

*Omnes et Singulatim: Towards a Criticism
of 'Political Reason'*

MICHEL FOUCAULT

THE TANNER LECTURES ON HUMAN VALUES

Delivered at
Stanford University

October 10 and 16, 1979

MICHEL FOUCAULT studied at the Sorbonne, receiving his Licence de Philosophie in 1948, his Licence de Psychologie in 1950, and the Diplome de Psycho-Pathologie from the Universitk de Paris in 1952. Thereafter he lectured at the University of Uppsala, was made Director of the Institut Francais in Hamburg, and then became Professor and Director of the Institut de Philosophie at the Faculte des Lettres in Clermont-Ferrand. Professor Foucault has lectured in many universities throughout the world; he is an editor of *Critique* and writes frequently for French newspapers and reviews. His best-known books in English are *Madness and Civilization*, which won the Medal of the Centre de la Recherche Scientifique on its publication in France in 1961, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and *The Order of Things*. Professor Foucault holds the Chaire d'Histoire des SystGmes de Pensee in the Colli.ge de France.

I

The title sounds pretentious, I know. But the reason for that is precisely its own excuse. Since the nineteenth century, Western thought has never stopped labouring at the task of criticising the role of reason — or the lack of reason — in political structures. It's therefore perfectly unfitting to undertake such a vast project once again. However, so many previous attempts are a warrant that every new venture will be just about as successful as the former ones — and in any case, probably just as fortunate.

Under such a banner, mine is the embarrassment of one who has only sketches and uncompletable drafts to propose. Philosophy gave up trying to offset the impotence of scientific reason long ago; it no longer tries to complete its edifice.

One of the Enlightenment's tasks was to multiply reason's political powers. But the men of the nineteenth century soon started wondering whether reason weren't getting too powerful in our societies. They began to worry about a relationship they confusedly suspected between a rationalisation-prone society and certain threats to the individual and his liberties, to the species and its survival.

In other words, since Kant, the role of philosophy has been to prevent reason going beyond the limits of what is given in experience; but from the same moment — that is, from the development of modern states and political management of society — the role of philosophy has also been to keep watch over the excessive powers of political rationality — which is rather a promising life expectancy.

Everybody is aware of such banal facts. But that they are banal does not mean they don't exist. What we have to do with banal facts is to discover — or try to discover — which specific and perhaps original problems are connected with them.

The relationship between rationalisation and the excesses of political power is evident. And we should not need to wait for bureaucracy or concentration camps to recognize the existence of such relations. But the problem is: what to do with such an evident fact?

Shall we 'try' reason? To my mind, nothing would be more sterile. First, because the field has nothing to do with guilt or innocence. Second, because it's senseless to refer to 'reason' as the contrary entity to non-reason. Last, because such a trial would trap us into playing the arbitrary and boring part of either the rationalist or the irrationalist.

Shall we investigate this kind of rationalism which seems to be specific to our modern culture and which originates in Enlightenment? I think that that was the way of some of the members of the Frankfurter Schule. My purpose is not to begin a discussion of their works — they are most important and valuable. I would suggest another way of investigating the links between rationalisation and power:

1. It may be wise not to take as a whole the rationalisation of society or of culture, but to analyse this process in several fields, each of them grounded in a fundamental experience: madness, illness, death, crime, sexuality, etc.

2. I think that the word 'rationalisation' is a dangerous one. The main problem when people try to rationalise something is not to investigate whether or not they conform to principles of rationality, but to discover which kind of rationality they are using.

3. Even if the Enlightenment has been a very important phase in our history, and in the development of political technology, I think we have to refer to much more remote processes if we want to understand how we have been trapped in our own history.

This was my 'ligne de conduite' in my previous work: analyse the relations between experiences like madness, death, crime, sexuality, and several technologies of power. What I am working

on now is the problem of individuality — or, I should say, self-identity as referred to the problem of ‘individualising power’.

Everyone knows that in European societies political power has evolved towards more and more centralised forms. Historians have been studying this organisation of the state, with its administration and bureaucracy, for dozens of years.

I’d like to suggest in these two lectures the possibility of analysing another kind of transformation in such power relationships. This transformation is, perhaps, less celebrated. But I think that it is also important, mainly for modern societies. Apparently this evolution seems antagonistic to the evolution towards a centralised state. What I mean in fact is the development of power techniques oriented towards individuals and intended to rule them in a continuous and permanent way. If the state is the political form of a centralised and centralising power, let us call pastorship the individualising power.

My purpose this evening is to outline the origin of this pastoral modality of power, or at least some aspects of its ancient history. And in the next lecture, I’ll try to show how this pastorship happened to combine with its opposite, the state.

The idea of the deity, or the king, or the leader, as a shepherd followed by a flock of sheep wasn’t familiar to the Greeks and Romans. There were exceptions, I know — early ones in Homeric literature, later ones in certain texts of the Lower Empire. I’ll come back to them later. Roughly speaking, we can say that the metaphor of the flock didn’t occur in great Greek or Roman political literature.

This is not the case in ancient Oriental societies: Egypt, Assyria, Judaea. Pharaoh was an Egyptian shepherd. Indeed, he ritually received the herdsman’s crook on his coronation day; and the term ‘shepherd of men’ was one of the Babylonian monarch’s titles. But God was also a shepherd leading men to their grazing ground and ensuring them food. An Egyptian hymn invoked Ra

this way: "O Ra that keepest watch when all men sleep, Thou who seekest what is good for thy cattle . . ." The association between God and King is easily made, since both assume the same role: the flock they watch over is the same; the shepherd-king is entrusted with the great divine shepherd's creatures. An Assyrian invocation to the king ran like this: "Illustrious companion of pastures, Thou who carest for thy land and feedest it, shepherd of all abundance."

But, as we know, it was the Hebrews who developed and intensified the pastoral theme — with nevertheless a highly peculiar characteristic: God, and God only, is his people's shepherd. With just one positive exception: David, as the founder of the monarchy, is the only one to be referred to as a shepherd. God gave him the task of assembling a flock.

