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Impasses of the Post-Global

Theory in the Era of Climate Change

Volume 2

Edited by Henry Sussman

Impasses of the Post-Global

Critical Climate Change

Series Editors: Tom Cohen and Claire Colbrooke

The era of climate change involves the mutation of systems beyond 20th century anthropomorphic models and has stood, until recently, outside representation or address. Understood in a broad and critical sense, climate change concerns material agencies that impact on biomass and energy, erased borders and microbial invention, geological and nanographic time, and extinction events. The possibility of extinction has always been a latent figure in textual production and archives; but the current sense of depletion, decay, mutation and exhaustion calls for new modes of address, new styles of publishing and authoring, and new formats and speeds of distribution. As the pressures and realignments of this re-arrangement occur, so must the critical languages and conceptual templates, political premises and definitions of 'life.' There is a particular need to publish in timely fashion experimental monographs that redefine the boundaries of disciplinary fields, rhetorical invasions, the interface of conceptual and scientific languages, and geomorphic and geopolitical interventions. Critical Climate Change is oriented, in this general manner, toward the epistemo-political mutations that correspond to the temporalities of terrestrial mutation.

Impasses of the Post-Global

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Edited by Henry Sussman

OPEN HUMANITIES PRESS

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Introduction

Spills, Countercurrents, Sinks

Henry Sussman and Jason Groves

Virtual Post-Global Omnibus

Impasses of the Post-Global considers a range of insults to the post-global Prevailing Operating System that is now broad enough to be bewildering. This evident series of affronts extends from satellite photographs of Gaia to plastic bags accumulating along the shores of once-pristine inland Chinese waters. The contributors have trained their sensors or viewfinders on the emergent catastrophe, tracking money, immigration, news and advertising hype, geophysical feedback, trash, and even water itself, all as the currents of contemporary mutation and change, each one a potential 'X-factor' precipitating the next systemic disaster, the next destabilization of what was once conceived as self-sustaining and correcting equilibrium. Perhaps the most prominent "current" of contemporary ecocatastrophe is the collection of ocean currents known as the North Pacific Gyre, a planetary vortex that recently re-emerged in the ecological imaginary, as the Plastic Trash Vortex, following the discovery of highly elevated levels of plastics, chemical sludge, and other anthropogenic gifts to an oceanic area estimated in most scientific literature at the size of the continental US—perhaps less a convenient measure of volume and more a prescient image of a coming continental liquidation that registers itself already in this uncanny aquatic other. Like a petrochemical twin of the cosmic fetus orbiting the earth at the close of "2001: Space Odyssey," in the Pacific Trash Vortex we can glean the polymeric afterbirth of a consumer society. In this non-biodegradable database of the post-global, the productivist dream of unlimited growth degrades into mermaid tears, nurdles, and

the other insoluble microplastics that already outweigh the Gyre's zooplankton by a factor of six. In place of promised global economic integration is the planet's largest landfill, a toxic multinational legacy erupting in the center of the Pacific Rim, invisibly proliferating outward across the biosphere, and bio-accumulating as we speak throughout planetary foodwebs, conventional and organic alike. This carcinogenic breeding ground for future birth defects, genomic mutation, trophic cascades, species explosions, dead zones and other ecological no-nonhuman's land also facilitates the mutations in critical thought evident in this volume. More than merely contaminated food for thought, the silence, invisibility, and pervasiveness of these spills intertwines an ecological with a representational problem, since its detection eludes the eye and satellite image alike.

Every mediatized and subsequently "contained" oil spill occludes the uncontainability of spills, their inability to conform to clear trajectories, well-choreographed multinational comedies of error, or humanized networks of corporate greed. Arguably, critical inattention to the formless and rhetorical unformalizability of the "spill" contributes to the continued polymerization of the Pacific (and to a lesser extent, Atlantic and Indian) ocean, no less than an unregulated industry and its careless factories. Emerging in response to the empirical and technological undetectability of the more life-threatening spills today, the possibility of a distinctly critical contribution takes shape in the various calls to attend to spills not (yet) bearing the initials of energy conglomerates (e.g. "BP") and yet no longer bearing the imprimatur of the 20th century critical canon (e.g."WB"). Today the ecological crisis itself spills into the theoretical with no less turbulence than it spills into the political. Walter Benjamin's materialist historian, emblematized in the figure of the Parisian ragpicker, may have been consigned to the dustbin of an ineffective politics; however, it returns, undead and deanthropomorphized, in the faceless thing known in biological parlance as a "sink"—both space and metabolic process capturing, breaking down, or otherwise channeling the waste and effluvia of aggregate social and ecosystems, whether urban, natural, disturbed, or pristine.[1] Where the celebrated cultural critic-cum-chiffonier gathered together the material and conceptual detritus of the 19th century into so many convolutes, the convoluted contributions to this volume turn to those overlooked biomes in which the function of the

ragpicker is distributed, amplified, and de-humanized: the overburdened lakes, lagoons, estuaries, atmospheres, forests, and other all-but saturated sites of carbon sequestration—ecological doubles of the financial sinks known as offshore banks . If the poet was the antenna of the species these critics could be called the cirrhotic kidneys of a dehydrated, intoxicated, and hepatitis-ridden Gaia. So the twelve entries that flicker before you could be called a 12 stutter-step program, but one with no guarantee of leading to any lasting recovery, since Avital Ronell has decisively exposed critique as an addiction as forceful as any scheduled narcotic.[2]

