

## MORE THAN JUST BIOPOLITICS: BIOPOLITICS TODAY

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Involved in the connection flow to a direct switched debate, the thematic issue of the *Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations* is dedicated, in two-stroke, to the elasticized biopolitics context by analyzing and interpreting of the concept reported to its resistances and new utilizations (*more than just biopolitics*), as well as to the data, realities and perspectives that give measure to the current (*biopolitics today*). We will establish in this case as start-lecture-landmark (by extending the sense, reviewing and completion), a certain set of constant preoccupations, as the ideas and spotting initiatives of/by Timothy Campbell's approach in order to translate, edit, publish and coordinate the directions and directing which he offers to the concept. In an equal measure, we shall return to the tome *Bio politics: A Reader* (Duke University Press, 2013) which we estimate as a pivoting opus in order to clarifying, reinterpretation, critical positioning, deconstruction and redefining *biopolitics* today.

The common factor that persists in most of the term-dedicated exegesis is the return itself to the enlightening question regarding *biopolitics* status and concept defining, by highlighting of *what it used to be* – by means of studying a finalized path – but also by highlighting of *what it is/assumes/becomes biopolitics nowadays*. In a Campbellian way, any defining/definition interested in tracking and assuming of a mostly rich term palette of shades, represents, in its core, an instructive/informational process as significance and performance, as working modality. The approach is destined to establish the status of an absolutely *plastic* concept, whose flexibility (difficulty of enclosing it within a sole directory definition) is hermetic, limits and ponders the actual detent to the past term configurations.

Relevant for a debate is, in Timothy Campbell's accretion, the prevalence of the verb *to be* – of *what is it?* – able to invest *biopolitics* with the equivalent signification (via Arendt, Agamben or Esposito) of *a moment* overlaid by the ancient Greeks to the *interregnum* intersection of the *bios* with the *politikos*, as mode/modality reporting to the urban or polis life, of importance not only in what regards separating the *life-as-bios* from *life-in-polis*, but in the very frontal confrontation of *life with politics*. The crossing/meeting moment, insists Timothy Campbell, is able to give a measure to the report established between life and politics, but it does not constitute a merging act of these.

From hereby the necessity of preserving the distinction between/among life and politics but also the imperative to find again/rethink the waiting interval installed between the two, suspension that, in the lack of such a delimitating space, could endanger and vitiate the very sense of biopolitics or biopower, by means of projecting it as a dominant knowledge act. Biopolitics calls for evaluation by means of life-imprinted evidences, as biological marking, in meeting political life, plus-senses attached to the concept claiming a view filtered by the present – by *the now* solicitations – that distances politics from a summary tributary evaluation of the perspectives that are reporting it to a series of evaluative reflexes/determinations (political parties, regime, voting and representation mechanisms).

By deferring to the healthcare and wellbeing of the polis and citizens a central role, the Foucaultian triad *security – territory – population* may be accepted as a grid capable to determine behavior, reaction and degree of biological-physiological-psychological involvement of the group in politics and to give biopolitics a measure as politics. The objective that is imposed in order to revise and re-actualize is the very lecture idea insisting in separating the *bios* from the *politikos*, a grounded/fundamental field for biopolitics sedimentation, that Timothy Campbell overlays to the act of imagining a continuous process of tuning in the biological to/with the political, by means of interrelating moments, events and conclusive decisions.

There are, in the intercession proposed by Timothy Campbell, two essential comments to whom the present issue is reporting itself, but that also provides with other comments and sense openings.

The first targets the insufficient *prefix politics*, by reviewing their resilience to the well-knit attachment to the political or power root's term (except geopolitics), prefix deprivation that keeps and maintains the established similitude report between politics and conflict, or expresses the sense of cost evaluation, strategy synonymous to a self-sufficient game.

