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Foucault's Genealogy in War: A Creative Element of Violence

Abstract:
In this article, I make an attempt to elucidate the problem of violence in Foucault's genealogy that, following Nietzsche's genealogy, seems to be based on the concept of a conflict of forces. Thus, the war of forces that constitutes history is the first dimension in which the presence of violence can be described in Foucauldian philosophy. The second dimension refers to violence taken as the effect of an interplay between forces. Both aspects allow us to think on violence, not in terms of *natural objects*, but in terms of *relations* and simultaneously to challenge the established concept of violence as something necessarily related to brute force or aggression.

Keywords:
violence, non-violence, genealogy, event, theory of forces, *Herkunft*, *Entstehung*

Introduction

Although the issue of violence is vividly present in Foucault's works, especially in the middle period of his writings, the task of analyzing this presence and placing Foucault's philosophy within the discourse on violence is demanding. In none of his texts or interviews does the French philosopher explore directly the phenomenon of violence and offer any clear concept of it. He can be placed neither among the acolytes of the righteous violence of revolution – through which man reconstructs himself[1] and that turns against oppression of power

1) Jean-Paul Sartre, preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, by Frantz Fanon, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), lv. Sartre, following Fanon, in believing that only violence, "can erase the marks of violence", conceives it as generative of a new man and

– like Sorel or Sartre, nor among those thinkers for whom violence and power, being antithetical, are mutually exclusive, like Arendt.[2] He does not give justification or legitimization for the violence of the state, but neither does he speak up for the victims.

I argue that a key to the Foucauldian approach to violence can be found in genealogy. Therefore, the aim of the article is to present Foucault as a creative continuer of Nietzsche's genealogy. Without being drawn into the details of a debate over the problem of whether Foucault's last books represent a break or a continuation with his earlier writings, we need to say that genealogy in Foucault's works is not a separate method specific to the middle period of his writings that would be different from the early archaeology and the late problematizational methods, but is present throughout his writings. What is crucial is that genealogy is not only a specific attitude towards the nexus of the present and the past, but simultaneously it gives a particular view on the problem of power. It is based on the theory of forces in which the world is conceived of as the great stage of ceaseless war. As Foucault puts it: "It was Nietzsche who specified the power relation as the general focus, shall we say, of philosophical discourse.... Nietzsche is the philosopher of power, a philosopher who managed to think of power without having to confine himself within a political theory in order to do so."[3] Foucault, following Deleuze, reads Nietzsche's works as the ontology of forces, but in contrast to Deleuze[4] – whose interpretation of Nietzsche's forces loses its war reference – he perceives the German philosopher as a philosopher of war.[5] Moreover, Foucault puts his interpretation of Nietzsche's thought into a war narrative giving it an emblem of violence:

> I am tired of people studying him only to produce the same kind of commentaries that are written on Hegel or Mallarmé. For myself, I prefer to utilize the writers I like. The only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest. And if commentators then say that I am being faithful or unfaithful to Nietzsche, that is of absolutely no interest.[6]

To put it in other words: Nietzschean genealogy, as well as its Foucauldian continuation, is a story about war and violence. Yet the question is: what kind of war and violence reside within his genealogy?

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new humanism which, in turn, would bring an end of violence despite the fact they take their beginning in violence. Even more plain justification for counter-violence can be found in Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* in which he calls the absolute disapproval of violence, present in the works of "great humanists", "the empty chatter of satiated suckers." Aleksander Sołżenicyn, *Archipelag Gułag 1918–1956*, vol. 3, trans. Jerzy Pomianowski [Michał Kaniowski] (Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy REBIS, 2012), 225.

2) Arendt in defining violence as something that is "instrumental by nature", distinguishes it from power, strength, force and authority. Hannah Arendt, "On Violence," in *Crises of the Republic* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace & Company), 143–145.

3) Michel Foucault, "Prison Talk," in *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings: 1972–1977*, ed. and trans. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 53.

4) Deleuze writes in his book devoted to Nietzsche: "One cannot over emphasise the extent to which the notions of struggle, war, rivalry or even comparison are foreign to Nietzsche and to his conception of the will to power. It is not that he denies the existence of struggle: but he does not see it as in any way creative of values." Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Continuum, 2002), 82.

5) Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–76*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 29.

6) Foucault, "Prison Talk," 53–54.

Chapter One: History is a War

To shed some light on the relation between genealogy and the violence of war we will begin with Foucault's lectures given at the Collège de France in 1976. In the lectures the French philosopher presents two types of discourses on society and the state: the philosophico-juridical narrative and its opposition, i.e., the historico-political one, which, indeed, was a discourse of war. The latter considers war and violence to be an inherent element of history and its main driver, while the first one strives to eliminate them from history.

The historico-political discourse appears at the end of the sixteenth century and it establishes war as an inherent foundation of social relations, claiming that every society has a binary structure and is divided into two hostile groups. It maintains that beneath the law, institutions and order, war carries on with its violent work in all the mechanisms of power. "In the smallest of its cogs, peace is waging a secret war."[7] In that way, as Foucault indicates, it destroys a strong link, formed since Greek philosophy, perpetuated by the philosophico-juridical discourse, between truth and peace. For according to the historico-political narrative, truth cannot be perceived as something neutral and universal, as something that can be revealed only when one goes beyond any struggle. On the contrary, from the perspective of the war discourse, the truth can be displayed only from a position of war. As Foucault puts it:

> 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.[8]

A speaking subject is always immersed in a running conflict, in some battle. Therefore, within the war discourse the speaking subject is simultaneously a fighting subject in contrast to the philosophico-juridical narrative in which (s)he has been granted a neutral position. Consequently their role "is not the role that legislators and philosophers, from Solon to Kant, have dreamed of: standing between the adversaries, at the center of and above the fray, imposing an armistice, establishing an order that brings reconciliation."[9] The same factors that make this discourse a war discourse, that is a narrative based on victory and defeat, brings to it an element of bitterness from those who cannot make their voices heard, who tell their counter-history, undermining the firm ground of historical knowledge, waiting for a triumph that will come. However, in thinking on the war discourse, one cannot include the Marxist theory of class struggle, with its fulfillment in a classless society, since Foucault makes a strict distinction between the historico-political discourse and the dialectic, emphasizing that the latter should not be perceived as a philosophical translation of the war narrative. For, the Hegelian dialectic and all its continuations colonize and pacify the historico-political discourse. The dialectic codifies struggles into a logic of contradiction, it changes them into the process of the tantalization and revelation of a rationality, and finally it ensures the emergence of "a reconciled truth, and a right in which all particularities have their ordained place."[10] Therefore we can assume that in the case of the historico-political narrative

7) Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 50.

8) Ibid., 53.

9) Ibid., 268.

10) Ibid., 58.

a desired victory is always under threat; it does not bring with itself a guarantee of its endurance through the final reconciliation.

In the same set of lectures one can find a description of genealogy. In the first lecture, Foucault declares that archaeology is the method used for analysis of local, subjugated and excluded knowledges, while genealogy is the tactic which employs these knowledges to struggle. Its aim is to "desubjugate historical knowledges, to set them free, or in other words to enable them to oppose and struggle against the coercion of a unitary, formal, and scientific theoretical discourse."[11]It brings into play the desubjugated knowledges that had been released and make them able to fight against the coercion of scientific discourse. When comparing the aforementioned description of the historico-political discourse with the Foucauldian concept of genealogy we cannot neglect to notice certain similarities between them. Both narratives bear the hallmarks of war and, in a way, Foucauldian genealogy seems to be a continuation of the war discourse. This similarity becomes stronger when we add to the picture Foucault's statement (from an interview "Truth and Power") that a point of reference in studying history should not be, "the great model of language [*langue*] and signs," but, "that of war and battle," since history, "has the form of a war rather than that of a language – relations of power, not relations of meaning."[12] As he explains:

> Neither the dialectic, as the logic of contradictions, nor semiotics, as the structure of communication, can account for the intrinsic intelligibility of conflicts. "Dialectic" is a way of evading the always open and hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton, and "semiology" is a way of avoiding its violent, bloody, and lethal character by reducing it to the calm Platonic form of language and dialogue.[13]

