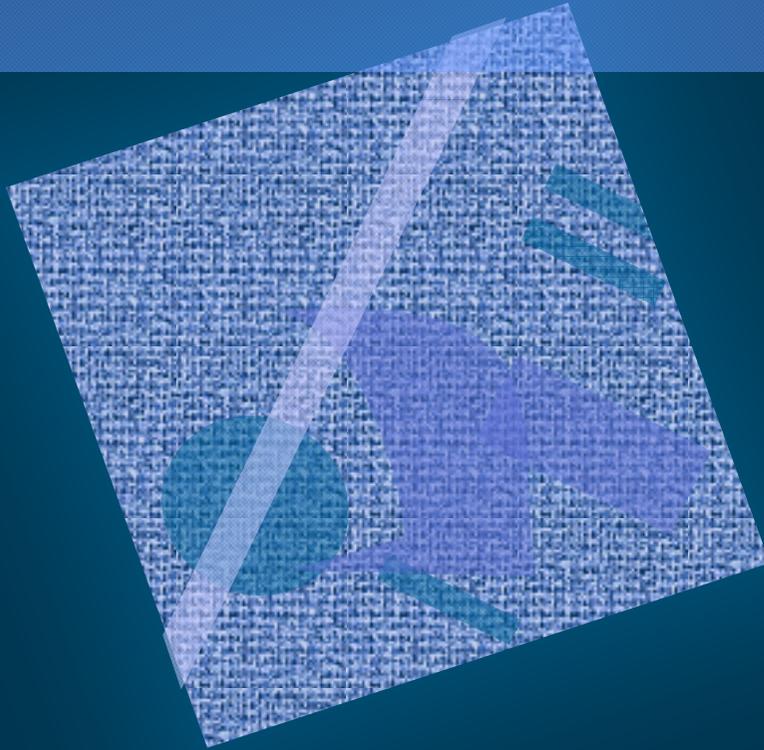


# Thoughts on Bio-Power and Death

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# § 1 Foucault



# Michel Foucault, 1926-84

- Became known as Structuralist scholar for his world-wide success of *Les Mots et les Choses*, 1966
- Taught at Collège de France from the early 1970's
- In the meantime, participated in activist-oriented work, such as research on prisons

# Things to Clarify Before Starting

- It is not necessarily a bad thing that he frequently changed his research plans and modified his recognition of the topics
- He is not a historian. Rather, he is an amateur, employing a sort of history-telling
- Admittedly, he is one of most influential philosophers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet, we should not regard every argument of his as perfect

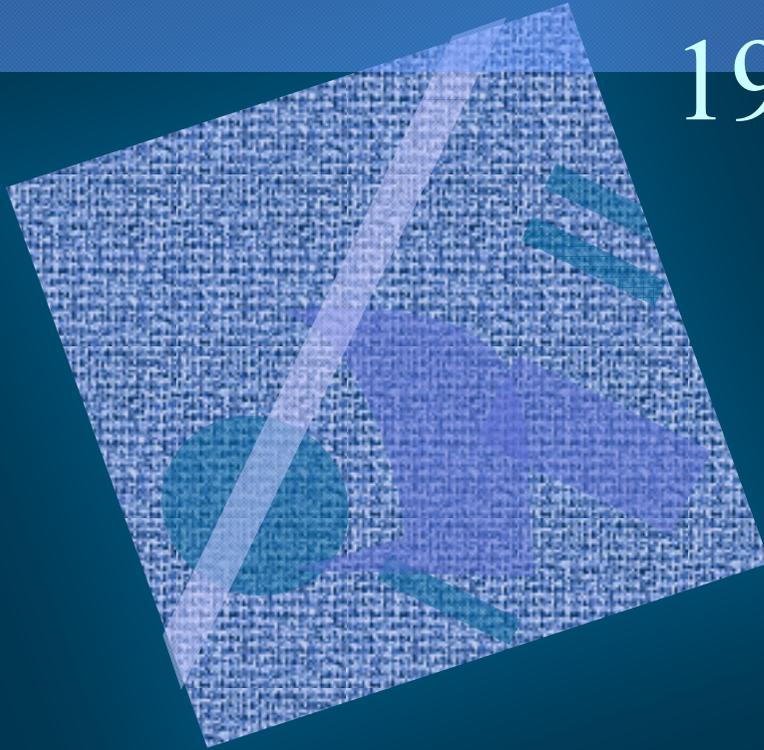
# Biopouvoir, Biopolitique

- The concepts of “biopower” and “biopolitics” are explicitly argued in *La Volonté de Savoir*, 1976 November, chapter 5, and his lecture at Collège de France, *Il Faut Défendre la Société*, 17 March 1976
- This means that these concepts were referred to for the first time in the last lecture of *Il Faut Défendre la Société*