The second one highlights the adverbial position of *just*, decreeing that “biopolitics is not just politics”, by registering the inflexions felt by a nov politics uninterested in reducing to ideology or taking sides expressed by the friend-enemy dichotomy. Biopolitics states that “today's politics is connected to the life of human beings, judged and evaluated function of its potential and contribution brought to the healthcare” (*Biopolitics – An interview with Timothy Campbell*, interview conducted by Heather Dewey-Hagborg, for Biononymous.me, January 21, 2015).

The double plus-sense extracted from the data that compose the thematic present file valorizes, on one hand the reactive-directory politics of the prefix *post-* attached not so the (bio)politics, as to the concept/term that enters contaminated in inter-dependency with it (without avoiding the prefixoid unwell knit attachment, recognized in a series of *politics post-directing – post-politics, post-democracy, post-truth*), of indirect re-directing, by ricocheting, of biopolitics' very sense and significance. On the other hand, it is taken into consideration the particular modality of perceiving politics by short-circuiting that the *bio(s)* is giving:

*nothing is just biopolitics!*, decisive allegation that grounds the multiplying philosophy and politics of the way in which, related to, the concept opens senses apparently closed, sends to/towards, thoroughgoing studies, completes or reconfigures the current one data. In the Campbellian way, “biopolitics could help us understand the evolutions that politics cannot inventory, by recognizing of what we know, experimentally, about life. As it increases and decreases, and, together with it, the significance and power of terms like democracy, citizenship and vote, biopolitics is the one that names the seismic changes, power becoming more and more devoted to biology, to life. Therefore, the increased resistance to the named term is explained”.

Aside from the prefixoid pressure, Claudia Aradau (“What’s left of biopolitics?”, in *Radical Philosophy* 173, May/June 2012) recognizes and diagnoses the imprinted deviational concepts of grounding *a beyond* biopolitics perspective, by noticing time-particular impregnations guided so, as well as by displaying the sense of *post* attached to biopolitics, as adverbially with the role of “heterogeneous assembly”, of individualizing the power connections and transformations. The stake consists in archaeologizing the “whatever is left of biopolitics”, but also in affirming the “renewed vitality” of the concept, able to insert and inform itself, in a decisive manner, into the social and political life.

By means of a dubbed research and a “four hands score”, Patricia Ticineto Clough and Craig Willse (*Beyond Biopolitics: Essays on the Governance of Life and Death*, Duke University Press, Durham NC and London, 2011), François Debrix și Alexander D. Barder (*Beyond Biopolitics: Theory, Violence and Horror in World Politics*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2012) sustain the fact that biopolitics escapes/resists to contemporary *endisms*, could not be considered as a final concept and that, moreover, the new biopolitical forms preserve the term’s rationality, transgressing it in the context of “trans-disciplinarian effort to critically engage the multiple tendencies and efforts of the neo-liberal governing, in all its current reformulations”. Hereby the orientation of the thematic present issue towards a specific-conceptual temporality of biopolitics, of semantic and contextual potentiation of the adverbial *more* (corresponding to *moreover*, *especially*, and accepted as *different quantity and sort*, with *proportions*, *intensity* and *extended development*), that tells against *beyond* or *after*, both prefixes directed towards the act of placing inside an open, modifying context.

“Not enough time has passed in order to completely account biopolitics, biopower and the possible genealogies and archaeologies written in this sense”, notices Timothy Campbell. Germinated by the end of the seventies Foucaultian texts, biopolitics and biopower ask for revision by bringing up-to-date of some ended/abandoned programs, but claim also to be distributed to projects in development, by means of the logics in dynamic intertwined series, by the *archaeological* effort to defer, philosophically and politically, a directing sense to the meeting of the *bios* with the *politikos*: *biopolitics represents the concept able to describe and analyze the current world’s becoming, by its content and directions that transcend the schematic report of the philosophy with the political phenomena. Genealogically*, biopolitics corresponds to the “way

through which it has been tried, starting with the 18<sup>th</sup> century, reasoning of the problems brought up to the government practice by the phenomena of an assembly of living people constituted into a population (...) it is of knowledge the increasing place that those problems took since the 19<sup>th</sup> century to nowadays and what economic and political stakes they represented until nowadays” [Michel Foucault, “Nașterea biopoliticii” (Birth of Biopolitics), in *Biopolitică și medicină socială* (Biopolitics and social medicine), Idea Design & Print, Cluj, 2003, p. 113], without ignoring precisely the prolonged-specific temporality underlined by Foucault, by designation of “nowadays”.

