


Derrida, Foucault, Agamben, and the Thinking of the Beginning

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 10.58048/2263-7664/3711

Derrida 2021 - Biopolitique et déconstruction

Biopolitique (biopouvoir, biohistoire) : c'est là une notion de Foucault que Derrida aborde indirectement en prenant Agamben pour cible de substitution. En premier lieu, Foucault lui-même semble bien avoir cessé de s'exprimer en ces termes après 1978 et *La naissance de la biopolitique*. Une étude des textes de Foucault montre que son idée de biopolitique ou de biopouvoir se rapporte étroitement à la physiocratie considérée comme une *arkhè* du libéralisme. Mais la notion même d'une telle émergence historique est crucialement incompatible avec la façon dont Derrida pense la vivance du vivant, réaffirmée dans *La vie la mort*. Ce pourrait bien être un exemple de ce que Heidegger appelait la pensée du commencement, et en fin de compte une fausse piste. Dans *La bête et le souverain*, Derrida critique Agamben précisément dans la mesure où le philosophe italien a pris au sérieux l'hypothèse foucauldienne de la biopolitique, jusqu'à un certain point.

English abstract

Biopolitics (bio-power, bio-history) is a notion of Foucault's that Derrida addresses indirectly, targeting Agamben as proxy. To begin with, Foucault himself seems indeed to have backed out from expressing himself in these terms after 1978 and *The Birth of Biopolitics*. A study of his texts shows that Foucault's idea of biopolitics or bio-power is closely related to physiocracy considered as an *arche* of liberalism. But the very notion of such a historical emergence is crucially incompatible with Derrida's thinking of the livingness of the living, as reasserted in *Life Death*. It may very well be an example of what Heidegger called the thinking of the beginning, and ultimately a false track. Derrida's criticism of Agamben in *The Beast and the Sovereign* hinges on this, precisely insofar as the Italian philosopher took Foucault's biopolitics hypothesis seriously, up to a certain point.

Introduction

Biopolitics and deconstruction do not get on very well together. In Foucault's discourse, in various passages where he speaks of bio-power, or bio-politics, as well as in the discourse of his severe friend Agamben, there can be overheard, against their better knowledge, and like a denegation of sorts, that is to say with a force of assertion directly proportional to the energy of all protestations to the contrary, "the shadow of a historic subjectivity" (as Derrida says in his preface to *The Origin of Geometry*), an avatar of the "imaginative schema of noumenal substance", a ghost ready to incarnate itself into some enemy: *there is bio-power*, like there is Kapital, etc. – some back-worldly power to the science of which we seem to be meant to be awakened as soon as possible to prevent us from dying wondering. Bio-ghosts, gods or demons that pester us ceaselessly: declensions of the *une bévue*¹ (as the man said in 1976), that's the *Hinterwelt*, where indeed a power always lurks, a force, which has everything to do with life and its impediment, which is not death, but the shackling of life, to such power that by relishing to do so witnesses it. "Reason hidden in Man"² (Derrida with Husserl in *The Origin...*), "psychological ghost of faculty and power", which in academic humanities resonates here as tragedy, there as comedy. But all ghosts are psychological, as all powers are bio, and all bios are political: equivalent tautologies, in fact "bio-power" is a "psychological ghost", and ghosts are the worst of persecutors. They literally ruin your life: *ψυχή* (*psyché*), mother of ghosts whom they would possess. *Ψυχή*, that's *slife*, under a third denomination, aka *ζωή* (*zōē*), aka *βίος* (*bíos*), neither this side nor that side of those, but in between: *That's life! Schicksalszwang!* Compulsion of destiny. Emergence of the *χώρα* (*khōra*), breath across the mirror of the seme. Therefore, rather than "Biopolitics" one should perhaps baptize her *Psychoby*, *Ψυχή-βία*, for *βία* (*bía*) that's the life force, the power that's called *life*(n° 4), *ψυχή* expressing all at once its spectrality, its spirituality. Does it take, as Hegel says, the physical death of the individual for the Phoenician life of the spirit to be born? Nothing is less certain. For *Geist*, *ψυχή*: that's the *Lebendigkeit des Lebens*, that outside the body *is no more than spirit: is no more*. Persisting in *the after-life*, that is to say *the life of others*, the one that immortals and other narcissi exacerbate, but that in fact has always been currently exchanged on the marketplace of the genome and other habits.

Biopower & physiocracy

“Biopolitics and deconstruction”. The notions of “bio-politics” (*bio-politique*), “bio-power” (*bio-pouvoir*) and “bio-history” (*bio-histoire*) appear in volume 1 of *History of Sexuality*, first published in 1975, but Foucault then stops mentioning them altogether in the subsequent volumes, as Frédéric Gros notes in his introduction to volume 4: “the purpose to study the biopolitical modern dispositive of sexuality (16th-19th centuries) [...] was abandoned and replaced by a problematization [...] of sexual pleasure in the historical perspective of a genealogy of the subject of desire and under the conceptual horizon of the arts of life³”.

These bio-terms are found again in several texts, from 1974 to 1978: “*La naissance de la médecine sociale*” (1974), “*Les mailles du pouvoir*” (1976), “*Bio-histoire et bio-politique*” (1976), “*Les rapports de pouvoir passent à l’intérieur des corps*” (1978), “*Sécurité, territoire, population*” (1978), “*Naissance de la biopolitique*” (1979⁴). The last two are yearly summaries of Foucault’s lectures at the Collège de France, and bear the same titles as the book publications of these lectures. Strangely enough, *Naissance de la biopolitique : cours au Collège de France, 1978-1979*⁵, published in 2004, contains next to nothing about biopolitics, which had reached the acme of its elaboration as such in Foucault’s discourse in the lectures of the year before: *Sécurité, territoire, population : Cours au Collège de France, 1977-1978*, published in the same year 2004. Beyond 1978, bio-politics vanishes, as it were, from Foucault’s discourse, and in any case is never again the object of any further development. *La Naissance de la bio-politique, The Birth of Biopolitics* is in fact its extinction.

On the reasons for this withdrawal, we can only speculate. It looks like an intellectual statement from which Foucault has quietly withdrawn, or perhaps a direction which he intentionally refrained from following further, perhaps because the “bio” prefix introduced a problematic tropism towards the “life” theme of various forms of *Lebensphilosophie*, let’s say from Nietzsche to Dilthey to Bergson. But yet another way of looking at this touch-and-go appearance and *aphanisis* of bio-politics-power-history would be to consider that it is a notion that was meant to remain non-conceptual, meant not to be conceptualized: it is an un-constructed notion. At one point in his 1978 lecture Foucault said: “Well, I believe I was wrong. I am never completely wrong, of course, but

still, it is not exactly that. I believe that what is at stake is quite something else⁶". We shall return to the element of his discourse which Foucault was thus revisiting and readjusting: the idea that liberalism – "*le libéralisme*", but in English the notion immediately poses the problem of the internal tension between economic and political liberalism – is in fact not an *ideology*, but a *technology*. The hardly avoidable Heideggerian turn of the philosophical discourse that suddenly crops up at this juncture may not be unrelated to the reasons why the topic could be thought to lead to unsafe ground. In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault explained:

Concretely, this power over life has developed since the 17th century under two principal forms [...] the disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constitute the two poles around which the organization of the power over life developed. The setting up, in the Augustan age [*l'âge classique*], of this two-faced technology – anatomical and biological, individualizing and specifying, turned towards the processes of the body and regarding the processes of life – characterizes a power of which the highest function is no longer to kill, but to invest life from beginning to end⁷.

First remark: it is difficult to see how from this point on Foucault could have avoided positioning his own discourse relatively to Heidegger's in *The Question Concerning Technique*, and especially the notion of *Gestell*: "Enframing" [*arrondissement*], *Ge-stell*] means the gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man, i.e. challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve⁸".

Second remark: there is here a de facto subjectivizing of historical processes, which is hard to reconcile with a certain Althusserian spirit of the time proclaiming that history was "a process without a subject⁹":

but what happens in the 18th century in certain Western countries, and which was linked to the development of capitalism [...] was nothing less than the entrance of life in history – I mean the entrance of phenomena specific to the life of the human species into the order of knowledge and power – into the field of political techniques¹⁰".

The point on which Foucault says he was wrong is that he had said that liberalism is an ideology. On second thought he says it is rather a technology.

The idea of a government of men *that would think* first and foremost of the nature of things and no longer of the bad nature of men, the idea of an administration of things *that would think*, first of all, of the liberty of men, what they want to do, what it is their interest to do, what they think of doing, all these are non-correlative elements. A physics of power or a power *that conceives of itself* as physical action in the element of nature is a power *that conceives of itself* as a regulation that can only be operated through and thanks to the liberty of each and everyone, I think that is something that is absolutely fundamental. It is not an ideology, it is not properly speaking, it is not fundamentally, it is not primarily an ideology. It is first and foremost a technology of power, it is in any case in that sense that one can read it¹¹.

Bio-power, bio-politics, bio-history (*bio-pouvoir, biopolitique, bio-histoire*) – let’s take these terms together as a notional nebula precisely to avoid rigid conceptualization – let’s say “*le bio-politique*” and translate it by “bio-power”. Now bio-power emerges in Foucault’s discourse as a subjectivized entity: it is an idea that thinks, an administration / a government that thinks, a power that conceives of itself: it is immaterial, and yet it has consciousness, volition, and capacity to act in the historical and physical world. It even seems to have had a moment of historical emergence, if not a date of birth: sometime in the 17th and 18th century.

