



REVIEW ESSAY

**Metamorphosis of Biopolitics. A Foucauldian Ecological Perspective and the Challenge of the Pandemic: A Review Essay of Ottavio Marzocca, *Biopolitics for Beginners. Knowledge of Life and Government of People***

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**ABSTRACT.** This paper is a review essay of Ottavio Marzocca, *Biopolitics for Beginners. Knowledge of Life and Government of People*, Milan/Udine: Mimesis International, 2020. Pp. 457. ISBN: 9788869771781 (paperback). It focuses on Marzocca's investigations into biopolitics, a topic of which the author offers an original ecological reconfiguration. The proposed reflections, which address the recent pandemic crisis of COVID-19, are developed from the work of Foucault but are not limited to this thinker. In fact, they offer an articulate examination of the issue by also taking into broad consideration the thought of authors such as Giorgio Agamben, Antonio Negri, Roberto Esposito, Jacques Donzelot, Robert Castel, Pierre Rosanvallon, Nikolas Rose, Melinda Cooper and Gregory Bateson.

**Keywords:** Biopolitics, health crisis, ecological perspective, environmental changes, COVID-19, capitalism, neoliberal governmentality.

Our historical era decrees the relevance of analyses on biopolitics. Without running the risk of exaggeration, we can state that the issue of biopolitics has never been more topical than it is today. The present is indeed marked by the emergence of a pandemic – the first of the third millennium – and an unexpected health crisis. Both these events place biopolitics as a central and strategic form of government.

It is precisely in this context, a real testing ground, that the validity, accuracy, and originality of the research produced by Ottavio Marzocca in his latest work, *Biopolitics for Beginners. Knowledge of Life and Government of People*, unfolds. It is a work which introduces elements useful to "beginners" (as the very title of the book suggests, which can be considered "modest or ambitious, ironic or serious" p. 12) and to more discerning readers, as

well. In fact, it may be of interest to both students and scholars with expertise in Political Philosophy, Science, and Political Sociology as it addresses: “issues that have gathered around the theme of biopolitics, starting from the most basic and trying to clarify those more complex” (p. 11). Hence the author's hope to offer “clear references to move on this terrain which – also because of what the pandemic has forced us to think – cannot be abandoned so easily”. (pp. 11-12). In fact, it seems clear that Marzocca confronts the materiality of a phasing out and phasing in of two different eras: the pre-COVID-19 and the post-Covid-19. In this regard, the incipit of the work could not be more paradigmatic: “The writing of this book began in one era and ended in another. Considering the month and year (June 2020) in which this text was completed, one can guess the reason” (p. 11). In short, it is a threshold or, put differently, a kind of Gramscian interregnum in which the old is dying and the new cannot be born: a challenge as much for Marzocca as for the reader, who, from the very first pages, cannot help but have the impression of being confronted with an analysis that captures the *Zeitgeist* of a precise political, cultural and philosophical scenario.

Actually, this is not the first time Marzocca has grappled with the issue of biopolitics. He is undoubtedly one of the scholars who has approached this topic with greatest sophistication. In his works, he has captured the complexity of this theoretical knot and its developments, particularly within the work of Michel Foucault. It is therefore not surprising that the French philosopher is also referred to in this book not only as an author capable of offering a wide range of approaches to think differently about the pandemic but also as the key thinker in reflections on biopolitics and ultimately in the connections between these two cruxes (a correlation that is also developed by Daniele Lorenzini).<sup>1</sup> In fact, it was Foucault who established the link between biopolitics and modernity, investigating biopolitics both starting from the developments of modern medicine and the medicalization of society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and in relation to the “hegemony that economic rationality exercises on the ways of governing modern societies” (p. 12). As Marzocca points out, in Foucault’s perspective, medicine takes on a political role related to the emergence and transformations of capitalism. At the same time, with reference to COVID-19, we can observe how the mere pursuit of profit has caused enormous difficulties – if not the collapse – of many public health systems (unable to withstand the impact of the pandemic), highlighting the consequences related to the functioning and perpetration of biopolitical or, more precisely, thanatopolitical manoeuvres.

