Griot: Revista de Filosofia
ISSN: 2178-1036
griotrevista@gmail.com
Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia
Brasil

Costa, William
Life as a (bio)political input: critical genealogies of Michael Foucault and Giorgio Agamben
Griot: Revista de Filosofia, vol. 21, no. 1, 2021, pp. 261-282
Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia
Brasil

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31977/grirfi.v21i1.2164

Griot : Revista de Filosofia, Amargosa - BA, v.21, n.1, p.261-282, fevereiro, 2021 ISSN 2178-1036
https://doi.org/10.31977/grirfi.v21i1.2164
Recebido: 19/11/2020 | Aprovado: 19/01/2021
Received: 11/19/2020 | Approved: 01/19/2021

LIFE AS A (BIO)POLITICAL INPUT: CRITICAL GENEALOGIES OF MICHAEL FOUCAULT AND GIORGIO AGAMBEN

William Costa[1]
Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS)
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2726-161X
E-mail: william_19costa@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT:
The present work means to analyze the relation between politics and life throughout Michael Foucault's and Agamben's critical-conceptual articulations. That way, we try to explain the following question: to what extent and under which arguments is it possible to reflect upon the politics over the biological human life taking as reference Foucault's and Agamben's thesis and even finding a connection between both? We hypothesize that: (1) it is possible to acknowledge the discovery of politics over life back at the Greco-Roman world, linking the bio politics to the Western political structure; (2) while having its spectrum projected in the Age of Antiquity, bio-politics blossomed within the Modern history, since the appearance of medico-social categories and the realizations around the human life potentiality. To inspect the underlying theme of the question, our text is organized in three different moments: first, we go through Foucault's perception of bio-politics and its connections to the human life; next, we observe how Agamben proposes his thesis and which arguments he makes use of to sustain his statements; and lastly, we present a liaison between both thesis, putting forward how they connected themselves within a research hypothesis.

KEYWORDS: Agamben; Bio-Politics; Foucault; Life.

[1] Doutorando em Filosofia Social e Política na Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS), São Leopoldo – RS, Brasil. Bolsista do(a): Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES), Brasil.

Introduction

Human life was not always important for the political means as we read from Michael Foucault. It would be only in the transition from the XVIII to the XIX century, with its medico-social waves and demographic concerns that the perspectives about it were redirected. The discursive production that brought in the "discovery" of the man and the Human Sciences, paved an important archeological way in the field of technical knowledge, but in the genealogical field, it was the insertion of populations in the context of cities that legitimated a paradigmatic change around the government management of the human life. Foucault's thesis profiles this horizontal axis. That is, understanding the management of life since the Christian practices, going through the anatomo-disciplinary view of the bodies, until the discovery of the living subject-object, the French thinker circumscribes his argumentative support in the systematic analysis of the economic management of life by the government practices. Foucault's researches threshold, often pervasive, is the explicitness of the bio-politics optics that converts the "make die, let live" into "make live, let die". All of his hypothetical constructions lies on the deep analyses of the practices used for the management of the human life and how such management merges politics and biology. The nexus examined by Foucault intends to delimitate the origins of the critical reason that no longer despises human life, but take it as the most important input for the maintenance of the political power. The bio-politics, according to him, is the power over life, over the living man, over the biological inputs - the more profitable and useful resources to be kept and invested in through the bio-politics optics. Make live means, therefore, taking the living being to the highest of his biological potency, leaving him to death whenever he is no more profitable nor productive.

Foucault's statement about the bio-politics marks in the XIX century, while very well substantiated, is one of the main Giorgio Agamben's critical points. Even having the first reinforced the interpretations of the latter, specially when it comes to the conceptual phenomenon, Agamben's work consists of reassessing the hidden plots of History to dig deeper on the political practices with the intent to whether attest or reformulate Foucault's thesis. We believe that the background hypothesis that made Agamben in need to confront Foucault's goes around the contact the Italian thinker had with Hannah Arendt researches. Agamben, as a contemporary researcher, came across the rich analysis of the German philosopher about the totalitarian regimes and concentration camps, and when he discovered Foucault and got philosophically interested in him, he merged both thesis, pointing holes in both. The savagery taking place in the camps that Agamben emphasizes as a set of bio-political mutation, was driven by Arendt's critical examination. What she missed, however, was to understand that series of phenomenon through a bio-politics point of view. Even with Foucault's conceptual examination of the bio-politics inside the government practices, Agamben was still not satisfied. Neglecting the might of the sovereign power, Foucault took a very close look at the Nazism and the Stalinism, but failed to reach out to the bio-politics stupor: the camps. And not only so, he limited himself to grant the origins of the bio-politics to the XIX century, ignoring practices in the Antiquity that could have been read as a conceptual dimension of the government practices.

Agamben's reinterpretation over the bio-politics paradigm made him question another thesis. Even being critical of Foucault's and Arendt's possible interpretations, the Italian thinker traverses an extensive genealogical trail in which, in our point of view, translates itself into a converging reflection, still critical, along with his reading of both speakers. For that matter, Agamben's and Foucault's thesis, Arendt's aside for now, subtly communicate with one another

about the discovery of the politics influence over the human life. Every aspect of such reflection marches along with the merging of politics and biology, in a context of multiple genealogies and pluralistic views. The possibility of inducing a reinterpretation of Foucault's thesis about bio-politics by Agamben is not only about the discourse analysis. His effort is focused in supporting and contesting Foucault's investigation by adding his and others' thoughts. To what extent such interpretations make sense is to be observed and also problematized with the intent to comprehend each thesis accurately to perceive argumentative nuances that ground them and the possible particular inconsistencies and holes of each of these authors considerations. Therefore, we aim to meet their views; that is to say, examining Agamben's and Foucault's thesis about the discovery of the politics over the human life and their arguments to sustain straightly or not their own positions. Thus, we seek to investigate both perspectives basing ourselves inherently in their researches and then articulate them critically in order to raise the hypothesis that, even going different ways, both can complement themselves. Our study is organized in three different moments: (i) first, we seek to understand carefully Foucault's writings about the discovery of politics over biologic life. We carry out this moment showing that Foucault followed the genealogy of the government practices over life, starting with the Christian pastoral, taking the XIX century as the correct historical period of the given discovery and the advent of bio-politics; (ii) second, we mean to profile, as with the former, Agamben's thesis about the discovery of politics over life. From our reading of Foucault's writings, we intend to show how the Italian thinker comes up with strict criticism to the French author and tries to have them corrected through his own and - also criticized by him - Hannah Arendt's articulations; (iii) in the third and last moment, our efforts go with connecting and articulating both thesis, hypothesizing that, while Agamben is an extremely important Foucault's bio-politics spokesman, we must evaluate both thesis meticulously, once they walk similar but not identical ways. We aim to point that these different interpretations can be read from a philosophical junction of themselves, so we may have a more critical and effective perception of bio-politics.

1. Considerations on the genealogy of power and the governementalization of the biologic life in Michael Foucault's: the discovery of human life

"For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question" (FOUCAULT, 1976a, p. 188). Foucault's writings corroborate an important insight into the philosophical horizon of modernity: the discovery of man as a correlate of his living biology. This sentence opens the way to the discovery of something entirely new in the object of the empirical science and, moreover, makes room for a breakthrough and an essential shaping in the way life came to be understood within government practices, especially from the XVIII and XIX centuries on. Foucault's work projects itself into Aristotle's fertile field. In spite of this choice, the French thinker seems willingly to demarcate an essential point: if all treaties that, in one way or another, feel the link between politics and life are debtors of Aristotelianism, an accurate investigation must take place to somehow try to extract prominent sparks to realize what exactly in modernity is unfolding under the expansive figure of bio-politics.

Following the clues left by Foucault, considering he does not adhere to an examination of the Aristotelian work for explanatory purposes, it can be believed that Foucault's stares directly into a possible thread between *Politics* and *De Anima* - in order to extract the nexus between

politics and life, Foucault finds the epistemic ties in *Politics;* on the other hand, he can find in *De Anima* a profound analysis of life within a biological dimension. The essence of the matter, however, is to converge both works, or rather realize about what biological life can be compared to within the political universe which Aristotle introduces. Contrary to it, life in the reflective universe of the Greeks adds to a treatise composed of detailed analysis of the functional biology of the human soul and a set of characteristics that corroborate the peculiar distinction between men and other animals. Minding that, Foucault's reading completes a critical cycle in spite of how, there, at that historical moment, life was only a marginal object within theoretical and practical considerations. In this bias, the fundamental concerning about the soul, which would tend to employ functions and activities from the simplest to the most developed - such as rationality, for example - guides the center of investigations of ancient thinkers to the stratum of what, within animal bodies, could arouse from a metaphysical use, a philosophical treatise of natural essence.