# Relevant Information

- Lectures at Collège de France listed below
- *Sécurité, Territoire, Population*, 1977-78
- *Naissance de la Biopolitique*, 1978-79
- The second lecture, though it is titled as “Birth of Biopolitics”, does not thoroughly discuss biopolitics

The History of Sexuality,  
Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge,  
1976



# Denial of Repressive Hypothesis

- Had sexuality been repressed in the Victorian era?
- Why do we passionately discuss sexuality when repressed?
- Rather, sex is put into discourse
- Expansion of discourses on sex in execution of power
- The institutions prompt people to speak about sex

# Confession as Apparatus

- Confession is a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the present (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile. (Chapter 3)

# Scientia Sexualis

- The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have witnessed diversification of sexual behaviors and have established multiple forms of perversion
- Ars erotica vs. scientia sexualis

# Analytics of Power (Chapter 4)

- Productive effectiveness and positivity of power
- The omnipresence of power
- There is no absolute outside where power is concerned
- The existence of power relationships depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance
- Rather than referring to all the infinitesimal violence that is exerted on sex to the unique form of a great power, we must immerse the expanding production of discourses on sex in the field of multiple and mobile power relations

# Definitions in Chapter 5

- **V. Droit de mort et pouvoir sur la vie**
- For a long time, one of the characteristic privileges of sovereign power was the right to decide life and death
- faire mourir, laisser vivre
- Power was exercised mainly as a means of deduction

# Transformation of the Mechanisms of Power

- From the right of death to administering life
- faire vivre ou rejeter dans la mort
- Power shifted its focus from juridical system to biological processes of body, to the regulation of the population
- The main role of power shifted from putting people to death to ensure, sustain, and multiply life

# Faire vivre ou rejeter dans la mort

- Starting in the 17th century, this power over life evolved in two basic forms;
- ① anatomo-politique du corps humain
- ② une bio-politique de la population

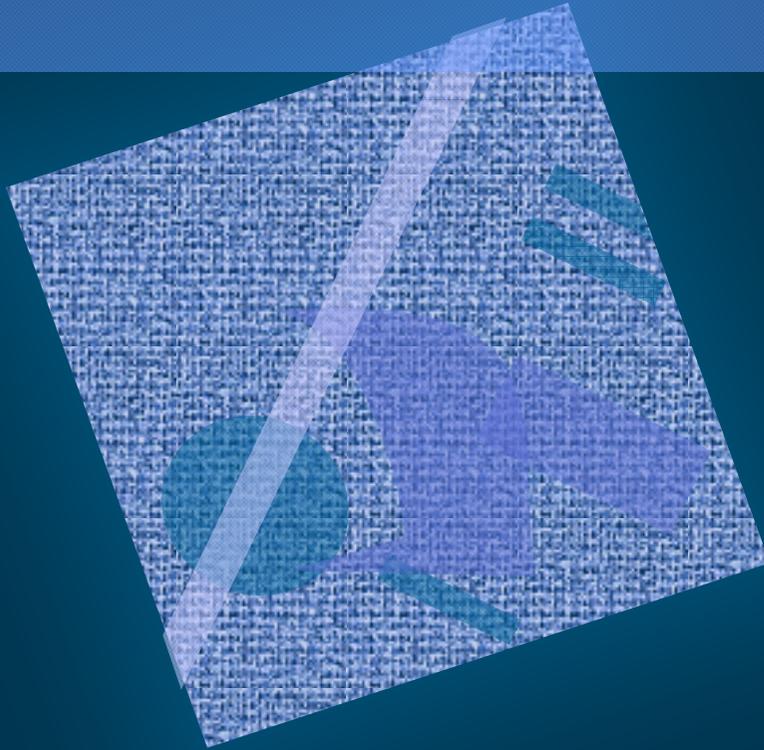
# Two Forms

- ① an anatomo-politics of the human body: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the disciplines
- ② A biopolitics of the population: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause entire series of interventions and regulatory controls
- Pay attention to the concept of population

# Calculated Administration of Life

- The right of sovereignty to no longer be dealing with death, but with living beings
- Administration of the body, calculated gestation of life
- The beginning of the are of bio-pouvoir (No distinct definition is provided to differentiate biopolitics from biopower at this point)

*Il Faut Défendre la Société, 1997*



## *Il Faut Défendre la Société*

- The course consists of 11 lectures from January 7th - March 17th, 1976
- *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* was published in November of this year. It is estimated that he gave the lecture right after completing his book
- This year's lectures marks a watershed in his course of work

# Turning Points in His Career

- *Il Faut Défendre la Société* Lecture from January-March, 1976
- *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* February, 1975
- *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, November, 1976
- This period roughly corresponds to his preparation time for *The History of sexuality Volume.1* after his success with *Discipline and Punish*
- He reflected on his accomplishments and sought for change

# Introduction of the First Lecture

- (January 7, 1976)
- He was at a loss, putting on a show in front of an anonymous audience
- Frustrated with his previous work, he was trying to put an ending point for his projects over the past 4 or 5 years

# Power / War

Is an uneconomical analysis of power possible?