Returning to the “Leçon du 18 janvier 1978” in *Sécurité...* where Foucault said: “Well I believe I was wrong. I am never completely wrong, of course, but still...”, the point on which he admits to having been wrong is when he spoke of “liberalism” as “that ideology of freedom¹²”. At this juncture it becomes apparent that, to a large extent, bio-power and liberalism coincide in Foucault’s mind, and that the critique of bio-power, bio-politics, etc. is in a great respect a critique of liberalism. The rapport between “bio-power” or “bio-politics” and “liberalism” is made clear in Foucault’s texts by his references to physiocracy, the French school of economists that were the contemporaries of Adam Smith (1723-1790), author of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Among the best-known Physiocrats were François Quesnay (1694-1774), Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (1727-

1781), Victor de Riqueti, Marquis de Mirabeau (1715-1789, the father of the revolutionary Comte), or Pierre Samuel Dupont de Nemours (1739-1817), and also Jacques Claude Marie Vincent, Marquis de Gournay (1712-1759), to whom Dupont de Nemours attributes the motto “*laissez faire et laissez passer*”¹³. In a sense, they were the French counterparts of the English agriculturalist Jethro Tull (1674-1741) who played an important part in the eighteenth-century Agricultural Revolution, that preceded the Industrial Revolution, and which is obviously the historical phenomenon that Foucault has in mind as the moment of emergence of “bio-power”. Although the Physiocrats were not “liberals” *stricto sensu*, they are generally considered as the precursors of liberalism, and no doubt they retained Foucault’s attention mainly for two reasons. Firstly, physiocracy constitutes an alternative French *arche* of liberalism. Secondly, *physio-cracy* as “nature-power” or “*physis-rule*” – in an ambivalent phrase where φύσις is alternately subject and object of κράτος (power), so it is in sum the natural government of nature – can be construed as a literal quasi-equivalent of “bio-power”.

Bio-power, bio-politics, or liberalism – it is an idea – “an idea of government that thinks [...] an administration of things that thinks [...] a power that conceives of itself [...] a physics of power, or a power that conceives of itself as physical action [...] it is not an ideology [...]. It is first and foremost a technology of power [...]”. Neither fish nor flesh is bio-power: neither pure idea nor pure thing, but technology, technique, or what Heidegger called an Enframing, a *Gestell* – “that gathering of this claim” [*das Versammelnde jenes Stellen*, interpellation] which summons man [*das den Menschen stellt*] that is to say challenges him [*d. h. herausfordert*] to reveal the real [*das Wirkliche zu entbergen*] as reserve [*als Bestand*] on the mode of commission [*in der Weise des Bestellens*, of committing, *Be-stellens*¹⁴]. *Arraignment* — André Préau’s French translation of *Gestell* (which is a putting into place, a placing), is a naval term meaning high-sea boarding: it is an investing, an occupation, an invasion. It (bio-power, e.g. liberalism) is not a pure idea, not an ideology: it is a technology, says Foucault, it is a factum, a facticity, a made thing, an art thing, a form of fetish: it is an incarnation, it is a hypostatized idea, a mental thing, a psychic thing that incorporates itself, that incarnates itself, that takes bodily form in the phenomenal world of *das Seiende (l’étant)*.

It may be that the proximity with Heidegger’s thinking, or the proximity of this line of thinking with metaphysical considerations, can contribute to explain why Foucault

abandoned the notion after 1978. But it is also possible to go one step further by suggesting that it is a *chimera* - *une chimère* - in the sense in which the eighteenth-century Physiocrat Louis Paul Abeille (1719-1807) asserts that “famine [...] is obviously a chimera¹⁵”. Which does not mean that it does not exist. But, like mythological chimeras, and also like biological chimeras that are transgenic individuals (or phenotypes genetically combining more than one genotype), this economic chimera, the famine, is a hybrid entity. Foucault goes on to explain: “It turns out that, on the one hand, it cannot exist, and that, when it existed, far from being a reality, a reality in some sense natural, it was nothing else than the aberrant result of a certain number of artificial measures themselves aberrant¹⁶”. A famine is a chimera in the sense that it is half natural and half artificial, half real and half unreal, half physical and half psychical. It is produced by the double negentropy of bad harvests and speculation: it is the result of a game of bargaining between various speculators playing with the law of offer and demand according to which the fetish value of the merchandise fluctuates. Foucault explains: “One is going to allow the self-creation and self-development of this phenomenon of dearness-rareness on such or such a market, in a whole series of markets, and it is precisely that, that very reality to which one has given the freedom to develop itself, it is that phenomenon itself that will indeed entail its self-curbing and self-regulation¹⁷”. Why? Because sooner or later the speculators will take their profit and the prices will go down again, but if they go too low, the lack of production it will entail (by lack of profitability) will perpetuate the recurrence of cyclical famine. And this engine-like to-and-fro movement between the physical and psychical planes of the phenomenon is what makes the *chimera* (of which the famine is only an instance among others) a living being (*un “être vivant”, i.e. un étant vivant*).

Looking at this in a Derridean perspective, one could say that it is a Phoenician movement, or rather an inverted, or a two-way Phoenician movement. In *La vie la mort* Derrida calls “*mouvement phénicien*” or “*motif phénicien*¹⁸” the Hegelian movement of the self-production or self-realization of the Spirit, by reference to Hegel’s recurrent metaphor of “the image of the Phoenix (*der Phönix*), of the Life of Nature; eternally preparing its own funeral pyre, and consuming itself upon it; but so that from its ashes is produced the new, renovated, fresh life¹⁹”. The Phoenician movement of Hegel’s philosophy does not directly represent the production of the Life of Spirit through the

destruction of the Life of Nature, but remarkably it produces the objective correlative (rather than the concept) of a dialectic engine including death in life and life in death – a *la-vie-la-mort* engine, so to speak. The proximity of Hegel's *Phönix* as well as that of Heidegger's *Gestell* would have been reasons sufficient for Foucault to decide to change tack and to choose on the whole to avoid the notions of “bio-politics” and “bio-power” in his philosophical discourse after 1978.

La vivance du vivant

One of the reasons why Derrida did not warm up to the notion of bio-power may be that more than ten years before, in a text of *L'écriture et la différence* entitled “Freud et la scène de l'écriture”, he had developed certain considerations that rendered rather ineffective Foucault's characterization of bio-power as “a power of which the highest function is no longer to kill, but to invest life from beginning to end²⁰”, or the difference, as Agamben rephrasing Foucault said in *Homo sacer III, Auschwitz, L'archivio e il testimone*, “*Make die and let live* compounds the motto of the old sovereignty, which exerts itself most of all as license to kill; *make live and let die* is the mark of bio-power, which makes the nationalization of the biological and of the care of life its first objective”, or more precisely, the formula of twentieth-century biopolitics being “no longer *make die*, nor *make live*, but make survive. Neither life nor death, but the production of a flexible and virtually infinite survival constitutes the decisive performance of bio-power in our time”. Agamben goes on to assert that “the supreme ambition of biopower is to produce in a human body the absolute separation of the living from the speaking, of *zōé* from *bíos*, of the non-human from the human: survival²¹”.

Where Derrida differs, indeed, is that in “Freud or the Scene of Writing” he has proposed a radically different approach to the *livingness of the living*, “*la vivance du vivant*” – “*vivance*” is Derrida's translation for *Lebendigkeit* –, recalling that “unsurprisingly, the essential definition that [biologist François Jacob] gives of the livingness [*la vivance*], of what it is that makes us say that an existent (a system or a living individual) is living, that is literally the definition that the most metaphysician of metaphysicians, the metaphysician *par excellence*, Hegel, gives of it, to wit that the living individual is living in so far as it can reproduce itself²²”. Now, “Freud et la scène de l'écriture” is this crucial text in which Derrida explains the notion of *differance*, by which the philosophy of

deconstruction presents itself as a *philosophy of life* that operates an epochal replacement of the various forms of *Lebensphilosophie* that survived in the wake of Hegelianism. For Derrida, revisiting the Freudian discovery, there is no longer any *dialectics* between natural and spiritual life: the *livingness* of the living lets itself be understood as *ψυχή* in the sense that “we already know that psychic life is neither the transparency of meaning nor the opacity of force, but the difference in the travail of forces”. And not biological reproduction, but *repetition* is crucial in this respect because “repetition adds no quantity of force in presence, no intensity, it re-edits the same impression: it has nevertheless priming power (*pouvoir de frayage, Bahnungsmacht*²³)”. And with this “priming power” (the power to eventually trace a path where there was none) the livingness of the living is redefined as *trace* and *differance* in a way that implicitly solves the problem of genesis in Husserl’s phenomenology, which Derrida was studying already in 1953 in *Le problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl*²⁴. As Derrida writes: “there is not *first* life, present, that would *then* come to protect itself, adjourn itself, reserve itself in differance” – a word which at this stage Derrida coins via a translation of Freud’s *Nachträglichkeit* and *Verpätung*.