There are negative exceptions, too: wicked kings are consistently compared to bad shepherds; they disperse the flock, let it die of thirst, shear it solely for profit's sake. Jahweh is the one and only true shepherd. He guides his own people in person, aided only by his prophets. As the Psalms say: "Like a flock/hast Thou led Thy people, by Moses' and by Aaron's hand." Of course I can treat neither the historical problems pertaining to the origin of this comparison nor its evolution throughout Jewish thought. I just want to show a few themes typical of pastoral power. I'd like to point out the contrast with Greek political thought, and to show how important these themes became in Christian thought and institutions later on.

1. The shepherd wields power over a flock rather than over a land. It's probably much more complex than that, but, broadly speaking, the relation between the deity, the land, and men differs from that of the Greeks. Their gods owned the land, and this primary possession determined the relationship between men and gods. On the contrary, it's the Shepherd-God's relationship with his flock that is primary and fundamental here. God gives, or promises, his flock a land.

2. The shepherd gathers together, guides, and leads his flock. The idea that the political leader was to quiet any hostilities within the city and make unity reign over conflict is undoubtedly present in Greek thought. But what the shepherd gathers together is dispersed individuals. They gather together on hearing his voice: "I'll whistle and will gather them together." Conversely, the shepherd only has to disappear for the flock to be scattered. In other words, the shepherd's immediate presence and direct action cause the flock to exist. Once the good Greek lawgiver, like Solon, has resolved any conflicts, what he leaves behind him is a strong city with laws enabling it to endure without him.

3. The shepherd's role is to ensure the salvation of his flock. The Greeks said also that the deity saved the city; they never stopped declaring that the competent leader is a helmsman warding his ship away from the rocks. But the way the shepherd saves his flock is quite different. It's not only a matter of saving them all, all together, when danger comes nigh. It's a matter of constant, individualised, and final kindness. Constant kindness, for the shepherd ensures his flock's food; every day he attends to their thirst and hunger. The Greek god was asked to provide a fruitful land and abundant crops. He wasn't asked to foster a flock day by day. And individualised kindness, too, for the shepherd sees that all the sheep, each and every one of them, is fed and saved. Later Hebrew literature, especially, laid the emphasis on such individually kindly power: a rabbinical commentary on Exodus explains why Jahweh chose Moses to shepherd his people: he had left his flock to go and search for one lost sheep.

Last and not least, it's final kindness. The shepherd has a target for his flock. It must either be led to good grazing ground or brought back to the fold.

4. Yet another difference lies in the idea that wielding power is a 'duty'. The Greek leader had naturally to make decisions in the interest of all; he would have been a bad leader had he preferred his personal interest. But his duty was a glorious one:

even if in war he had to give up his life, such a sacrifice was offset by something extremely precious: immortality. He never lost. By way of contrast, shepherdly kindness is much closer to ‘devotedness’. Everything the shepherd does is geared to the good of his flock. That’s his constant concern. When they sleep, *he* keeps watch.

The theme of keeping watch is important. It brings out two aspects of the shepherd’s devotedness. First, he acts, he works, he puts himself out, for those he nourishes and who are asleep. Second, he watches over them. He pays attention to them all and scans each one of them. He’s got to know his flock as a whole, and in detail. Not only must he know where good pastures are, the seasons’ laws and the order of things; he must also know each one’s particular needs. Once again, a rabbinical commentary on Exodus describes Moses’ qualities as a shepherd this way: he would send each sheep in turn to graze — first, the youngest, for them to browse on the tenderest sward; then the older ones; and last the oldest, who were capable of browsing on the roughest grass. The shepherd’s power implies individual attention paid to each member of the flock.

These are just themes that Hebraic texts associate with the metaphors of the Shepherd–God and his flock of people. In no way do I claim that that is effectively how political power was wielded in Hebrew society before the fall of Jerusalem. I do not even claim that such a conception of political power is in any way coherent.

They’re just themes. Paradoxical, even contradictory, ones. Christianity was to give them considerable importance, both in the Middle Ages and in modern times. Among all the societies in history, ours — I mean, those that came into being at the end of Antiquity on the Western side of the European continent — have perhaps been the most aggressive and the most conquering; they have been capable of the most stupefying violence, against them-

selves as well as against others. They invented a great many different political forms. They profoundly altered their legal structures several times. It must be kept in mind that they alone evolved a strange technology of power treating the vast majority of men as a flock with a few as shepherds. They thus established between them a series of complex, continuous, and paradoxical relationships.

This is undoubtedly something singular in the course of history. Clearly, the development of 'pastoral technology' in the management of men profoundly disrupted the structures of ancient society.

* * *

So as to better explain the importance of this disruption, I'd like to briefly return to what I was saying about the Greeks. I can see the objections liable to be made.

One is that the Homeric poems use the shepherd metaphor to refer to the kings. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the expression *ποιμῆν λαῶν* crops up several times. It qualifies the leaders, highlighting the grandeur of their power. Moreover, it's a ritual title, common in even late Indo-European literature. In *Beowulf*, the king is still regarded as a shepherd. But there is nothing really surprising in the fact that the same title, as in the Assyrian texts, is to be found in archaic epic poems.

The problem arises rather as to Greek thought: There is at least one category of texts where references to shepherd models are made: the Pythagorean ones. The metaphor of the herdsman appears in the *Fragments* of Archytas, quoted by Stobeus. The word *νόμος* (the law) is connected with the word *νομέυς* (shepherd): the shepherd shares out, the law apportions. Then Zeus is called *Νόμιος* and *Νέμειος* because he gives his sheep food. And, finally, the magistrate must be *φιλόανθρωπος*, i.e., devoid of selfishness. He must be full of zeal and solicitude, like a shepherd.

Grube, the German editor of Archytas' *Fragments*, says that this proves a Hebrew influence unique in Greek literature. Other commentators, such as Delatte, say that the comparison between gods, magistrates, and shepherds was common in Greece. It is therefore not to be dwelt upon.