The meaning used by Foucault in the statement we take as the starting note, revolves around this assumption. That is, Aristotle perceives the meaning of life only through the natural axis; so only after such dominium, there is the possibility of political existence and acquiescence of the famous phrase that goes *"the man is by nature a political animal"* (*ho ánthropos phýsei politikón zôon*) (ARISTOTLE, 1253a 9-10). However, the gap between politics and biology cannot, in light of Foucault's view of the ancient world, circumscribe the practical thread of action within the bio-politics' own field. That is so because, firstly, the projection of the bio-political theme needs a clear look on how life is, simultaneously, a biological and political input in itself, and how such input suffers interference from axioms as a more productive mean for constant movement within the optics of power. As Foucault fathoms, both the Greek and Roman worlds tend to a different perception; they are restricted to the exercise of biology and politics' analysis from a naturalistic and social construction outlook and that can be evidenced through its optics of power and its close connection to the natural relations.[2] Another crucial factor about it that discerns some distance from the classical world is the homogenous notion of politics as a theory of virtuous principles and demeanours. Early works about politics are very good for understanding the science behind States, but they don't offer a completely accurate view of government practices and their inherent web of articulation.

By taking this genesis as a starting point, Foucault does not neglect how government practices have been composed over the centuries. The Greeks' first notion of politics, strongly led by the teleological sense and self-autonomy, is quickly set aside in order for him to assay the emergence of governments and their practices of life-management. Before reaching the thrust of bio-politics and governmentality, Foucault's genealogy went a long way: first, going through the pastoral practices, he wanders around the pre-Christian and then Christian eastern world, and from it he extracts a model erected by the shepherd-king figure, responsible for organizing a typical pastoral power and for directing the conscience and souls of his "sheep" (FOUCAULT, 2004a, p. 127-128). The pastoral power carefully managed to control the whole and the individual

[2] Through a close examination of Aristotle's various works, it is possible to understand - to live up to Foucault's view -, that the Greek thinker means to demonstrate how the political (science) is developed. From those assemble politics - that is, men -, Aristotle traces how they are constituted and how they act and deliberate in the practical and theoretical world. This reference, when compared in the realm of power, also reveals some natural dynamics: Aristotle enunciates power relations - and it can be observed in both *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* - through the relations immanent to the natural form. Analysing the building of the city, for instance, the thinker defines the division of natural power: there is between the *polis* and the *oikos,* organic means of power for each; in the *polis* there is the politician and the king, and in the house there are the *oikonomos* and the *despotés*. (ARISTOTLE, I, 12 1259a 38).

(*omnes et singulatim*). The shepherd, who wields his power over the flock rather than over the earth, knows the whole of "sheep" and each of their individuality: every life matters the same to him and he is in charge of running and sacrificing for the meadow of those lives. The pastor's government limits the freedom of his herd. He imposes boundaries and expects his followers to follow him and confess their wrongs and hurdles (FOUCAULT, 2004a, p. 133). This art of the arts (*technè technôn*) had as its scope a specific control over the lives of the heard: it sought to know the subjectivity of each individual and shape their relationships with their own conscience (FOUCAULT, 1994, p. 548-549).

The pastoral power goes on throughout the civilisation until the 16th century, where the age of conduct, age of leadership, age of the governments start[3] (FOUCAULT, 2004a, p. 236). The spiritual counsellor's power is conveyed to the sovereign monarch, who in turn, constitutes a much sharper relational game over human life, which is seen, for now, from a vertical sphere completely limited by the social contract. The bond between men and subjects with their ruler runs through the institutional sieve of the State. Comparing to the pastoral practices, there is no care or sacrifice in order to look after other's lives. The sovereign builds a bridge over his power and his mindfulness towards his subjects. To the subjects, such care is only reachable through the institutional bond set in the administrative apparatus of the territorial monarchy (LEMKE, 2016, p. 10). This sovereign political unity - that Foucault believes to stem initially from the medieval legal practices (FOUCAULT, 1997, p. 29-30),- is lively projected from the 16th century until the beginning of the 18th. Foucault's main conjecture about sovereignty revolves around the rationality of power and its correlation with the government. Through the French thinker's optics, sovereign power extends the political dimension of the State and yet, it blocks, not entirely although, government's multiplicity[4].The obstacle to the development of the government by the sovereign, tensions the interests of the State's core and its administration - still very much connected with the management of the territorial wealth. The sovereign is a ruler concerned with the internal turmoil and with the unfolding of his interests, and this implies the regal mastery over all that can, in any way, limit his power.

Regarding this unity of sovereign powers, as opposed to governmental practices which are emerging and contrasting to monarchical barriers, Foucault's emphasis on the sovereignty theory draws attention to the inner meaning which such concept exposes. In his interpretation, the sovereign power in modernity brings with itself this peculiar trait of spreading forms of rationality applied around the paradox that compounds sovereignty. The sovereign paradox in the light of Foucault's thesis crosses the conceptual sense of *patria potestas* - a right granted to Roman families' parents to dispose the lives of their children and slaves (THOMAS, 1984, p. 502), with the modern condition of power and in order to argue about the peculiar form of how sovereignty is constituted. According to Foucault, what demarcates the condition of sovereignty in modernity is an underlying view on what the classical authors (Hobbes and Locke, for instance) stressed about the social contract when it comes to the sovereign figure. To him, the vertical view on the modern sovereignty brings up a critical construction on the subjects. That means the peak of the analysis that hovers this debate is the ability to draw from the general speeches and discourses the subtle lesson that sovereignty is an exercise of power aiming the multiplicity of bodies and,

[3] For verification reasons: "avec le XVI siècle on entre dans 1'âge des conduites, dans l'âge des directions, dans l'âge des gouvernements" (FOUCAULT, 2004a, p. 236).

[4] Mercantilism shows amongst the main examples shown by Foucault. According to him, Mercantilism was a government practice that, although captive to the XVI century, tended towards a steady expansion. However, the sovereign institutional structure surpassed its further development by restricting trade actions through contract law. (FOUCAULT, 2004a, p. 106).

moreover, oriented at establishing the process and progress of individual subjection in order to turn him into a loyal subject (TERREL, 2010, p. 40). On the one hand, this assertion substantiates Foucault's hypothesis that the practices of subjection establish a web of mechanisms that legitimize violence against the subjects; on the other hand, it lays out the most important content of interpretation that presents that the sovereign power, as it is wielded upon each subject, restrains its emphasis as of the paradoxical prerogative of life and death. The modern sovereign displays his features much more discreetly if compared to the paternal right of the Roman families: "between the sovereign and the subjects [death] is no longer allowed to be perpetrated under absolute and unconditional terms, but only in cases where the sovereign is exposed in his own existence[5]" (FOUCAULT, 2004b, p. 177 – free translation of ours). The (indirect) prerogative of a subject's death was only glimpsed when the sovereign's life was endangered. To oppose to this, legal theories considered as genuine and valid the use of sovereign powers to induce the subject's death (FOUCAULT, 1976a, p. 178). Such right crosses the enigmatic means of sovereignty by showing that, in order to protect the monarch, death could be adopted as a rational practice of absolute power's preservation.

This life and death paradox - or in another sense, death for life or the credible force of "making oneself die and letting oneself live" (FOUCAULT, 1976a, p. 178), prolongs itself to the end of the 18th century. In this century where, in a way, industrial and urban transformations impose scientific, social and economic development and, in another, the absolute monarchy is weakened in the face of parliamentary and democratic states, one can notice two things: the fall of the modern sovereignty and the rise of a different mechanism responsible for endorsing sovereignty nation wise. The fall of the personified sovereignty - not sovereignty's fall as a whole - has led to a dispersion of the violent, constrictive sovereign power engaged with surveillance over life. The subjects have become, under the influence of liberalism, individuals and subjects of sovereignty, and as such, they underwent a process moulding their bodies and thoughts according to the terms of discipline (CHIGNOLA, 2018). Discipline[6] has emerged as a technique of power and pervaded through all state institutions, practices, and apparatus. In order to make the bodies "docile" have them trained, this technique brought up vigilance, confession and punishment as technologies of appreciation for the conduct of life (FOUCAULT, 1975, p. 208; 2013, p. 144). The emergence of such technologies led to the construction of some kind of penitentiary power centred in prisons, hospitals, schools, industry and military activities. Training the bodies was one of the most acute practices when it comes to the subjection of individuals. Their subjection, unlike the sovereign methods, focused on the indistinct use of mechanisms over bodily and psychical individualities (FOUCAULT, 1975, p. 28). It was an anatomy-politics responsible for making each human body docile and useful, and each subjectivity, a functional and vigilant space imposing discipline over oneself. According to Foucault, the vigilance executed over individuals constrained them to self-discipline and self-punishment. The ballistics built on such mechanisms proceeded in contrast to the norms that, far more peculiar and global than laws, fabricated a punitive disposition on individuals through culturally pervasive patterns.