This [differance] constitutes rather the essence of life. Rather: as differance is not an essence, is nothing, it *is not* life if being is determined as *ousia*, presence, essence/existence, substance or subject. Life must be rethought as trace before being is determined as presence. It is the only condition to be able to say that life is death, that repetition and the beyond of the pleasure principle are original and congenital with that precisely which they transgress
25.

A wild guess is that sometime in 1978, reading in preparation for his on-coming lecture at the Collège de France on *La Naissance de la biopolitique*, Foucault was thinking to himself: bio-this, bio-that, *ma in somma, che cos’è la vita?* He finally made up his mind to read *L’écriture et la différence* and said “Oops!” or in French “*au temps pour moi !*” which means “*let me start over again!*” We who have over Foucault the advantage of hindsight, because we have been able to read Derrida’s later texts, are brought to realize that the notion of bio-power is a pleonasm of sorts, if we grant that there is “an essential inherence of *logos* in the living or of the living in *logos*”. Derrida explains this in volume 1

of *La bête et le souverain*, just before he questions Agamben's distinction between *zōē* and *bíos*. Derrida insists on the opportunity of

reopening the text of [Aristotle's] *Politics* at the page where we find another configuration of *zoe* and *logos*, another essential inherence of *logos* in the living or of the living in *logos*, another *zoology* or another *logozooy* that situate themselves, that are supposed to situate themselves at the *arche*, at the beginning, at the sovereign principle of everything that concerns what appears and grows in the light, the *phusis* of light, *phos*, of life, *zoe*, and of *logos*, of speech²⁶.

The reversal implied in the overturning of “zoologie” to “logozoïe” sums up, in a formula, the epistemological oxymoron contained in the yoking together of “biopolitics” and “deconstruction”, *antonomasia* of the *conchetto* (which is the opposite of the concept), or witticism, characteristic of Metaphysical Poets according to Samuel Johnson. The tension at stake here, that is to say the criticism addressed by Derrida to the Foucault and the Agamben of “biopolitics” (for it is only a phase, so to speak a didactic phase of the intellectual career of these thinkers), this tension is not unrelated to the opposite criticism addressed by Johnson – who was as convinced as Boileau that “*Ce que l'on conçoit bien s'énonce clairement / Et les mots pour le dire arrivent aisément*”²⁷ – to those poets of the 17th century whom he called “Metaphysical” pejoratively because he found them obscure. The spirit that characterizes them is *wit*, defined as *discordia concors*, that is to say the “discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike”, a writing in which “the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together,” so that “the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and though he sometimes admires is seldom pleased”²⁸. Text of *jouissance* more than text of pleasure, as Barthes would have said: it must be underlined that the writing of these poets of *wit* works on what Ricoeur has called “*la métaphore vive*”, or, in other words, at the juncture of an “essential inherence of *logos* in the living and of the living in *logos*”.

Holzwege & red herrings

The Metaphysical Poets²⁹ wrote in the early 17th century, at the time when, as Donne put it in his “Anatomie of the World”, “A new Philosophy calls all in doubt”³⁰. It is to be

noted, before we return to this a little later, that (“by a commodius vicus of recirculation³¹”), the relevance to Descartes is beyond doubt, even though the poet preceded the philosopher by a few years. The criticism, i.e. the judgement, in this case aesthetic, that Johnson passes on these poets whom he baptizes “Metaphysical” is the reverse of the one passed by Derrida on Foucault and Agamben concerning “biopolitics”. It is also to be noted that this text, “Life of Cowley” was reprised nearly one century and a half later by T. S. Eliot in an essay entitled “The Metaphysical Poets,” where he outlines his theory of the *dissociation of sensibility*, a divorce that he perceived between “thought” and “feeling”: “It is something which happened to the mind of England between the time of Donne and Herbert of Cherbury and the time of Tennyson and Browning; it is the difference between the intellectual and the reflective poet³²”. Eliot returns to this several times in his critical writings, but the theory remains inchoative, rather like Foucault’s who, after 1978, abandoned the theme of biopolitics as a historical event that would have happened to the “mind” of the West, and also like Agamben, who, after having followed in the steps of Foucault on this head, would later change tack. The object of criticism is more precisely this vision of the world and of history of philosophy according to which there would be beginnings, first times, sudden advents of spirit in the world. For instance, the idea that Descartes and his philosophy would have inaugurated an epoch of which the beginning would therefore be situated in the 17th century. It is a very Heideggerian mode of thinking, of which Derrida rather seems to think that it is one of these *Chemins qui ne mènent nulle part*³³, as *Holzwege* has been translated into French. In one of these *false tracks*, or *blind alleys*, entitled “The Age of the World Picture³⁴”, Heidegger attributes to Descartes the original sin, so to speak, of “this objectification of being” (*diese Vergegenständlichung des Seienden*) which has in sum waylaid us into the “enframing” (*Gestell*), which has framed us into technique. For the first time, therefore, “*Erstmals*”:

For the first time being [*das Seiende, l'étant*] is considered as objectivity of representations and truth as certainty of representation in the metaphysics of Descartes. His main work is entitled *Meditationes de prima philosophia*, *Meditations on first philosophy*. Πρώτη φιλοσοφία designates specifically since Aristotle all that would later be called metaphysics. The whole of modern metaphysics, including Nietzsche, stands in the interpretation of

being [*des Seienden, de l'étant*] and truth initiated by Descartes³⁵.

The interpretation of being (*das Seiende, l'étant*, as distinct from *Beyng, Seyn, l'Être*) as objectivity and of truth as certainty "initiated by Descartes": "*von Descartes angebahnten*", sent on the way, on the track (*Bahn*) of a destiny (*Schicksal*), as if in the ruts of a compulsion of destiny (*Schicksalszwang*), from which Heidegger wants to break free. "Inceptual thinking" (*das anfängliche Denken*), that is the argument of several chapters of Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, "is necessary as confrontation between the first beginning [*der erste Anfang*], that is first to be reconquered, and the other beginning (*der andere Anfang*) that is to be unfolded³⁶". The "first beginning" that is to be reconquered, is metaphysics as destiny of philosophy, initiated by Plato and Aristotle. Descartes in sum only relaunched Western thinking on the same tracks after the medieval interlude of Christian doctrine. The "other beginning", that remains to be unfolded, is the post-metaphysical thinking that would begin in the history of philosophy with Heidegger. It would be the passage (*Übergang, Der Übergang zum anderen Anfang*³⁷) from an interpretation of truth as exactitude to a reading of α -λήθεια as un-concealing, that is also to say as event-like beginning of *Beyng (Seyn)*. "The beginning of *Beyng [Seyn, l'Être]* itself as event, the hidden sovereignty of the origin of the truth of being [*Seiende, l'étant*] as such. And *Beyng* is the beginning as event³⁸". "Inceptual thinking" (*das anfängliche Denken*), or "the thinking of the beginning" (*das Denken aus dem Anfang*) is Heideggerian through and through, but as such it signals a *point of departure*, a *clinamen* or swerve of Derrida's philosophy. In other words, it is precisely with reference to this "thinking of the beginning", *Das anfängliche Denken*, "the thinking of the beginning as contraposition between...", *Das anfängliche Denken als Auseinandersetzung zwischen...* between a before and an after, a thesis and an antithesis, etc. that Derrida asserts his *differance*, or, so to speak, that from which *differance* differs, or that deconstruction deconstructs. "There is not *first* life, present, that would *then* come to protect itself, adjourn itself, reserve itself in *differance*³⁹". That is the very question of the beginning or of beginnings, of the scansion of historical time in successive steps and stations on the destinal tracks of a *telos*. In other words still, there is not *first* life without power, nor is there *first* power without life that would then become bio, sometime in the 17th or 18th century, by some operation of the Holy Spirit. That is a red herring: it would be a false track to think so, because it would

amount to not see that there is “an inherence of *logos*, or power, in life and of life in *logos*⁴⁰”.

Giorgio il bandito

This is what is crucially at stake, both from the philosophical and from the historical point of view, in the moments when Derrida sounds surprisingly exasperated with Agamben, but in reality with Foucault through Agamben, and (when all is told) with Heidegger through both Foucault and Agamben. For indeed, in two sessions of the first volume of his seminar *La bête et le souverain*, the third séance, of 16 January 2002, and the twelfth, of 20 March 2002, Jacques Derrida adopts an unusually polemical tone. The target of his exasperation happens to be the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. It begins by an eulogium, as often claw swipes do: “Rousseau’s wolves have been as if forgotten, precisely, in a book that I strongly advise you to read, [...] I mean *Homo sacer* by Giorgio Agamben, subtitled *Sovereign Power and Naked Life*⁴¹”. As the editors indicate in a footnote, Derrida is referring here to the French translation of *Homo sacer I*, published by Éditions du Seuil in 1997⁴², of which the original Italian version came out in 1995 from Einaudi. Derrida refers here more particularly to the chapter entitled “The Ban and the Wolf” [*Il bando e il lupo*], the wolf as banned bandit, on a theme that Derrida would develop one year later in *Voyous*:

[...] the figure of the one who has been banished from the community [...] man wolf and not simply wolf [...] The life of the bandit – like the one of the sacred man – is not a piece of wildlife absolutely unrelated to the law and the city; it is, on the contrary, a threshold of indifference [*una soglia di indifferenza*] and of passage between animal and man, *physis* and *nomos*, exclusion and inclusion⁴³ [...].