Even more specifically, in the first chapter Marzocca dwells in depth on the analysis of a number of Foucauldian works from the 1970s – not only, as it is easy to guess, “*Society Must Be Defended*” and the first volume of the *History of Sexuality*, both from 1976, but also,

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<sup>1</sup> See Daniele Lorenzini, “Biopolitics in the Time of Coronavirus,” *Critical Inquiry* 47:S2 (2021), S40-S45. Furthermore, consider that Marzocca also developed some aspects of the relationship between pandemic and biopolitics in the following texts: Ottavio Marzocca, “Sorveglianza globale e metropoli pandemica. Attualità e genealogia di un disastro,” *Scienze del Territorio* (2020), 18-28; Ottavio Marzocca, “Pandemia, protezione della vita, ecologia: Smarrimenti del biopotere,” *Politics. Rivista di Studi Politici* 15:1 (2021), 183-197.

for example, earlier works such as the conferences given in Brazil in 1974, even though the term biopolitics does not explicitly appear in them. Especially in these texts, in fact, Foucault shows how, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a twofold focus has developed: both on the lives of individuals (through disciplines) and on the lives of the population understood as a species (through policies regulating biological processes). In effect, taking charge of life becomes a privileged object of the exercise of power. Therefore, a “set of knowledge, techniques and strategies that give rise to a *bio-politics*, i.e., to the exercise of a power over life, a *bio-power*” (p. 36) is developed.

It should also be considered that, on the basis of the heterogeneous combination of biopolitical forms of government and sovereign power, another phenomenon took shape from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Foucault recognizes as historically determined: “state racism” (of which Nazism is the most extreme and violent example). In this case, the power of life is transformed into the power of death. In fact, it is a specific condition in which some people, deemed dangerous to the collective health and welfare, are killed or left to die in the name of protecting the social body. More generally, it should also be observed that the (political) process of medicalization, not only of the body but also of the soul, as in the case of the “establishment of psychiatry as a specific field of medical knowledge” (p. 56), has probably had positive consequences but certainly also uncontrollable and therefore negative side effects. In fact, one of the issues that runs through all of Marzocca's work, related to a consciously ecological viewpoint – also used in relation to the analysis of the pandemic – is based on questioning the ecosystemic effects of medicalization, as the environment is recognized as external to life itself.

Marzocca also notes that “the biopolitical link between strategies to protect society and attention to the fate of the population as a living species” (p. 65) is also important in courses at the Collège de France *Security, Territory, Population* (1977-1978), *The Birth of Biopolitics* (1978-1979), and *On the Government of the Living* (1979-1980). However, what assumes centrality in these works is above all another connection, namely, between biopolitics and “the complex of theories and political practices that the author indicates with the term governmentality” (p. 65). With reference to modern forms of political government, Foucault notes that knowledge and techniques of political administration are developed in order to strengthen the state and the social body. Biopolitics thus becomes one of the forms of expression of governmentality, from which it follows that investigating the dimension of government is crucial for understanding the emergence of biopolitics. At the same time, precisely in this historical context, we also observe the prevalence of security mechanisms over sovereign and disciplinary power and the establishment of a close connection between security and freedom (fostered by the political regime of liberalism). As Marzocca effectively points out, from this “we can deduce not only that (...) the nucleus of modern governmentality is essentially economic, but also that biopolitics is, in a sense, functional and complementary to the economic rationality of this governmentality” (p. 76).

The first chapter of the book therefore helps us to grasp how necessary it is to start precisely from Foucault, and his original, historically situated elaboration of biopolitics,

in order to move in the most diverse directions of philosophical and political debate. In this sense, and precisely in the footsteps of the French thinker, in the second and third chapters, Marzocca devotes some attention to the criticality of those positions that develop a metahistorical analysis of biopolitics. In this regard, an important node of the book's arguments is related to the refutation of the assumptions that have understood Ancient Greek political thought as the promoter or precursor of biopolitics. On the contrary, it is instead necessary to recognize, firstly, that in the classical era "the natural necessities of life were generally excluded from political activities" (p. 86); secondly, that economics has taken on political importance only in modernity, that is, only in this era has economics led to considering life as one of the main goals of politics.