This attitude toward the past implies continued questioning: should what appears to be natural and self-evident be taken for granted? In that sense genealogy can be seen as a fight against what is commonsensical and familiar, against the safe system of the obvious knowledge of striving, "not to exhibit that one is a stranger in one's own country, but to exhibit how your own country is foreign to you and how everything that surrounds you, that seems to be an acceptable landscape is, in fact, the effect of a whole series of struggles, conflicts, dominations, postulates, etc."[14] Thus, genealogy is "a device to defamiliarize what is familiar,"[15] "to jar stock responses into grasping ones, making the past look strange and different again, reasserting its heterogeneity, not numbly recognizing what was always there, present by an absence."[16]

First of all, one needs to say that Foucault, following Nietzsche, does not believe in neutral history, which would be a disinterested and objective reconstruction of the past. He rejects the conviction that historical practice is merely a matter of the application of a proper methodology to a particular field. As Mitchell Dean points out, for Foucault, "history is above all a practice, a practice undertaken in a particular present and for particular

11) Ibid., 10.

12) Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 3. ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley, (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 116.

13) Ibid.

14) Michel Foucault, "L'intellectuel et les pouvoirs," in *Dits et Écrits. 1954–1988*, vol. 4, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 750.

15) Harry D. Harootunian, "Foucault, Genealogy, History: The Pursuit of Otherness," in *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges*, ed. Jonathan Arac (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press 1988), 121.

16) Ibid.

reasons linked to that present."[17] The conviction that a neutral position is impossible when telling histories, "is not simply a repetition of the idea that all histories are written from a particular viewpoint or perspective, because it is also concerned to come to terms with history as practice, as a particular set of actions brought to bear on a particular material. This material is not 'raw' but already the result of other practices of conservation and organization."[18] The issue of marshalling historical sources, which Foucault deals with in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, has its continuation in *Society Must Be Defended*. Precisely speaking, one can find this continuation in his tracing of the analyses of Henri de Boulainvilliers that were the critical point of the historico-political discourse, for they were connected with the issue of taking over existing knowledge. Boulainvilliers – whom the king ordered to abridge reports about the situation of the economy, institutions, and customs of the kingdom that were prepared by the administration – introduced "a type of analysis that will be of fundamental importance for all historico-political analyses from the seventeenth century until the present day."[19] The aim of the administration reports was to supply the king's heir and grandson, the duke of Burgundy, with information needed by the man who would, after the death of Louis XIV, rule France. The aim of Boulainvilliers' report was, as Foucault says, "to abridge it, and to explain or interpret it: to recode it,"[20] in order to make it more accessible. Yet, in doing so he told a different (hi)story; a (hi)story that instead of heralding the king's glory, told of the lost power of the nobles and tried to reawaken their forgotten memory. In other words, he reshuffled the cards which were in the game and began a new game, confiscating the knowledge and using it against the system of the absolute monarchy, against the system of power-knowledge.[21] Consequently, within the historico-political discourse, the act of speaking, telling (hi)stories, always means being on one side. The intellectual cannot be perceived any longer as the "bearer of universal values"[22] and genealogy, as a part of the war narrative, can be described in terms of "intervention into contemporary conditions of politics and domination."[23]

The historico-political discourse and genealogy share the concept of conflict. In both cases being involved in conflict would mean being involved in uncovering the chaos of war from the established order, spotting struggles hidden under a coagulated layer of law. That process of uncovering is related to a change in the function of memory. In the philosophico-juridical discourse, as Foucault says, memory is intended to prevent forgetting, "to preserve the law and perpetually to enhance the luster of power for so long as it endured."[24] History that belongs to this discourse arises as a tale about the power of those who win and becomes a part of a ritual that legitimizes that power. Whereas the main task of memory, in the discourse of war, becomes to "disinter something that has been hidden, and which has been hidden not only because it has been neglected, but because it has been carefully, deliberately, and wickedly misrepresented."[25] In doing so, history becomes counter-history, it makes muffled voices heard and lets those who were made voiceless speak. Another important point that brings Foucauldian genealogy closer to Boulainvilliers' version of the war discourse is the concept of the relational character of power, which implies that power cannot be perceived as something that can be possessed.[26] For

17) Mitchell Dean, *Critical and Effective histories*: *Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 14.