What does not appear, or rather appears only in filigree in these few lines of recontextualization of the notions of “ban” (*bando*) relatively to “bandit” (*bandito*) and “naked life” (*vita nuda*) shows that Agamben’s purpose is not to make an exhaustive catalogue of all the wolves that may well have appeared in literature and philosophy, but much rather to illustrate his purpose, around the notion of *homo sacer* (sacred man), that is to say in ancient Rome a man deprived of his humanity, who may be killed like an

animal without it being a homicide. The man-wolf as bandit, banned from society, but also in internal reclusion, as under some totalitarian regimes one can be sentenced to inner exile, or even the pariah (in the common sense of the term even more than with reference to the Indian social caste) – *homo sacer* personifies a threshold (*soglia*) between the city and its other side, between the human and the non-human.

In the subtext of these remarks on the wolf-man as bandit lies the gist of the argument of the second criticism addressed by Derrida to Agamben, in the séance of 20 March 2002, that bears precisely on Agamben's distinction between *zoe* and *bios*, the first designating for him "naked life" (*vita nuda*) as opposed to political life, or the life of the city. For the time being, Derrida continues on the tone of the examiner reproaching the candidate for having forgotten some wolves: Rousseau's wolves, "Plautus' wolf and some others before, since *homo homini lupus* is here, as by everyone, alas, attributed by Agamben to Hobbes⁴⁴". The journey to the origin is a never-ending one. There has always already been another wolf. Of course, one cannot take seriously the reproach addressed to Giorgio Agamben, an Italian philosopher who knows Latin as well as he does his mother tongue, not to know that "*homo homini lupus*" is an ancient saying. Agamben writes:

[...] thus, when Hobbes founds sovereignty with reference to the *homo homini lupus*, in the wolf one should be able to hear an echo of the *wargus* and the *caput lupinum* of Edward the Confessor: not simply *fera bestia* and natural life, man transforming himself into wolf and wolf that transforms itself into man: that is to say bandit, *homo sacer*⁴⁵.

Agamben does not attribute the "*homo homini lupus*" to Hobbes: he is saying that Hobbes "founds sovereignty" by (*attraverso* : through, by the intermediary of, by means of) reference (*rimando*, *attraverso il rimando*, by means of sending back to) the *homo homini lupus* – and the definite article "the" (*il*, in all' [*a il*], *il rimando all'homo homini lupus*) indicates well enough that he is speaking of *l'adagio*, the well-known adage of the ancients, the saying, the theme, etc. Derrida's insistence to speak of Rousseau when Agamben is speaking of Hobbes resonates like the toeing of an ideological demarcation line, like the underlining of a diverging affiliation, since traditionally in political philosophy Rousseau and Hobbes appear as opposites. Thus Derrida implicitly sides with Rousseau, as against Agamben who would supposedly be on the side of Hobbes. But that is also to

forget that Agamben does not establish a radical opposition between the natural life of the *fera bestia* and a social life disciplined by sovereignty, but on the contrary he is precisely speaking of a “zone of indifference between man and the wild beast”, which the *homo sacer* embodies. So what can motivate this surprising exasperation of Derrida’s against Agamben? A clue may perhaps be found in the subsequent reproaches addressed to the author of *Homo sacer* in the séance of 16 January 2002:

These omissions of wolves [...] are here all the more significant, not to say entertaining that, as is regularly the case with this author, his most irrepressible gesture regularly consists in recognizing priorities that have supposedly been unnoticed, ignored, neglected, that one has not known or not been able to recognize, for lack of knowledge, for lack of reading or clear-sightedness, for lack of intellectual strength – priorities, then, *first times*, inaugural initiatives, instituting events that one would have denied or neglected, and so, in truth, priorities that are primacies, principalities, principal signatures, signed by princes of the beginning that everyone, except the author, of course, would have ignored, so that each time the author of *Homo sacer* would be the first to say who *will have been* the first⁴⁶.

At a superficial level of reading, this looks like an assault of pedantry. If there is a tic of Agamben’s to recognize priorities, perhaps, as Derrida says, to assert himself as the first ever to have pointed out such priorities, it is in any case a venial sin, of which it is difficult to see why it should thus exasperate the author of *De la grammatologie*. Perhaps it is indeed because Derrida’s philosophy is always so critical of this kind of will to hegemony, and even more so of this linear, progressist, dialectic, and in a word Hegelian approach to the history of ideas – and indeed Derrida soon comes to Hegel, the systematic philosopher whom the author of *Glas* makes his point to contradict.

For instance, on page 29, in a chapter precisely entitled “The Paradox of sovereignty”, one can read, whether one can believe one’s eyes or not, I quote: “Hegel was the *first* to understand *to the utmost* [...] this presupposing structure of language, thanks to which it is immediately outside and inside itself [...]” There follows a whole paragraph, very interesting, that I

let you read, notably about a language that is sovereign, “in a permanent state of exception, declaring that there is no outside-language, that it is always outside itself”, so that “to say is always, in that sense, *ius dicere*”. All this seems to me so true and convincing that not only Hegel, who said so in his own way, was not the first nor the only one to say so, but that one would be hard put to find, and not only in the history of philosophy and not only in the reflection on language, someone who has not already said so or acted upon it, or implied it, the “to the utmost” remaining to be determined and being only determined by the last arrived that presents itself as the first to know who will have been the first to think something to the utmost⁴⁷.

Here appears perhaps a possible reason of the sudden rage of the philosopher of the “*there is no outside-text*⁴⁸”, whom Giorgio Agamben makes bold to fly past without even saluting him by the way, and even casually rephrasing his phrase, when he evokes “a permanent state of exception, declaring that there is no outside-language, that it is always beyond itself”. This excerpt from Agamben’s text is to be found in *Homo sacer I* more than 70 pages *before* the passage in which he speaks of “the *homo homini lupus*”, contrarily to what Derrida’s “For instance” might seem to suggest, giving the impression that the remarks on Hegel come *after* those on Hobbes, whereas they *precede* them by far:

Hegel was the first to understand to the utmost this presupposing structure of language, thanks to which it is, all at once, both outside and inside itself, and the immediate (the non-language) proves to be nothing else than a presupposed of language. “The perfect element – he wrote in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* – , in which the interiority is all the more exterior because the exteriority is interior, is language⁴⁹ (Hegel, I, pp. 527-529) [...]”. Language is the sovereign that, in permanent state of exception, declares that there is no outside-language, that it is always beyond itself. The particular structure of right has its foundation in this presupposing structure of human language. It expresses the link of inclusive exclusion to which a thing is subjected for being in language, for being named. To say, in that sense, is always *ius dicere*⁵⁰.

“Language (*linguaggio*) is the sovereign that, in a permanent state of exception, declares *that there is no outside-language (lingua)*, that it is always beyond itself.” If there was an “outside-language” (*un fuori lingua*), it could only be language as *Ur-Sprache*, as primaeval language. Thus language, that is to say *logos* is always all at once outside and inside itself, like Hegel’s *Geist*. Such is the thought expressed by the formula “there is no outside-language”, “*non vi è un fuori lingua*”, “il n’y a pas de hors-language” (Derrida quoting Marilène Raiola’s translation⁵¹), or “*il n’y a pas de hors-texte*”. At this juncture, by not quoting this well-known formula, published thirty years earlier (1967, 1997), Agamben snubbed Derrida, in a manner that could be called Hegelian (for it is also a Hegelian tic to think that everything is always already in Hegel), thus accrediting Hegel’s own will to primacy, or principality, of being the summit, the alpha and omega of philosophy. In this seminar on sovereignty entitled *La bête et le souverain*, by this criticism of Agamben, Derrida is precisely circumscribing, or let us say that he is situating in his own non-systematic way the problem of sovereignty as priority, principality, characteristic of the prince as principle: “the sovereign, if there is one, is he who manages to make the others believe, at least for a time, that he is the first or the first to have known who will have come first⁵²”. This question of the *principium*, that is to say of the origin, of the point of departure, or so to speak of the referential stop, this question of the *Ur-*, that recurs in the *Ursprache*, is indeed what deconstruction questions:

reading must not content itself to redouble the text, it cannot legitimately transgress the text towards something else than the text, towards a referent (metaphysical, historical, psycho-biographical, etc.) or towards a signified outside text of which the content could take place, could have taken place outside language, that is to say, in the sense we here give to this word, outside writing in general. That is why the methodological considerations we are venturing to make here on an example are narrowly dependent upon the general propositions that we have elaborated earlier, concerning the absence of referent or of transcendental signifier. *There is no outside-text*⁵³.

