WHAT AN APPARATUS IS NOT: ON THE ARCHEOLOGY OF THE NORM IN FOUCAULT, CANGUILHEM, AND GOLDSTEIN
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> The *habitus* is the logical place where something like a theory of subjectivity could have been born.
> Giorgio Agamben, *Opus Dei*[1]

> The abnormal, while logically second, is existentially first.
> Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*[2]

AGAMBEN'S 'DISPOSITIVE' RELIGION

In his essay "What is an Apparatus?" Agamben relates the genealogy of the Foucauldian *dispositif* of biopower directly to the notion of *positivity* in Christian theology as highlighted by Hyppolite in a passage from his *Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of History*. Agamben believes that this "passage […] could not have failed to provoke Foucault's curiosity, because it in a way presages the notion of apparatus".[3] Agamben then sets up a lengthy genealogy: he first relates the notion of biopolitical *dispositif* to Hegel's notion of *positive* religion and then moves from there to the theological term *dispositio*. According to Agamben, the Latin *dispositio* translates the Greek word *oikonomia,* which in the early centuries of theology designated "the administration and government of human history" by Christ.[4] Agamben thus proposes to take the form in which Christianity was propagated and governed as the archetype of Foucault's modern *dispositif* of biopower.

The passage from Hegel as quoted by Hyppolite is the following:

> A positive religion implies feelings that are more or less impressed through constraint on souls; these are actions that are the effect of command and the result of obedience and are accomplished without direct interest.[5]

In other words, positive religions introduce a form of power or management of the soul, one that is both indirect and automatic, as Agamben explains:

> While natural religion is concerned with the immediate and general relation of human reason with the divine, positive or historical religion encompasses the set of beliefs, rules, and rites that in a certain society and at a certain historical moment are externally imposed on individuals.[6]

Agamben intuits here the embryo of the future paradigm of biopolitics: originally, the definition of biopolitics would have emerged from a kind of spiritual manipulation, one that operates "without direct interest", as Hegel said, and in a way that is similar to the automatic and impersonal movements of a mechanism.

According to Agamben, Foucault in his *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1969) often uses the term *positivity* of power in this sense (yet, as Agamben notes, without ever defining or referencing it), only to replace it with the term *dispositif* in his research on power from 1975 onwards.[7] Agamben points out that the term *dispositif* has three main definitions in Foucault and in the French language more generally: a juridical one, a technological one, and a military one. He immediately emphasizes, however, that "[t]his fragmentation [of meaning] generally corresponds to the historical development and articulation of a *unique original meaning* that we should not lose sight of".[8] After opening his essay with a long quote by Foucault[9] on the diverse meanings of *dispositif*, it seems odd (at least to this reader) that Agamben would then promptly inaugurate a quest towards the notion's "unique original meaning".

Specifically, Agamben retraces Foucault's *dispositif* to an etymology that goes back to the first centuries of Christian theology and the disputes against the Monarchians, a heresy denying Trinity in favor of God as a single person. Agamben does not provide any philological reference for this theological *liaison* within the Foucauldian corpus: he underlines only that theologians such as Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Irenaeus translated the Greek word *oikonomia* (the divine government of the worldly things) with the Latin word *dispositio*, that is cognate to the French *dispositif*.

Yet Agamben nonetheless appears quite confident that his etymology can be tied back to Foucault:

> The Latin term *dispositio*, from which the French term *dispositif* derives, comes therefore to take on the complex semantic sphere of the theological *oikonomia*. The "dispositifs" about which Foucault speaks are somehow linked to this theological legacy. They can be in some way traced back to the fracture that divides and, at the same time, articulates in God being and praxis, the nature or essence, on the one hand, and the operation through which He administers and governs the created world, on the other. The term *dispositif* designates that in which, and through which, one realizes a pure activity of governance devoid of any foundation in being. This is the reason why *dispositifs* must always imply a process of subjectification, that is to say, they must produce their subject.[10]

Evoking remote and alien forces, Agamben thus works very hard to resolve a question that can actually be resolved—this is, indeed, what I propose to show—much more easily, while staying closer to the sources of the Foucauldian corpus itself.

