

Discourse of War: Analysis of Bosnian War through Michel Foucault's Work Society Must Be Defended

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Abstract

Foucault says that political power stops the war, bringing not justice and equilibrium, but shifting the power in to institutions, language and so on. Such was the way with Dayton Agreement in November of 1995. Of course Foucault was talking about the political power of one state, law and policies of the same state, which are continuing to inscribe all the relationships. Power has a character of "passing through" and it circulates political activity. But with Dayton Agreement that brought end of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) political power was from the outside, namely USA.

And while the end of war certainly meant end of battlefield activities, the war between the political interests of three different people is continued to be waged. B&H is politically complex country, because it's not the political interest of one nation (B&H) that rules the domestic or international policies it makes, but rather interests of three peoples. Rather than having a developed sense of nation, the identity of B&H's citizens is in a lot of ways decided by belonging to a group of people. This is further inscribed in to institutions, education, language where one is presented with a choice of Bosniak, Serb, and Croatian. And this is where the political war continues and is perfect example to the Foucault's inversion of Clausewitz's parole: "war is the continuation of politics by other means". These choices are forms of normalization.

The historical very much rules the political in this part of the word, and I will seek to show just which discourses have influenced nationalism and state racism in Balkans by analyzing Bosnian War through Foucault's philosophy.

Using the discourse of sovereignty as product of war and conquest Foucault turns away from the question of right to the question of domination. This domination is represented in power to normalize and act against those who defy the norm thus self-perpetuating this power through the institutions. In this sense it is destruction of 'Other' in complete way. This is a discourse of

Nation. I think we can analyze Bosnian War through it, in a sense of having threatening elements which question survival of the nation and which have led to genocide in this case.

Finally I will briefly touch upon the concept of positive peace by Tim Murithy and Tanabe Hajime's concept of individual in opposition to the state.

With abrupt termination of the war, peace building is a difficult task. Going from the peace in negative sense (absence of war) as Tim Murithi describes in his book "The Ethics of Peacebuilding" to a positive sense of peace which promotes "reconciliation and coexistence on the basis of human rights and social, economic and political justice" is a difficult task when the everyday is dominated by "race struggle" as Foucault called it. In my opinion going through this task can be read as Foucault's concept of local critique.

Tanabe's idea of historical subject is very much similar to Foucault's but the interesting concept is that of individual in opposition to the State as the starting point of freedom for the subject.

Foucault's main interest was analyzing power through historical discourse and biopolitics, not the ideal philosophical subject or theory of sovereignty. In this paper I try to do the same using Bosnian War, just as Foucault used wars which happened in France and England from Roman period to 20th century state to explain idea of discourse of war.