Marzocca's critique addresses in particular the reflections of the Finnish thinker Mika Ojakangas, according to whom one can speak of the origins of biopolitics with reference to both Aristotle and Plato. Drawing on some of Hannah Arendt's analyses, in line with those of Foucault and delving into their insights, Marzocca, on the other hand, shows how, in the case of Aristotle – with particular reference to *The Politics* – "the power exercised in the domestic dimension for the preservation of life was not a political power, but rather a *prepolitical* power" (p. 88). Moreover, even if one recognizes "a biopolitical flavor" (p. 132) in Aristotle's intentions to exclude a large portion of inhabitants from citizenship, one must also consider that such discriminations are aimed at "certain activities rather than specific social figures" (p. 129). With respect to Plato, Marzocca accurately addresses the hypothesis that – especially in *The Republic* but also in the *Statesman* and the *Laws* – it would be possible to find a biopolitical thought with reference to the issues of procreation (and thus eugenics), the family, human nature, education, the role of medicine, and the comparison between the ruler and the shepherd. What is at stake, for Marzocca, is to avoid oversimplification and instead demonstrate that "Plato has as his main aspiration not the constitution of a healthy and strong social organism in terms of physical power and biological integrity, but the formation of a political community in which the conditions of virtue and attention to what is common are actually created and endure" (p. 102).

Giorgio Agamben too – whose theses capture Marzocca's attention because "at the beginning of the pandemic of 2020 he [problematically – author's note] denounced (...) the danger for democracy" in establishing a state of emergency "to face the contagion" (p. 425)<sup>2</sup> – finds the foundation of biopolitics in Ancient Greece. Moreover, together with Antonio Negri and Roberto Esposito, he is one of the main references in the biopolitics debate from the 1990s onwards. The third chapter of the book is devoted to these three authors, who testify to the "vivacity that Italian philosophical research on biopolitics has expressed in recent decades" (p. 143). The interaction between Foucault's and Arendt's analyses leads Agamben to consider the camp (not exclusively that of the Nazi experience) as the biopolitical paradigm of modernity and biopolitics – always destined to turn into thanatopolitics – as "the essential form of the modern exercise of power" (p. 146). More precisely, according to Agamben, the entire Western political thought has a biopolitical

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<sup>2</sup> See Giorgio Agamben, *Where Are We Now: The Epidemic as Politics* (2021).

vocation because of the separation between *zoé* (the sphere of natural life) and *bios* (the sphere of political life) – it was not by chance, in this author's opinion, that during the pandemic we can observe the reduction of life to a purely biological state, in connection with the enactment of an unlimited securitarian biopolitics implemented in the name of risks that cannot be effectively determined. In fact, the division between *zoé* and *bios* constitutes “the condition that authorizes politics to make life itself the material to be politically qualified and transformed, that is to say to be bio-politicized” (p. 148). Therefore, one can see how much Agamben's reflections diverge from those of Arendt and, more importantly – for the purposes of Marzocca's analysis – from those of Foucault. In particular, according to Agamben, what prevented Foucault from considering the paradigmatic biopolitical importance of the camp was his failure to recognize that the core of biopower is sovereign power: the former is inscribed in the latter. While for Foucault, in fact, there is a heterogeneity between biopower and sovereignty, for Agamben, on the contrary, these present a structural connection. Fundamentally, for Marzocca, it is thus a matter of observing that Agamben's analyses – which pose theoretical problems that are specifically investigated in the book – lead, on one hand, to the removal of specificities among different political forms and, on the other, to their reduction to a mere exercise of sovereign power. In this way, therefore, reference to Foucauldian genealogical analyses is lost.

Actually, although for different reasons, Negri's analysis also risks losing many of the results of the genealogical research developed by Foucault. For Negri, in fact, in the age of globalization it is necessary, on the one hand, to distinguish between biopower (mechanisms of power exercised over life) and biopolitics (processes of subjectification of the multitude) and, on the other hand, to observe that Foucault “was not able to fully appreciate the ontological importance of production” (p. 167). According to Marzocca, this interpretation is actually marked by the pronounced Marxist imprint of Negri's thought, which views productive power as inherently biopolitical and, consequently, “the immediate productive involvement of life itself; which (...) also constitutes an immediate possibility for labour to produce autonomous and free subjectivities, capable of resisting and avoiding the dominion of capital” (p. 169). In this way, Negri comes to recognize the labor of the multitude – embedded in a biopolitical dimension – as a source of ethical-political practices of subjectification: an operation that would hardly have been accepted by Foucault.