The task of the historian of ideas should be to use a complex reading (*lectio difficilior*) when a text does not provide a context, but here the context seems clear enough. It may indeed be wiser to look at the sources that Foucault himself quotes when he employed the term *dispositif* of biopower for the first time. The history of the idea of *dispositif* in Foucault is, of course, plural and complex, but it can be explained without the detour through the remote Christian *oikonomia*: by simply visiting the German *Naturphilosophie* that Foucault himself knew very well.

THE NORMALIZING APPARATUS OF FOUCAULT

What exactly did Foucault say during the course *Abnormal* at the Collège de France, in his lecture on January the 15th 1975 when he used the term *dispositif* for the first time? On that day, Foucault was introducing his research project on the "normalization of sexuality" in modern France:

> The eighteenth century, or the Classical Age, also set up a State apparatus [*appareil*] that extended into and was supported by different institutions. And then—and it is on this that I would like to focus, or which I would like to serve as background to my analysis of the normalization of sexuality—it refined a general technique of the exercise of power that can be transferred to many different institutions and apparatuses [*appareils*]. This technique constitutes the other side of the juridical and political structures of representation and is the condition of their functioning and effectiveness. This general technique of the government of men comprises a typical apparatus [*dispositif*], which is the disciplinary organization I spoke to you about last year. To what end is this apparatus [*dispositif*] directed? It is, I think, something that we can call "normalization." This year, then, instead of considering the mechanics of the disciplinary apparatus, I will be looking at their effects of normalization, at what they are directed toward, the effects they can achieve and that can be grouped under the rubric of "normalization".[11]

To what does Foucault relate the idea of *dispositif* in this passage from 1975? What is the purpose of the *dispositif* that Foucault himself is suggesting and in what ways does it diverge from the merely *mechanical* reading of the disciplinary apparatuses? The answer to both those questions is: "Normalization".

The concept of normalization is pivotal in Foucault's thought and he would use it again in *Discipline and Punish*, which was published that same year. Both in his course and in his book, Foucault explains normalization by following his teacher Canguilhem's interpretation of the norm in *The Normal and the Pathological*. Canguilhem defines the norm as something that operates differently from the law, as Foucault recalls: "The norm's function is not to exclude and reject. Rather, it is always linked to a *positive technique* of intervention and transformation, to a sort of *normative projec*t".[12] The *dispositif* of normalization in Foucault's *Abnormal* thus emerges as a further and more complex evolution compared to the notion of positivity in *The Archeology of Knowledge*, as in this case the *dispositif* is not just a positive heterogeneous agent (law) but becomes, rather, a normative autonomous agent.

CANGUILHEM'S NORMATIVE BOURGEOISIE

In the chapter "From the Social to the Vital" in *The Normal and the Pathological*, Canguilhem aims to retrace the history of the words 'normal' and 'normalization' in the French language. As he explains, before entering common speech, the term 'normal' was used only in educational and medical institutions to indicate a prototype of learning and health as required by the modernizing reforms following the French Revolution. The process of normalization of French society began silently with the normalization of language, but in order to pursue a more ambitious political plan: in the years in which the bourgeoisie was taking over the means of production, it expropriated, for the same reason, the grammar of the French language. According to Canguilhem, the bourgeoisie thus appeared as the new *normative class*. Compared to the previous regimes, the bourgeoisie started to exercise power not through the old laws (that were functioning on the basis of *repression*), but above all through new norms (that were *structural*):

> Between 1759, when the word "normal" appeared, and 1834, when the word "normalized" appeared, a normative class had won the power to identify—a beautiful example of ideological illusion—the function of social norms, whose content it determined, with the use that that class made of them.[13]

In his course *Abnormal,* Foucault himself underlines those passages where Canguilhem describes such a normative period of French modernity that transformed the whole society by inventing new educational, medical and industrial norms. It is clear that Canguilhem anticipates several research fields that Foucault would take up and provides him with a conceptual toolbox for the analysis of the "power of normalization" and the "techniques of normalization".