If power evolves within a power relationship, shouldn't its analysis employ the words of struggle, confrontation and war?

- Is power repression?
- Is power war?
- Power is a continuation of war by other means

# Reversal of Clausewitz

- Politics is a continuation of war by other means  
Cf “war is a continuation of politics by other means”  
(Clausewitz, *On War*)
- Upon attempting to abandon the economic framework, theory of power faces the following two hypotheses
- Power equals repression (By Reich)
- Power is a relation of force (By Nietzsche)

# His future prospects (didn't come true)

- (January 14th, 1976)
- He had hoped to undertake a study on war, discussing whether war can be a principle in analyzing power relationship
- He had worked on theories of discipline for the past five years since the beginning of his career at Collège de France. For the next five years, he wished to do studies on war, struggle and the military.

# Last Lecture March 17th, 1976

- Identified the control of life as an important phenomenon in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Administration of human as living beings by power
- Nationalization of biological beings

# Power Over Life and Death

- Traditional sovereign theory: power over life and death consists one of fundamental rights of power
- *faire mourir et laisser vivre*
- Sovereign power cannot let live as it kills = unbalance
- Sovereign power can only be executed when it kills
- Essentially, power is the right to kill, symbolized by the sword

# Emergence of a New Form of Power

- Supplementation by a new form of power
- Faire vivre et laisser mourir
- Disciplinary technology of labor in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: the technology of power which concentrates on individual body
- Pouvoir disciplinaire

# A Newer Form of Power

- In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a newer, non-disciplinary power technology emerged
- This non-disciplinary new power technology is applied not to the body but to life
- This technology targets human beings, (as a) species

# Biopolitics

- In this case, human being is not regarded as a mere body. Biopolitics perceives lives of numerous human as a large mass with a series of unique processes such as birth, death, production and disease
- Emphasis on collectivization rather than individuality
- Highlights human species rather than human body
- Emergence of the biopolitics of human species in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century

# Targets

- Matter of Interests: percentage of births and deaths, birth rate, propagation of the population
- The birth of demography, providing the statistics for such phenomenon
- Propagation and mortality rate are also important

# Transformation of Topology of Diseases of Interest

- More interests in endemic disease than in epidemics
- Expensive treatment, decrease of strength
- Disease as constant death that sneaks in, undermines and diminishes and weakens life rather than critical diseases such as epidemics

# Public Health

- Medicine as Public Health
- Aging
- Accident, impairment
- Arrangement of insurance, saving and security by biopower
- Artificial environment is taken into consideration

# Population

- This new technology, population = a large amount of body, which is hard to count
- Biopolitics concerns population

Study targets collective phenomenon. It studies a series of fortuitous events in the continuum of population

# Coordination

- Measures: calculation, statistical evaluation, inclusive measures
- Development of coordinating mechanism
- Optimization of the status of life by arranging safety mechanism that deals with fortuity within the population
- Aims at securing the balance and regularity through inclusive mechanism rather than approaching individuals through its particularity

# Transformation of the Position of Death

- From the right to death to optimization of life and administration of accidents, fortuity and defect
- Death means the ending and limit of power
- Death locates itself the outside of power
- Death gets marginalized in the public sphere and turns back to the private sphere

# D and B

- Disciplinary technology of body D
- Coordinating technology of life (biopolitics) B
- D (discipline) = Coordination of individual body through surveillance and training
- Since it was easy to realize, it was widely adopted at schools, hospitals, barracks and factories
- B (biopolitique) is harder to realize

# D and B

- D: body, organism, discipline, institutions
- B: population, biological processes, coordinating mechanisms, nation
- Discipline and coordination do not exist on the same level, therefore they are not exclusive to each other. They can work together
- Take sex phenomenon as an example

# Significance of Medicine

- Two approaches to sex: Individual discipline = criticism of masturbation etc./ collective level = genetic decline, deterioration
- Significance of medicine in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: medicine deals with body and population, organism and the biological processes. Therefore, it is power and knowledge that have both disciplinary and coordinating effects

