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Giorgio Agamben's essay, "What is an Apparatus?" provides a concise discussion of a key in his recent work, the concept of profanation, accompanied by the challenge to conceptualize its possible application.

In this text he excavates the Hegelian genealogy of Foucault's concept of the *dispositif* or 'Apparatus' and defines it as that which encompasses, "virtually anything, linguistic or nonlinguistic, under the same heading: discourses, institutions, buildings, laws, police measures." The apparatus appears as the intersection of power relations and relations of knowledge; but also has a strategic function.

In raising the question of how we might combat these forces, Agamben dismisses the possibility of destroying them, or, conversely, using them properly, proposing instead that we return them to common use through the counter-apparatus of Profanation.

However, certain problems arise in the difficulty of distinguishing "common use" from "correct use," and there remains a question of intention in that Profanation involves a strategic function equally located at an interstice of power and knowledge.

In the same way that Agamben ultimately advises us to abandon the context of Foucauldian philology in order to situate Apparatuses in a new context, how might we abandon the Agambenian exegesis of Profanation in order to instrumentalize it in aesthetic theory?

I believe this text would be suitable subject matter for the Close Reading workshop. "On the Horizon," with the proposition of Profanation as a new theoretical tool, as well as the Concept Laboratory workshop, "Metaphors in Aesthetic Theory," as one can read in the Apparatus a general framework for understanding the aesthetic.

**Questions:**

1. How can one distinguish between 'proper' and 'common' use?
2. How can Profanation evade the strategic aspect of the Apparatus?
3. What is the role of language in Profanation?

**Bibliographic reference:**

Agamben, Giorgio. "What is an Apparatus?" in *What is an Apparatus?* Trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.