18) Ibid., 15.

19) Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 155.

20) Ibid., 128.

21) Ibid., 170.

22) Foucault, "Truth and Power," 131.

23) Harootunian, "Foucault, Genealogy, History," 123.

24) Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 72.

25) Ibid.

26) Ibid., 168.

Boulainvilliers – Foucault says – "...relations of force and the play of power are the very stuff of history. History exists, events occur, and things that happen can and must be remembered, to the extent that relations of power, relations of force, and a certain play of power operate in relations among men."[27] Yet one needs to stop here and add that for Foucault's research a more important source of the idea of the relational character of power, than Boulainvilliers, was Nietzsche. The German philosopher was the first one who detached philosophical thinking from substances, subjects, and things, in other words from *objects*, and focused attention on the *relations* between them. Foucault takes on board that concept and continues it. However, as Alan Schrift writes:

> Where Nietzsche saw a continuum of will to power and sought to incite a becoming-stronger of will to power to rival the progressive becoming-weaker he associated with modernity, Foucault saw power relations operating along a continuum of repression and production, and he sought to draw attention to the becoming-productive of power that accompanies the increasingly repressive power of that normalizing, disciplinary, carceral society we call "modern".[28]

Yet despite those resemblances, genealogy cannot be identified with the historico-political discourse. To grasp that dissimilarity we need to look at the passage in which Foucault comments on the relation between the war discourse and history. He explains that the historico-political discourse 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.[29]

These words should give us pause. The description seems to stand in opposition to all examples, provided by Foucault, of the historico-political discourse that can be found in the course of history.[30] For all of them have

27) Ibid., 169.

28) Alan Schrift, *Nietzsche's French Legacy: A Genealogy of Poststructuralism* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 40, https://doi.org/10.1016/0142-0496(95)80172-3.

29) Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 55–56.

30) As he writes: "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." Ibid., 57.

to operate within the thoughts of beginning and end. Their immersion in "the indefiniteness of history" would take the political force away from their seductive rhetoric; the lack of a beginning would make weaving a foundation myth impossible. The absence of an end would mean not only an endless war, but first of all, would imply that the desired victory will be destined to fail. Taking the aforementioned into consideration, one can say that the perspective of an endless history, history as an endless war, is not so much the perspective of the historico-political discourse, but above all, represents the genealogical view. Within genealogy it is not the final victory, but "the indefiniteness of history" which plays a crucial role. Undoubtedly, genealogy as well as the historico-political discourse look at history through the prism of war. Nevertheless, according to genealogy, history is not a war between groups or classes or individuals who strive for their aims, but it is a conflict of forces. The genealogical perspective follows Nietzsche's conviction that "there is no 'being' behind the deed, its effect and what becomes of it; 'the doer' is invented as an afterthought, – the doing is everything."[31] For this reason, as Foucault explains, genealogy makes no reference to a subject that "is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history."[32]

Furthermore, history is not only conflict, it is *because of* conflict. It is war that will not be stopped by a successful battle or a wise treaty. The French philosopher, echoing Nietzsche, perceives history as an unending struggle of impersonal forces, that in Nietzsche's thought, are guided by the rule of domination and obedience, and he makes this ceaseless conflict the very mechanism of history. Although Foucault does not explicitly refer to Nietzsche's concept of a conflict of forces, it can be found in his account of power, "as the multiplicity of force relations,"[33] "as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations transforms, strengthens, or reverses them."[34] Therefore, the Foucauldian idea of power is inextricably intertwined with resistance, and, precisely speaking, it should be taken as one concept, namely power-resistance. Moreover, relations of power are not merely one of many other types of relations, they are always present and immanent in other relations having "a directly productive role, wherever they come into play."[35] That driving force of history, likewise in the Hegelian vision of history, does not stand outside its course, as an unchangeable cause, but it is immanent in it. Consequently, it needs to be said that the concept of war, on which genealogy is based, contains different content from that which is used in the historico-political discourse. In the latter case, war is understood literally, as something that destroys the body and takes one's life. Although genealogy does not avoid this aspect of war and power, it focuses not on the conflict that annihilates the body, but the conflict that creates it, and finds its locus within life, since violence belongs to life to the same extent as to death. Moreover, both the Foucauldian power of sovereignty and biopower, despite differences between them, need a living body to exercise (as in the case of biopower) or manifest (as in the case of the power of sovereignty) themselves. Even if the power of sovereignty sentences the body to death, it needs the body as a condition of its existence; it needs the body in a life order, to make its death power happen.