I shall restrict myself to political literature. The results of the enquiry are clear: the political metaphor of the shepherd occurs neither in Isocrates, nor in Demosthenes, nor in Aristotle. This is rather surprising when one reflects that in his *Areopagiticus*, Isocrates insists on the magistrates' duties; he stresses the need for them to be devoted and to show concern for young people. Yet not a word as to any shepherd.

By contrast, Plato often speaks of the shepherd-magistrate. He mentions the idea in *Critias*, *The Republic*, and *Laws*. He thrashes it out in *The Statesman*. In the former, the shepherd theme is rather subordinate. Sometimes, those happy days when mankind was governed directly by the gods and grazed on abundant pastures are evoked (*Critias*). Sometimes, the magistrates' necessary virtue — as contrasted with Thrasymachos' vice, is what is insisted upon (*The Republic*). And sometimes, the problem is to define the subordinate magistrates' role: indeed, they, just as the watchdogs, have to obey "those at the top of the scale" (*Laws*).

But in *The Statesman* pastoral power is the central problem and it is treated at length. Can the city's decision-maker, can the commander, be defined as a sort of shepherd?

Plato's analysis is well known. To solve this question he uses the division method. A distinction is drawn between the man who conveys orders to inanimate things (e.g., the architect), and the man who gives orders to animals; between the man who gives orders to isolated animals (like a yoke of oxen) and he who gives orders to flocks; and he who gives orders to animal flocks, and he who commands human flocks. And there we have the political leader: a shepherd of men.

Rut this first division remains unsatisfactory. It has to be

pushed further. The method opposing *men* to all the other animals isn't a good one. And so the dialogue starts all over again. A whole series of distinctions is established: between wild animals and tame ones; those that live in water, and those that live on land; those with horns, and those without; between cleft- and plain-hoofed animals; between those capable and incapable of mutual reproduction. And the dialogue wanders astray with these never-ending subdivisions.

So, what do the initial development of the dialogue and its subsequent failure show? That the division method can prove nothing at all when it isn't managed correctly. It also shows that the idea of analysing political power as the relationship between a shepherd and his animals was probably rather a controversial one at the time. Indeed, it's the first assumption to cross the interlocutors' minds when seeking to discover the essence of the politician. Was it a commonplace at the time? Or was Plato rather discussing one of the Pythagorean themes? The absence of the shepherd metaphor in other contemporary political texts seems to tip the scale towards the second hypothesis. But we can probably leave the discussion open.

My personal enquiry bears upon how Plato impugns the theme in the rest of the dialogue. He does so first by means of methodological arguments and then by means of the celebrated myth of the world revolving round its spindle.

The methodological arguments are extremely interesting. Whether the king is a sort of shepherd or not can be told, not by deciding which different species can form a flock, but by analysing what the shepherd does.

What is characteristic of his task? First, the shepherd is alone at the head of his flock. Second, his job is to supply his cattle with food; to care for them when they are sick; to play them music to get them together, and guide them; to arrange their intercourse with a view to the finest offspring. So we *do* find the typical shepherd-metaphor themes of Oriental texts.

And what's the king's task in regard to all this? Like the shepherd, he is alone at the head of the city. But, for the rest, who provides mankind with food? The king? No. The farmer, the baker do. Who looks after men when they are sick? The king? No. The physician. And who guides them with music? The gymnast — not the king. And so, many citizens could quite legitimately claim the title 'shepherd of men'. Just as the human flock's shepherd has many rivals, so has the politician. Consequently, if we want to find out what the politician really and essentially is, we must sift it out from 'the surrounding flood', thereby demonstrating in what ways he *isn't* a shepherd.

Plato therefore resorts to the myth of the world revolving round its axis in two successive and contrary motions.

In a first phase, each animal species belonged to a flock led by a Genius-Shepherd. The human flock was led by the deity itself. It could lavishly avail itself of the fruits of the earth; it needed no abode; and after Death, men came back to life. A crucial sentence adds: "The deity being their shepherd, mankind needed no political constitution."

In a second phase, the world turned in the opposite direction. The gods were no longer men's shepherds; they had to look after themselves. For they had been given fire. What would the politician's role then be? Would *he* become the shepherd in the gods' stead? Not at all. His job was to weave a strong fabric for the city. Being a politician didn't mean feeding, nursing, and breeding offspring, but binding: binding different virtues; binding contrary temperaments (either impetuous or moderate), using the 'shuttle' of popular opinion. The royal art of ruling consisted in gathering lives together "into a community based upon concord and friendship,' and so he wove "the finest of fabrics." The entire population, "slaves and free men alike, were mantled in its folds."

The Statesman therefore seems to be classical antiquity's most systematic reflexion on the theme of the pastorate which was later to become so important in the Christian West. That we are

discussing it seems to prove that a perhaps initially Oriental theme was important enough in Plato's day to deserve investigation, but we stress the fact that it was impugned.

Not impugned entirely, however. Plato did admit that the physician, the farmer, the gymnast, and the pedagogue acted as shepherds. But he refused to get them involved with the politician's activity. He said so explicitly: how would the politician ever find the time to come and sit by each person, feed him, give him concerts, and care for him when sick? Only a god in a Golden Age could ever act like that; or again, like a physician or pedagogue, be responsible for the lives and development of a few individuals. But, situated between the two — the gods and the swains — the men who hold political power are not to be shepherds. Their task doesn't consist in fostering the life of a group of individuals. It consists in forming and assuring the city's unity. In short, the political problem is that of the relation between the one and the many in the framework of the city and its citizens. The pastoral problem concerns the lives of individuals.

All this seems very remote, perhaps. The reason for my insisting on these ancient texts is that they show us how early this problem — or rather, this series of problems — arose. They span the entirety of Western history. They are still highly important for contemporary society. They deal with the relations between political power at work within the state as a legal framework of unity, and a power we can call 'pastoral', whose role is to constantly ensure, sustain, and improve the lives of each and every one.