Where it is to be noted that, in Derrida’s own terms, “outside-text” (“*hors texte*”), is equivalent to “outside language” (“*hors de la langue*”), or Agamben’s “*fuori lingua*”, and to “outside writing in general” (“*hors de l’écriture en général*”). But by saying so does

Derrida say something else than Hegel? Agamben seems indeed implicitly to reply no and to prove it: language like spirit is both inside and outside itself. Derrida responds to this mute criticism that nobody is ever “legitimately” the first, neither Agamben, nor Derrida himself, nor even Hegel: “All this seems to me so true and convincing that not only Hegel [...] was not the first nor the only one to say so, but that one would be at a loss to find [...] someone who has not already said so or acted upon it, or implied it [...]”. There remains to be underlined, about the first criticism waged by Derrida against Agamben, in the séance of 16 January 2002, that Agamben’s purpose is not at all to distinguish the state of nature from the political state, but quite on the contrary to insist, with Hobbes, on their contemporaneity. In other words, there was not first the state of nature as “historical reality”, and then a political state, a “state of the right of the city” (*uno stato del “diritto della città”*), as another, successive, “historical reality”, but these two states are understood in their simultaneity:

[...] the Hobbesian mythologeme of the state of nature [...] is not a real epoch, chronologically anterior to the foundation of the City, but a principle inherent to it, that appears at the moment when the City considers itself *tanquam dissoluta* (therefore, something like a state of exception) [...] [*Here is interpolated the previously studied passage on homo homini lupus and homo sacer as banished bandit (bandito)*] [...] The Hobbesian state of nature is not a pre-juridical condition totally indifferent to the right of the city, but the exception and the threshold that constitutes and inhabits it; and it is not so much a war of all against all, than, more exactly, a condition in which each and everyone is for the other naked life and *homo sacer*, that is to say that each and everyone is *wargus, gerit caput lupinum*. And this lupification of man and hominization of the wolf is possible at every moment in the state of exception, in the *dissolutio civitatis*⁵⁴.

ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον

In the séance of 20 March 2002, Derrida picks up his criticism of Agamben, armed with Aristotle’s *Politics* in one hand and the Gospel according to John in the other: “Agamben, at the beginning of the book of which I have already spoken, *Homo sacer*, believes to find

a distinction between *bios* and *zoe* that will structure his whole demonstration⁵⁵". All the venom of the onslaught is in the verb "believes": Agamben "believes to find a distinction between *bios* and *zoe* that will structure his whole demonstration", but since he is mistaken, his whole demonstration is false, and the whole of his *Homo sacer* (1347 pages in the original version) is worth nothing. The limit of this criticism resides in the fact that in Agamben's thought there is no more "distinction" between *zoe* and *bios* than there is any between the Hobbesian state of nature, and the city of right, but it is already easily understandable that for him *zoe* and *bios* are contiguous by a threshold (*soglia*) that is the naked life (*vita nuda*) of *homo sacer*. It is in the name of this consideration that Agamben, while placing himself in the wake of Foucault, quotes him, then proposes (these are his own words) to *reconsider* his assertion: "Foucault's assertion according to which man was for Aristotle a 'living animal and, moreover, capable of a political existence', must be *reconsidered* in the sense that what poses a problem is precisely the signification of the phrase 'moreover' [*de plus*]⁵⁶". In sum, Derrida reproaches Agamben with an offence of *lèse-majesté* for having dared to say that Foucault's expression should be reconsidered. This bears in part on an imprecision of the translation. For, in fact, Agamben can be construed to have written: "Foucault's assertion, according to which for Aristotle man is 'a living animal and, besides [or moreover], capable of political existence', must therefore be well understood (*va conseguentemente integrata nel senso che...*) in the sense that, precisely, the signified of this 'besides' [or 'moreover': *in oltre*] is problematical⁵⁷". It is true that Agamben persists in the offence of *lèse-Foucault*, "two pages further down": "I quote: 'Foucault's thesis will then have to be corrected, or at least completed [that is not at all the same thing, but so much for this strategy or this rhetoric⁵⁸], [...]'". Agamben's "strategy", his "rhetoric", aiming at establishing an "irreducible zone of indifference" between *zoe* and *bios*, postulates indeed a distinction between these two terms:

Agamben's whole demonstrative strategy, here and elsewhere, bets on a distinction or a radical, clear, univocal exclusion, for the Greeks, and for Aristotle in particular between naked life (*zoe*), common to all the living (animals, men, and gods), and the life qualified either as individual or life or group life (*bios*: *bios theôritikos*, for instance, contemplative life, *bios apolaustikos*: life of pleasure, *bios politikos*: political life). Unfortunately, this

distinction is never so clear and assured, and Agamben must himself admit that there are exceptions, for instance in the case of God, who leads, says Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, a "*zôê aristê kai aidios*" a noble and eternal life⁵⁹ [...].

One could debate the question whether the life of God as *zoe* (it is the Greek word used in the Gospel of John) is indeed an exception (for it is not political life, it is not group life, etc.) Nevertheless, Derrida points out a flaw in Agamben's demonstrative armour. But notwithstanding what he could seem to be doing at first sight, Derrida does not reproach Agamben with criticizing Foucault. On the contrary, he reproaches Agamben with having "taken seriously" Foucault's elaboration on "biopolitics" or "biopower" as defining a modern human condition, which would have developed from the 17th or the 18th century on. In fact, Agamben's "strategy" consists in sustaining this thesis of Foucault's, while explicating it by a confusion between *zoe* and *bios* that is characteristic of our modernity, since the Enlightenment.

What is difficult to sustain, in this thesis, is the idea of an entrance (a modern entrance, therefore) in a zone of irreducible indifferenciation, where differentiation has never been insured, I would say, even on Agamben's at least furtive avowal; and above all, what remains still more difficult to sustain, is the idea that there is here something modern and new, for Agamben himself, as you will hear, taking seriously Foucault's idea of a specifically modern biopolitics, insists on saying that it is as ancient, immemorial, and archaic as can be⁶⁰.

Derrida's disagreement *with Foucault* bears on the *principle*, that is to say on the *historical origin* of what the latter calls "biopolitics", just as in the first phase of his criticism addressed to Agamben he differed from the Italian philosopher on the question of his apparent mania of deciding who was first. The main target of Derrida's criticism is the sudden event of the emergence, of the historical origin of an idea or of anything whatsoever. On the occasion of the séance of 16 January 2002, the idea that language is at once outside and inside itself, i.e. that there is no outside-language, no outside-text, this idea Derrida affirmed that it was "so true" and finally so ancient "that one would be hard put to find [...] someone who has not already said so⁶¹". In like manner, the notion

of “biopolitics” or of “biopower” is unfathomably old.

Indeed, Aristotle already wrote: “Ἐκ τούτων οὖν φανερόν ὅτι τῶν φύσει ἡ πόλις ἐστὶ, καὶ ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον”: “There results from all this that the city (*polis*) is by nature, and that man is by nature a political animal”) (Aristote, *Politique* I, 1253a). οὖν φανερόν (ἐστὶ)... ὅτι ... καὶ ὅτι... “In fact it appears *that ... and that...*”. For Aristotle, there is no “*in oltre*”, no “*moreover*” or “*besides*”: the city belongs to nature *and* it is the nature of man to be an a city animal. In other words, there is no fundamental distinction between *zoe* and *bios*, between the life of nature and the life of the city. But Agamben knows this better than anyone else, and his own *mythologeme* of *zoe* and *bios* does not establish any evolutive distinction between its terms any more than in “the Hobbesian mythologeme” the state of nature is “a real epoch, chronologically anterior to the foundation of the City”. Agamben’s mistake, which exposes him to Derrida’s criticism in *La bête et le souverain*, is the mistake of “taking seriously Foucault’s idea of a specifically modern biopolitics”. Agamben himself spots out this error of historicism, this optical illusion, to which Foucault will finally have abandoned himself, for a brief time only, before he corrected it. But, in fact, Agamben detects it himeself, on seeing Heidegger realizing the same error in his own philosophy. Remarkably, this happens in a work entitled *L’aperto: l’uomo e l’animale*, published for the first time in 2002, the very same year when Derrida was giving his seminar *La bête et le souverain* (published in 2008):

Heidegger was perhaps the last philosopher to believe in good faith that the place of the *polis* – the *polos* where reigns the conflict between latency and non-latency, between the animality and the humanity of man – be more practicable, and that – by standing in this perilous place – it be still possible for certain men – for a people – to find their own historical destiny. In other words, he was the last one to believe – at least up to a certain point and not without some doubts and contradictions – that the anthropological machine, saying and recomposing each time the conflict between man and the animal, between the open and the non-open, could still produce a people’s history and destiny. It is probable that, at a certain point, he realized his error, that he understood that there exists nowhere the possibility of a decision

responding to a historical sending forth of Beyng⁶².

Conclusion

In the second episode of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus is conversing with a certain Mr. Deasy, whose ideas on history are so simple-mindedly easy that he makes one feel dizzy. "History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake." The man insists: "All history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God". Meanwhile, outside, boys are playing football, score a goal, and shout with joy. Stephen shrugs his shoulders and says: "That is God. [...] A shout in the street⁶³". Intemporal inherence of the God of *logos* even in the inarticulate cries of the *Dasein*... From the discussion of biopolitics or biopower such as they think it diversely, it results that for Foucault, Agamben, and Derrida, the historical approach is a nightmare from which, each in his own way, they have awakened, or to rephrase it with Heidegger it is a *Holzweg*, a false track from which they have retraced their steps. What finally appears to be an optical illusion, is to think biopolitics as a modern historical phase, of which the emergence would be located sometime in the 17th or the 18th century. Biopolitics and deconstruction? Deconstruction inflects biopolitics in two ways at least: it hauls it out once and for all from the ruts of historical dialectic, and it reveals its inner redundancy by showing the inherence of the living in the *logos* and of the *logos* in the living.