In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault refers very clearly to Canguilhem:

> The power of the Norm appears through the disciplines. Is this the new law of modern society? Let us say rather that, since the eighteenth century, it has joined other powers - the Law, the Word and the Text, Tradition—imposing new delimitations upon them. The Normal is established as a principle of coercion in teaching with the introduction of a standardized education and the establishment of the écoles *normales*; it is established in the effort to organize a national medical profession and a hospital system capable of operating general norms of health; it is established in the standardization of industrial processes and products.[14]

Canguilhem, among other things, extends his analysis also to the close relationship between *technological norms* and *legal norms*; how they must develop in harmony and go hand in hand in their innovation, always as part of the grand and silent plan of the new bourgeoisie. He thus writes in a way that, looking back from the present, can be said to resonate with Agamben: "A bureaucratic and technocratic myth, the Plan is the modern dress of the idea of Providence".[15] In contrast to Agamben, however, Canguilhem stresses that "the normal is not a static or peaceful, but a dynamic and polemical concept".[16] The normal is continuously produced and redefined by the immanent field of social forces.

In this historical ontology of the norm, Canguilhem is keen to deny any dominant function by a superior power and he recognizes the logical primacy of the abnormal over the normal. At the heart of the definition of norm there is no transcendent form but, instead, the *abnormal*, which remains the norm's primary and conflictive kernel:

> The abnormal, as ab-normal, comes after the definition of the normal, it is its logical negation. However, it is the historical anteriority of the future abnormal which gives rise to a normative intention. The normal is the effect obtained by the execution of the normative project, it is the norm exhibited in the fact. [...] Consequently it is not paradoxical to say that the abnormal, while logically second, is existentially first.[17]

The Normative Organism of Goldstein

Foucault's idea of biopolitical *dispositif* thus found its first historical inspiration in Canguilhem's account of the normative power of the French bourgeoisie in the Napoleonic period. In *The Normal and the Pathological,* however, the genealogy of the idea of norm, in spite of all the references to the history of French medicine, comes directly from the work of the Jewish-German neurologist Kurt Goldstein, who had remained Canguilhem's main inspiration over the years. Whereas Foucault adopted the notion of normativity from Canguilhem, Canguilhem adopted the notion of normativity from Goldstein.

Throughout several passages in *The Normal and the Pathological,* we witness the application of Goldstein's idea of normativity to the history of the definitions of pathology.[18] A cousin of Ernst Cassirer's, Goldstein was well known in French philosophical circles. His main work *Der Aufbau des Organismus* (literally, *The Structure of the Organism*) was dictated in exile in Amsterdam in 1934, after the Nazis arrested and expelled him from Berlin.[19] In 1952 Merleau-Ponty had it translated in French in the series for Gallimard that he was co-directing with Jean-Paul Sartre. Merleau-Ponty himself cited Goldstein countless times: already in *The Structure of Behavior* (1942; the book's title even mirrors Goldstein's title) and also in *Phenomenology of*

Perception (1945).

In Goldstein the normative power is first and foremost an attribute of the living and not necessarily a faculty of institutional apparatuses such as scientific knowledge and medicine. Goldstein always reframes the definition of pathology from the point of view of the patient: "the sick man is not abnormal because of the absence of a norm but because of his incapacity to be normative", as Canguilhem informs us in a passage praising Goldstein.[20] For Goldstein, in general, the *normative power* is the ability of each organism (and specifically of the human brain) to invent, modify and destroy its own norms, internal and external habits, rules and behaviors, in order to adapt better to its own *Umwelt* (or surrounding environment), particularly in cases of illness and traumatic incidents and in those conditions that challenge the survival and unity of the organism.[21] In Goldstein, the normative proceeds from the constant antagonism of the organism *against* its environment.[22] Yet Goldstein's originality lies not in the recognition of this antagonism alone, but rather in conceiving sickness and all that is usually considered psychopathological and socially abnormal as a manifestation of a positive normative process itself. Thus, the organism is always *in-becoming*. Truly 'sick' is instead the organism that is incapable of invention and experimentation of new norms: the organism that is, paradoxically, not capable of making mistakes.