To this Foucauldian portrait of the relationship between power, its violence and a living body we can add an element derived from Judith Butler's philosophy. Namely, she establishes a case of power that eliminates the difference between life and death, and maybe, in a sense, the difference between the power of sovereignty and biopower as well, and establishes "the body in social death, as one that lives and breathes its potentiality as

31) Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 26.

32) Foucault, "Truth and Power," 118.

33) Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 92.

34) Ibid.

35) Ibid., 94.

death."[36] A continuation of the idea of the productiveness of violence, on the cultural and social level of human lives, can be found in Butler's thought on the "interpellative force of violence,"[37] that operates through norms and "the pervasive existence of an – always potentially violent – other."[38] What is more important is the fact that, building her theory on Althusser's and Foucault's concept of *assujettissement*, and Althusser's concept of interpellation, she takes us one step further and perceives violence, present in these processes, as a starting point for something new. Writing on hate speech, Butler notices that it may "produce an unexpected and enabling response. If to be addressed is to be interpellated, then the offensive call runs the risk of inaugurating a subject in speech who comes to use language to counter the offensive call."[39] However, it does not mean that a victim will become an aggressor, in a reversed repetition of violence (although they become a violator insofar as they do not comply with established rules labeling them as a victim). Instead, it implies that non-violence needs to acknowledge violence as its beginning.[40]

Chapter Two: A Masked "Other"

A deeper insight into the genealogical concept of history and its relationship to war can be found in Foucault's essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History". The Foucauldian approach to history is not a vision of a linear and teleological process subjugated to "the myth of evolution."[41] History, the way Foucault sees it, has no beginning, understood as a metaphysical cause of things, and no end that would mean a final glory, a moment which would bring a lasting peace or the fulfillment of any higher idea or sense. The forces that operate within history are not subjected to destiny or any regulative mechanisms, but they are left at the mercy of the randomness of the struggle.[42] To put it in other words: "History has no 'meaning'."[43] However, it does not mean that it is "absurd or incoherent."[44] On the contrary, the French philosopher claims, "it is intelligible and should be susceptible of analysis down to the smallest detail – but this in accordance with the intelligibility of struggles, of strategies and tactics."[45] But how to comprehend those struggles without referring them to a subject? How to grasp them without finding their metaphysical basis? How to recognize them since they are not marked by military flags defining their origins?

Genealogy assumes that there are two critical points at which struggles can be identified. Namely (as Foucault writes in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"), at *Herkunft*, which "is the equivalent of stock or *descent*,"[46]

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36) Judith Butler, "Violence, Non-Violence: Sartre on Fanon," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 27, no. 1 (2006): 17, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neurobiolaging.2005.12.009.

37) Birgit Schippers, *The Political Philosophy of Judith Butler* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 66, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203551530.

38) Ibid.

39) Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 2.

40) Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London: Verso, 2016), 182.

41) Michel Foucault, "Who are you, Professor Foucault?," trans. Lucille Cairns, in *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault*, ed. Jeremy R. Carrette (New York: Routledge, 1999), 92.

42) Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Aesthetics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 2, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 381.

43) Foucault, "Truth and Power," 116.

44) Ibid.

45) Ibid.