# Atomic Power & Life Manipulation

- Atomic power possibility to diminish life: overpower of sovereignty over biopower
- Exuberance of life, creation of life, creation of monsters, creation of the unmanageable, destructive virus, biopower goes beyond the realm of human sovereignty

# How Does the Biopower Murder?

- How does such a disciplinary biopower kill?
- Intervention of racism
- The emergence of biopower made nation integrates racism into its mechanism

# Racism

- Racism = a way to draw the boundaries between lives, for which power is responsible. It determines which life to live and die
- Racism initiates the war-style relation (if you want to live, you need to kill) in a new form
- It is rather a biological relation than a military, war or political relation

# Nazism

- Nazism marks the peak of the new power mechanism that has been in place since the
- No nation had been more disciplinary than N
- No nation had emphasized the value of biological coordination than N
- Meanwhile, the traditional sovereign power (the right to kill) was liberated in the most perfect form

# Unusualness of Nazism

- Unusualness of Nazism
- Undoubtedly, this is the society which generalized biopower. It is also the society which generalized the sovereign power to kill
- Traditional mechanism, which authorizes the nation to kill or let its citizens live, bears resemblance to the mechanism of biopower, which centers around discipline and coordination

# Summary

- D and B
- It is hard to distinguish whether power is directed at body or life
- It can be argued that Foucault's studies on prison and madness represents a part of his works on biopower and biopolitics

# Summary

- Therefore, the difference between D and B should not be seen as absolute
- Foucault moved onto his next themes without fully developing the theory of biopower

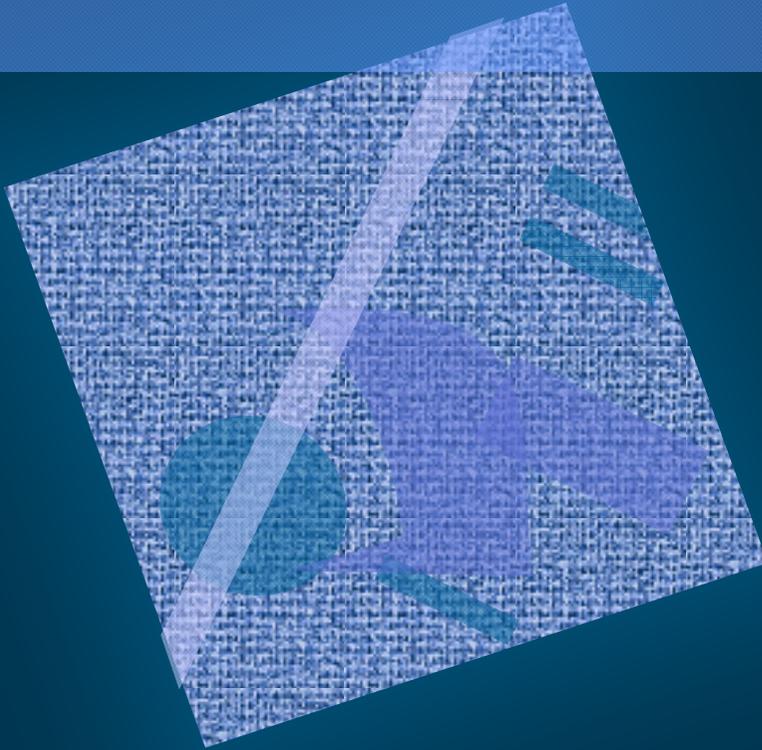
# *After The Birth of Biopolitics*

- *On the Government of the Living*, 1979-80  
Uncompleted lectures
- From the next year, his interests center around the analysis of self and subject, mainly focusing on Greek Philosophy
- *Subjectivity and Truth*, 1980-1
- *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 1981-2
- *The Government of Self and Others*, 1982-3
- *The Courage of Truth*, 1983-4

# Biopower Left Undeveloped

- His theory on biopower did not receive enough appreciation in the 1990's, after his death in 1984