Canguilhem closely studied the holistic neurology of Goldstein, including his sophisticated idea of *biological knowledge*[23] and transformed it into a veritable *epistemology of medical sciences*, thus approaching and interrogating the broader field of social sciences. In particular, he took Goldstein's intuition of the normative power expressed by the subject and applied it to the whole social field. In this way he began to analyze the normative power of the institutions in charge of producing and normalising the subject itself. At this point, Foucault expanded and transformed Canguilhem's *epistemology of the living* into an *epistemology of power*.

It is rarely recalled that Foucault himself had studied Goldstein. Indeed, Foucault opens his first book *Maladie mentale et personnalité* (1954) with a strong critique of Goldstein's definitions of mental illness and organic medicine (based on the notions of: abstraction, abnormality, and environment), surely as part of an implicit dialogue with his teacher Canguilhem.[24] As a bizarre and circular coincidence, it is worth noting on this count that the last public and authorized text by Foucault is the new introduction to the English edition of *Le Normal et le pathologique*. Following again Goldstein's track, Foucault famously writes there: "life is what is capable of error".[25] In this way Foucault seems to conclude in the last days of his research that life is itself the ab-normal, the life that does not imitate itself, the life exceeding the norm. In such an encounter of the geophilosophical faults of the old Continent, the austere monism of German thought and Goldstein's holistic philosophy are turned upside down in Foucault's ostensibly pagan polytheism and analytics of power.

Gilles Deleuze describes very well this pluralistic blooming of French post-structuralism, exploding further Foucault's *dispositif* into a cosmic diagram. "What is a dispositif?" asks one of his essays, written a decade before Agamben's essay with the same title:

> In the first instance it is a tangle, a multilinear ensemble. It is composed of lines, each having a different nature. [...] Each line is broken and subject to *change in direction,* bifurcating and forked, and subject to *drifting*. [...] Great thinkers are somewhat seismic.[26]

Here Deleuze's operation is to explode German *organicism* to the limit of the cosmos, challenging the very organic and teleological unity of the living that was inaugurated by Kant in the *Critique of Judgment*. Indeed, as Deleuze and Guattari remind us in *A Thousand Plateaus*: "The enemy is the organism. The Body-without-Organs is opposed not to the organs but to that organization of the organs called the organism".[2]

CANGUILHEM AND THE CARTESIAN GOD IN THE MACHINE

So far we have had the chance to illustrate the conceptual genealogy that, via Canguilhem, links Foucault's *dispositif* of normalisation to Goldstein's normativity of the organism. However, at which point does Goldstein's structure of the organism turn into a political diagram of the body and into the form of a (biopolitical) *dispositif*? Another text by Canguilhem provides the philological evidence for the first usage of the term *dispositif* in relation to political philosophy.

Foucault must have known Canguilhem's essay "Machine and Organism" (published in 1952, originally a lecture given in 1947), as Canguilhem uses there the term *dispositif* in a way that is very similar to how Foucault would do so later. The polemical target of the essay is Descartes and his transcendent mechanistic program for the human body and for the living organism in general. Canguilhem intervenes against a strong, dualistic reasoning that traverses French thought and obliterates the very autonomy of the living in favor of mechanicism. The essay can be divided in four parts: "the meaning of the comparison of the organism to a machine; the relationship between mechanism and finalism; the reversal of the traditional relationship between machine and organism; and the philosophical consequences of this reversal".[28] In the conclusion, Canguilhem reverses Cartesian mechanicism in favor of an organicism that is resonant with both Goldstein's holism and German *Naturphilosophie*.