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1 Jacques Lacan, "L'insu que sait de l'une-bévue s'aile à mourre (Séminaire [XXIV] du 11 janvier 1977)", in *Ornicar? Bulletin périodique du champ freudien*, 14 (1978). Word-play on *Unbewußt* (the unconscious): transcribed into French *une bévue*, (one blunder): l'insuccès de l'inconscient c'est l'amour (the failure of the unconscious [one blunder] is love). *All translations are by Joanny Moulin unless otherwise specified.*

2 "Or quand on parle de Raison cachée dans l'homme, il est difficile de se délivrer du fantôme psychologique de la faculté et du pouvoir ; [...] "Jacques Derrida, "Introduction", *L'origine de la géométrie*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2010, p. 156.

3 "Le dessein d'étudier le dispositif biopolitique moderne de la sexualité (XVI^e-XIX^e siècle) [...] a été délaissé au profit de la problématisation [...] du plaisir sexuel dans la perspective historique d'une généalogie du sujet de désir et sous l'horizon conceptuel des arts d'existence." Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité, Vol. 4, Les aveux de la chair*, éd. Frédéric Gros, Éditions Gallimard, 2018.

4 Michel Foucault, "La naissance de la médecine sociale", in *Dits et Écrits*, III (1976-1979), ["El nacimiento de la medicina social", 1974, tr. D. Reynié, *Revista centroamericana de Ciencias de la Salud*, N° 6, Janvier-Avril 1977, p. 89-108], Paris, Gallimard, 1994, p. 207-208. Michel Foucault, "Les mailles du pouvoir", in *Dits et Écrits*, IV (1980-1988), ["As malhas do poder" 1^{ère} partie, tr. P. W. Prado Jr., Conférence prononcée à la faculté de philosophie de l'université de Bahia, 1976, *Barbarie*, n° 4, Été 1981, p. 23-27], Paris, Gallimard, 1994, p. 182-201. Michel Foucault, "Bio-histoire et bio-politique", in *Dits et Écrits*, III (1976-1979), [*Le Monde*, N° 9869, 17-18 octobre 1976, p. 5. (Sur J. Ruffié, *De la biologie à la culture*, Paris, Flammarion, 1976)], Paris, Gallimard, 1994, p. 95-97. Michel Foucault, "Les rapports de pouvoir passent à l'intérieur des corps", in *Dits et Écrits*, III (1976-1979), [Entretien avec L. Finas, *La Quinzaine littéraire*, N° 247, 1er-15 janvier 1977, p. 4-6], Paris, Gallimard, 1994, p. 228-236. Michel Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population: Cours au Collège de France, 1977-1978*, eds. Michel Senellart, François Ewald et Alessandro Fontana, Paris, Seuil/Gallimard, 2004. Michel Foucault, "Naissance de la biopolitique", in *Dits et Écrits*, III (1976-1979), [*Annuaire du Collège de France, 79e année, Histoire des systèmes de pensée, Année 1978-1979, 1979*,

p. 367-372], Paris, Gallimard, 1994, p. 818-825.

5 Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique: cours au Collège de France, 1978-1979*, éd. François Ewald, Alessandro Fontana et Michel Senellart, Paris, EHESS/Gallimard/Seuil, 2004.

6 “Eh bien je crois que j’ai eu tort. Je n’ai jamais tout à fait tort, bien sûr, mais enfin, ce n’est pas exactement ça. Je crois que ce qui est en jeu, c’est tout autre chose.” Michel Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population: Cours au Collège de France, 1977-1978*, éd. Michel Senellart, François Ewald et Alessandro Fontana, Paris, Seuil/Gallimard, 2004, p. 50.

7 “Concrètement, ce pouvoir sur la vie s’est développé depuis le XVII^e siècle sous deux formes principales [...] Les disciplines du corps et les régulations de la population constituent les deux pôles autour desquels s’est déployée l’organisation du pouvoir sur la vie. La mise en place au cours de l’âge classique de cette grande technologie à double face — anatomique et biologique, individualisante et spécifiante, tournée vers les performances du corps et regardant vers les processus de la vie — caractérise un pouvoir dont la plus haute fonction désormais n’est peut-être plus de tuer mais d’investir la vie de part en part.” Michel Foucault. *Histoire de la sexualité, Vol. 1, La volonté de savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1976, p. 182-183.

8 Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology And Other Essays*, tr. William Lovitt, New York, Garland, 1977, p. 19-20. “Ge-stell heißt das Versammelnde jenes Stellens, das den Menschen stellt, d. h. herausfordert, das Wirkliche in der Weise des Bestellens als Bestand zu entbergen.” Martin Heidegger, “Die Frage nach der Technik” (1953), in *Gesamtausgabe 7, I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910-1976, Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1976, p. 5-36, p. 20-21.

9 Louis Althusser, *Politics and History: Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hegel and Marx*, (trans. Ben Brewster, London, NLB [New Left Books], 1972), p. 183, *et passim*.

10 “[...] mais ce qui s’est passé au XVIII^e siècle dans certains pays d’Occident, et qui a été lié par le développement du capitalisme, est un phénomène autre et peut-être d’une plus grande ampleur que cette nouvelle morale, qui semblait disqualifier le corps ; ce ne fut rien de moins que l’entrée de la vie dans l’histoire — je veux dire l’entrée des

phénomènes propres à la vie de l'espèce humaine dans l'ordre du savoir et du pouvoir —, dans le champ des techniques politiques.” Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

11 “L'idée d'un gouvernement des hommes qui penserait d'abord et fondamentalement à la nature des choses et non plus à la mauvaise nature des hommes, l'idée d'une administration des choses qui penserait avant tout à la liberté des hommes, à ce qu'ils veulent faire, à ce qu'ils ont intérêt à faire, à ce qu'ils pensent à faire, tout cela, ce sont des éléments corrélatifs. Une physique du pouvoir ou un pouvoir qui se pense comme action physique dans l'élément de la nature et un pouvoir qui se pense comme régulation qui ne peut s'opérer qu'à travers et en prenant appui sur la liberté de chacun, je crois que c'est là quelque chose qui est absolument fondamental. Ce n'est pas une idéologie, ce n'est pas proprement, ce n'est pas fondamentalement, ce n'est pas premièrement une idéologie. C'est d'abord et avant tout une technologie de pouvoir, c'est en tout cas dans ce sens qu'on peut le lire”. Michel Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population: Cours au Collège de France, 1977-1978*, éd. Michel Senellart, François Ewald et Alessandro Fontana, Paris, Seuil/Gallimard, 2004, p. 50. *Italics added.*

12 “Le libéralisme [...] cette idéologie de liberté [...]” Michel Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population: Cours au Collège de France, 1977-1978*, éd. Michel Senellart, François Ewald et Alessandro Fontana, Paris, Seuil/Gallimard, 2004, p. 49.

13 “Il [Gournay] en conclut qu'il ne fallait jamais rançonner ni réglementer le commerce. Il en tira cet axiome: *Laissez faire et laissez passer.*” Pierre Samuel Dupont de Nemours, “Éloge de Gournay”, in *Œuvres de Turgot. Classées par ordre de matières, avec les notes de Dupont de Nemours, augm. de lettres inédites, des Questions sur le commerce, et d'observations et de notes nouvelles*, vol. 1, Paris, Guillaumin, 1844, p. 257-261, p. 259.

14 Martin Heidegger, “La question de la technique”, in *Essais et conférences*, tr. André Préau, Paris, Gallimard, 1958, p. 9-48, p. 26-27. “Ge-stell heißt das Versammelnde jenes Stellens, das den Menschen stellt, d. h. herausfordert, das Wirkliche in der Weise des Bestellens als Bestand zu entbergen.” Martin Heidegger, “Die Frage nach der Technik” (1953), in *Gesamtausgabe 7, I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910-1976, Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1976, p. 5-36, p. 20-21, tr. J. M..

15 “La disette [...] est évidemment une chimère”, Louis-Paul Abeille, “Lettre d’un négociant sur la nature du commerce des grains, 1763”, in *Premiers opuscules sur le commerce des grains 1763-1764*, Paris, Paul Geuthner, 1911, “Collection des économistes et des réformateurs sociaux de France”, p. 89-103, p. 91.

16 “Il apparaît que, d’une part, elle ne peut pas exister et que, quand elle existait, loin d’être une réalité, une réalité en quelque sorte naturelle, elle n’était rien d’autre que le résultat aberrant d’un certain nombre de mesures artificielles elles-mêmes aberrantes.” Michel Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

17 “On va laisser se créer et se développer ce phénomène de cherté-rareté sur tel ou tel marché, dans toute une série de marchés et c’est cela, cette réalité même à laquelle on a donné liberté de se développer, c’est ce phénomène-là qui va entraîner justement son autofreinage et son autorégulation.” *Ibidem*.

18 Jacques Derrida, *La vie la mort (Séminaire 1975-1976)*, éd. Pascale-Anne Brault et Peggy Kamuf, Paris, Le Seuil, 2019, p. 20, 67.