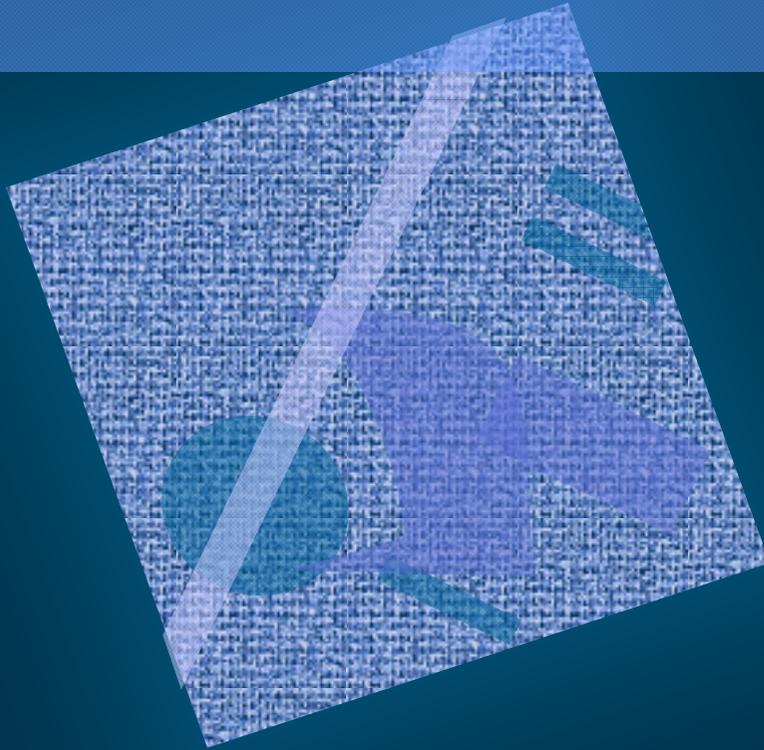
## § 2 Negri



# Antonio Negri, 1933-

- After his major success with *Empire* (2000), co-authored with Hardt, Negri became known throughout the world as a Marxist scholar
- Originally from Italy
- Marxism + French contemporary philosophy (Deleuze, Foucault, Derrida)
- The most prominent example of contemporary Marxism

# Background



# Liveliness of Italian Contemporary Philosophy

- Croce, Gentile in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Eco, Semiotic and his intellectual novel
- In the 1980's
- Vattimo, Cacciari... known among intellectuals
- After the 1990's
- Negri, Agamben, Virno, Esposito etc.

# Unique Career

Became known as a theorist in the anti-communist left-wing movement in the mid-1960's

- In the 1970's (1974-1978) Provides theoretical ground to the Autonomist movement (acquiring the autonomy in factory/ street, strike, occupying empty houses, pirate broadcasting)
- Accused of the murder of Aldo Moro in 1978, arrested and imprisoned in 1979

# Imprisonment, Asylum, Return, Imprisonment, Release

- In 1983, he was elected to parliament while still in prison. After being released from prison, he sought asylum in France (1983-97)
- Returned to Italy in 1997, back to prison
- Finally released in April, 2003

# Evaluation of Foucault's last Writings

- Foucault's last writings are of exceptional importance. They outline a 'strong' figure of political intervention in life and a laboratory of transformative praxis. Genealogy here loses every weak feature; epistemology becomes 'constitutive', ethics assumes 'transformative' dimensions. (*Empire and Beyond*, 232)

Linkage with Foucault's theory of biopolitics

# Post Modernity and Biopolitics

- We define post modernity as a situation where the antagonistic relationship of capital dominates all social relationships, all nexuses of life, whether in production, culture or ways of living.
- Total control of capital over life

# An Attempt to Critique Postmodernism

- Some people simply regarded this process ironically without recognizing what is actually happening in reality. It was a beautiful era, but an irresponsible era as well
- With prevalent philosophical and historical revisionism, aesthetic-looking interpretation of Heideggerian grave ontology came into fashion in this era.
- Cf *il pensiero debole* (G.Vattimo, P.A.Rovatti, 1992)

# Critique of Totalitarian Socialism

- Disapproval of socialist states in the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Claims that Marx has nothing to do with such nations
- (Upon the fall of the Berlin Wall) Claus and I drank quite a bit that night, completely happy that this gross and totalitarian socialism was finally finished
- (*Goodbye Mr. Socialism*, 10)

# *Empire*

- A.Negri & M.Hardt, *Empire*, 2000
- Manifesto of the Communist Party in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- A.Negri, *Il potere costituente*, 1992 (*Insurgencies; constituent power and the modern state*, 1999)
- A.Negri, *Fabrique de porcelaine*, 2006 (*The Porcelain Workshop: For a New Grammar of Politics*, 2008)

# Empire

- Globalization of economic and cultural exchanges
- Along with the global market and global circuits of production has emerged a global order, a new logic and structure of rule—in short, a new form of sovereignty. Empire is the political subject that effectively regulates these global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world.
- (*Empire*, xi)

# Resistance

- Resistance through a variety of means (refusal of labor)
- Evaluation of unique forms of activism
- The core of Negri's philosophy lies in its activist features rather than the analytical concepts employed