The well-known 'welfare state problem' does not only bring the needs or the new governmental techniques of today's world to light. It must be recognised for what it is: one of the extremely numerous reappearances of the tricky adjustment between political power wielded over legal subjects and pastoral power wielded over live individuals.

I have obviously no intention whatsoever of recounting the

evolution of pastoral power throughout Christianity. The immense problems this would raise can easily be imagined: from doctrinal problems, such as Christ's denomination as 'the good shepherd', right up to institutional ones, such as parochial organisation, or the way pastoral responsibilities were shared between priests and bishops.

All I want to do is bring to light two or three aspects I regard as important for the evolution of pastorship, i.e., the technology of power.

First of all, let us examine the theoretical elaboration of the theme in ancient Christian literature: Chrysostom, Cyprian, Ambrose, Jerome, and, for monastic life, Cassian or Benedict. The Hebrew themes are considerably altered in at least four ways:

1. First, with regard to responsibility. We saw that the shepherd was to assume responsibility for the destiny of the whole flock and of each and every sheep. In the Christian conception, the shepherd must render an account— not only of each sheep, but of all their actions, all the good or evil they are liable to do, all that happens to them.

Moreover, between each sheep and its shepherd Christianity conceives a complex exchange and circulation of sins and merits. The sheep's sin is also imputable to the shepherd. He'll have to render an account of it at the Last Judgement. Conversely, by helping his flock to find salvation, the shepherd will also find his own. But by saving his sheep, he lays himself open to getting lost; so if he wants to save himself, he must needs run the risk of losing himself for others. If he does get lost, it is the flock that will incur the greatest danger. But let's leave all these paradoxes aside. My aim was just to underline the force and complexity of the moral ties binding the shepherd to each member of his flock. And what I especially wanted to underline was that such ties not only concerned individuals' lives, but the details of their actions as well.

2. The second important alteration concerns the problem of

obedience. In the Hebrew conception, God being a shepherd, the flock following him complies to his will, to his law.

Christianity, on the other hand, conceived the shepherd–sheep relationship as one of individual and complete dependence. This is undoubtedly one of the points at which Christian pastorship radically diverged from Greek thought. If a Greek had to obey, he did so because it was the law, or the will of the city. If he did happen to follow the will of someone in particular (a physician, an orator, a pedagogue), then that person had rationally persuaded him to do so. And it had to be for a strictly determined aim: to be cured, to acquire a skill, to make the best choice.

In Christianity, the tie with the shepherd is an individual one. It is personal submission to him. His will is done, not because it is consistent with the law, and not just as far as it is consistent with it, but, principally, because it is his *will*. In Cassian's *Coenobiticul Institutions*, there are many edifying anecdotes in which the monk finds salvation by carrying out the absurdest of his superior's orders. Obedience is a virtue. This means that it is not, as for the Greeks, a provisional means to an end, but rather an end in itself. It is a permanent state; the sheep must permanently submit to their pastors: *subditi*. As Saint Benedict says, monks do not live according to their own free will; their wish is to be under the abbot's command: *ambulantes alieno iudicio et imperio*. Greek Christianity named this state of obedience *ἀπάθεια*. The evolution of the word's meaning is significant. In Greek philosophy, *ἀπάθεια* denotes the control that the individual, thanks to the exercise of reason, can exert over his passions. In Christian thought, *πάθος* is willpower exerted over oneself, for oneself. *Απάθεια* delivers us from such wilfulness.

3. Christian pastorship implies a peculiar type of knowledge between the pastor and each of his sheep.

This knowledge is particular. It individualizes. It isn't enough to know the state of the flock. That of each sheep must also be known. The theme existed long before there was Christian pastor-

ship, but it was considerably amplified in three different ways: the shepherd must be informed as to the material needs of each member of the flock and provide for them when necessary. He must know what is going on, what each of them does — his public sins. Last and not least, he must know what goes on in the soul of each one, that is, his secret sins, his progress on the road to sainthood.

In order to ensure this individual knowledge, Christianity appropriated two essential instruments at work in the Hellenistic world: self-examination and the guidance of conscience. It took them over, but not without altering them considerably.

It is well known that self-examination was widespread among the Pythagoreans, the Stoics, and the Epicureans as a means of daily taking stock of the good or evil performed in regard to one's duties. One's progress on the way to perfection, i.e., self-mastery and the domination of one's passions, could thus be measured. The guidance of conscience was also predominant in certain cultured circles, but as advice given — and sometimes paid for — in particularly difficult circumstances: in mourning, or when one was suffering a setback.

Christian pastorship closely associated these two practices. On one hand, conscience-guiding constituted a constant bind: the sheep didn't let itself be led only to come through any rough passage victoriously, it let itself be led every second. Being guided was a state and you were fatally lost if you tried to escape it. The ever-quoted phrase runs like this: he who suffers not guidance withers away like a dead leaf. As for self-examination, its aim was not to close self-awareness in upon itself, but to enable it to open up entirely to its director — to unveil to him the depths of the soul.

There are a great many first-century ascetic and monastic texts concerning the link between guidance and self-examination that show how crucial these techniques were for Christianity and how complex they had already become. What I would like to empha-

sis is that they delineate the emergence of a very strange phenomenon in Greco-Roman civilisation, that is, the organisation of a link between total obedience, knowledge of oneself, and confession to someone else.

4. There is another transformation— maybe the most important. All those Christian techniques of examination, confession, guidance, obedience, have an aim: to get individuals to work at their own ‘mortification’ in this world. Mortification is not death, of course, but it is a renunciation of this world and of oneself: a kind of everyday death. A death which is supposed to provide life in another world. This is not the first time we see the shepherd theme associated with death; but here it is other than in the Greek idea of political power. It is not a sacrifice for the city; Christian mortification is a kind of relation from oneself to oneself. It is a part, a constitutive part of the Christian self-identity.

