Rethinking the Biopolitical Turn: from the Thanatopolitical to the Geneapolitical Paradigm

Western philosophy has consistently privileged death over birth as the defining moment of our existential condition. Bottici argues that both Foucault’s and Agamben’s biopolitical model is entrenched in this tradition and is thus intrinsically “thanatopolitical.” But what if birth had both an ontological and a political priority over death? Ontological because we die only as a consequence of having been born, and political because, while we may die alone, we are always born in the company of somebody else. If human beings are conceived as beings-after-birth, a different perspective emerges. In this lecture, Bottici argues that we can discuss it along “geneapolitical” lines.

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