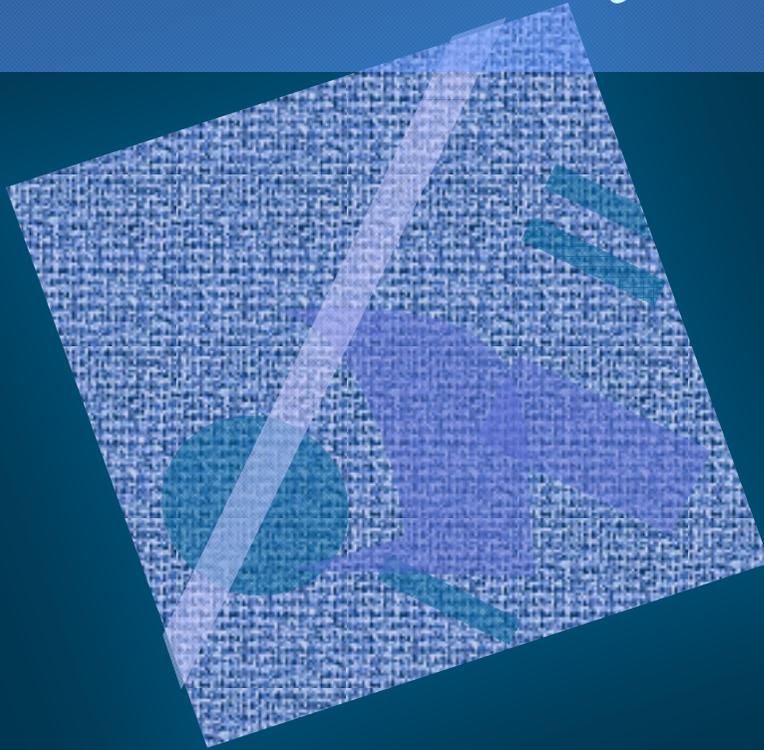
# Evaluation of Activism

- Zapatista (a guerrilla group based in Chiapas, Mexico)
- Movement to protest against the elimination of tariffs on US imports by NAFTA
- Background: structural discrimination against native Americans
- Deprivation of developing countries by neoliberalism
- Postmodern revolutionary movement (usage of internet)

# Evaluation of Activism

- Major strike in 1995, caused by the retirement reform plan. People gathered at bus stops and discussed
- Seattle, 1999 WTO meeting: anti-globalization protesters gathered from all over the world and carried out intensive demonstrations

# Key Concepts



# Socialized Worker

- Multitudinous rebellion after 1968, Autonomia movement in 1970's
- Computerization of factories
- Spread of information networks
- Factories increases their influence within society

# Socialized Worker

- The central axis of productive labor is no longer limited to factory workers. It is diversified and dispersed into the service sector and information process work
- This new subject came to be known as the socialized worker
- Cf. *The Politics of Subversion*, 1989

# Immaterial Labour

- Labour that creates immaterial labour, such as intellectual, communicative, relational and affective reactions
- 1) Mainly intellectual, communicative labour that requires problem-solving, symbolic and analytical operation, language expression, etc.
- 2) Affective labour

# Immaterial Labour

- It is clear that the notion of immaterial labour is not simply a redefinition of old-style productive labour but a biopolitical concept of new intensity. Immaterial labour is an amalgam between productive labour and ways of life. It is the multitudinarian ensemble of multiple singularities, of multiple differences
- (*Empire and Beyond*, 6)

# Multitude

- M ≠ people, mass
- People is a single unit, while M is plural
- mass is an unidentifiable chunk. M lives various social difference as such

# How about Biopolitics?

- Socialized workers, immaterial labour: Biopolitics invests every economic, cultural and political aspect of every social life and produces it
- To emphasize this situation, he uses “biopolitical production”

# Biopower & Biopolitics

- These two concepts are not strictly differentiated by Foucault
- In general, Negri uses biopower negatively and biopolitics positively
- Biopower towers as sovereign authority over the society and orders from above. On the contrary, biopolitical production inhabits within the society and creates various social relations and social forms through collaborative forms of labour. (*Multitude*)