The use of the term *dispositif* by Canguilhem occurs in a passage discussing Descartes' short treatise "The Description of the Human Body". Descartes explains the voluntary movement of the human body with a pre-organization and pre-disposition of its organs, so as to make the soul unnecessary as a prime mover of the body:

> The soul cannot produce any movement without the appropriate disposition of the bodily organs which are required for making the movement. On the contrary, when all the bodily organs are disposed for some movement, the body has no need of the soul in order to produce that movement.[29]

Descartes, says Canguilhem, attempts to prove that the soul does not move the body in the way that a general moves his army, but rather through gears connected to each other like in a well-thought out clockwork. "He is thus a tributary, intellectually speaking, of the technical forms of his age: of the existence of clocks and watches, water mills, artificial fountains, pipe organs", Canguilhem notes.[30]

At a conceptual level, Canguilhem insists, this model is the transition from the political image of command to the technological image of command.

> Thus, in Descartes, the technological image of "command" (a type of positive causality by a *dispositif* or by the play of mechanical connections) substitutes for the political image of commandment (a kind of magical causality; causality by word or by sign). [A] mechanical device that executes replaces a power that directs and commands—but God has set the direction once and for all; the direction of the movement is included by the builder in the mechanical device that executes it.[31]

It is in this passage that Canguilhem mentions, for the first time, an impersonal *dispositif* of power that replaces a power that directs and controls in the first person. What must be emphasized here is that Canguilhem presents the *dispositif* as a form of power but without an explicit and visible command. This passage resonates strikingly with a description of disciplinary power in *Discipline and Punish*:

> The power in the hierarchized surveillance of the disciplines is not possessed as a thing, or transferred as a property; it functions like a piece of machinery [*machinerie*]. And, although it is true that its pyramidal organization gives it a 'head', it is the apparatus [*appareil*] as a whole that produces 'power' and distributes individuals in this permanent and continuous field.[32]

These two passages show that the term *dispositif* in Canguilhem and Foucault is first tributary to the emerging mechanical craftsmanship of the 17th century and to a technological view of power rather than to a Hegelian translation of the paradigm of positive religion.

Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish* is closer to this technological genealogy of the *dispositif*: the Panopticon is an acephalous form of power that functions without a center of command, indeed as a *dispositif*. On the other hand, Foucault's course *Abnormal* links the *dispositif* to "the emergence of the power of normalization" in modern France and to the institutionalization of the categories of "the normal and the pathological". Here the *dispositif* is not simply an acephalous structure, but a full normative structure. Both lineages are important to understand the evolution of the term *dispositif*. Both refer to the problem of organic normativity in Canguilhem: whereas the *normalizing dispositif* refers to the autonomous production of the categories of the normal and the pathological by state apparatuses, the *disciplinary dispositif* refers to the 'organic' incarnation of power into an impersonal infrastructure of procedures, standards and norms.

Interestingly, in Canguilhem's critique of Descartes the problem of a Christian account of the machine-organism returns. However, Canguilhem's attention goes in a direction opposite to Agamben's. Canguilhem is aware of the influence of Christian transcendence on Descartes. And like Agamben, he is very aware that the paradigm of Christianity introduced a form of power that directs without acting, as this passage illustrates:

> This is to accept that it is possible to direct without acting; we might call this a magical conception of direction, because it implies that directing transcends execution. On the contrary, according to Descartes, a mechanical *dispositif* that executes replaces a power that directs and commands—but God has set the direction once and for all; the direction of the movement is included by the builder in the mechanical *dispositif* that executes it.[33]

In his works, Agamben may have properly recorded (via Carl Schmitt) a stigma of Western thought, namely the reincarnation of religious paradigms into political ones. However, he repeats that stigma himself by obliterating the possibility of autonomous normativity and imposing on the Foucauldian *dispositif* a Christian lineage that, even from a philological perspective, is not central to it.[34] Canguilhem, by contrast, has registered an alternative lineage of thought that, crossing German biophilosophy, attempts to illuminate the normative autonomy of the subject and, specifically, technology as a potentiality of the living, not just as extension of power.[35]