46) Ibid., 373.

and at *Entstehung*, which "designates *emergence*, the moment of arising,"[47] or, "the entry of forces."[48] Foucault explains: "descent qualifies the strength or weakness of an instinct and its inscription on a body, emergence designates a place of confrontation."[49] To pin down the *descent* of something means to spot its historicalness by describing when, why and what it arose for. At the same time, showing a historical and bodily beginning of something always means announcing its end, detaching it from its eternal essence, turning it into becoming. To explain the emergence of a particular state of forces, Foucault refers to the category of the "distance", the "interstice", and the "scene". *Emergence* – he writes – "designates a place of confrontation, but not as a closed field offering the spectacle of a struggle among equals," since it is rather "a 'non-place', a pure distance, which indicates that the adversaries do not belong to a common space. Consequently, no one is responsible for an emergence; no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstice."[50] As Paweł Pieniążek argues, every state of forces is a result of particular historical practices. For this reason there is no pre-existing subject who makes an entrance to the scene of history. The scene each time constitutes an order of forces, the changing relations between them. The scene casts subjects in roles and determines their acts on the stage. Therefore genealogy "analyses the emergence of this productive field of conflict taken as the historical source of procedures and rituals of power, institutions, identities of individuals, knowledge, ideas and values."[51] Forces do not stand face to face as hostile armies on the battlefield do. The conflict of forces happens in a non-place and brings about the relationship of domination which is, as Foucault says, a non-relationship.

It seems that naming that relationship of domination a non-relationship brings into view the fact that Foucault excludes Hobbes from the philosophy of war. In *Society Must Be Defended*, he denies the author of *Leviathan* access to the historico-political discourse holding that Hobbes's vision of war is a war of *couch warriors*, a sort of unending diplomacy between rivals who are naturally equal. As Foucault puts it: "There are no battles in Hobbes's primitive war, there is no blood and there are no corpses. There are presentations, manifestations, signs, emphatic expressions, wiles, and deceitful expressions; there are traps, intentions disguised as their opposite, and worries disguised as certainties."[52] The relationship of domination, in which genealogy is interested, is not a relationship, easy to label and based on agreement, between a sovereign and the people, or between a master and a servant or slave. A settlement, always fleeting and put at risk, does not happen on the battlefield, it does not result from a signed treaty, or any other agreement. It is realized in taking control over vocabulary, in an imposed practice. It manifests itself through "rituals, in meticulous procedures that impose rights and obligations. It establishes marks of its power and engraves memories on things and even within bodies. It makes itself accountable for debts and gives rise to the universe of rules,"[53] which is not designed "to temper violence, but rather to satisfy it."[54] Leviathan does not stand in opposition to Behemoth, it is not a threat located beyond state borders, but irreducible within it. Therefore, Foucault claims, we should rid ourselves of the traditional belief that total war ends with peace that brings laws and stops violence. On the contrary, the order of law is "the promised blood, which permits the perpetual instigation of new dominations and the staging of meticulously repeated

47) Ibid., 376.

48) Ibid. 377

49) Ibid.

50) Ibid.

51) Paweł Pieniążek, "Dwie genealogie: Nietzsche/Foucault," in *Poznanie-podmiot-dyskurs. Idee i dziedzictwo frankofońskiej tradycji epistemologicznej*, ed. Adam Dubik (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2002), 115.

52) Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 92.

53) Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 377.

54) Ibid.

scenes of violence."[55] Another thing that makes the Foucauldian vision of war so distant from Hobbes's concept, and which needs to be mentioned, is the fact that to give a justification for the constant threat of war, that hangs over the state, Hobbes employs the concept of a restless desire of power residing in human nature. Foucault would be definitely closer to the account provided by Nietzsche who bases the perpetual conflict of forces on the concept of impersonal will to power. Nietzsche describes it in terms of the "insatiable desire to demonstrate power; or use, exercise of power, as a creative drive."[56] In another place, the German philosopher writes: "This world is the world of will to power – and nothing else! And you yourselves are as well this will to power – and nothing else!"[57] Although, let us add, Foucault never explicitly uses the notion of will to power.