Therefore, we may qualify *Nașterea biopoliticii* (Birth of Biopolitics) and *Viața: experiența și știința* (Life: Experience and Science), as two landmark-texts Foucaultian-directory for connecting to the political philosophy that re-irrigates the senses/significations of biopolitics today.

The first text expresses the stake of the ideatic-thematical Foucaultian laboratory, of the impossibility in dissociating the frame/concept from the political reasoning, understanding liberalism not as a theory, ideology or society manner of representing itself, but as a practice, a “mode of orienting towards objectives and tuning by means of continuous reflection” (*Ibidem*) – a landmark of political life, identified and associated when government practice is limited, in its excess, by the impediment of becoming the object of a public debate, focused on good or bad antagonisms, of over or under-productivity, contradictory traits that characterize it (p. 116).

The second – an ultimate Foucaultian text – insists upon the primacy of philosophical evaluation, in harm of the genealogy and archaeology specific research, self-delivering as text of reviewing modernity and its historicity. Via Canguilhem, Foucault includes the concept of *life* in the political alloy, highlighting the essential in the Canguilhemian approach for elaborating discontinuous analysis and elucidating the historical report between sciences and epistemology. The *science of the living* is being therefore valorized, without omitting sickness, death, monstrosity, anomaly and error, granting *vitalism* with the theoretical role as indicator of problems to be solved and the mission of critical indication for reductions to be avoided. Therefore, the life sciences solicit and apply particular formulae for making history, re-proclaiming the philosophical dimension of knowledge.

A last predicament, imposed by the guided method of the present thematic issue is accepting *today* with a double meaning: a first Foucaultian inflexion refers to a “philosophical mode of showing as more or less significant revealing element of an era’s signification or, quite the contrary, to a general law that fixed, for every era the figure that it was supposed to have”, receiving, by the *present moment* data, a philosophical-simultaneous interrogation of the general historic process and of the “point towards which history itself must decipher in its conditions” [*Viața: experiența și știința* (Life: Experience and Science), p. 121]. The history of the present is marked by, in the Foucaultian interpretation deferred to Kant, by the essential connection of philosophical discursivity with the *current* and with the *event*.

A second sense, of Esposito origins, has as scope promoting a philosophy centered both on the concept of *actualità* (the concept being defined as space reserved for current and pressing events in which function the mechanisms subdued/auxiliary to history in which nihilism and biopolitics are exemplary distillation principles) and on the concept of *l'attuale* (term that expresses the idea of projecting the vehicle in the very nucleus of the present, with the probability that this one exposes itself to the archaism also, the term states the constitution of diagonal connecting categories, specific to knowledge and power, nature and history, technology and life).

In Foucault's vision (as interpreter of Kant), Esposito puts in action the instruments responsible with moving the own sight and research towards the self, by which he suggests a true report on the "present's ontology" and allows himself to a *different reality reading*. Philosophy's mission consists in an ontological referral to the present, in an imperative request for counting on the (permanent) criticizing of the self-history difference, on highlighting the essential and the intrinsic mobility, in a contrasting relationship with the ephemeral detail and sterile superficiality, based on assuming the present as history creating factor. In Esposito's opinion, the present/"today" represents the epicenter of the front confrontation between diverse (opposed) perspectives, placing the thinking on the mobile border (to be read as – *philosophy's own place* – the horizon imprinted in sense and its contemporary destiny), between an inside and an outside, between the ongoing process and the real and possible event.