Unlike Agamben and Negri, Esposito seems to follow a more distinctly Foucauldian line in linking biopolitics and biomedical knowledge. In fact, again and while granting several merits to Esposito's analysis, Marzocca notes that things are more complex, and there is a risk of putting life at the center of politics uncritically. For Esposito, it is a matter of making up for Foucault's lack of clarification of the reasons why biopolitics in some cases turns into thanatopolitics in order to reverse this trend. The aim is to outline an affirmative biopolitics that can consider life and politics not as separate spheres but rather in their inextricability. The paradigm used by Esposito to indicate the fluctuations between biopolitics as power that preserves and biopolitics as power that destroys is that of “immunity”, which allows us to grasp the essential relationship between life and death in

modern politics. It substantially involves recognizing “the tendency of society to immunize itself in order to protect itself from the dangers of disintegration” (p. 178), as well as considering the issue of immune privilege granted to some individuals and not to others (particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic). In this way, *communitas* is preserved through *immunitas*, which is both its complementary and negative form. Marzocca also points out that, although the immunization paradigm leads to a focus on the problem of the “genetic calculations” inherent in contemporary biopower (a topic to which the book’s author devotes special attention, particularly in chapter five), nevertheless it very often proves insufficient. It is not, in fact, simply a matter of overturning the thanatopolitical inclinations of biopolitics but of problematizing the political use of genetics as a form of governing individuals that determines their *ethos* – an element that, in the wake of Foucault’s later studies, needs to be recovered. It is precisely in this “ethical” (in the Foucauldian sense of the term) dimension that biopolitics must be contextualized.

Indeed, the fourth and fifth chapters analyze the main forms of biopolitics and government of our *ethos* or, more precisely, the biopolitical character of some of the main forms of government that have developed since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What emerges is, on one hand and again, “the privileged relationship that the various forms of biopolitics have with the economic rationality that essentially permeates the ways of governing modern society” and, on the other, the fact “that *ethos* is one of the main stakes of the economic and biopolitical government of this society” (p. 18). The thread from which Marzocca’s reflections branch out is always Foucault’s work, especially from what he developed in *Security, Territory, Population* and *The Birth of Biopolitics*: according to the French philosopher, in modernity the family becomes a central element in the application of government strategies aimed at governing the population, that is, the biopolitical object *par excellence*.

Drawing on Jacques Donzelot’s analyses, Marzocca describes the development, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, of a morality compatible with the free market. In this context, philanthropic organizations play an important role, largely inspired by the theories of Thomas R. Malthus (very different from Marx’s theories on surplus population) and, in particular, the need in liberal societies to encourage workers to save and be chaste in order to counter the biopolitical problem of population growth, ward off welfarism, improve economic and moral well-being, and, in short, counter the risks of the new industrial society. In this way, we observe both the formation of an economic *ethos* and the moralization of people’s lives.

The issue of security and the issue of rights (particularly the right to property, as Robert Castel shows) become a central node of the liberal state, which recognizes the (isolated) individual as a privileged interlocutor and becomes the promoter and guarantor not only of civil security but, indeed, also of social security (precisely from the protection of private property). It is no coincidence, therefore, that the first forms of insurance were devised in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the first social security systems, which – as Pierre Rosanvallon shows – marked the transition from the protective (liberal) state to the welfare state. In this way, a new, specific relationship between contemporary society and life develops, centered on the concept of risk and the need to govern the uncertainty of existence – an early example of which can be found in the Bismarckian state: “a system with a

certain degree of organic state insurance against illness, accidents, old age and invalidity" (p. 230) which shows how the social (a historical "invention") has become a specific form of government.

In Marzocca's elaborate reconstruction, he also underlines how the welfare state has not achieved what it promised in terms of social justice. From a biopolitical point of view, it has led to a radicalization of the processes of medicalization of individuals, resulting in the creation of public health services and, at the same time, private medical care systems that maintain an inextricable relationship with the market economy. It is therefore understood, the author notes, that this determines "a profound inequality of possibilities of accessing the "right to health" by figures with too little economic resources to be able to adequately contribute to the financing of the welfare state and therefore to fully benefit from its protection" (p. 242). In short, since its creation, the welfare state seems destined to its own crisis due to the inherent contradictions in its functioning.

It is therefore from this perspective that Marzocca analyzes neoliberal critiques of the welfare state and, in particular, the latter's emphasis on the wage labor model, which presupposes specific ways of life and forms of *ethos*. Conversely, neoliberal forms of government, which replaced the welfare state from the end of the 1970s, have been based on minimizing the "state intervention on the economy (...) assigning it, rather, the role of guarantor of competition and the proper functioning of the free market" (p. 253). More generally, especially the more advanced countries, dominated by the capitalist economy, have begun to find the demand for socialization of health costs unacceptable (as we have already pointed out, this condition that has come down to our present, leading to great difficulties in the management of the pandemic emergency due to the weakness of public health systems). Along these lines, between the mid-Seventies and mid-Eighties, the process of medicalization assumes "the characteristics of a biomedicalization intended as an approach to life problems dominated by investigation and intervention techniques on biogenetic material" (p. 269). The fifth chapter is devoted to these issues and an analysis of the biopolitical implications inherent in the process of the molecularization of contemporary medicine.