Thus, the Foucauldian genealogical approach to history is rooted in the concept of the event that can be taken as a moment in which violence, with its many facets, reveals its presence. That is why to elucidate what an event is and how it functions seems to be crucial to grasping the Foucauldian picture of war and its violence. First of all, it needs to be said that Foucault's "peculiar use of 'event' serves to distinguish him from old and new historians alike."[58] Being labeled as a structuralist he makes the concept of the event, evacuated from historical research by structuralism, the center of his analyses. And this brings his study closer to a traditional history of events (*histoire événementielle*). However, he transforms the meaning of an event by referring it to forces. It loses its, let us say, seriousness and the Hegelian spectacularity. That change makes the smallest detail possible to appear, something banal and seemingly not important that turns out to be a key to a new reading of the past. Moreover, an event is no longer perceived in terms of historical necessity but of randomness. "An event," Foucault writes, "is not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle, but the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a domination that grows feeble, poisons itself, grows slack, the entry of a masked 'other'."[59] Another piece of this puzzle can be found in *The Order of Discourse* where the philosopher explains that:

> The event is neither substance nor accident, neither quality nor process; the event is not of the order of bodies. And yet it is not something immaterial either; it is always at the level of materiality that it takes effect, that it is effect; it has its locus and it consists in the relation, the coexistence, the dispersion, the overlapping, the accumulation, and the selection of material elements. It is not the act or the property of a body; it is produced as an effect of, and within, a dispersion of matter. Let us say that the philosophy of the event should move in the, at first sight, paradoxical direction of a materialism of the incorporeal.[60]

The concept of "a materialism of the incorporeal" becomes clearer when one bears in mind that what is essential historical text for genealogy is a living body shaped and inscribed by the impersonal forces that operate within

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55) Ibid., 378.

56) Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1884–1885. Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 11, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich: Walter de Gruyter/dtv, 1999), 36 [31], 563.

57) Ibid., 38 [12], 610. About the Nietzschean concept of the world as the world of will to power see also: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Common (New York: The Modern Library, 1930), chapter: "Self-Surpassing"; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), §13, § 36, and §259.

58) Thomas Flynn, "Foucault's mapping of history," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 41.

59) Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 380–381.

60) Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 69.

it. Likewise in the case of Nietzschean genealogy for Foucault, history, driven by blind forces, manifests itself through bodies which are the only material on which it can work. Each ideal in human history refers not to the non-material essence, but to a body and its practices.[61] Therefore, the center of gravity of genealogical analyses could be shifted from power taken as carrying the force of prohibition to the productivity of power.

Chapter Three: Violence Does not Exist

The genealogical perspective throws light on the issue of violence in Foucault's philosophy not only because it helps to clarify the conflict of forces on its ontological ground, but also because it allows us to assume that some other conclusions about violence – taken as the effect of an interplay between forces – can be found in his writings.

First of all, it needs to be said that his vision of violence is anti-Platonic; it challenges the traditional view on the problem of violence. Frédéric Gros points out (in his article "Foucault, penseur de la violence?") that Platonic philosophy positions violence in opposition to reason, maintaining that there are two orders; the order of "reason, truth, language, speech, *logos*,"[62] and the order of violence to which "power relations, coercion, and domination"[63] belong. "Classically, it is considered that *logos* does justice to each thing, peaceably giving it its meaning, that reason frees us from the shackles of obscurantism, that dialogue is an alternative to struggle, that knowledge allows avoidance of violence."[64] Gros concludes that "a number of Foucault's theses let us question this evidence."[65] Yet it seems that this conclusion should be formulated in stronger terms, especially when one takes into account the perpetual war of forces depicted by genealogy. Certainly Foucault, in thinking on violence or power, does not make a simple reversal. He does not want to convince us that the order of logos is always the domain of violence. Instead, he tries to remove this Platonic division, deeply rooted in Western philosophy, from our thinking. The extent to which it is present in our thinking proves the fact that a belief in the redemptive power of truth which emerges from darkness functions not only in Platonic and post-Platonic philosophy, but can be found as well in Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxist theory, in which human consciousness has the status of being a liberating instance. According to Foucault, the order of logos is not a safe place which is able to save us from violence, and the truth will not set us free, instead it will coerce us into its games. For "truth isn't outside power or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world."[66] The light and the darkness cannot be divided from each other. There is no shielded place that could not be exposed to a mistake or a perversion. There are no things that would be unable to turn into their opposition. Hence, from the Foucauldian perspective, the concepts of Freud's repression and Marxist ideology, employed to explain the issue of violence, are too simplistic, as both concepts seemed to retain that Platonic division into two separated orders; innocent where truth belongs and the second which inevitably brings illusion and violence. In one of his interviews, Foucault says that there is one thing about which we can be sure, namely that everything we do or create to liberate ourselves will be, at a certain moment, exploited to bring us under the yoke. For, "that's the way we live, that's

61) Pieniążek, "Dwie genealogie," 107.