If Canguilhem addresses the problem of the definitions of machine and organism, it is ultimately to inscribe the machinic in immanence and not as an evil transcendence. Deeply influenced by the German *Lebensphilosophie* and Spinozian monism that were permeating Goldstein's work, Canguilhem takes a stand for the autonomy of the *bios* in the third part of his essay:

> We have come to the point where the Cartesian relationship between machine and organism is reversed. In an organism—and this is too well known to need insisting—one observes phenomena of self-construction, self-conservation, self-regulation, and self-repair.[36]

THE DANGERS OF BIOPHILOSOPHY

In discussing organic and social normativity in 1966, Canguilhem proceeds cautiously and well aware of the dangers of *organicism*, that is of the metaphors that were born within the biological sciences and then clumsily transplanted into the political sciences.[37] He intends to overturn the organicist understanding of the normative: whereas the organism is formed around an *internal environment* of organs that can grow but not significantly change their configuration, Canguilhem sees society as an *external disposition* of machine-organs that often extend and accumulate against each other. These two domains evolve in a completely different way. The social norm, Canguilhem reminds us, is quite different from the organic one, precisely because it is an external and not an internal norm, a norm, in other words, which must be invented and not merely observed, a norm which is

openly destroyed, rewritten and revolutionized by the forces of history. Macherey has pointed out that Canguil-hem does not explain the social with the categories of the organic; on the contrary, it is the social *that absorbs the living*—for example, because one of the principal organs of society is knowledge, whose constitution is collective and 'political'.[38]

In an inspiring and almost sci-fi passage, which reflects some of the optimism of post-war French cybernetic modernism, Canguilhem says that the social organization is able to *invent new organs* that are no longer an imitation of nature but follow its sense of production: "organs to look for and receive information, organs to calculate and even make decisions".[39] To clarify the positions of this debate on vitalism, I propose to call *biomorphism* that model in which *life does not imitate itself*, but is projected into *ab*-normal social relations, mutant relations of production and further planes of consistency without looking back; *organicism*, on the other hand, would stand for the application of the hierarchical and normalizing idea of organic unity to the whole ontological structure without any autonomous plane of consistency.

Canguilhem's reading of organicism can be historically understood only against the background of the German *Lebensphilosophie* and the catastrophe of Nazi *Staatsbiologie*. Somehow Canguilhem seems to have found in Goldstein a sort of antidote against that totalitarian organicism that started to permeate German philosophy and its doctrine of the state long before the crisis of the Weimar Republic. The question of organicism is ancient. As Rottleuthner recalls, since Plato's *Republic* metaphors of the human body have often been used to describe power, and it is only in the 19th century that they are replaced by the technical jargon of biology and in par-ticular by the modern concept of organism.[40] All the German *Naturphilosophie*, from Kant to Goethe, from Humboldt to Haeckel, from Driesch to Uekxüll, is built up around the organic unity of the living, which is then delivered 'hands tied' to political philosophy and legal theory. Hegel and Schelling already saw the State as an organism.[41] In this spirit German *Naturphilosophie* is responsible for the very term *Biopolitik*, coined by a reactionary and proto-Nazi branch of the *Lebensphilosophie* that Foucault knew very well. As Esposito reminds us, the word *Biopolitik* appears for the first time in the German context in the 1917 book by Rudolf Kjellén *Der Staat als Lebensform* (literally, *The State as a Form of Life*).[42]

Organicist and holistic metaphors and images were also infiltrating the artistic circles of the Weimar Republic, where they were associated with a cultural and aesthetic renewal: German Expressionism itself was breeding this common hatred towards the civilization of machines and here it is enough to remember the atmospheres depicted in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. The organicist paradigm led German society to drift, eventually, into the catastrophe of Nazism.[43]

Nevertheless, in the '80s life sciences resurfaced in Germany to enter legal studies and sociological theory once again, this time passing through the more liberal California: the most important example is here the paradigm of the autopoiesis of biological systems by Varela and Maturana on Luhmann's *social systems theory* and Teu-bner's *autopoietic law*.[44] Somehow this trend recovered a typical German attraction for the *bios* that perhaps was never appeased.