19 «[...] das Bild des Phönix, von dem Naturleben, das ewig sich selbst seinen Scheiterhaufen bereitet und sich darauf verzehrt, so daß aus seiner Asche ewig das neue, verjüngte, frische Leben hervorgeht.» Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Stuttgart, Philipp Reclam, 1924, (1822-1830), p. 39.

20 “[...] un pouvoir dont la plus haute fonction désormais n’est peut-être plus de tuer mais d’investir la vie de part en part”. Foucault, *La volonté de savoir, op. cit.*, p. 183.

21 “*Far morire e lasciar vivere* compendia la divisa del vecchio potere sovrano, che si esercita soprattutto come diritto di uccidere; *far vivere e lasciar morire* l’insegna del biopotere, che fa della statalizzazione del biologico e della cura della vita il proprio obiettivo primario. Alla luce delle considerazioni che precedono, tra le due formule se ne insinua una terza, che definisce il carattere più specifico della biopolitica del secolo XX: non più *far morire* né *far vivere*, ma *far sopravvivere*. Non la vita né la morte, ma la produzione di una sopravvivenza modulabile e virtualmente infinita costituisce la prestazione decisiva del biopotere nel nostro tempo. [...] L’ambizione suprema del biopotere e di produrre in un corpo umano la separazione assoluta del vivente e del parlante, della *zōé* e del *bíos*, del non-uomo e dell’uomo: la sopravvivenza.” Giorgio

Agamben, *Homo sacer III, Auschwitz, L'archivio e il testimone*, in *Homo sacer: edizione integrale: 1995-2015*, Macerata, Quodlibet, 2018, p. 759-882, p. 870.

22 "Comme par hasard, la définition essentielle qu'il donne de la vivance, de ce qui fait qu'un existant (un système ou un individu vivant) est vivant, c'est littéralement la définition qu'en donne le plus métaphysicien des métaphysiciens, le métaphysicien par excellence, Hegel, à savoir que l'individu vivant est vivant en tant qu'il peut se reproduire." Jacques Derrida, *La vie la mort (Séminaire 1975-1976)*, éd. Pascale-Anne Brault et Peggy Kamuf, Paris, Le Seuil, 2019, p. 117-118.

23 "On sait donc déjà que la vie psychique n'est ni la transparence du sens ni l'opacité de la force mais la différence dans le travail des forces. [...] La répétition n'ajoute aucune quantité de force présente, aucune intensité, elle réédite la même impression : elle a pourtant pouvoir de frayage." Jacques Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence*, Paris, Seuil, 1997, p. 299-300.

24 Jacques Derrida, *Le problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl*, [1953-1954], Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1990.

25 "Mais il faut prendre garde à cette formulation : il n'y a pas de vie *d'abord* présente qui viendrait *ensuite* à se protéger, à s'ajourner, à se réserver dans la différance. Celle-ci constitue l'essence de la vie. Plutôt : la différance n'étant pas une essence, n'étant rien, elle *n'est pas* la vie si l'être est déterminé comme *ousia*, présence, essence/existence, substance ou sujet. Il faut penser la vie comme trace avant de déterminer l'être comme présence. C'est la seule condition pour pouvoir dire que la vie est la mort, que la répétition et l'au-delà du principe de plaisir sont originaires et congénitaux à cela même qu'ils transgressent." Jacques Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence*, Paris, Seuil, 1997 p. 302.

26 "[...] il est donc opportun de rouvrir le texte de la Politique là où nous retrouvons une autre configuration de *zôê* et de *logos*, une autre inhérence essentielle du logos dans le vivant ou du vivant dans le *logos*, une autre *zoologie* ou une autre *logozoïe* qui se situent, qui sont censées se situer à *l'archê*, au commencement, au principe souverain de tout ce qui concerne ce qui apparaît et croît dans la lumière, la *phusis* de la lumière, *phôs* , de la vie, *zôê*, et du *logos*, de la parole." Jacques Derrida, *Séminaire La bête et le*

souverain, Tome 1, 2001-2002, Paris, Éditions Galilée, 2008, p. 418.

27 Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, *Art poétique [1674]*, éd. Claude-Joseph Drioux, Librairie classique Eugène Belin, 1887, p. 17.

28 Samuel Johnson, "Cowley", *Lives of the English Poets: Waller, Milton, Cowley [1779-1781]*, London, Cassell, 1891, p. 135-192, p. 149.

29 Among the best known can be quoted Abraham Cowley (1618-1667), John Donne (1572-1631), George Herbert (1593-1633), Henry Vaughan (1621-1695), Andrew Marvell (1621-1678), Richard Crashaw (1613-1649).

30 John Donne, *The Poems of John Donne*, vol. 1, éd. Herbert John Clifford Grierson, London, The Clarendon Press, 1912. 2 vol., p. 237.

31 Joyce James, *Finnegans Wake*, London, 1939, p. 3.

32 Thomas Stearne Eliot, "The Metaphysical Poets [1921]", in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode, London, Faber & Faber, 1975, p. 59-67, p. 64.

33 Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track [Holzwege, 1950]*, tr. Julian Young et Kenneth Haynes, Cambridge University Press, 2002, but the title of this translation is misleading, because "off the beaten track" has a positive connotation of nonconformism, which is the reverse of the German "*Holzweg*" (here in the plural, *Holzwege*), as in "*auf dem Holzweg sein*": to err, to be mistaken, to be on the wrong track.

34 Martin Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes", in *Holzwege: Gesamtausgabe, Band 5, I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1914-1970*, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1977, p. 75-114. "The Age of the World Picture", in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays [Die Frage nach der Technik (1953)]*, tr. William Lovitt, Garland, 1977, p. 115-154. Martin Heidegger, "L'époque des conceptions du monde [1938]", in *Chemins qui ne mènent nulle part [Holzwege, 1949]*, tr. Wolfgang Brokmeier, Paris, Gallimard, 2001, p. 99-146.

35 "Erstmals wird das Seiende als Gegenständlichkeit des Vorstellens und die Wahrheit als Gewißheit des Vorstellens in der Metaphysik des Descartes bestimmt. Der Titel seines Hauptwerkes lautet: 'Meditationes de prima philosophia', Betrachtungen über die erste

Philosophie. Πρώτη φιλοσοφία die von Aristoteles geprägte Bezeichnung für das, was später Metaphysik genannt wird. Die gesamte neuzeitliche Metaphysik, Nietzsche miteingeschlossen, hält sich in der von Descartes angebahnten Auslegung des Seienden und der Wahrheit". Martin Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

36 "Das anfängliche Denken als Auseinandersetzung zwischen dem erst zurückzugewinnenden ersten Anfang und dem zu entfaltenden anderen Anfang ist aus diesem Grunde notwendig." Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis), Gesamtausgabe, Band 65; III. Abteilung: Unveröffentlichte Abhandlungen Vorträge - Gedachtes*, vol. 65, éd. Friedrich-Wilhelm Von Herrmann, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 1989, p. 58, § 23. Das anfängliche Denken. Warum das Denken aus dem Anfang?.

37 *Ibidem*, p. 176, §89.

38 "Der Anfang ist das Seyn selbst als Ereignis, die verborgene Herrschaft des Ursprungs der Wahrheit des Seienden als solchen. Und das Seyn ist als das Ereignis der Anfang." *Ibidem*.

39 "Il n'y a pas de vie *d'abord* présente qui viendrait *ensuite* à se protéger, à s'ajourner, à se réserver dans la différance. [...] Il faut penser la vie comme trace avant de déterminer l'être comme présence." Jacques Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence*, Paris, Seuil, 1997 p. 302.

40 "[...] inhérence [...] du *logos* dans le vivant ou du vivant dans le *logos* ", Jacques Derrida, *Séminaire La bête et le souverain: Tome 1, 2001-2002*, Paris, Éditions Galilée, 2008, p. 418.

41 "Les loups de Rousseau ont été comme oubliés, justement, dans un livre dont je vous recommande vivement la lecture, [...] je veux dire dans *Homo sacer* de Giorgio Agamben, sous-titré *Le pouvoir souverain et la vie nue*". *Ibidem*, p. 134.

42 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer I. Le pouvoir souverain et la vie nue*, tr. Marilène Raiola, 1995, Paris, Seuil, 1997.

43 “[...] la figura di colui che è stato bandito della comunità [...] uomo-lupo e non semplicemente lupo [...] La vita del bandito — come quella dell’uomo sacro — non è un pezzo di natura ferina senz’alcuna relazione col diritto e con la città; è, invece, una soglia di indifferenza e di passaggio fra l’animale et l’uomo, la *physis* e il *nómos*, l’esclusione e l’inclusione [...]”. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer I. Il potere sovrano e la nuda vita*, Macerata, Quodlibet, 2018, (“Homo sacer. Edizione integrale 1995-2015”), p. 101.