62) Frédéric Gros, "Foucault, penseur de la violence?" *Cités*, no. 50 (2012): 75, https://doi.org/10.3917/cite.050.0075.

63) Ibid.

64) Ibid., 76.

65) Ibid.

66) Foucault, "Truth and Power," 131.

the way we struggle, that's the way of human history."[67] Partially, for this reason, because of the impossibility of an enduring order of things, genealogy is not a doctrine but a ceaseless exertion of suspicion.

Moreover, following the assumptions made by genealogy, one needs to agree that if *emergence* each time determines the roles of historical actors, their appearance and relationships between them, it means that the concept of violence can be neither unchangeable nor ready-made. If violence resides in power relations, in its games of domination and obedience, an explanation of it cannot be found in any *theory* of violence, like an explanation of power cannot be found in any *theory* that would assume, "that power is some *thing* that is univocal in all its manifestations, some *thing* that remains constant,"[68] throughout the course of history. In other words, it seems that there is no reason to think on violence as *a natural object*. Instead, it should be described in terms of relations, as *an object of practices*.[69] Accordingly, there can be no violence, but individual instances of domination, manipulation, influence, subjugation, and the like. That is why violence needs to be recognized anew, with genealogical analytics, every time it emerges. Another genealogical hint useful to trace facets of violence, is to avoid looking only at those areas where violence is announced as an aggression or a brute force, that is, traditionally, in the political field, and lately, in smaller social groups like the family or the classroom. For it can be found in areas of life and in forms that customarily are regarded as essentially free from violence; namely, in the discursive field in which it takes the form of the Nietzschean "will to truth".[70] Therefore, from a genealogical perspective, a differentiation between the transparency of former violence and the non-violent, devious perfidiousness of the contemporary world, made by Sorel in his *Reflections on Violence*,[71] can be easily questioned, since a ploy, a gambit and machination can be associated with violence as well. And at the same time violence can be absent where it is supposed to be found, for instance in S&M practices.[72]

Thus, to learn the Foucauldian lesson we need to start thinking of violence as something that does not necessarily belong to the dark domain of death, but to the bright sphere of life, since violence destroys and annihilates bodies, but also creates and shapes them. It ends lives as well as it forms them. We need to notice that violence does not have to be violent; it may act in a subtle, discreet and delicate way since it can be tenacious and endlessly patient. Such violence has nothing to do with the ancient glory of war, but neither with twentieth-century genocide. It remains distant from Hector's wounded body dragged around the walls of Troy by brave Achilles and from the cold nights of Stalin's Gulags. Instead, it stays closer to Nietzschean priests reversing the values of noble men, to the ruse of the cunning Odysseus identified by Adorno and Horkheimer. However, it is always ready to change its mask.

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67) Michel Foucault, "Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity," in *Ethics: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 1, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 167.

68) Schrift, *Nietzsche's French Legacy*, 40.

69) Paul Veyne, "Foucault Revolutionizes History," in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 162.

70) Foucault, "The Order of Discourse," 54–56.

71) Sorel argues: "There is a tendency for the old ferocity to be replaced by cunning, and many sociologists believe that this is a real progress; some philosophers, who are not in the habit of following the herd, do not see exactly how this constitutes progress from the point of view of morality: 'If we are revolted by the cruelty, by the brutality of past times," says Hartmann, "it must not be forgotten that uprightness, sincerity, a lively sentiment of justice, pious respect before holiness of morals, characterized the ancient peoples; whilst today we see predominant lies, duplicity, treachery, the spirit of deception, the contempt for property, disdain for instinctive probity and legitimate customs, the value of which are no longer understood....'" Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, trans. Thomas Ernest Hulme (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 187–188.

72) Foucault, "Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity," 165.

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