Wonderfully diverse—in approach, strategy, and improvisation—as the materials comprising *Impasses of the Post-Global* may be, they arise out of a shared story about the failure of the master narrative of globalization, whose outfall consists in the radioactive unfolding of ecological disaster, political legerdemain, massive disenfranchisement, population culling, financial meltdown, narco-war, resource misappropriation, IMF restructuring, technological stopgap, and reductive cultural slogans that we are all currently living, responding, and writing through. The confluence of the multiple out-of-control flows and currents—spills—that motivate the contributors' accounts and stories is, specifically, the arena of informed, rigorous critique, the medium par excellence for this read-out. In the wake of the extension of the respective schools and paradigms of disciplinary cultural commentary to the open-ended concatenation of ecological insults, material shortages, and desperate administrative and political measures currently besetting us, the current academic division of labor and set of authorized practices will never be quite the same as it was. In its ineluctable aberrancy Impasses of the Post Global evinces an emergent institutional, theoretical, terrestrial, and climactic depatterning, one far more diffuse and decentralized than the psychotechnical genealogy that Naomi Klein traces from Dr. Ewan Cameron's "psychic driving" experiments at McGill University to the CIA-sponsored and university-supported MKUltra Project to Saigon, Honduras, Guantánamo, and all the black sites in between.[3] It is as though depatterning, the hypnosis and narcosis-based technique for disturbing an interrogatee's "time-space-image," has gone viral in an era of climate change to become synonymous with the Prevailing Operating System itself.

Even in the context of this broad narrative backdrop, however, it would only be too reassuring if the diverse admonitions and complaints making up the present volume could be ascribed to a coherent or coordinated set of technological or conceptual practices, ideological agendas, misconceptions, or out-and-out aggressive or suicidal campaigns or impulses. The volume's lead article, Tom Cohen's "Anecographics: Climate Change and 'late' Deconstruction," performs the double service of establishing the widest theoretical parameters of the critical environment that its diverse materials join; also, in setting a distinctive tone, urgent in its measured assessment, for the ongoing discourse of critical climate change. These materials issue from inattention, conceptual blockage, and a general articulation block so deep-seated and widely dispersed as to skirt the very threshold of legibility. If not in outright solidarity then at least in a general accord with the recent proliferation of successful if short-lived climate and social justice blockades in Germany (main rail line of Castor nuclear waste cargo), France (massive refinery strikes), England (road leading to Coryton refinery and over which 80% of all consumed oil in the U.K. passes), Greece (blockade at the Acropolis), *Impasses of the Post-Global* tracks the spiraling and in most senses irreversible crisis ensuing from ecological analphabetism and blindness (contributions by Clarke, McKee, Bunn, and Song); from callow greed and miscalculation in the financial sphere (Martin, Sussman); from runaway ambition effected by military aggression and its ideological self-justification (Weber); through draconian social controls enacted by means of calculated lapses and misrepresentations on the mimetic stage (Chow, E. P. Ziarek, Moreiras). Certain of the symptoms that the volume pursues do not express themselves in bounded artifacts or initiatives so much as subtend policy abuses at the level of phenomenological or psycho-social preconditions (K. Ziarek). In my own intervention, I may have strayed as close as the volume gets to a linear account of skewed if interrelated catastrophes, supplied by Naomi Klein in the scenario of brainwashing and hostile socio-economic takeovers on a global scale that she choreographs in *The Shock Doctrine*. Even Klein's reportorial virtuosity cannot spare us the malaise ensuing from a backdrop of coordinated systematic absences at the level of critical acuity and ethical sensibility.

Critique, as the theoretically driven responsible and rigorous decoding and reprogramming of messages, motives, trends, performances, and systematic aberrations, has a special mission and role to play in an engagement with the composite and evolving climate of catastrophe. In full admiration for an unbroken string of methodological advances emerging over the past half-century from the fields of literary criticism, critical theory, cultural studies, psychoanalysis, and theoretical inquiries into linguistics, philosophy, gender, and post-colonialism, the IC^3 initiative, since its outset, has struggled to budge the discourse and its synthesis away from the corridors of academe and into the tsunami's debris. And the discourse must also be budged away from melancholically lingering over wreckage and debris, whose finality forecloses the initiative in advance by staging its own belatedness, a melodrama in which the inertia of political apathy finds its perverse self-justification by the end of every episode, every foretold extinction event, every inundated island community. Rather than armchair disaster tourism made up in the tweed of eco-criticism or "timely" critical theory, the discourse needs to be dragged, looking forward rather than back, out into the streets, or into the Department of Defense databases, to the occupied factories, the recovered companies of Argentina, the French blockades and the Gaza flotillas and the indebted future spilling through the shattered glass façade of London's Tory Headquarters. If the critical endeavor will survive as anything more than the ideological self-justification of the status quo it must be able to imagine a present in which the much-touted irreversibility of climate change is not equated with its inexorability—and also in which the hope that there would be a regulatory top-kill for climate change is abandoned. In this impasse a concerted and multiple effort is indispensable. This dislocation in the scene of critical notation, as rehearsed by a cadre of writers extending from Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes, and Michel Foucault to Jacques Derrida, René Girard, J. Hillis Miller, and Samuel Weber, is not only justified; it is precariously overdue.