We can say that Christian pastorship has introduced a game that neither the Greeks nor the Hebrews imagined. A strange game whose elements are life, death, truth, obedience, individuals, self-identity; a game which seems to have nothing to do with the game of the city surviving through the sacrifice of the citizens. Our societies proved to be really demonic since they happened to combine those two games—the city–citizen game and the shepherd–flock game—in what we call the modern states.

As you may notice, what I have been trying to do this evening is not to solve a problem but to suggest a way to approach a problem. This problem is similar to those I have been working on since my first book about insanity and mental illness. As I told you previously, this problem deals with the relations between experiences (like madness, illness, transgression of laws, sexuality, self-identity) knowledge (like psychiatry, medicine, criminology, sexology, psychology), and power (such as the power which is wielded in psychiatric and penal institutions, and in all other institutions which deal with individual control).

Our civilisation has developed the most complex system of

knowledge, the most sophisticated structures of power: what has this kind of knowledge, this type of power made of us? In what way are those fundamental experiences of madness, suffering, death, crime, desire, individuality connected, even if we are not aware of it, with knowledge and power? I am sure I'll never get the answer; but that does not mean that we don't have to ask the question.

II

I have tried to show how primitive Christianity shaped the idea of a pastoral influence continuously exerting itself on individuals and through the demonstration of their particular truth. And I have tried to show how this idea of pastoral power was foreign to Greek thought despite a certain number of borrowings such as practical self-examination and the guidance of conscience.

I would like at this time, leaping across many centuries, to describe another episode which has been in itself particularly important in the history of this government of individuals by their own verity.

This instance concerns the formation of the state in the modern sense of the word. If I make this historical connection it is obviously not in order to suggest that the aspect of pastoral power disappeared during the ten great centuries of Christian Europe, Catholic and Roman, but it seems to me that this period, contrary to what one might expect, has not been that of the triumphant pastorate. And that is true for several reasons: some are of an economic nature — the pastorate of souls is an especially urban experience, difficult to reconcile with the poor and extensive rural economy at the beginning of the Middle Ages. The other reasons are of a cultural nature: the pastorate is a complicated technique which demands a certain level of culture, not only on the part of the pastor but also among his flock. Other reasons relate to the sociopolitical structure. Feudality developed between individuals a tissue of personal bonds of an altogether different type than the pastorate.

I do not wish to say that the idea of a pastoral government of men disappeared entirely in the medieval church. It has, indeed, remained and one can even say that it has shown great vitality. Two series of facts tend to prove this. First, the reforms which had been made in the Church itself, especially in the monastic orders — the different reforms operating successively inside existing monasteries — had the goal of restoring the rigor of pastoral order among the monks themselves. As for the newly created orders — Dominican and Franciscan — essentially they proposed to perform pastoral work among the faithful. The Church tried ceaselessly during successive crises to regain its pastoral functions. But there is more. In the population itself one sees all during the Middle Ages the development of a long series of struggles whose object was pastoral power. Critics of the Church which fails in its obligations reject its hierarchical structure, look for the more or less spontaneous forms of community in which the flock could find the shepherd it needed. This search for pastoral expression took on numerous aspects, at times extremely violent struggles as was the case for the Vaudois, sometimes peaceful quests as among the Freres de la Vie community. Sometimes it stirred very extensive movements such as the Hussites, sometimes it fermented limited groups like the Amis de Dieu de l'Oberland. It happened that these movements were close to heresy, as among the Beghards, at times stirring orthodox movements which dwelt within the bosom of the Church (like that of the Italian Oratorians in the fifteenth century).

I raise all of this in a very allusive manner in order to emphasize that if the pastorate was not instituted as an effective, practical government of men during the Middle Ages, it has been a permanent concern and a stake in constant struggles. There was across the entire period of the Middle Ages a yearning to arrange pastoral relations among men and this aspiration affected both the mystical tide and the great millenarian dreams.

* * *

Of course, I don't intend to treat here the problem of how states are formed. Nor do I intend to go into the different economic, social, and political processes from which they stem. Neither do I want to analyse the different institutions or mechanisms with which states equipped themselves in order to ensure their survival. I'd just like to give some fragmentary indications as to something midway between the state as a type of political organisation and its mechanisms, viz., the type of rationality implemented in the exercise of state power.

I mentioned this in my first lecture. Rather than wonder whether aberrant state power is due to excessive rationalism or irrationalism, I think it would be more appropriate to pin down the specific type of political rationality the state produced.

After all, at least in this respect, political practices resemble scientific ones: it's not 'reason in general' that is implemented, but always a very specific type of rationality.

The striking thing is that the rationality of state power was reflective and perfectly aware of its specificity. It was not tucked away in spontaneous, blind practices. It was not brought to light by some retrospective analysis. It was formulated especially in two sets of doctrine: the *reason of state* and the *theory of police*. These two phrases soon acquired narrow and pejorative meanings, I know. But for the 150 or 200 years during which modern states were formed, their meaning was much broader than now.

The doctrine of reason of state attempted to define how the principles and methods of state government differed, say, from the way God governed the world, the father his family, or a superior his community.

The doctrine of the police defines the nature of the objects of the state's rational activity; it defines the nature of the aims it pursues, the general form of the instruments involved.

So, what I'd like to speak about today is the system of rationality. But first, there are two preliminaries: (1) Meinecke having published a most important book on reason of state, I'll speak

mainly of the policing theory. (2) Germany and Italy underwent the greatest difficulties in getting established as states, and they produced the greatest number of reflexions on reason of state and the police. I'll often refer to the Italian and German texts.

* * *

Let's begin with *reason of state*. Here are a few definitions:

BOTERO: "A perfect knowledge of the means through which states form, strengthen themselves, endure, and grow."

PALAZZO (*Discourse on Government and True Reason of State*, 1606): "A rule or art enabling us to discover how to establish peace and order within the Republic."

