

Order of Things II

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In this lecture I rely heavily on Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge UP, 1989)

Structure of OT

We should recall that the goal of OT is an "archaeology of the human sciences." As we recall, F first briefly covered the Renaissance episteme, and then the Classical episteme and three empirical sciences. Now, to finally reach the human sciences, F must explain the modern episteme, as well as two of its three realms of knowledge: 1) the empirical sciences of biology (succeeding natural history as a science of life); economics (succeeding analysis of wealth as a science of labor) and philology (succeeding general grammar as a science of language); and 2) philosophical reflection, which he will call the "analytic of finitude." The third realm, formal sciences (math and physics) is mentioned only in passing. As we see, OT is an attempt at a *tour de force*: the conditions of possibility of modern knowledge (science and philosophy) all in one book!

The Modern Episteme

Order: historical forces producing organic structures

The basic shift here is from ideal essences transparently represented in a table laying them out in continuous series according to identity and difference (Classical) to discrete organic structures related by functional analogies and temporal succession (Modern). Things become the ever-changing but temporarily stable product of historical forces rather than the instantiations of ideal forms. The modern age is the age of the overthrow of Platonism.

Signs: Failure of representation

Representation is no longer the being of thought, the unquestioned principle of all cognitive ability; rather it must be grounded (accounted for in another realm) by something else. Instead of being the way humans relate to the world, representation as a human capacity must be explained, must become an object rather than being the very mode of subjectivity. Kant is the emblem here ("Ideology and Critique"); more later.

Language: Impure medium of knowledge

Language moves from being the transparent representation of the ideal order of things (*Les mots et les choses*) to being a problem, a central issue for thought, the impure medium of knowledge. See "Language become object" at 294-300. Modern thought has tried either 1) to purify language via formalization, as in either a) positivist constructions of ideal languages or b) symbolic logics (Russell); or 2) to critically interpret language, to bring out its implicit meanings (Freud). In a typical Foucaultian attempt at a *tour de force*, F shows that archaeologically phenomenology and structuralism occupy a common ground as they criss-cross formalism and the interpretation of unconscious meaning (299): phen tries to express implicit structures of meaningful experience in precise, scientific language while structuralism tries to specify the pure forms of the unconscious.

Literature: compensation for language's "demotion"

The third and last "compensation" for language's modern "demotion" is modern literature, the discovery of "literature as such" (300). It's not that Dante or Homer didn't exist, but that a certain type of self-conscious literature appears, "existing wholly in reference to the pure act of writing." F cites the "radical intransitivity" of lang as lit: lang that doesn't refer to the world, but to itself. Cf. Blanchot and *The Space of Literature*: lit as lang "falling out of work" i.e., resisting Hegelian spiritual sense-making. See also Heidegger in this regard, all the way back to the "Origin of the Work of Art." Here lang is something like

Ren lang: an opaque part of the world (but w/o reference to God). At 44, F mentions "Holderlin, Mallarme, Artaud" as modern lit writers. This is a mid-60s French phil obsession: Derrida will write on this conception of literature as self-referential a lot, most notably in *Dissemination* (Mallarme and Sollers).

Knowledge: fragmentation into 3 realms

In the "Three faces of knowledge" section (344-48), F shows the fragmentation of modern knowledge. From being merely different forms of a homogenous "general science of order," simply tables of identities and differences of different regions, knowledge becomes a "volume of space open in 3 dimensions" (347): 1) formal: math and physics: deductive and linear presentation of evident or verified propositions; 2) empirical: biology, economics, philology: relating discontinuous but analogous elements to show causal relations (in time) and structural constants. These two are the domain of the mathematicizable in life, labor, language. 3) philosophical reflection: "thought of the Same": along the empirical plane it is philosophy of life (biology: Nietzsche), alienated man (political economy: Marx), and symbolic form (cultural expression: Freud); along the mathematical plane it is formalization (logic: Russell).

Transitional Figures

F represents the transition to modernity as happening in two steps. In the first, 1795-1800, a major figure in each field establishes a new (historical, organic) concept, but still expresses its meaning in terms of representation, the Classical era's key term. F puts it like this: the fundamental positivity (double representation) remains the same, but their "configuration," their internal relations, changes.

Smith, Lamarck, Jones

In economics, Adam Smith is the transitional figure, for he pointed to labor as the absolute measure of value of a commodity. The Classical age looked to value of commodities as represented by money or the equivalent amount of goods that could be exchanged for it. Further, Smith broke with the Classical analysis of labor in terms of the needs and desires for goods that necessitated a certain amount of labor. Here the desire is primary; it motivates exchange and determines labor. But for Smith, labor is the fundamental measure of value, not desire. But this is as far as Smith goes; it is left up to Ricardo to posit labor as the source of value.

In biology, the transitional figure is Lamarck (F also mentions Jussieu and Vicq d'Azyr), who posits organic structure as the fundamental means of determining character, which as we recall was the essential nature of a thing, usually arrived at by analyzing structure (spatial form). Whereas Lamarck broke with the fundamental visibility of Classical natural history, he still kept the notion of character as representation of place of a species in a table of identities and differences.