The anatomy-politics represented the initial sense of the multiplicity of individuals' government and, to this end, disseminated a plurality of technologies aimed at modulating human behavior. In this very scenario, social medicine appeared in the context of practical

[5] For verification reasons: "Du souverain à ses sujets, on ne conçoit plus qu'il s'exerce dans l'absolu et inconditionnellement, mais dans les seuls cas où le souverain se trouve exposé dans son existence même" (FOUCAULT, 2004b, p. 177).

[6] Colin Gordon notes that discipline refers to a range of technologies aimed to make a body "docile" and reduce it to the optics of power (GORDON, 1991, p. 3).

discussions setting in motion concerns about the "health" of the cities. Communicating with disciplinary power, medical knowledge has been expanded as techniques for treating public ills and preventing health disorders. They promoted, in the public as well as in the private domain, social sanitation, circumscribing politics and medicine on a cross-cutting edge of interests, so as to indicate within their own power a medicinal disposition to politicize urban life and men. This medical construct on individuals is essential insofar as it allows linking health and disease to the individual body and to the plural treatments and political practices (FOUCAULT, 2001, p. 223). Since the 18th century, social medicine has vibrated a fruitful management of life in the carnal sense, so as to indifferently sanitize and medicalize individuals to maintain them in a permanent state of health (FOUCAULT, 1976b, p. 14). Foucault's attention in relation to such scope aims, however, to point out what social medicine has done in terms of government practices. It is necessary to conceive that, to deal with such a movement, Foucault's reflections were based on a critical point found between medical practices and their recognition in the governmental field. This means that the emergence of medicine as a science linked to social sphere envisioned granting medical-biological resources so the state and government could manage human life. The nationalization of medicine and its techniques as public health proposals endorsed the managerial sieve of individuals, bringing politics closer to biology and assuming their technical resources as mechanisms of care for society. The disciplinary society also became a medicalizing and hygienist society, giving rise to a close bond from which it could exchange objects, methods and, above all, public policies responsible for maintaining a "docile" life at the normal levels of medicine.

As medical-social techniques and social disciplinary resources became accepted as guidelines of normality and abnormality, and, as a result, cities were undergoing social, political, and, above all, economic transformations, political rationality began to display signs of organic fractures in the developed sense of power. The turn from the 18th to the 19th century brought important variations in this development. The first of these variations observed by Foucault concerns the mutation of modern sovereignty and the anatomical politics of bodies to a complex postulated model of population. This form of population management, or rather, of governmentality, arises from the displacement produced in power with respect to those other systems presented previously and has a profound impact on the social medicine that needed to homogenize its principles and objects of care. The governmentalization[7] of the population, in contrast to the techniques of discipline and social hygiene, evidenced that what, in the archeology of knowledge, led to the "discovery" of man as a living, biological and a psychic being. The knowledge about man, unlike previous prerogatives that took him as an accessory or figurative element, displaced any and all maxim entirely to life. From this, resulted the rationality driven

[7] It is appropriate to present the concept of governmentality articulated by Foucault: "par *gouvernementalité*, j'entends l'ensemble constitué par les institutions, les procédures, analyses et réflexions, les calculs et les tactiques qui permettent d'exercer cette forme bien spécifique, quoique très complexe, de pouvoir qui a pour cible principale la population, pour forme majeure de savoir l'économie politique, pour instrument technique essentiel les dispositifs de sécurité. Deuxièmement, par *gouvememementalité*, j'entends la tendance, la ligne de force qui, dans tout l'Occident, n'a pas cessé de conduire, et depuis fort longtemps, vers la prééminence de ce type de pouvoir qu'on peut appeler le *gouvernement* sur tous les autres : souveraineté, discipline, et qui a amené, d'une part, le développement de toute une série d'appareils spécifiques de gouvernement [et,d'autre part], le développement de toute une série de savoirs" (FOUCAULT, 2004a, p. 111-112). We've translated this as it follows: "I understand as *governmentality* the whole constituted by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow this very specific and yet so complex method of power that targets the population as an essential technical instrument in order to control the political economy and the security devices. Secondly, I understand as *governmentality*, the tendency, the line of force which, throughout the West, has not ceased to lead, and for a long time, to the preeminence of this kind of power which we may call government over all others: sovereignty, discipline, and that somehow, led to the development of a series of specific governing apparatuses [and, on the other hand], to the development of a whole range of knowledge.

by the triangle: sovereignty, discipline and government management (FOUCAULT, 2004a, p. 11), which synthesized the confluence of sovereign-disciplinary power within governmental practices of a controlling nature. With this shift, Foucault aroused, as a second variation, the modulation by which power and politics erupted. From the 19th century on, the horizon of power and politics became, respectively, bio-power and bio-politics, converging their interests around the control of populations. Regarding this fracture, Foucault's appeal circumscribes the dominance of State's power in the biological stratum, demonstrating the construction of a paradox stablished, on the one hand, with the concern for the physical and mental health of individuals, and, on the other, with the production of massacres and conflicts (FOUCAULT, 2001, p. 858). The modern State to which the 19th century prefigures, takes control of human life, governing the populations through public policies responsible for crossing them in all their biological dimensions. From birth to death, through youth and maturity, the State capillarises, through statistical controls, the number of births, the dead, the sick, the addicted, the real and potential vulnerable, pathologies and so many other processes crossing the human life that can be measured, evaluated and controlled.

Bio-political's governmentality cares about the ways of action of the population from the rationality of power empowered over man. Man matters to bio-politics because he makes possible for the government to exercise and extract vital inputs necessary to keep the political system in motion, which, even when exposed to exhaustion, can be useful and profitable for some government practice. Considering so, life is taken within a fertile dimension; because of this, instead of letting it live and fabricating its death when necessary, it faces the opposite, that is: life is let to be lived to the fullest of its biological vitality, and is let to naturally die when its biological inputs are depleted. "To make life or to let die" (FOUCAULT, 1976a, p. 181) corroborates the thesis that one has less and less the right to make die and increasingly the right to intervene to make live, and in the way of life, and in the 'how' of life, from the moment when power intervenes to increase life, to control its accidents, its eventualities, its deficiencies, henceforth death; from that point on, death as the termination of life, is evidently the completion, the limit, the end of power[8] (FOUCAULT, 1997, p. 221).

It should be noted that life, by assuming the extremity of power, resonates with all the biological phenomena inherent to it. . The power that invests in the multiplicity of bodies of the population finds in the nationalization of the biological conditions the main seam to demarcate the bio-political governmentality of human beings in the face of security devices. This critical view on the 19th century (bio)politics composes Foucault's main thesis. And it can be argued that the genealogy of government practices reaches the mark of the governmentality of the biological by proceeding to nationalize it. Not only in thinking about the modern fracture that introduces bio-politics as a set of policies aimed at controlling biological life, one observes the "discovery" of man as subject-object[9] as well, which further enables the demarcation of power over life. This,

[8] For verification reasons: "Or, maintenant que le pouvoir est de moins en moins le droit de faire mourir, et de plus en plus le droit d'intervenir pour faire vivre, et sur la manière de vivre, et sur le "comment" de la vie, à partir du moment donc où le pouvoir intervient surtout à ce niveau-là pour majorer la vie, pour en contrôler les accidents, les aléas, les déficiences, du coup la mort, comme terme de la vie, est évidemment le terme, la limite, le bout du pouvoir" (FOUCAULT, 1997, p. 221).

[9] About this duplicity, Foucault notes in Le Mots et Choses that man as subject-object is one of the striking marks of the 19th century. The 19th century emerges from the break with the thought of explicit things, that is, it emerges with the tone of capturing the imperceptible that distinguished and identified the sciences. In this context, the shift in knowledge reaches Kant's assumptions. In Foucault's view, Kant broke with the past atmosphere and sustained the search for the possibility of knowledge from the subjects themselves. Knowledge is in the very rational structure of the subjects and such subjects behave as beings that

when discovered by the empirical sciences, reveals a range of knowledge (Biology, Philology and Political Economy) responsible for inducing the discourses and practices around their biological anthropology. In the 19th century, the distinctive hue of circular power over the biological element was converted with the discovery of the subjectivity and objectivity of man. With such interlocution, the whole humanistic scenario comes into vogue at the scientific level of control (DELEUZE, 1990, p. 238). To *make live* more and more, control becomes an essential technology composing the bio-political architecture from which all governmentality is guided to spread the power links over biology. This claim, with no doubt, could not be understood in the Aristotelian world, from which life was only understood within a natural stratum, and not from political links designed to co-opt the biological.