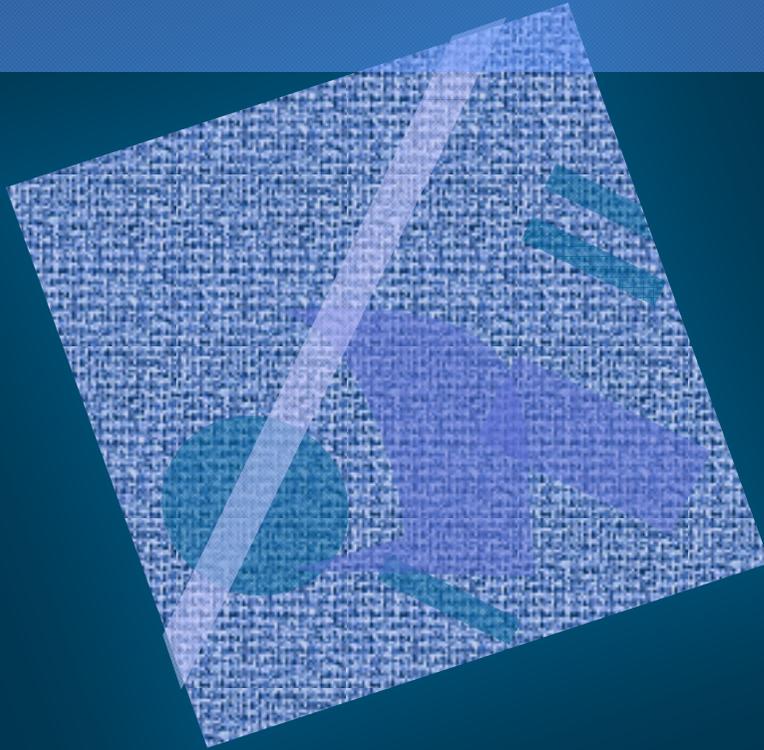
# Biopower vs. Biopolitics

- Biopower: Empire
- Biopolitics: various resistance against Empire by multitude

# Summary

- Activist feature is essential in Negri's argument
- His analytical concepts are not necessarily primary
- Although the concept of biopower is frequently used, he uses it in the relation to the Marxist political goals
- The definition gets even more expanded from its original, polysemous meaning <sup>71</sup>

# § 3 Agamben



# Giorgio Agamben, 1942-

- Originally specialized in aesthetics
- *The Man without Content*, 1970 Theory of aesthetics and art
- *Stanzas*, 1977
- *Infancy and History*, 1978
- *The End of Thinking*, 1982
- *Language and Death*, 1982
- *Idea of Prose*, 1985

# Contemporary Evolvment of Political Science

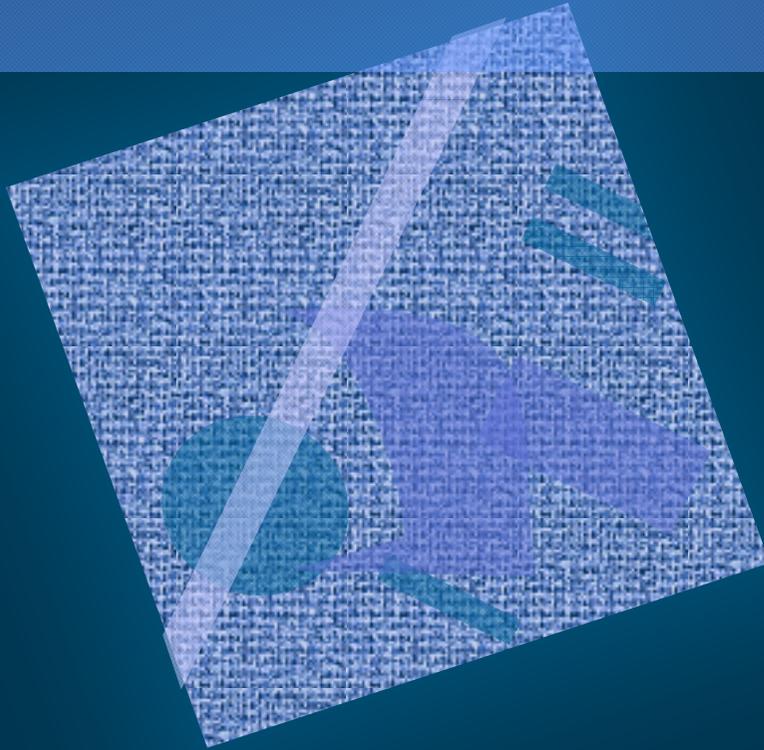
- Upon the dramatic change of world's political systems, he expands his study arena after *The coming Community* (1990)
- Plays a key role in contemporary political science
- Extensive knowledge in many disciplines. It is impossible to understand all of his arguments

# Bibliography

Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, Torino, Einaudi, 1995. (*Homo Sacer*, 1998)

- Idem, State of Exception, *Stato di eccezione*, Torino, Bollati Borlinghieri, 2003. (*State of Exception*, 2005)
- Idem, *Quel che resta di Auschwitz*, Torino, Bollati Borlinghieri, 1998. (*Remnants of Auschwitz*, 2002)

With Focus on “Homo Sacer”



# Two Concepts of Life in Greek Philosophy

- ζωη (zoe) vs. βιος (bios)
- Bios: a qualified life, a particular way of life, a meaningful with its own life story
- Zoe: on the contrary, zoe means a life with its minimum function. Biological life confined in the private sphere
- Cf “labor” by Arendt”