In philology, the transitional figure is William Jones, who posits inflection as a fundamental category: they are the ones that stay the same in comparative studies, rather than roots. Here the change is slower, due according to F, to the fundamental role of language in the Classical episteme.

Kant

Kant is the figure marking the philosophical transition to modernity for F. In the "Ideology and Criticism" section (236-43), he shows how the movement in knowledge of the transitional figures is the move through representation to its ground outside itself (in life, labor, language). Representation has now "lost the power to provide a foundation -- with its own being ... -- for the links that can join its various elements together" (238-9). In other words, representation, which works by identity and difference, can no longer be grounded by a mere analysis of the identity and difference of types of representations, as the "Ideologues" like Destutt de Tracy tried to do. Ideology studies the relation of representations to each other: it is a table of tables, a knowledge of knowledge. Instead, Kantian critique (the move to a ground of representation in the structure of the human subject) is the modern move. Kant studies the conditions of representation: what makes representation valid (or not): categorial-temporal synthesis (understanding) of temporal-spatial sensation (intuition). This is the T Aesthetic and Analytic; the T Dialectic studies what happens when this fundamental condition is evaded and categories are applied to mere Ideas (God,

World, Soul), which are supposed only to guide empirical research as regulative ideals, as mere heuristic presuppositions of the wholeness and systematicity of nature.

In the "Objective Syntheses" section (243-49) F shows a fundamental triangle in modern philosophy as beginning with Kant: 1) criticism: studies of transcendental subjectivity (Kant: the way in which the knowing subject determines the formal conditions of experience); 2) metaphysics: studies of "transcendental objectivity" (Schopenhauer: studying the "transcendentals" of life, labor, language, the objective and material conditions of human existence and hence experience; 3) positivism: the study of what is given in positive knowledge (Comte). Contrary to what some have claimed, 2 and 3 are not regressions to pre-critical (Classical) thought, but are reactions to the transcendental turn of Kant and are hence fundamentally modern modes of thought.

The New Empirical Sciences

The new empirical sciences study human conditions of life, labor, language. These are also taken up by the human sciences, but F will not discuss them until after his trip through modern philosophy. Before that, a brief treatment of the new empirical sciences.

Economics: Ricardo/Marx

The break here is Ricardo, who posits labor as source, not just measure, of value. This has three fundamental consequences: 1) economic history is linear causality; 2) economic man is a finite being struggling in a hostile world; 3) economic history is apocalyptic (putting 1 and 2 together). Ricardo reads this pessimistically; Marx optimistically.

F's reading of Marx in OT was very controversial. In his *tour de force* mode, he tries to locate Marx's political economy in 19th C episteme: "like fish in water." No fundamental break w/ Marx; controversies are mere ripples in wading pool. [methodology note: archaeology shows deep similarities under surface differences {w/in an episteme} and deep differences under surface identities {between epistemes}]. This infuriated Sartre, for whom, famously, Marxism was an insurpassable horizon. F will later admit that Marx's conception of politics and history (as class struggle) was indeed a novel break. There's a lot to talk about here, regarding the limitations of archaeology and the limitations of Marx; taking Marx's writings as a "toolbox" for instance gives a different relation of theory and practice and allows for an "eschatological" rather than "apocalyptic" Marx.

Biology: Cuvier/Darwin

Another archaeological *tour de force* here. Cuvier is the decisive break; by positing organic structure as prior to taxonomy, Cuvier could relate functions rather than properties (size, shape, location, etc) of organs; thus life becomes functional system and a science of life, modern biology, is possible. Three consequences here as well: 1) discontinuous forms; 2) connection w/ environment; 3) temporality. The last is the key to F's claim that Cuvier is the modern and Lamarck the Classicist, even though Cuvier is a "fixist" and Lamarck a thinker of change and development. However, for Lamarck, species developed along predetermined lines in a continuous process; for Cuvier, species fixism is a consequence of the stability of historical forces. F draws the parallel with Ricardo and Marx, who both share historicity, but give it different interpretations. Similarly with Cuvier and Darwin.

Philology: Bopp

Modern philology sees words not as simply as representations, but as having representative power solely by being elements in a grammatical system defined by rules governing their use. F locates four changes here: 1) modern philology focuses on formal features of grammar systems as ways of distinguishing languages; and 2) as its primary object of study; 3) philology focuses on roots as elements of a system and as verbs, hence as expressions of action and volition rather than attempts to know (the politics of philology: the people as basis of language rather than elites); 4) history of languages as key to determining relations.

Modern Philosophy: the analytic of finitude

Here is the site of much smoke and noise in the reception of OT: the claim that "man" is a modern invention, perhaps soon to disappear. At the risk of belaboring the obvious, "man" for F in OT means "humans insofar as they are the subject-object of representations." This only becomes possible after the end of the Classical period, as we have seen, since representation could not be represented by it. Hence the modernity of "man."

Now the empirical sciences are precisely the ways in which the representational powers of man can be objectively studied as products of life, labor, and language (conditioned man from the outside). But man is also the subject of representations: he produces them and makes sense of the world. Man as representational subject is studied by both modern philosophy (conditioned man and represented world from the inside) and by the human sciences (conditioned man and represented world from the outside).