2. Agamben and the Western's bio-political paradigm: genealogical and paradoxical interpretations of life

Foucault's thesis that bio-politics erupts in the transition from the 18th to the 19th century, forming a fracture between sovereign-disciplinary power and governmentalization's control technologies has spurred important critical work in recent years[10]. Among the outstanding researchers who profile Foucault's theses, seeking to interpret them and, when possible, criticize them to support other theses, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben can be highlighted. Concerning Foucault's seminal thesis on bio-politics and government practices, Agamben's keen eye ponders critical corroborations to the development of the genealogical power research, seeking to connect it to the theoretical impressions of the German philosopher, Hannah Arendt, on totalitarian regimes. These incisions which, according to Agamben, emerge separately on the horizon of Foucault's and Arendt's research in the 80's, validate the attempt to make a critical reading of bio-politics by examining it in the length of the power devices incident on human life (LEMM, 2017, p. 53). Much of Agamben's philosophical project is based on Foucault's and Arendt's philosophical concavities, but is not limited to reinforcing both authors' thesis. The opposite can be said, actually: Agamben's substantial difference over the other thinkers lies on how the Italian author makes his approach to the problems identified by the others in an articulated manner. The arguments that underlie Agamben's focus are based on the scope that, for him, Arendt and Foucault didn't strongly consider. In partial disagreement with the French thinker about the genesis of bio-politics and government practices, and unhappy that he failed to dig deeply into the intersection of concentration camps biology policy, Agamben's thesis argues that Western politics are eminently bio-political ever since the Greco-Roman societies. This same hypothesis is still taken as the threshold for Agamben's forceful observation about the maintenance of sovereign power in Western politics (MILLS, 2008, p. 64). Contrary to Foucault's view, which endorsed a supposed dilution of sovereign-disciplinary practices in government conduct, the Italian philosopher interprets this position as a decay of sovereignty, which, to his

capture the exteriority of the world through their cognitive apparatus. They are transcendental subjects, that is, beings endowed with possibilities of experience having as architectonic the use of their own rational faculties. However, the Kantian transcendental subject is not dissociated from the empirical world, as Foucault points out. In fact, he depends on empiricism, on science constituted by natural principles, and on the interaction whereby the individual has the faculty of being, also, the object of empiricism, as the subject of external knowledge. Man is thus the empirical object of the very rational dispositions from which he operates; he is, therefore, a transcendental-empirical subject, insofar as he is coordinated by objective and subjective axes (FOUCAULT, 1966, p. 358).

[10] Giorgio Agamben's works stand out: *Il potere sovrano e la nuda vita* (1995); and Roberto Esposito's: *Bíos, biopolítica e filosofia* (2004).

mind, tends to a theoretical insufficiency to explain the structure and the operation of the policy. Regarding Arendt, Agamben perceives how the German philosopher's vision underlies the origins of politics from the distinction between private and public life. Even agreeing - and corroborating - with this diagnosis, Agamben indexes his criticism to the limit of Arendt's analysis of bio-politics. Even though she's had reached the nodal point of totalitarian regimes, namely the camps, she has also failed to pursue a critical examination on the politicization of biological life. Agamben's innovation regarding genealogical research on bio-politics focuses on the articulation of Foucault's and Arendt's theses, having as its problematization the politicization of biological life, incipiently, with the Greeks and, later, with a strong attack, examining the concentration camps (AGAMBEN, 1995, p. 6).

As Foucault and Arendt, Agamben resumes genealogical studies of Greek thinkers, seeking to draw argumentative lines to endorse his thesis. In the possession of Foucault's landmark study of Aristotle in his argument that man was a living animal capable of political existence, Agamben seems to be uncomfortable with the antinomic view between the spheres of biology and politics the way they were observed by the French thinker. For Agamben, Aristotle's *Politic*s[11] (1278b, 23-31) brings something that strictly contradicts the Foucaultian thesis: it is about observing two ways of life (*zoé and bíos*) articulated through a technical qualification of its own living. Standing next to Arendt, Agamben insists that the Greeks used different terminologies[12] to refer to life: while natural life was used to address common life and living (*zen*) to all living beings so as to be undertaken in pure existence (Murray, 2010, p. 61-62), qualified life employed the sense of the political life of the social groups, from which the meaning of the good life[13] (t*oû eû zên*) could be extracted and its participation in the public sphere of the cities. The caesura between natural life and qualified life, when taken as the object of analysis, centres Agamben's debate on a specific threshold: it is a matter of distinguishing two types of life (*bios tis*) organized around the biological

---

[11] Agamben quotes Aristotles as follows: "Questo (il vvevere secondo il bene) è massimamente il fine, sai in comume per tutti gli uomini, sai per ciascuno separatamente. Essi, però, si uniscono e mantegono la comunità politica anche in vista del símplice vivere, perché vi è probabilmente uma qualche parte di bene anche nel solo fatto di vivere (catà to zên autò mónon); se non vi è um eccesso di difficoltà quanto al modo di vivere (catà ton bíon), è evidente che la maggior parte degli uomi sopporta molti patimenti e si ataca ala vita (zoé), come se vi fosse in essa una sorta di serenità (eumería, bela giornata) e uma dolcezza naturale" (AGAMBEN, 1995, p. 4). We translate it as: "This (living according to good) is the supreme end for all men, or for each one separately. But they unite and maintain the political comminity even for the sake of simple living, because there is probably a certain ammount of goodness even in the mere fact of living; if there is no excess of difficulties in the way of life, it is evident that most men endure many sufferings and cling to life (zoé), as if there were a kind of serenity and natural sweetness about it." We point out that Agamben's translation sources match Aristotles original Greek text, which can be checked bellow with the material provided by William David Ross(1957):
μάλισταμὲν οὖν τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ τέλος, καὶ κοινῇ πᾶσι καὶ χωρίς συνέρχονται δὲ καὶ τοῦ ζῆνἕνεκεν αὐτοῦ καὶ συνέχουσι τὴν πολιτι κὴν κοινωνίαν, ἴσως γὰρ ἔνεστί τιτοῦ καλοῦ μόριον καὶ κατὰ τὸ ζῆν αὐτὸ μόνον: ἂν μὴ τοῖς χαλεποῖς κατὰ τὸνβίον ὑπερβάλῃ λίαν, δῆλον δ᾽ ὡς καρτεροῦσι πολλὴν κακοπάθειαν οἱ πολλοὶτῶν ἀνθρώπων γλιχόμενοι τοῦ ζῆν, ὡς ἐνούσης τινὸς εὐημερίας ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ γλυκύτητος φυσικῆς.

[12] Says Agamben: "greci non avevano un unico termine per esprimere ciò che noi intendiamo con la parola *vita*. Essi si servivano di due termini semanticamente e morfologicamente distinti: *zoé*, che esprimeva il semplice fatto di vivere comune a tutti i viventi (animali, uomini o dei) e *bios*, che significava la forma o maniera di vivere propria di un singolo o di un grupo (AGAMBEN, 1996, p. 11). We translate it as: "The Greeks did not have a single term to express what we mean by the word life. They used two semantically and morphologically distinct terms, albeit reportable to a common great: zoé, which expressed the simple fact of living, common to all living beings (animals, men or gods), and bíos, that indicated one's own way to live".

[13] Arendt goes about it: "the "good life," as Aristotle called the life of the citizen, therefore was not merely better, more carefree or nobler than ordinary life, but of an altogether different quality. It was "good" to the extent that by having mastered the necessities of sheer life, by being freed from labor and work, and by overcoming the innate urge of all living creatures for their own survival, it was no longer bound to the biological life process" (ARENDT, 1998, p. 36-37).

and human nature. (BROCK, 2013, p. 176) that enable the binding of a bio-political paradox already in the contours of antiquity: in man[14], the two figures cohabit, but do not coincide, and such ambiguity is translated into the force by which one can present oneself as the holder of the natural life and the simple living; and others as men directed towards the qualified life and the well living. These two distinctions, living and living well, endorse the ambiguity of Greek antiquity. And its shape gives rise to the tension built around the natural life, which, to be qualified, had to be politicized in the figure of bios. To qualify the organic body, to give it political power, meant to project upon natural living a linguistic and (bio) political instrumentality necessary to indicate a human social mutation whose strength was to displace the simple living's nature into the theology of living well (AGAMBEN, 2014).