Firstly, Marzocca investigates the reflections of Nikolas Rose, who observes that "the historical normalizing, eugenic and racist tendencies of biopolitics are clearly reduced by the current overcoming of traditional biological determinism" (p. 272). In fact, while the racist and eugenic exercise of biopower by states was based on the connection between the individual body and the collective body of the population, with molecular medicine practiced in advanced liberal societies, it is the very idea of the unitariness of the body that is challenged. The molecularization of medicine "progressively reduces the supremacy of the national and state dimension over that individual" (p. 283) and, consequently, also the thanatopolitical effects of biopower. Marzocca responds to these analyses, which aim to emphasize the beneficial effects of molecular biology – which, moreover, according to Rose, produces new forms of subjectification and responsibility –, by pointing out how risky it is to minimize the discriminatory forms of contemporary biopower. Indeed, these continue to be visible in the geopolitical context of globalization, if only because of the

important role that the idea of nation still plays in biopolitical strategies. Moreover, the increasing individualization implicit in contemporary medicine leads to the “privatization of scientific, political and economic attention to life” (p. 289).

Thus, in Rose there is a renunciation of critique toward contemporary biopolitical trends and, in fact, an acceptance of biocapitalism, a position to which Marzocca opposes the theses developed by Melinda Cooper. The latter points out that, with the rise of neoliberalism as the main form of government from Reagan's America onwards, biotechnology research was strategically initiated to heal the economic crisis in the United States. In this way, we see an inextricable link between neoliberalism and the creation of bioeconomic capitalism, which involves continuous financial investments in experimentation and the commercialization of attention to life. It can also be noted that, according to Cooper, the main characteristics of the bioeconomy are delirium and megalomania: “it aspires to overcome the very limits of life just as this has been done so far on our planet, trying to produce it in ever new forms” (p. 300).

It is not difficult to understand Marzocca's proclivity for Cooper's analysis. Indeed, as already explained, one of the fundamental assumptions of his work, also employed in the analysis of SARS-COV2, is to take an ecological view. In particular, considering both the decisive role that ecological factors may play in pandemic emergencies, and the fact that the “COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the extreme limit that the crisis has reached in the relations of our societies with the world (...) that is, as an alteration of man's ecosystemic relations with animals, in particularly with wild ones” (p. 30), Marzocca's analyses aim to place biopolitics in the sphere of inquiry that connects ecology and economics. Chapter six is devoted to this. It opens with the observation that the concept of milieu, associated with that of biopower and used by Foucault in *Security, Territory, Population* to denote the space in which population government takes place, is similar to the notion of “environment that we use today to refer to the ecosystem contexts affected by the ecological crisis” (p. 324). The milieu/environment needs to be kept salubrious and is thus protected through public hygiene policies. However – as Marzocca notes – the separation remaining between population and environment considers the latter as an external element and therefore secondary to the former. More precisely: the natural environment must be available to ensure the success of biopolitical interventions on the population, understood as an economic resource. This is an externality that, in fact, has not been overcome, even following the development of natural sciences since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which have emphasized the inextricable relationship between physical contexts and living species. For a long time, in fact, the consequences of environmental exploitation were not considered; there was no agreement between government strategies and expressions of scientific ecology (such as botanical geography, evolutionary theory, population ecology and ecosystem ecology, whose genesis and development Marzocca traces). And yet, on the other hand, as Marzocca notes, in our capitalist society even ecological knowledge “tends to frame the environmental question in both economic and biopolitical terms” (p. 338). With the exercise of liberal and especially neoliberal governmentality, ecological knowledge looks at



the environment in terms of economic rationalization and nature in terms of natural capital, with little influence on the economic and biopolitical government of society.

The fact that the need to place limits on natural resources has not found adequate space, even since (starting from the 1970s-80s) the ecological crisis has become a global problem, is very serious. Obviously, this is not meant to speak of indifference towards environmental degradation and the fate of life (indeed Marzocca identifies and describes various attempts and approaches deployed by economic and political powers), yet, very often, the focus is on the ecologically correct behavior of individuals to solve environmental problems. The guiding paradigm of neoliberal governmentality, which has influenced the *ethos* of the modern individual, remains that of productivity at all costs, and even ecological and political strategies end up being treated in financial terms, following the prevailing logic of the market.