Modern philosophy begins with Kant: the limits of knowledge become the conditions of possibility of knowledge. This is the analytic of finitude: man's finitude providing the foundation of his knowledge. F's terms: finitude as founding = the fundamental; as founded = the positive (315). The relation will be repetition as play of identity and difference in the Same. Again, a mid-60s French philosophy *topos*, as in Derrida and Deleuze.

For F, modern philosophy has three figures to discuss this repetition: 1) as transcendental subject to empirical object; 2) as thinking subject (*cogito*) to what is unthought; 3) as return of origin to present and retreat of origin into past. The discussion in each section is hyper-abstract and requires for its decipherment 1) a broad and deep knowledge of modern philosophy; 2) the ability to follow F's allusions; 3) faith that such an attempt at tracing the fundamental "closure" of modern philosophy is either possible or plausible or fruitful.

I say we skip the details as unsuited for this class and remember only what F is trying to do: 1) trace the systematic limits of modern philosophy; 2) suggest that Nietzsche's pronouncement of the death of God is also the death of man and perhaps the sign that the system is exhausted and that another thought might now be possible. These notions of the "end of philosophy" and Nietzsche's fundamental alterity to modern philosophy are both mid-60s French themes: the first is a Hegelian [Kojève] and/or Heideggerian theme, the second a Deleuzian reaction to Heidegger's attempt to read Nietzsche as the sign of the exhaustion of modern philosophy [for H, itself the tail end of the narrative of decline of Western philosophy since either Plato [history of Being as *Geschichte*]--or as coming full circle of eclipse of Being and Dasein's errancy seen as structural elements of the sending [*Geschick*] of Being).

Methodologically, it's only this imminent end of the modern episteme (but has it happened?) that enables F to write this part of OT. If historical difference is necessary to do archaeology, what distance does F have in order to write the archaeology of modern philosophy?

The Human Sciences

Finally we get there! The human sciences objectively study man's subjectivity: what are the conditions for conditioned man to represent his conditions to himself (352). Thus psychology will study the ways a living being, man, will represent his life to himself; sociology will study the way a laboring being, man, will represent his social labor to himself; literary analysis will study the way a linguistic being, man, will represent his culture to himself. The difference between the human sciences and modern philosophy comes from the location of these "representations": philosophy studies them from the inside of lived experience; the human sciences studies them as unconscious structures that condition lived experience. The human sciences, in fact, connect empirical sciences to the analytic of finitude (354).

F lays out three constituent models (355ff): 1) biological: function and norm; 2) economic: conflict and rule; 3) philological: meaning [*signification*] and system. These are primarily associated with psychology, sociology, and literary analysis respectively, but they are mobile and interlocking, which produces all sorts of controversy, of which F isolates two: 1) methodological: genetic [diachronic biological model] vs.

structural [synchronic economic and cultural]; 2) goal: understanding [philological-cultural] vs. explanation [biological-economic].

The history of the human sciences (359) can be written by focusing on predominance of models: 1) biological (Romantics); 2) economic (Marx); 3) philological (Freud). In each of the sciences there has also been a shift from basic elements (functions, conflicts, or meanings--the empiricities) to organizing principles (norms, rules, systems--the forms of finitude); in psychology this occurs with Goldstein; sociology, Mauss; culture, Dumezil (360). This shift eliminates the "dichotomy of values" previously held between positive (normal, rational, meaningful) and negative (pathological, irrational, meaningless) within each science; now "everything" can be thought, that is, included w/in the same system. This is a fundamental advance, figured by Freud.

The key to the human sciences is their breaking the philosophical link of representation and consciousness (361). They do so, however, w/o escaping "the law of representation." They bring unconscious structures to representation: they explain how life, labor, language are unconsciously represented by psychological, social, and cultural man. They explain how function, conflict and meaning are structured by norm, rule, and system so that man represents to himself the forces that determine him as object. The human sciences "treat as object what is in fact their condition of possibility" in a "quasi-transcendental unveiling" (364). But this success is that of knowledge, not that of science (366); they are in the vicinity of the sciences, borrowing their models from them, but their epistemic position forbids them that title. But this is not a negativity; the human sciences have their own positivity.

History and the Countersciences

The conclusion to OT considers history and three countersciences: psychoanalysis, ethnology (social anthropology); linguistics. History limits the application of the human sciences: fundamentally historical man is a changeable object, and so is each human science itself. As regards the countersciences, while the human sciences study unconscious representations, the countersciences study the unconscious directly. Psychoanalysis studies the general conditions of possibility of unconscious representations. F seems to be thinking of Lacan here: Death, Desire, and Law are the metapsychological foundations of representing life, labor, and language. Ethnology, on the other hand, studies the conditions of possibility of specific cultural representations, the precise form of norm, rule and system by which a culture regulates functions, conflicts, and meanings. They are countersciences because they dethrone man; they do not start with man as the subject-object of representations. Linguistics, were it to develop as science of formal sign systems, would link psychoanalysis and ethnology and complete the task of dethroning "man," for language would finally leave representation behind and concentrate on language in its pure formality as self-referential signification.