This caesura, when thought critically, induces another important argument. In ancient communities, the dichotomy between *zoé* and *bíos* was still sustained under the figures of *oikos* (house) and *polis* (city). These two spheres indicated, respectively, the domestic management of the home and the autonomous participation of the subjects in the public domain of politics. In the sphere of *oikos*, each family was organized by a right inherited from *gens* / γένη (COULANGES, 2010, p. 121-122; LACEY, 1969). *Gens* were aristocratic criteria that determined the domestic order and sovereignty of a *pater familias*. The *pater familias* exercised the right over the natural lives belonging to their *oikos*, pointing to a set of "managerial"[15] relationships that kept their private sphere (AGAMBEN, 2014, p. 31). The paradoxical form occupied by protection and violence was reflected in the figure of paternal law: every domestic life (women, children, and slaves) subjected to the sovereignty of the household head was protected from external threats, but on the other hand, was susceptible of being subjected to violence regardless (BROCK, 2013, p. 25-26). The inherited right guaranteed protection and legitimized violence against the *zoé*, which, as such, did not participate autonomously in political life. Inherited law guaranteed protection and legitimized violence against the zoo, which, as such, did not participate autonomously in political life. The Greek *bíos* opposed the *zoé* not only for being a member of the *polis*, but above all, for having the autonomy responsible for propagating equality of expression, equality of power and equality of rights. In the *polis*, no man submitted to another, which implied the autonomy of the subjects concerning political deliberations (AGAMBEN, 2003, p. 10-22).

From Agamben's point of view, the bio-political mark of the Greeks can be noted first with the technical need to qualify natural life to participate in the public space of the polis, and then with cases outside the political parameters of ancient societies. Regarding this second observation, about which Agamben seems to cleave his interpretation, we identify a set of practices that can be applied contrary to the lives devoid of the protection of family and politics. To these indistinct lives, there was no form of vital sustainability legally speaking. Domestic violence or the political violence of citizens could be exercised over them, without any claim being made as a legal or legitimate counterpoint (OJAKANGAS, 2016, p. 7). *Zoé* was the life unprotected by public policy or domestic sovereignty from which power could be acutely exercised. Taking this case to the Roman communities, Agamben takes up a similar figure to the

[14] Agamben says: "Nell'uomo, questi due animali coabitano, ma non coincidono: la vita organica dell'animale-di-dentro comincia nel feto prima di quella animale e, nell'invecchiamento e nell'agonia, sopravvive ala morte dell'animale-di-fuori" (AGAMBEN, 2002, p.). We translate it as: "in man these two animals cohabit but do not coincide: the organic life of the animal within begins in the fetus before the animal life itself and, in aging and agony, survives the death of the animal outside".

[15] According to Agamben (2014, p. 31-32), the private relations, from the domestic domain (oikos), were exercised from the "managerial, and not epistemic" relations. These relations were not linked to a norms system nor were they a science in the strict sense.

unprotected life of the Greeks, namely, *homo sacer*. The *homo sacer* was a legal-political figure with no rights and banned from the political order. By becoming sacred, life was brought out of the human jurisdiction without going beyond the divine sphere and this corroborated the definition of a life belonging to the gods from the unsacrificability of the *sacer*, while the human community was linked from its killability. The sense that such a paradoxical condition reveals makes Agamben rescue Festus' treatise on the relation between Roman law and sacred life to endorse that:

> The sacred man 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 Tiburtinian 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.[16](AGAMBEN, 1995, p. 79).

It is noted that Agamben questions the dimension of life within the threshold of nature and politics. The *homo sacer* is the life banished from the political protection of the city, but because of its unconsecrated condition for the divine, he swings restricted to the threshold of humanity and divinity. At that hidden point, where such a life is neither human nor divine, it can be included in the community through its killable characteristics. Only when exposed to the power of death the homo sacer is inserted into the unknown domain of human presence. This epitomises the critical relation profiled by Agamben: where human law and divine law are mutually exclusive, or rather where they cannot protect, the natural presupposition of a violent force upon that life willing to capture it in an instrumental way, opens up. Sacred life is the life subject to radical instrumentation by sovereign power and violence (RASCH, 2007, p. 101). It can be manipulated throughout its biological-vital forces to the extreme of pain or even death. Killing the sacred life does not imply any penalty for murder or criminal offence; *homo sacer* lies abandoned by the law on the indiscernible threshold of nature and politics, where he is neither zoé nor bíos. In the midst of both, the sacred life is mere life, life abandoned by law and exposed to the nakedness of instrumental violence. In the figure of naked life, man becomes a shepherd of politics, yet he may still be the object of (de)politicization on its part. The power that decides on this causes the law to break through the exception (AGAMBEN, 2003, p. 83). In other words, by strictly fulfilling the right to the unsacrificability of life, its exceptional inscription in the field of natural killability is possible. Therefore, the assumption of sacredness grounds the exception from the legal gap and the decision of the domestic sovereign or the political sovereign over life itself (ZIAREK, 2007, p. 91).

The hidden point of this debate can be understood in the light of bio-politics. For Agamben, the Greco-Roman civilizations were responsible for constituting techniques of (de)politicization of natural life and naked life. This matrix vibrates the thinker's critical view of bio-politics' genetic origins. The ancients used the politicization of biological-natural life or its exposure to violence as power devices, especially sovereign devices, creating indiscernible thresholds for the bio-political capture of human life. This is Agamben's nodal thesis. And from it comes the central argument that bio-politics is germinated in political structure as a technique designed to paradoxically capture and manage human life. Domestic power or political power spells out how, if read critically closely, we can elicit bio-political practices in the Greco-Roman world. Therefore, unlike Foucault, the referential framework of Agamben's research consists in

[16] Agamben uses Festo (AGAMBEN, 1995, p. 79).

adopting the medullary position of sovereign power from the timely relation between legal decision and anomie under the process of bio-politics (CAMPBELL; SITZE, 2013, p. 25- 26).

It is opportune to observe this transit that Agamben produces in the vacuum of Foucault's theses to highlight another important thesis. Now, closer to Arendt, the Italian thinker's reflections envisage sustaining a deep break in the ancient transition to the modern world in relation to the constitution of societies and government practices. According to Agamben, the Western political structure produced a mutation in the classical forms of *oikos* and *polis* management. These two spheres, the private and the public, the economic and the political, produced a credible symbiosis that, in contrast to antiquity, made politics a space for the (domestic) economic management of individuals' private lives (ARENDT, 1998, p. 24). Over time, the Greco-Roman deliberative assemblies were replaced by representative models of societies. The eminent meaning of politics has been reduced to representation, and subjective autonomy has been converted into passive participation. Strictly, politics are no longer the public space of self-management, but now occupies the figure of the private management *(oikonomia)* of human life. For Arendt, as well as for Agamben, the great change effected in this inversion refers to the intricacies by which politics began to occupy. Cleaving public interests to the private dimension of human life shifted autonomous and deliberative concern to the faculties of domestic life. This means that politics took on *oikonomia* and began to invest in human biology, typical of the natural life (*zoé*) of the Greek *oikos* or the Roman *domus* (ARENDT, 1998, p. 45). Political action has been totally diluted in the human social, becoming the economic management of biological needs. The direct unfolding of this implied the rise of the man whose work has been changed to maintain individual biological faculties (PITKIN, 1998, p. 278). This man of labor, of biological sustainability in the social sphere, allowed the *zoé* to be naturalized in modern societies from the economic management of their lives and as a target of the interests of these management techniques. Society planned man out of a subjectivity of biological interests and based his rationality on the calculative game of work versus consumption. As soon as, the autonomy of individuals was compressed by the density of labor by the maintenance of biological faculties, ensuring what, for Arendt, would tend to the sore point of the fracture between Greek politics and modern societies.