In this regard, Marzocca shows how Gregory Bateson's ecology of mind recognizes the centrality of transformations of *ethos* (both individual and social) in relation to the ecological question. In fact, this theory – an alternative to traditional scientific ecology – is based on the assumption of the inextricable relationship – understood as a mental relationship – between life and the environment. It, moreover, attributes “extreme importance to behavioral processes and their interactions, similarities and differences with biological and ecosystem processes” (p. 376). This is an important passage because it is precisely Bateson's reflections that, according to Marzocca, allow for the recovery of the importance of the Foucauldian analysis of *ethos* (of each and every one), which in turn underscores the relationship between self-knowledge and knowledge of the world and focuses on the political aspects of environmental issues. Interestingly, Foucault recognizes that, above all, cynical philosophy proposes an *etho-poiesis*, that is, a dimension in which the construction of *ethos* is possible, which in reality, Marzocca keenly intuits, consists of an *eco-poiesis*, which indicates “a relationship with the world as a context of dwelling” (p. 379).

Thus, one can see how, based on these analyses, Marzocca proposes an original ecological reconfiguration of the discourse on biopolitics. It is also from these reflections that, in the last chapter – written during the COVID-19 outbreak and precisely because of this emergence (see p. 391) – the author contextualizes the investigation of pandemics, noting that the central role of ecological factors in the outbreak and spread of epidemics is only occasionally acknowledged. Indeed, there is a tendency to downplay the importance of environmental changes, produced by contemporary society, in causing phenomena such as interspecific transmissions, which refer directly back to the concept of zoonoses, “that is to say the idea that some pathogens that animals carry, under certain conditions, can transfer to human organisms” (p. 394) and cause epidemic processes. For Marzocca, it is fundamentally a question of defining the dangers of the pandemic in ecosystemic terms, where our globalized societies produce the alienation of humans from the world and, at the same time, an alteration of nature, a reduction in biodiversity and processes of intense anthropization of the environment.

The question underlying Marzocca's analysis, which can be read in relation to the theses proposed from a biopolitical and ecological perspective by Miguel Vatter<sup>3</sup> and Andreas Malm<sup>4</sup>, is basically: "What forms does biopolitics take today in the face of the problem of pandemics?" (p. 403). In this regard, we should consider, on the one hand, the fact that the preferred dimension for dealing with a pandemic is planetary and, on the other hand, the general unpreparedness of nation states in dealing with the risk of infectious diseases. From here, the main tool employed to tackle the problem of pandemics is that of global surveillance (also through the use of algorithmic technologies). However, this policy is often in danger of underestimating the (negative) condition of public health systems in many countries, which to date are suffering the effects of years of privatization of medicine and health services. As Marzocca in fact observes: "The SARS-COV2 pandemic has clearly revealed the widespread health vulnerability that the previous forty years of neoliberal policies has created in many countries" (p. 417). It is therefore not surprising that, with the COVID-19 pandemic, the inefficiency of the global surveillance tools adopted by world organizations was observed, and this condition led many societies to take "a step back in the history of biopolitics" (p. 423). In this respect, it is again possible to refer to Foucault in order to address anti-pandemic biopolitics that aim to normalize ungovernable situations. Indeed, it should be noted that in the COVID-19 pandemic, the inoculation and vaccination approach, typical of security mechanisms, had to be integrated with the quarantine model, typical of disciplinary systems developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (analyzed in *Discipline and Punish* and in *Security, Territory, Population*).

Ultimately, we can conclude with Marzocca's words, recognizing that Foucault provided "sufficient tools to allow us to approach the first real pandemic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with some hope of understanding (...) the last and most surprising metamorphosis of biopolitics" (p. 441). It is barely worth adding that, thanks to the use of Foucauldian tools, it is precisely Marzocca's book that allows us to historically connect and delve into the most surprising metamorphosis of biopolitics.

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<sup>3</sup> See Miguel Vatter, "One health and one home: On the biopolitics of Covid-19," in *Coronavirus, Psychoanalysis, and Philosophy*, ed. Fernando Castrillon and Thomas Marchevsky (2021), 79-82.

<sup>4</sup> See Andreas Malm, *Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency: War Communism in the Twenty-First Century* (2020).

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