CHEMNITZ (*De Ratione Status*, 1647): "A certain political consideration required for all public matters, councils, and projects, whose only aim is the state's preservation, expansion, and felicity; to which end, the easiest and promptest means are to be employed."

Let me consider certain features these definitions have in common.

1. Reason of state is regarded as an 'art', that is, a technique conforming to certain rules. These rules do not simply pertain to customs or traditions, but to knowledge — rational knowledge. Nowadays, the expression *reason of state* evokes 'arbitrariness' or 'violence'. But at the time, what people had in mind was a rationality specific to the art of governing states.

2. From where does this specific art of government draw its rationale? The answer to this question provokes the scandal of nascent political thought. And yet it's very simple: the art of governing is rational, if reflexion causes it to observe the nature of what is governed — here, the *state*.

Now, to state such a platitude is to break with a simultaneously Christian and judiciary tradition, a tradition which claimed that government was essentially just. It respected a whole system of laws: human laws; the law of nature; divine law.

There is a quite significant text by St. Thomas on these points. He recalls that “art, in its field, must imitate what nature carries out in its own”; it is only reasonable under that condition. The king’s government of his kingdom must imitate God’s government of nature; or again, the soul’s government of the body. The king must found cities just as God created the world; just as the soul gives form to the body. The king must also lead men towards their finality, just as God does for natural beings, or as the soul does, when directing the body. And what is man’s finality? What’s good for the body? No; he’d need only a physician, not a king. Wealth? No; a steward would suffice. Truth? Not even that; for only a teacher would be needed. Man needs someone capable of opening up the way to heavenly bliss through his conformity, here on earth, to what is *honesturn*.

As we can see, the model for the art of government is that of God imposing his laws upon his creatures. St. Thomas’s model for rational government is not a political one, whereas what the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seek under the denomination ‘reason of state’ are principles capable of guiding an actual government. They aren’t concerned with nature and its laws in general. They’re concerned with what the state is; what its exigencies are.

And so we can understand the religious scandal aroused by such a type of research. It explains why reason of state was assimilated to atheism. In France, in particular, the expression generated in a political context was commonly associated with ‘atheist’.

3. Reason of state is also opposed to another tradition. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli’s problem is to decide how a province or territory acquired through inheritance or by conquest can be held against its internal or external rivals. Machiavelli’s entire analysis is aimed at defining what keeps up or reinforces the link between prince and state, whereas the problem posed by reason of state is that of the very existence and nature of the state itself. This is

why the theoreticians of reason of state tried to stay aloof from Machiavelli; he had a bad reputation and they couldn't recognize their own problem in his. Conversely, those opposed to reason of state tried to impair this new art of governing, denouncing it as Machiavelli's legacy. However, despite these confused quarrels a century after *The Prince* had been written, *reason of state* marks the emergence of an extremely — albeit only partly — different type of rationality from Machiavelli's.

The aim of such an art of governing is precisely not to reinforce the power a prince can wield over his domain. Its aim is to reinforce the state itself. This is one of the most characteristic features of all the definitions that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries put forward. Rational government is this, so to speak: given the nature of the state, it can hold down its enemies for an indeterminate length of time. It can only do so if it increases its own strength. And its enemies do likewise. The state whose only concern would be to hold out would most certainly come to disaster. This idea is a very important one. It is bound up with a new historical outlook. Indeed, it implies that states are realities which must needs hold out for an indefinite length of historical time — and in a disputed geographical area.

4. Finally, we can see that reason of state, understood as rational government able to increase the state's strength in accordance with itself presupposes the constitution of a certain type of knowledge. Government is only possible if the strength of the state is known; it can thus be sustained. The state's capacity, and the means to enlarge it, must be known. The strength and capacities of the other states must also be known. Indeed, the governed state must hold out against the others. Government therefore entails more than just implementing general principles of reason, wisdom, and prudence. Knowledge is necessary; concrete, precise, and measured knowledge as to the state's strength. The art of governing, characteristic of reason of state, is intimately bound up with the development of what was then called either political

statistics, or *arithmetic*; that is, the knowledge of different states' respective forces. Such knowledge was indispensable for correct government.

Briefly speaking, then: reason of state is not an art of government according to divine, natural, or human laws. It doesn't have to respect the general order of the world. It's government in accordance with the state's strength. It's government whose aim is to increase this strength within an extensive and competitive framework.

* * *

So what the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century authors understand by 'the police' is very different from what we put under the term. It would be worth studying why these authors are mostly Italians and Germans, but whatever! What they understand by 'police' isn't an institution or mechanism functioning within the state, but a governmental technology peculiar to the state; domains, techniques, targets where the state intervenes.

To be clear and simple, I will exemplify what I'm saying with a text which is both utopian and a project. It's one of the first utopia-programmes for a policed state. Turquet de Mayenne drew it up and presented it in 1611 to the Dutch States General. In his book *Science in the Government of Louis XIV*, J. King draws attention to the importance of this strange work. Its title is *Aristo-Democratic Monarchy*; that's enough to show what is important in the author's eyes: not so much choosing between these different types of constitution as their mixture in view to a vital end, viz., the state. Turquet also calls it the City, the Republic, or yet again, the Police.

Here is the organisation Turquet proposes. Four grand officials rank beside the king. One is in charge of Justice; another, of the Army; the third, of the Exchequer, i.e., the king's taxes and revenues; the fourth is in charge of the *police*. It seems that this officer's role was to have been mainly a moral one. According to Turquet, he was to foster among the people "modesty, charity,

loyalty, industriousness, friendly cooperation, honesty.” We recognize the traditional idea that the subject’s virtue ensures the kingdom’s good management. But, when we come down to the details, the outlook is somewhat different.

Turquet suggests that in each province, there should be boards keeping law and order. There should be two that see to people; the other two see to things. The first board, the one pertaining to people, was to see to the positive, active, productive aspects of life. In other words, it was concerned with education; determining each one’s tastes and aptitudes; the choosing of occupations — useful ones: each person over the age of twenty-five had to be enrolled on a register noting his occupation. Those not usefully employed were regarded as the dregs of society.