According to Agamben, the break with the Greeks' political model and, in the same vein, the reversal of the politics of autonomous subjects to the economics of private life of natural subjects, produced a deep cut in the whole history of Western thought and practice. It is no coincidence that, walking on Foucault's and Arendt's paths, Agamben captured a managerial-technical source from the government exactly in this transition. Alongside his initial thesis, which postulates the landmark of (sovereign) bio-politics already in Greco-Roman sources, the Italian thinker perceives a practical and epistemological mutation with Christian theology. According to Agamben (2007, p.35-37), the notion of economy as management of human life enters the discursive orb as early as the Second and Third centuries, with the church fathers, and, at the same time, with the translations and texts of Alexandre de Aphrodisias, who, in interpreting the Aristotelian theory of transcendental arché, articulated it within a theory of immanent providence over human life (AGAMBEN, 2007, p. 61). Numenius, Plutarch, and Boethius followed this same reading, ratifying the theory of governmental providence on life. Although we do not intend to take a deep look at this Agamben's genealogy, it is essential to note that the introduction by Christian priests and the commentators of ancient thinkers has become the central argument for Agamben to assert that the notion of governing other's lives arises in between classical antiquity and late antiquity. Contrary, again, and also partly to Foucault's

thesis, whose strength lies in proposing that the notion of government arose with pastoral practices, Agamben identifies that the debate on the managerial economy of life is one of the prominent affairs dated from the ancient centuries. Even though this fruitful hypothesis aroused his interest, he does not disagree that a very well-articulated rationality has followed, as Foucault's research suggests, governmental contours as of the Christian pastorate. The Christian pastorate reveals, for Agamben, a view confluent with the theory of providence, from which they flow in the same direction.

Regarding the intersection between Arendt and Foucault's theses and their critical reflection on the discourses and practices of political and economic management on human life, Agamben seems to be able to draw a concise diagnosis: first, bio-political practices mark the political structure of the West, in order to expose life to the extreme (de)politicization of human biology. Then the transition from Greco-Roman civilizations to modern societies transcribed an irremediable fracture in political and economic structures. The triumph of the managerial economy of biological life - initially permeated by theological discourses and theoretic commentaries on metaphysical doctrines, and, subsequently, by the pastoral practices that extended until the 19th century, where they could modify the rationality present in them - demonstrate the constitution of the paradigm of bio-political governmentality. The rise of the biological man, first *zoé* and *homo sacer*, and after *homo laborans* led Agamben to the discovery of biological life within the political and economic significance. Bio-politics is a dual technology of powers, knowledge and practices. It operates by articulating devices of sovereignty and governance over the human's pluriverse.

The accurate stratum of this bio-political articulation is based on the concentration camps; there the dynamics of power existed and insisted on the biological body from a tension between sovereign power and the management of natural powers over populations. The camp is the territorial delimitation for the exercise of exception as the sovereign norm. The sovereign decides on the exception to be made the rule and how lives should be lived in the territorial experience of the camps. Population governmentalization, on the other hand, institutes the techniques for fulfilling the sovereign proposal. In the camps, man lives with the real imminence of being made mere life. Politics is a crossroads between bio-politics and tanatopolitics that make life survive extreme power (AGAMBEN, 1998, p. 145). Totalitarian regimes have made this dynamic clear by setting up numerous camps and adopting sharp policies on human beings. The actual practice of turning human lives into sacred lives in the camps constituted a distinction between politics and biology in ways never seen before. The factual experience of totalitarian regimes marked sovereign-government deceits in disposing of bio-politics as a dual technique of politicizing life. On the one hand, by the reduction of political life; the withdrawal of the nationalities; the abandonment of biological life; the bodily input assumed as the object of the direction of power; the naked lives of the men in the camps were led to a sacralization technique within the latter. The optics that were present in the camps did not follow the practical content of Foucaultian's bio-politics. That is, it was no longer about making live or letting die; the political experience of the camps was geared to survival and only survival. It was therefore neither life nor death that took the lead in the reason of the totalitarian state, but the invisible line between them. Survival explicitly states the distinction between man and animal, between life that is neither *zoé* nor *bíos*. Stripped of all rights and naked by its own natural biology, the lives of men in the camps exposed, according to Agamben, the exceptional zone through which bio-politics and tanatopolitics captured the living and dying of subjects.

On the pretext of his thesis, Agamben reinforces his argument based on the hypothesis that the Western political structure is originally bio-political and that the extreme mark of this paradigm is conferred within the camps. Sovereignty and governmentality intersect each other indistinctly about human life in concentration camps. And that way, the peculiar techniques used by bio-politics are revealed to, on the one hand, propose the sovereign exception and, on the other, to administer the living body. Politics discovers human life - one might say by analyzing Agamben's thinking, already in Greco-Roman practices, but its true neuralgic face is observed within the concentration camps. If sovereignty finds life in the Greek and Roman theorems, governmentalization finds the biological body strikingly within the camps. Both practices - that already intersect one another in antiquity- constitute the indistinct level of politics over biology, or rather bio-politics, with the experience of totalitarian systems. The contemporary paradigm of politics dialogues with old practices of sovereign bio-politics and government bio-politics, having, in order for Agamben to agree with Foucault, the onslaught and insistence on the living/surviving man, an important object for political management of life.

3. Critical (dis)articulations and the dimensions of Foucault and Agamben's theses: would a convergent reading be possible?

The topics explored by Foucault and Agamben allow us to cast critical glances on power, bio-politics and life within a specific and very well defined framework, namely the practical genealogy of Western politics. At the core of this clipping, Foucault and Agamben's genealogical reading deal with an important debate in the field of political-practical philosophy and focus the debate in a sphere that, in our hypothesis, generates a convergence between the both thinkers and their proposals. If we follow Foucault's genealogical thread and draw from it his concerns with the validation of governalization on human life, from where we observe the latitude of his view on pastoral government and its extension to population bio-politics we will observe that the critical form of his research consists in questioning governmental practices about life. It is the government itself, regarding its attitudes in the field of human action, that matters to Foucault. In this sense, this research goes about conducting human life given the economic-managerial rationality of the subjects. Governing the the lives of others is the emblem which the Greeks could not understand in the public sphere and, to a large extent, is one of the central arguments put forward by Foucault to point out that bio-politics, understood in the sense of a set of practices on the administration of the other's lives only comes into play in 19th century's modernity. Foucault's main working hypotheses that support his thesis are intertwined with (i) the genealogy of governmental practices of other's lives understood as the proper management of life, and (ii) the ruptures of the rationalities of sovereign power and the emergence of biological, economic, population and medical-social practices. In contrast to these two hypotheses, the philosophical thread that runs through Foucault's work allows us to tint it into a well-defined problem: his research aims to point to the field of bio-political governmentality to define it as the historical landmark of managerial domain of human life. Such purpose translates itself as the main point of Foucault's project. In other words, by assuming the 19th century as the threshold of the introduction of politics on vital biology, Foucault beckons the movement of discovery of life and reorientation of power to this new element. The synthesis of his research finds junction between the political and the biological once human life is truly discovered in the economic-governmental level of its elements and potentialities.

Agamben does not and could not agree - not even to be cohesive in his research - with Foucault, even though his sketches dialogue much with Foucault's research. The disagreement occurs not because of possible conceptual errors of Foucault's, but because Agamben, by inserting the sovereign investigation in the political level, makes his incursion articulating the historical moments from a strict reading of the concept of bio-politics and governmentality. These two concepts that, in Foucault's research arise in late modernity and are intertwined within and from the managerial economy, gain broader contours in Agamben's research. To him, Foucault's superficial reading of the Greeks did not make it possible to grasp the depth of the bio-political meaning employed in *polis* and *oikos'* practices. By tying bio-politics to the concepts of population, medico-social practices and governmentalization, Foucault failed to understand that, in fact, the problematic core of bio-politics - whose translation is conceptually made by a set of practices, acts, discourses, etc, towards life -, was already in the civilizing germs of the Greco-Roman antiquity. However, it should be noted, as Paul Patton (2007, p. 218) and Maria Muhle (2014, p. 51) do well, that Agamben's notes on possible interpretative dichotomies by Foucault have somewhat different horizons. The hypothesis we put on the scene has as its background the following observation: even though Agamben and Foucault started from the same germinal point, Foucault conducted his research into the practices of governmentalization of human life. In Foucault's point of view, the matter is the government and the technical and epistemological unleashing of such practices around human life. Now, if Foucault's interest lies in this methodological demarcation, he could not attempt to show that bio-politics was already present in ancient societies. That way, being well aware, one could not assume, and Agamben agrees that there were clear notions of economic management of life as correlated with governmentality. Agamben, on the other hand, distances himself on the only wire profiled by Foucault. Interested in understanding the bio-political genesis in its pragmatic conceptual condition, Agamben alludes to the nerve of discussion from the Greek (bio)political practices resulting from the distinctions between *zoé* and *bios*, *oikos* and *polis*. Now, the first mark that we can draw from this Agamben's deep analysis is is how, according to him, the problematic of philology is in the face of bio-politics. His starting point, even observing political practices, is to produce reflections between these two spheres, which, wasn't even a question in Foucault's work. By way of distinction, the strength of Agamben's argument lies in crunching the concept, its genesis, while in Foucault's research, the force erupts in the practical movement of human life behavior.