CONCLUSION

To conclude: inspired by Canguilhem's notion of socio-organic normativity, Foucault defined the *dispositif* of power as a normative project in 1975. Some twenty years earlier, in 1952, Canguilhem had already discussed the structure of the organism in Descartes using the term *dispositif*. What Canguilhem ultimately recognized in the *dispositif* of the organism, however, was not a transcendent and divine design but a power of self-actu-alisation, i.e. the autonomous normative power of the organism that Goldstein had presented in his 1934 book *Der Aufbau des Organismus*. Canguilhem absorbed the idea of the normative autonomy of the organism from Goldstein, in order to then apply his own idea of *normativity* to the social field and the institutions of French modernity in the final part of *The Normal and the Pathological* in 1966.

When Foucault intervenes in this chain of influences, he tears the *normative dispositif* away from medical sciences and its biological substrate and applies it to the analytics of power. Foucault's intervention can be il-lustrated by considering the titles of these two works alone: Canguilhem's *Knowledge of Life* is conceptually reversed into Foucault's "The Will to Knowledge".[45] Here, we see a shift from knowledge as an *expression of life* to knowledge as an *expression of power upon life*. The Foucauldian *dispositif* ultimately appears as the secularization of Goldstein's *structure of the organism* and the reversal of its normative *potentia* into the mirror of power. As in the nightmares of the worst German *Staatsbiologie*, Foucault's power apparatuses appear to cast the shadow of a gigantic macro-organism of which we would not dare to think.

The contemporary history of the concept of *dispositif* has been running, then, from normative potentiality (*po-tentia*, *puissance*) to normative power (*potestas*, *pouvoir*) and not, as Agamben believes, from a divine plan to a secularized technological plan. In this transmission and circulation of concepts, however, something is lost: the very autonomy of the subject that Foucault will try to re-establish in the works about the *care of the self* in his last years. Regarding the problem of the norm, that is the Latin *habitus* and the Greek *ethos*, Agamben has briefly recognized more recently that indeed the problem of the normative has never been properly addressed: "the *habitus* is the logical place in which something like a theory of subjectivity could have been born".[46] What the fascinating archaeology of the idea of norm from Goldstein to Canguilhem and Foucault shows, on the con-trary, is that such an experiment has already been already attempted within contemporary European philosophy itself, and that it has reached the following postulate: *the abnormal is first and comes before the power logic of the normal*.

NOTES

1. Giorgio Agamben, *Opus Dei. Archeologia dell'ufficio*. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2012, 113, translation mine.

2. Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*. Trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett. Introd. Michel Foucault. New York: Zone Books, 2007, 243.

3. Giorgio Agamben. *What is an Apparatus? And Other Essays*. Trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2009, 5.

4. Agamben, *What is an Apparatus?,* 10.

5. G.W.F. Hegel, *Die Positivität der christlichen Religion,* 1795; quoted in: Jean Hyppolite, *Introduction* à *la philosophie de l'histoire de Hegel*. Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1948. For the quote in Agamben, see: Agamben, *What is an Apparatus?,* 5.

6. Agamben, *What is an Apparatus?,* 9.

7. The definition of *positivity* by Foucault in *The Archeology of Knowledge* resonates with the description of the *dispositif* given in an interview in 1977, but it appears to divert from Agamben's Hegelian perspective: "To describe a group of statements not as the closed, plethoric totality of a meaning, but as an incomplete, fragmented figure; to describe a group of statements not with reference to the interiority of an intention, a thought, or a subject, but in accordance with the dispersion of an exteriority; to describe a group of statements, in order to rediscover not the moment or the trace of their origin, but the specific forms of an accumulation, is certainly not to uncover an interpretation, to discover a foundation, or to free constituent acts; nor is it to decide on a rationality, or to embrace a teleology. It is to establish what I am quite willing to call a positivity" (Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Trans. Rupert Swyer. New York: Pantheon, 1970, 141). See also: "What I'm trying to single out with this term is, first and foremost, a thoroughly heterogeneous set consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus [*dispositif*]. The apparatus itself is the network that can be established between these elements…" (Michel Foucault. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Ed. C. Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980, 94).