The second board was to see to the negative aspects of life: the poor (widows, orphans, the aged) requiring help; the unemployed; those whose activities required financial aid (no interest was to be charged); public health: diseases, epidemics; and accidents such as fire and flood.

One of the boards concerned with things was to specialise in commodities and manufactured goods. It was to indicate what was to be produced, and how; it was also to control markets and trading. The fourth board would see to the ‘demesne’, i.e., the territory, space: private property, legacies, donations, sales were to be controlled; manorial rights were to be reformed; roads, rivers, public buildings, and forests would also be seen to.

In many features, the text is akin to the political utopias which were so numerous at the time. But it is also contemporary with the great theoretical discussions on reason of state and the administrative organisation of monarchies. It is highly representative of what the epoch considered a traditionally governed state’s tasks to be.

What does this text demonstrate?

1. The ‘police’ appears as an administration heading the state, together with the judiciary, the army, and the exchequer. True.

Yet in fact, it embraces everything else. Turquet says so: “It branches out into all of the people’s conditions, everything they do or undertake. Its field comprises justice, finance, and the army.”

2. The *police* includes everything. But from an extremely particular point of view. Men and things are envisioned as to their relationships: men’s coexistence on a territory; their relationships as to property; what they produce; what is exchanged on the market. It also considers how they live, the diseases and accidents which can befall them. What the police sees to is a live, active, productive man. Turquet employs a remarkable expression: “The police’s true object is man.”

3. Such intervention in men’s activities could well be qualified as totalitarian. What are the aims pursued? They fall into two categories. First, the police has to do with everything providing the city with adornment, form, and splendour. Splendour denotes not only the beauty of a state ordered to perfection; but also its strength, its vigour. The police therefore ensures and highlights the state’s vigour. Second, the police’s other purpose is to foster working and trading relations between men, as well as aid and mutual help. There again, the word Turquet uses is important: the police must ensure ‘communication’ among men, in the broad sense of the word. Otherwise, men wouldn’t be able to live; or their lives would be precarious, poverty-stricken, and perpetually threatened.

And here, we can make out what is, I think, an important idea. As a form of rational intervention wielding political power over men, the role of the police is to supply them with a little extra life; and by so doing, supply the state with a little extra strength. This is done by controlling ‘communication’, i.e., the common activities of individuals (work, production, exchange, accommodation).

You’ll object: but that’s only the utopia of some obscure author. You can hardly deduce any significant consequences from it! But *I* say: Turquet’s book is but one example of a huge

literature circulating in most European countries of the day. The fact that it is over-simple and yet very detailed brings out all the better the characteristics that could be recognized elsewhere. Above all, I'd say that such ideas were not stillborn. They spread all through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, either as applied policies (such as cameralism or mercantilism), or as subjects to be taught (the German *Polizeiwissenschaft*; don't let's forget that this was the title under which the science of administration was taught in Germany).

These are the two perspectives that I'd like, not to study, but at least to suggest. First I'll refer to a French administrative compendium, then to a German textbook.

1. Every historian knows Delamare's *Compendium*. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, this administrator undertook the compilation of the whole kingdom's police regulations. It's an infinite source of highly valuable information. The general conception of the police that such a quantity of rules and regulations could convey to an administrator like Delamare is what I'd like to emphasise.

Delamare says that the police must see to eleven things within the state: (1) religion; (2) morals; (3) health; (4) supplies; (5) roads, highways, town buildings; (6) public safety; (7) the liberal arts (roughly speaking, arts and science); (8) trade; (9) factories; (10) manservants and labourers; (11) the poor.

The same classification features in every treatise concerning the police. As in Turquet's utopia programme, apart from the army, justice properly speaking, and direct taxes, the police apparently sees to everything. The same thing can be said differently: Royal power had asserted itself against feudalism thanks to the support of an armed force and by developing a judicial system and establishing a tax system. These were the ways in which royal power was traditionally wielded. Now, 'the police' is the term covering the whole new field in which centralised political and administrative power can intervene.

Now, what is the logic behind intervention in cultural rites, small-scale production techniques, intellectual life, and the road network?

Delamare's answer seems a bit hesitant. Now he says, "The police sees to everything pertaining to men's *happiness*"; now he says, "The police sees to everything regulating '*society*' (social relations) carried on between men." Now again, he says that the police sees to *living*. This is the definition I will dwell upon. It's the most original and it clarifies the other two; and Delamare himself dwells upon it. He makes the following remarks as to the police's eleven objects. The police deals with religion, not, of course, from the point of view of dogmatic truth, but from that of the moral quality of life. In seeing to health and supplies, it deals with the preservation of life; concerning trade, factories, workers, the poor and public order, it deals with the conveniences of life. In seeing to the theatre, literature, entertainment, its object is life's pleasures. In short, life is the object of the police: the indispensable, the useful, and the superfluous. That people survive, live, and even do better than just that, is what the police has to ensure.

And so we link up with the other definitions Delamare proposes: "The sole purpose of the police is to lead man to the utmost happiness to be enjoyed in this life." Or again, the police cares for the good of the soul (thanks to religion and morality), the good of the body (food, health, clothing, housing), wealth (industry, trade, labour). Or again, the police sees to the benefits that can be derived only from living in society.

2. Now let us have a look at the German textbooks. They were used to teach the science of administration somewhat later on. It was taught in various universities, especially in Gottingen, and was extremely important for continental Europe. Here it was that the Prussian, Austrian, and Russian civil servants — those who were to carry out Joseph II's and the Great Catherine's reforms — were trained. Certain Frenchmen, especially in Napoleon's entourage, knew the teachings of *Polizeiwissenschaft* very well.

What was to be found in these textbooks?