This apparently unique step can be understood within different but complementary systematizations. By insisting on his thesis on the original source of bio-politics, Agamben also endeavors to show how the prevailing discussion at that time was concerning the initial view of sovereignty. In contrasting *oikos*/*domus* and *polis*/*republic* and showing the power of decision in both atmospheres, Agamben is attentive to the meaning of politics within the level of sovereign power. The Greco-Roman bio-politics, if we take it from this perspective, is translated from a sovereign bio-politics (MACEY, 2009, p. 200). That is, the nodal argument is that there is a sovereign power that exerts its political force in the natural life of others in order to lead them to the (de)politicization within a threshold of indiscernibility. This would surely be a trap-filled thesis if Foucault had taken it for analysis. This is because, according to Foucault, the whole mark of sovereignty was diluted within bio-political practices, not ruling alone or outside its domain. Agamben's interlocution, as can be read, is distinct from Foucault's proposal: starting from bio-political sovereignty, the Italian thinker leads the investigation of conceptual-philological genealogy until - when he sees opportune links in the theses of Arendt, Schmitt and Peterson - the the movement from home economy to political economy with the church priests

and the political changes of the time. The bio-political movement of sovereignty now becomes articulated with another from an economic-managerial source.[17] As Arendt did in identifying a fracture in the dimensions of politics and economics, in pointing out that post-antiquity politics had lost its deliberative stupor and public debate, and was now driven by the management of private life, as did the chiefs of *oikos* and *domus*, Agamben found a junction in the political and economic theological sources capable of corroborating the strict views of his philosophy. We do not intend to analyze this theological development, but merely to point out that it is important for - and mainly - the discursive foundation of Agamben's thought regarding the terms used. All in all, what deserves attention is the convergence within theology, politics and economics for the expansion of bio-politics in both atmospheres. Going through the the Italian thinker's genealogy and taking note of his attention concerning the bio-political sovereignty of the ancients, one cannot ignore the argument that the break with the classical antiquity and the emergence of Judeo-Christian society has equally moved the balance of governmental bio-politics on human life. Once again, Agamben moves away from Foucault. At least at the discursive level, and thus within a genealogy of discourse and philology, Agamben supports that the notion of governing others has its initial stake in the 2nd and 3rd centuries with the Christian priests and the interpretations of mainly Plato and Aristotle's thesis. However, this genealogy eventually connects, as Agamben shows, to Foucault's thesis, at least with regard to the interpretation of life management practices that begin with Eastern pastors. Agamben's guiding thread articulates bio-politics within political sovereignty and economic governmentality. Even assuming Arendt's hypothesis that societies reduced the role of politics and public space, enabling the rise of the managerial economy of biological man's life, there still exists the power of political sovereignty in the fields of humanity. This means that although subjects have been reduced to working men, typical of economic societies, they remain passive in receiving the power rush, which acts doubly on them. Sovereignty and governmentality act bipolarly, using bio-politics as a technology to control human life. Such contrast reveals the constitution of a closely related paradigm, whose embryos are exposed in the Greco-Roman antiquity and whose extension is carried to an extreme in the concentration camps. In the camps, sovereign power and life management act, according to Agamben, in a blunt and visible way. The power that captures political life and turns it into naked life, whether through depoliticization or through the withdrawal of all fundamental rights, finds the managerial momentum over the biological body when it can - through countless technologies - survive. The technical formula of bio-politics survives the threshold survival; that is, life intertwined where nature and politics do not distinguish themselves. For Agamben, the camps show the density of sovereign power, a power that, in Foucault's eyes, had been diluted in governmental practices and the economy of life on the managerial-biological field. In these territorial domains, bio-politics becomes the most accurate and useful technique for (de)politicizing and (de)subjectifying individuals. One could say that politics truly discovers the biological stratum and invades it completely to modulate it throughout perverse rationality. Such perversion, seen by Arendt, but not followed to the point of constituting the failure of politics over biology - and, therefore, understanding bio-politics - was not carried forward by Foucault, who, although he did some analysis of Nazism and Stalinism, did not understand how powerful concentration camps were to display the meaning of bio-politics.

[17] Even holding the hypothesis that the Greeks, specially Xenophon, had incipient theories about the government, Agamben realizes that such theories were about metaphysics, not being understood in the field of immanence.

As he critically discusses Foucault's work and inserts Arendt's readings to it, Agamben, perhaps because he is very focused on his own project, does not realize that the theses and hypotheses that guide his work differ not in clipping, but in the sources and interpretations of the problem in question. In fact, Agamben's entire epistemological construction is paired with Foucault's, but it does not replace it, as we would like to support. In this regard, we find that Foucault and Agamben have two distinct philosophical projects, united, however, in order to find and traverse the genealogy of bio-politics. The two lines of research, starting from conceptual sources, are eventually connected and complemented: by proposing the discovery of life by politics as originating in Greco-Roman (sovereign) practices, Agamben takes the conceptualization of bio-politics to the most fertile point. If bio-politics means the set of political practices over the biological body, it cannot be ignored, in fact, that the Greeks and Romans performed such acts inherently in their organizations. Even though there was no notion of population, a hypothesis contested by Ojakangas[18], for instance, that argues about the pre-existence not only of the notion but also of racist practices, Agamben sees the strength of the bio-political movement in oikonomic-political practices. It is true that the Italian thinker is, in the old context, reflecting on bio-politics from a decisionist or sovereign hue, and this would distance him even further from Foucault. Even so, we point to the validity of Agamben's thesis: as a concept, already in ancient practices one sees the application of bio-politics in the sphere of power over life. We are not opposed that this is taken to the expansive point only in modern governmentality, when politics and economics undergo a critical reversal. And from this point of view, our observation is based on the hypothesis that, even thought Agamben has had excavated the genealogy of bio-political governmentality and raised the thesis that Christian, post-Aristotelian and post-Platonic sources already supported concepts close to the management of life, this is only highlighted as the proper conduct of living in the Christian pastorate. Until then, one notices the discursive presence, of mainly metaphysics and theological hermeneutics, but not the network of biased practices about governing the others. If we agree with Agamben when it comes to bio-politics in antiquity, we are also in agreement with Foucault regarding the economic-governmentality of life as being introduced into Christian pastoralism and as having its core in the 19th century's modernity. Before, the managerial governmentality of life was only touched by discursive-theoretical investigations, still very dependent on metaphysical-theological sources. Now, the convergence of the two theses, when problematized, especially by Foucault in the 19th century, and by Agamben in posterity, seem to dialogue very well. In fact, there are disagreements at this point: Agamben disagrees with Foucault about the dilution of sovereign power in government, just as he hesitates to accept the French thinker's forgetting to turn to the field examination. Indeed, Foucault bet on the transcription of sovereignty to the government and from this movement drew the argument that sources of economic management over life had permeated the human atmosphere. When experimented, sovereign techniques most often came up within legal mechanisms which yielded from the governmental point of view. Agamben's counterpoint makes sense. For him, sovereign power has not been diluted, even though it has withdrawn. It remains hidden and sets itself in motion, especially in legal anomies and States of exception. Regarding this point of view, we agree with Agamben's view of sovereignty, but

[18] Ojakangas considers in Aristotle the use of the term *plêthos* as meaning of population. The strict term for the author means people; However, this word designates the group of men, women, youth, children, slaves and foreigners, which, in the Greek view, would contradict the meaning of the Greek people (OJAKANGAS, 2016, p. 39). Similar analysis is given by Susan Lape in "Race and Citizen Identity in the Classical Athenian Democracy." Lape emphasizes the conditions of identity and the racist context of Greek antiquity (LAPE, 2010, p. 41).

equally yield to Foucault's economic-managerial analysis. Bio-power and bio-politics work in contrast and make sovereignty and government prone to manifest their power techniques. Politics discovers life through sovereign nexus, but is stressed to the deepest knot as it can become a life economy and the management of biological inputs.

Crossing these two theses, one can, without neglecting the theoretical singularities of each of them, assert a connection between these thinkers and their research. In light of this interpretation, the genealogy of political discovery about human life is aligned with the Greek context and gradually developed until the turn of the 19th century and its posterity, when sovereignty and government become more subtle but nonetheless foster their advance fields. The bipolarity explained by Agamben dialogues much with Foucault's unity of research on managerial practice, and together they constitute, in greater depth, a critical interpretation of bio-politics.