44 “Celui de Plaute et de quelques autres précédents, puisque l’*homo homini lupus* y est, comme par tout le monde, hélas, attribué par Agamben à Hobbes”. Jacques Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

45 “[...] così, quando Hobbes fonda la sovranità attraverso il rimando all’*homo homini lupus*, nel lupo occorre saper intendere un’eco del *wargus* e del *caput lupinum* delle leggi di Edoardo il Confessore: non semplicemente fera bestia e vita naturale, ma piuttosto zona di indifferenza fra l’uomo e il ferino, lupo mannaro, uomo che si trasforma in lupo e lupo che diventa uomo: cioè bandito, *homo sacer*”. Giorgio Agamben, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

46 “Ces oublis de loups [...] sont ici d’autant plus significatifs, voire amusants, que, comme c’est régulièrement le cas chez cet auteur, son geste le plus irréprensible consiste régulièrement à reconnaître des priorités qu’on aurait méconnues, ignorées, négligées, pas su ou pas pu reconnaître, faute de savoir, faute de lecture ou de lucidité, de force de pensée — des priorités, donc, des premières fois, des initiatives inaugurales, des événements instituteurs qu’on aurait déniés ou négligés, donc, en vérité, des priorités qui sont des primautés, des principautés, des signatures principales, signées par des princes du commencement que tout le monde, sauf l’auteur bien entendu, aurait ignorées, si bien que chaque fois l’auteur de *Homo sacer* serait le premier à dire qui aura été le premier.” Jacques Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

47 “Par exemple, à la page 29, dans un chapitre qui s’intitule justement “Le paradoxe de la souveraineté,” on peut lire, qu’on en croie ou non ses yeux, je cite: “Hegel fut le premier à comprendre jusqu’au bout [...] cette structure présupposante du langage, grâce à laquelle celui-ci est immédiatement à l’extérieur et à l’intérieur de soi-même [...]”. Suit tout un paragraphe fort intéressant, et que je vous laisse lire, notamment au sujet d’un langage qui est souverain, “dans un état d’exception permanent, déclarant qu’il n’y a pas de hors-langage, qu’il est toujours au-delà de lui-même”, si bien que “dire

est toujours, en ce sens *ius dicere*”. Tout cela me paraît tellement vrai et convaincant que non seulement Hegel, qui l’a dit à sa manière, n’a pas été le premier ni le seul à le dire, mais qu’on serait en mal de trouver, et non seulement dans l’histoire de la philosophie et non seulement dans la réflexion sur le langage, quelqu’un qui ne l’a pas déjà dit ou mis en œuvre ou sous-entendu, le “jusqu’au bout” restant à déterminer et n’étant déterminé que par le dernier arrivé qui se présente comme le premier à savoir qui aura été le premier à penser quelque chose jusqu’au bout.” *Ibidem*, p. 135-136.

48 “*Il n’y a pas de hors-texte*”. Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie*, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1967, p. 227.

49 Original text: “Das vollkommene Element, worin die Innerlichkeit ebenso äußerlich als die Äußerlichkeit innerlich ist, ist wieder die Sprache [...]”, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phänomenologie des geistes*, 1807, éd. Georg Lasson, Leipzig, Verlag der Dürr’schen Buchlandlung, 1907, p. 466.

50 “Hegel ha compresso per primo fino in fondo questa struttura presupponente del linguaggio, grazie alla quale esso è, insieme, fuori e dentro se stesso e l’immediato (il non-linguaggio) si rivela essere nient’altro che un presupposto del linguaggio. ‘L’elemento perfetto — egli ha scritto nella *Fenomenologia dello spirito* —, in cui l’interiorità è altrettanto esteriore quanto l’esteriorità è interna, è il linguaggio’ (Hegel, I, pp. 527-529). [...] Il linguaggio è il sovrano che, in permanente stato d’eccezione, dichiara che non vi è un fuori lingua, che esso è sempre al di là di se stesso. La struttura particolare del diritto ha il suo fondamento in questa struttura presupponente del linguaggio umano. Essa esprime il vincolo di esclusione inclusiva cui è soggetta una cosa per il fatto di essere nel linguaggio, di essere nominata. Dire è, in questo senso, sempre *ius dicere*.” Giorgio Agamben, *op. cit.*, p. 33-34.

51 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer I. Le pouvoir souverain et la vie nue*, tr. Marilène Raiola, 1995, Paris, Seuil, 1997.

52 “[...] le souverain, s’il y en a, c’est celui qui arrive à le faire croire, au moins pour quelque temps, qu’il est le premier ou le premier à avoir su qui sera venu en premier [...]” Jacques Derrida, *Séminaire La bête et le souverain*, vol. 1, Paris, Galilée, 2008, p. 135.

53 “[...] la lecture ne doit pas se contenter de redoubler le texte, elle ne peut légitimement transgresser le texte vers autre chose que lui, vers un référent (réalité métaphysique, historique, psycho-biographique, etc.) ou vers un signifié hors texte dont le contenu pourrait avoir lieu, aurait pu avoir lieu hors de la langue, c’est-à-dire, au sens que nous donnons ici à ce mot, hors de l’écriture en général. C’est pourquoi les considérations méthodologiques que nous risquons ici sur un exemple sont étroitement dépendantes des propositions générales que nous avons élaborées plus haut, quant à l’absence du référent ou du signifié transcendantal. *Il n’y a pas de hors-texte*”. Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie*, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

54 “[...] il mitologema hobbesiano dello stato di natura [...] non è un’epoca reale, cronologicamente anteriore alla fondazione della Città, ma un principio interno a questa, che appare nel momento in cui si considera la Città *tanquam dissoluta* (dunque, qualcosa come uno stato di eccezione) [...] [*Ici s’intercale le passage précédemment étudié sur l’homo homini lupus et l’homo sacer comme bandit (bandito)*] [...] Lo stato di natura hobbesiano non è una condizione pregiuridica affatto indifferente al diritto della città, ma l’eccezione e la soglia che lo costituisce e lo abita; e non è così tanto una guerra di tutti contro tutti, quanto, più esattamente, una condizione in cui ciascuno è per l’altro nuda vita e *homo sacer*, ciascuno è, cioè, *wargus, gerit caput lupinum*. E questa lupificazione dell’uomo e ominizzazione del lupo è possibile in ogni istante nello stato di eccezione, nella *dissolutio civitatis*. “Giorgio Agamben, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

55 “Agamben, dit Derrida, au début du livre dont j’ai déjà parlé, *Homo sacer*, croit trouver une distinction entre *bios* et *zôê* qui structurera toute sa problématique”. Jacques Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

56 Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer I. Le pouvoir souverain et la vie nue*, tr. Marilène Raiola, 1995, Paris, Seuil, 1997, p. 15.

57 “[...] l’affermazione di Foucault, secondo cui per Aristotele l’uomo era un “animale vivente e, inoltre, capace di esistenza politica”, va conseguentemente integrata nel senso che problematico è, appunto, il significato di quell’ ‘inoltre’”. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer*, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

58 “Je cite : ‘La thèse de Foucault devra dès lors être corrigée, ou à tout le moins complétée [ce n’est pas du tout la même chose, mais passons sur cette stratégie ou cette rhétorique], [...]”, Jacques Derrida, *La bête et le souverain*, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

59 “Toute la stratégie démonstrative d’Agamben, ici et ailleurs, mise sur une distinction ou une exclusion radicale, claire, univoque, chez les Grecs, et chez Aristote en particulier entre la vie nue (*zôê*), commune à tous les vivants (animaux, hommes et dieux), et la vie qualifiée comme vie individuelle ou vie de groupe (*bios* : *bios theôrêtikos*, par exemple, vie contemplative, *bios apolaustikos* : vie de plaisir, *bios politikos* : vie politique). Le malheur, c’est que cette distinction n’est jamais si claire et assurée, et qu’Agamben doit lui-même admettre qu’il y a des exceptions, par exemple dans le cas de Dieu qui mène, dit la *Métaphysique* d’Aristote, une “*zôê aristê kai aidios*”, une vie noble et éternelle”. *Ibidem*.

60 “Ce qui est difficile à soutenir, dans cette thèse, c’est l’idée d’une entrée (moderne, donc) dans une zone d’indifférenciation irréductible, là où la différenciation n’a jamais été assurée, je dirais même de l’aveu au moins furtif d’Agamben ; et surtout ce qui reste encore plus difficile à soutenir, c’est l’idée qu’il y a là quelque chose de moderne et de nouveau, car Agamben lui-même, vous allez l’entendre, prenant au sérieux l’idée foucauldienne d’une bio-politique spécifiquement moderne, tient à rappeler qu’elle est aussi ancienne que possible, immémoriale et archaïque.” *Ibidem*, p. 421.

61 *Ibidem*, p. 135-136.

62 “Heidegger è stato forse l’ultimo filosofo a credere in buona fede che il luogo della *polis* — il *polos* dove regna il conflitto fra latenza e illatenza, fra l’animalitas e l’humanitas dell’uomo — fosse ancora praticabile, che — tenendosi in quel luogo rischioso — fosse ancora possibile per degli uomini — per un popolo — trovare il proprio destino storico. Egli è stato, cioè, l’ultimo a credere — almeno fino a un certo punto e non senza dubbi e contraddizioni — che la macchina antropologica, decidendo e ricomponendo ogni volta il conflitto fra l’uomo e l’animale, fra l’aperto e il nonaperto, potesse ancora produrre per un popolo storia e destino. E probabile che, a un certo punto, egli si sia accorto del suo errore, che abbia compreso che da nessuna parte una decisione che rispondesse a un invio storico dell’essere fosse possibile.” Giorgio Agamben, *L’aperto: l’uomo e l’animale*, 1. ed, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2002, p. 78.

63 James Joyce, *Ulysses*, Paris, Shakespeare and Company, 1922, p. 34.