Huhenthal's *Liber de Politia* featured the following items: the number of citizens; religion and morals; health; food; the safety of persons and of goods (particularly in reference to fires and floods); the administration of justice; citizens' conveniences and pleasures (how to obtain them, how to restrict them). Then comes a series of chapters about rivers, forests, mines, brine pits, housing, and finally, several chapters on how to acquire goods either through farming, industry, or trade.

In his *Precis for the Police*, Willebrand speaks successively of morals, trades and crafts, health, safety, and last of all, of town building and planning. Considering the subjects at least, there isn't a great deal of difference from Delamare's.

But the most important of these texts is Von Justi's *Elements of Police*. The police's specific purpose is still defined as live individuals living in society. Nevertheless, the way Von Justi organises his book is somewhat different. He studies first what he calls the 'state's landed property', i.e., its territory. He considers it in two different aspects: how it is inhabited (town vs. country), and then, who inhabit these territories (the number of people, their growth, health, mortality, immigration). Von Justi then analyses the 'goods and chattels', i.e., the commodities, manufactured goods, and their circulation which involve problems pertaining to cost, credit, and currency. Finally, the last part is devoted to the conduct of individuals: their morals, their occupational capabilities, their honesty, and how they respect the Law.

In my opinion, Von Justi's work is a much more advanced demonstration of how the police problem was evolved than Delamare's 'Introduction' to his compendium of statutes. There are four reasons for this.

First, Von Justi defines much more clearly what the central paradox of *police* is. The police, he says, is what enables the state to increase its power and exert its strength to the full. On the other hand, the police has to keep the citizens happy — happiness

being understood as survival, life, and improved living. He perfectly defines what I feel to be the aim of the modern art of government, or state rationality: viz., to develop those elements constitutive of individuals' lives in such a way that their development also fosters that of the strength of the state.

Von Justi then draws a distinction between this task, which he calls *Polizei*, as do his contemporaries, and *Politik*, *Die Politik*. *Die Politik* is basically a negative task. It consists in the state's fighting against its internal and external enemies. *Polizei*, however, is a positive task: it has to foster both citizens' lives *and* the state's strength.

And here is the important point: Von Justi insists much more than does Delamare on a notion which became increasingly important during the eighteenth century — population. Population was understood as a group of live individuals. Their characteristics were those of all the individuals belonging to the same species, living side by side. (They thus presented mortality and fecundity rates; they were subject to epidemics, overpopulation; they presented a certain type of territorial distribution.) True, Delamare did use the term 'life' to characterise the concern of the police, but the emphasis he gave it wasn't very pronounced. Proceeding through the eighteenth century, and especially in Germany, we see that what is defined as the object of the police is population, i.e., a group of beings living in a given area.

And last, one only has to read Von Justi to see that it is not only a utopia, as with Turquet, nor a compendium of systematically filed regulations. Von Justi claims to draw up a *Polizei-wissenschaft*. His book isn't simply a list of prescriptions. It's also a grid through which the state, i.e., territory, resources, population, towns, etc., can be observed. Von Justi combines 'statistics' (the description of states) with the art of government. *Polizei-wissenschaft* is at once an art of government and a method for the analysis of a population living on a territory.

Such historical considerations must appear to be very remote;

they must seem useless in regard to present-day concerns. I wouldn't go as far as Hermann Hesse, who says that only the "constant reference to history, the past, and antiquity" is fecund. But experience has taught me that the history of various forms of rationality is sometimes more effective in unsettling our certitudes and dogmatism than is abstract criticism. For centuries, religion couldn't bear having its history told. Today, our schools of rationality balk at having their history written, which is no doubt significant.

What I've wanted to show is a direction for research. These are only the rudiments of something I've been working at for the last two years. It's the historical analysis of what we could call, using an obsolete term, the art of government.

This study rests upon several basic assumptions. I'd sum them up like this:

1. Power is not a substance. Neither is it a mysterious property whose origin must be delved into. Power is only a certain type of relation between individuals. Such relations are specific, that is, they have nothing to do with exchange, production, communication, even though they combine with them. The characteristic feature of power is that some men can more or less entirely determine other men's conduct — but never exhaustively or coercively. A man who is chained up and beaten is subject to force being exerted over him. Not power. But if he can be induced to speak, when his ultimate recourse could have been to hold his tongue, preferring death, then he has been caused to behave in a certain way. His freedom has been subjected to power. He has been submitted to government. If an individual can remain free, however little his freedom may be, power can subject him to government. There is no power without potential refusal or revolt.

2. As for all relations among men, many factors determine power. Yet rationalisation is also constantly working away at it. There are specific forms to such rationalisation. It differs from the rationalisation peculiar to economic processes, or to production

and communication techniques; it differs from that of scientific discourse. The government of men by men — whether they form small or large groups, whether it is power exerted by men over women, or by adults over children, or by one class over another, or by a bureaucracy over a population — involves a certain type of rationality. It doesn't involve instrumental violence.

3. Consequently, those who resist or rebel against a form of power cannot merely be content to denounce violence or criticise an institution. Nor is it enough to cast the blame on reason in general. What has to be questioned is the form of rationality at stake. The criticism of power wielded over the mentally sick or mad cannot be restricted to psychiatric institutions; nor can those questioning the power to punish be content with denouncing prisons as total institutions. The question is: how are such relations of power rationalized? Asking it is the only way to avoid other institutions, with the same objectives and the same effects, from taking their stead.

4. For several centuries, the state has been one of the most remarkable, one of the most redoubtable, forms of human government.

Very significantly, political criticism has reproached the state with being simultaneously a factor for individualisation and a totalitarian principle. Just to look at nascent state rationality, just to see what its first policing project was, makes it clear that, right from the start, the state is both individualising and totalitarian. Opposing the individual and his interests to it is just as hazardous as opposing it with the community and its requirements.

Political rationality has grown and imposed itself all throughout the history of Western societies. It first took its stand on the idea of pastoral power, then on that of reason of state. Its inevitable effects are both individualisation and totalisation. Liberation can only come from attacking, not just one of these two effects, but political rationality's very roots.