8. Agamben, *What is an Apparatus?,* 8, italics mine.

9. See n7.

10. Agamben, *What is an Apparatus?,* 11, translation modified.

11. Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974-1975*. Trans. Graham Burchell. New York: Picador, 2004, 49. For the French original, see: Michel Foucault, *Les anormaux. Cours au Collège de France 1974-1975*. Paris: Seuil, 1999, 45.

12. Foucault, *Abnormal,* 53, italics mine.

13. Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological,* 246.

14. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995, 184.

15. Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological,* 247.

16. Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological,* 239.

17. Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological,* 243.

18. Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological,* 30, 86, 119, 181, 198, 199, 204, 211, 220.

19. Kurt Goldstein, *The Organism. A Holistic Approach to Biology Derived from Pathological Data in Man*. Trans. [not listed] New York: Zone Books, 1995.

20. Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological,* 186.

21. Goldstein, *The Organism,* 325.

22. Goldstein, *The Organism,* 85.

23. Goldstein, *The Organism,* 305.

24. Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.

25. Michel Foucault, "La vie: l'expérience et la science". *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 90: 1 (1985). This text was reprinted in: Michel Foucault, *Dits et* écrits, Paris: Gallimard, 1994, 774.

26. Gilles Deleuze, "What is a *dispositif*?". In: Armstrong, Timothy, ed. *Michel Foucault Philosopher*. New York: Routledge, 1992, 159.

27. Gilles Deleuze and Guattari, Félix. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1987, 158.

28. Georges Canguilhem, "Machine and Organism". In: *Knowledge of Life*. Trans. Stefanos Geroulanos and Daniela Ginsberg. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008, 76.

29. Qtd. in Canguilhem, *Knowledge of Life*, 86.

30. Canguilhem, *Knowledge of Life*, 80.

31. Canguilhem, *Knowledge of Life*, 86, translation modified.

32. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* 177.

33. Canguilhem, *Knowledge of Life*, 87, translation modified.

34. This culminates in the peculiar technophobia of the last pages of the essay "What Is an Apparatus?"

35. One should note here the reception of Canguilhem as instigator of cyborg philosophy: it is no coincidence that Donna Haraway was one of his students.

36. Canguilhem, *Knowledge of Life*, 88, translation modified.

37. For a critical overview of the history of the concept of organism see: Charles T. Wolfe, "Do organisms have an ontological status?". *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences*, 32: 2-3 (2010).

38. Pierre Macherey, *De Canguilhem à Foucault. La force des normes*. Paris: La Fabrique, 2009.

39. Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological,* 253.

40. Hubert Rottleuthner, "Biological Metaphors in Legal Thought". In: Gunther Teubner, ed. *Autopoietic Law: A New Approach to Law and Society*. Berlin: Gruyter, 1987.

41. Some awareness of the sinister influence of these models of political thought was already apparent in Some awareness of the sinister influence of organicism on the German doctrine of the state was already apparent in: Erich Kaufmann, Über *Den Begriff Des Organismus in Der Staatslehre des 19 Jahrhunderts*. Heidelberg: Winter, 1908.

42. Kjellén (1864-1922) was a Swedish scholar of Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) and father of the nefarious idea of *Lebensraum*. Kjellén's works had a wider circulation in German. The term biopolitics appears to be mentioned also in his 1905 book *Stormakterna* [*Great Powers*]. See: Roberto Esposito, *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008.

43. For a historical overview see: Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996.

44. See: Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*. Boston: Reidel, 1980. Gunther Teubner, ed. *Autopoietic Law: A New Approach to Law and Society*. Berlin: Gruyter, 1987. Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme: Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984.

45. See: Canguilhem, *Knowledge of Life* and Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Vol I. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1990. The English translation unfortunately obscures the meaning of the original French title: Michel Foucault, *La Volonté de savoir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1976.

46. See note n1.