# To Live Well

- In the classical world, simple natural life is excluded from the *polis* in the strict sense, and remains confined – as merely reproductive life – to the sphere of the *oikos*, “home”
- Zen (life) and eu zen (a good life) cf *Politics* by Aristotle

# Zoe in the Polis

- The entry of zoe into the sphere of the *polis* – the politicization of bare life as such – constitutes the decisive event of modernity and signals a radical transformation of the political-philosophical categories of classical thought
- Only the reflection that questions the subject of the relations between bare life and politics contributes to pulling out political matters from the darkness and retain practical duties of thinking

# One Sort of Paradox

- In the classical Greek sense, zoe “bare life” is not political
- The important subject in contemporary political science is reflection on how zoe forms itself when introduced to the political platform.

# Sextus Pompeius Festus

- *On the Significance of Words*

“The sacred man (homo sacer) is the one whom the people have judged on account of a crime. It is not permitted to sacrifice this man, yet he who kills him will not be condemned for homicide; in the first tribunitian law, in fact, it is noted that if someone kills the one who is sacred according to the plebiscite, it will not be considered homicide. This is why it is customary for a bad or impure man to be called sacred.”

(“*Homo Sacer*, Chapter 2)

# Homo Sacer

- Cf In the Roman era, a soldier took an oath that he will be sacred (expelled from the community) if he doesn't complete his duties
- Examples of misconduct include; move the boundary stones, harm father, commit injustice to guests etc

# The Paradox of Subjectivity (Chapter 1)

- The sovereign simultaneously exists both outside and inside of the lawful order
- The order of law allows the sovereign to have the authority of announcing the status of exception and suspending the effect of order. In this sense, the sovereign exists outside of the lawful order while belonging to it. The decision whether the constitution will be fully suspended depends on him.
- Cf Schmitt “Sovereign is he who decides on the exception”

# To Modern Homo Sacer

- What does homo sacer look like in the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

# Life Unworthy of Living

- lebensunwertes Leben
- Cf. Karl Binding & Alfred Hoche,
- *Die Freigabe der Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens*, Leipzig, Felix Meiner, 1920.

*(The Authorization for the Destruction of Life Unworthy of Life)*

- Binding was a lawyer, Hoche was a doctor

# Who is?

- 1: Terminal patients with incurable cancer, terminal tuberculosis, critical injury etc.
- 2: Patients with incurable intellectual disabilities and dementia
- 3: People in between the above categories, such as an unconscious patient with critical injury (similar to persistent vegetative state)
- Intervention to condition 2 is strongly supported based on sympathy and economic restraint. (combination of “mercy killing” and economic reasons)

# The Effect of Theories of “Life Unworthy of Living”

- The book drew lots of attention after its publication in the Weimar era, but responses were mainly negative
- But the ideas were reflected in the Nazi euthanasia program (1939-). (though some argue that it did not have a direct link)
- Leads to elimination of people with intellectual disabilities
- Provided technical and institutional preparation for the Holocaust

# Euthanasia

- Hitler's euthanasia program
- Sovereign power determines the fate of “bare life”
- In the case of euthanasia, people separate zoe from bios in other people's lives and forms a life that can be murdered, such as “bare life”

# High Altitude Experiments

- They conducted human experimentation to solve air pressure problem in aircraft. There was a low pressure chamber in Dachau, Versuchepersonen
- Altitudes of up to 12,000 metres
- “In 4 min, VP started to sweat and shake the head. In 5 min, VP began cramped and in 6-10 min, respiration got faster and VP lost consciousness. In 10-13, respiration reduced to three times per minute, then stopped completely. During that time, the face presented the state of cyanosis and water came out of mouth”

# Der Muselmann

- Homo sacer is a pure zoe
- From the report of Primo Levi: “Muslims” stands for people who lost all consciousness and personality and fall in absolute exhaustion out of humiliation, fright and fear in concentration camps
- Due to extreme hunger, people's posture look like praying Muslims (QCR)
- Muslims were avoided even in films

# Place of Muslims

- “Walking corpses”, “Living dead”, “Mummy-men”
- Those who live on the border of life and death
- Non-men who march and labour in silence, the divine spark dead within them
- There exists a point where human beings stop being human though they will still look like human. That point is Muslims, and the concentration camp offers a suitable place for them.

# Homo Sacer in Today's World

- Life unworthy of living
- Targets of euthanasia
- Patients diagnosed with brain death
- Prisoners in Nazi concentration camps
- In particular, those who were used for human experimentation (=Muslims)

# Summary

- Attention and control over life
- The limit of biopower: zoe, “bare life”, which is deprived of bios
- Determination and control of zoe
- From biopolitics to the politics concerning death