Final considerations

We have presented Foucault's and Agamben's theses on the connections of politics over life, taking as our guideline the concept of bio-politics. Throughout this thread, the inherent links to the theses of both thinkers reveal an important and conceptual dialogue that is able not only of roaming the genealogy of the debate, but also to point out critical interpretations of the Western political paradigm. Foucault and Agamben, albeit the latter being a critic of the seminal theses of the former, provide, on the horizon of our hypothesis, a critical interpretation about the junction between politics and biology in a convergent way. Such convergence is due to the fact that Agamben, by repositioning the debate and proposing his interpretation about it, ends up doubling the starting point of investigations on bio-politics. That is, he remarks Foucault's thesis from his perspective, which distances him severely from the philosophical object of his study. Therefore, one could say that Foucault and Agamben keep similar but not equal pieces of work. And because of such divergence, there is a chance to produce theoretical crossings between both authors, and provide critical interpretations about the fields of human life.

Concerning such distinction, the two hypotheses we have tried to state throughout our argument revolved around the complementary articulation between both thinkers' theses. (1) It is possible, as Agamben suggests, to think of bio-political practices in antiquity as long as they are taken under the critical view of sovereign politics. For that matter, politics emerge and keep the West's structural paradigm as bio-political paradigm. (2) However, the bio-political germ of antiquity has not pushed the links between politics and vital biology to the extreme. According to Foucault, this happens in the 19th century's modernity, following numerous practices of governmentalization development. Agamben's critique of this thesis is based on his genealogical hypothesis of government discourse. Going back to the fields of theology and commentary-texts on ancient philosophy, Agamben insists that the notion of governing others is already in incident in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. In fact, Agamben's genealogy leads us to believe his hypothesis. However, with it can be extracted that its nodal point are the bibliographic-discursive exams, while for Foucault, the practical sources matter most. We support the hypothesis that there is a connection between these two theses: even though the origin of the discourse pointed to antiquity, as Agamben alludes, it is impossible for us not to cleave our gaze to the 19th century and capture the systematic encounter of politics on biology. Ever since that century, politics and life are in a very close and indistinct instance, in order to produce constant devices for capturing and governing the human inputs.

The two hypotheses that we consider feasible, dialogue due to the research problematic we have delimited, namely: to what extent and under what arguments is it possible to think about the discovery of politics about human biological life? There are surely several routes to undertake within this interrogation. The one that best supports our debate transcribes a relative dialogue between Foucault and Agamben. Human biological life is discovered in the fields of bio-politics from a duplicity: sovereign bio-politics and government bio-politics. On the one hand, politics discovers life, while on the legal and domestic surface, in Greco-Roman antiquity, and on the other, it is pushed to the extreme of governmentalization, that is, of governmental bio-politics, when, from the 19th century on, politics undertake how deep and how diverse human biology is and its (de/re) generative potential. The concentration camps unravel politics' rich discovery of biology. They also reveal the proper dimension of bio-politics to seek life within articulated reasons of sovereignty and governmentalization. Since life was discovered by politics, men have increasingly become manufactured inputs to feed this subtle process that sharply invests over the entire life sphere.

References

AGAMBEN, Giorgio. *Homo sacer*: *il potere sovrano e la nuda vita*. Torino: Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, 1995.
AGAMBEN, Giorgio. *Mezzi senza fine. Note sulla politica. Torino: Bollati* Boringhieri, 1996.
AGAMBEN, Giorgio. *Quel che resta di Auschwitz. L'archivio e il testimone*. Torino: *Bollati* Boringhieri, 1998.
AGAMBEN, Giorgio. *Stato di eccezione*. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2003.
AGAMBEN, Giorgio. *Il Regno e la Gloria. Per una Genealogia Teologica dell'Economia e del Governo*. Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2007.
AGAMBEN, Giorgio. *L'uso dei corpi*. Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2014.
ARENDT, Hannah. *The human condition*. Introduction by Margaret Canovan. — 2nd ed. p. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
ARISTOTE. *La politique*. Tradução de J. Tricot. Paris: Vrin, 1982.
ARISTOTLE. *Aristotle's Politics*. Ed. W. D. Ross. Oxford, Clarendon Press. 1957.
BROCK, Roger. *Political Imagery from Homer to Aristotle*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.
CAMPBELL, Timothy; SITZE, Adam. *Biopolitics: a reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.
CANGUILHEM, Georges. *La santé: concept vulgaire et question philosophique*. Toulouse: Sables, 1990.
CHIGNOLA, Sandro. *Foucault más allá de Foucault: una política de la filosofía*. Buenos Aires: Cactus, 2018.
COULANGES, Fustel de. *La Cité Antique - Étude sur Le Culte, Le Droit, Les Institutions de la Grèce et de Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
DELEUZE, Gilles. Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de controle. In: *Pourparlers*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1990.
FOUCAULT, Michel. *Les mots et les chose*. Paris: Gallimard, 1966.
FOUCAULT, Michel. *Surveiller et punir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1975.
FOUCAULT, Michel. *Histoire de la sexualité I. La volonté de savoir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1976a.
FOUCAULT, Michel. La politique de la santé au XVIII siècle. In: *Les Machines à guérir. Aux origines de l'hôpital moderne*; dossiers et documents. Paris: Institut de l'environnement, 1976b.
FOUCAULT, Michel. La phylosophie analytique de la politique. In: *Dits et Écrits*. Vol. III. Paris: Gallimard, 1994.
FOUCAULT, Michel. *ll faut défendre la Société*. Paris: Gallimard, 1997.
FOUCAULT, Michel. La naissance de la médecine sociale. In: *Dits et Écrits*. Vol. II. Paris: Gallimard, 2001.
FOUCAULT, Michel. Étudie la raison d'État. In: *Dits et Écrits*. Vol. II. Paris: Gallimard, 2001.
FOUCAULT, Michel. *Sécurité, territoire, population*. Paris: Gallimard, 2004a.
FOUCAULT, Michel. *Naissance de la biopolitique*. Paris: Gallimard, 2004b.
FOUCAULT, Michel. *La société punitive*. Paris: Gallimard, 2013.
GORDON, Colin. Governmental Rationality: An Introduction. In: BURCHELL, Graham; GORDON, Colin; MILLER, Peter. *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
LACEY, W. K. The family in classical Greece. London: Thames and Hudson, 1969.

LAPE, Susan. *Race and Citizen Identity in the Classical Athenian Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
LEMM, Vanessa. Michel Foucault. In: KOTSO, Adam; SALZANI, Carlo. *Agamben's philosophical lineage*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017.
LEMKE, Thomas. *Foucault, governmentality, and critique*. Routledge: New York, 2016.
MACEY, David. Rethinking Biopolitics, Race and Power in the Wake of Foucault. In: *Theory, Culture & Society*. Vol. 26(6): pp: 186-205.
MILLS, Catherine. *The Philosophy of Agamben*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008.
MUHLE, Maria. A Genealogy of Biopolitics: The Notion of Life. in Canguilhem and Foucault. In: LEMM, Vanessa; VATTER, Miguel. *The Government of Life: Foucault, Biopolitics, and Neoliberalism*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2014.
MURRAY, Alex. *Giorgio Agamben*. New York: Routledge, 2010.
OJAKANGA, Mika. *On the Greek Origins of Biopolitics*. New York: Routledge, 2016.
OKSALA, Johanna. *Foucault on Freedom*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
PATTON, Paul. Agamben and Foucault on Biopower and Biopolirits. In: CALARCO, Matthew; DECAROLI, Steven. Giorgio Agamben. *Sovereignty and Life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
PITKIN, Hannah Fenichel. *The attack of the blob. Hannah Arendt's concept of the social*. Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1998.
RASCH. William. In: CALARCO, Mathew; DeCAROLI, Steven. *Sovereignty and Life*. California: Stanford, 2007.
TERREL, Jean. *Politiques de Foucault*. Paris: P.U.F.: 2010.
THOMAS, Yan. Vitae necisque potestas. Le père, la cité, la mort. In: *Du châtiment dans la cité. Supplices corporels et peine de mort dans le monde antique*. Rome: École française de Rome, 1984. p.p. 499-548.
ZIAREK, Ewa Płonowska. Bare life on strike: notes on biopolitics of race and gender. In: ROSS, Alisson. *The Agamben Effect*. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007.

Autor(a) para correspondência / Corresponding author: William Costa**.** Avenida João Pinheiro, nº 761, centro, Uberlândia – MG, Brasil. william_19costa@hotmail.com