The founder or patron saint of the critical anthology ricocheting between the various zones or spheres demarcated by the Prevailing Operating System, if we look to one, is none other than Friedrich Nietzsche, even allowing for the fact that his own improvisations in the genre—such works as *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Human All Too Human*—allowed only

of a single author, himself. The space of the contemporary critical anthology, even if currently a virtual space, was invented by Nietzsche, who in his own omnibus volumes of trenchant philosophical critique, roams from sector of social order to the next, deconstructing the pieties that legitimate and perpetuate it. Nietzsche was one of the first philosophers to employ a typewriter, to display the text he synthesized on a typographic "screen." He negotiated a landscape of cognitive and spatio-political strictures implemented by such analog media as the army, the church, the school system, and the printing press. We may have since graduated to a web of political and intellectual impasses rendered all the more exasperating through the encompassing invisibility powering and surrounding digital technology and relations. We live amid the instantaneous simultaneity of "Real Time." This heightens the inexactitude and even danger of rendering our critical read-outs "on the fly," in a condition of instability, maddeningly, whose account must be rendered in its own right. But even with all these transformations and their attendant responsibilities, whose effect on what we can see and what we can say is material, we remain on the watch of critical attentiveness that Nietzsche initiated; we persist in a cultural bearing that his inscription inaugurated and defined.

In *Human All Too Human*, for example, Nietzsche careens from morality and organized religion to the culture wars, between "high and low" cultures, of his day, to gender politics and political theology. The predicaments shared by the spheres of articulation and social engineering are common; the enabling rhetorics and instrumental mechanisms of power, whether termed "metaphysics," "hegemony," "Empire," or "Prevailing Operating System," diverse. It is, then, a stunningly brief interval from the variegated scene of critique that Nietzsche established, albeit in his own discursive idioms, to the topically-organized, multi-author critical anthology. Readers delving into such productions meander in stutter-steps in a trajectory leading from one socio-cultural impasse, or dead-end ensuing from a closed system, to the next. The entries in a critical collection prompted by a common set of features on the geophysical, cultural, and teletechnic landscapes relate to one another as multiple takes of one prepossessing image or as spinoffs ensuing from a shared anecdotal heritage, one nonetheless undergoing—in Real Time—its own variants and shifts in direction and emphasis. Each response is at once plausible and bound

by its author's predilections, the specific lenses or objectives comprising her critic-rhetorical viewfinder. Each entry is both emblematic and symptomatic not only of the catastrophe at hand but of the theoretical instrumentation and choreography we bring to it.

The following volume articulates itself in eddies and turbulences themselves energized, if not exactly determined or organized, by circulations, measures, and meltdowns transpiring in such zones as the environment, finance, globalization and its underlying political theologies, and demography, as well as in communications and representation themselves. Different ones of the following essays spill into each of the aforementioned zones. Yet each one of these spontaneous groupings is itself a feedback loop winding its way back to the others comprising the collection. Such is the interconnectivity of the stresses and insults that have been imposed on Gaia herself and the systemic organizations ensuing from her through economic exploitation, runaway urban development, uninformed resource management, and distraction and non-attentiveness in cultural articulation. The particular thrust and urgency of this volume is to argue that one of the more egregious misappropriations of resources today is that of critical attention itself, whose possible avenues of redistribution this volume more than hints at.

As in all omnibus publications, the individual interventions must, in the end, speak for themselves. The best that can be ventured by way of introduction is a map or schematic of the configuration that a collaborative reality-check regarding the current sequence of catastrophes, shocks, and aftershocks has formed, accompanied by a brief legend indicating interactions, reverberations, and specific instances of feedback. Like all critical receptions and registrations of the manifold stresses, flows, and aporias comprising actuality and engaging the domains of politics, economics, and public policy, the following reactions, as Symbolic rapprochements by the authors to the emergent turbulence and muddle, shuttle back and forth between the Real of the material underpinnings and collective aftershocks, the Imaginary transmutations of these conditions as epiphenomena in the diverse theaters of culture, and the screen or notepad of inscription. Otherwise put, each essay may start out as a bound discursive response to one or several of the semiotic registers implicated in the current impasses of demographic shift, resource and work availability,

ecological compromise, and economic and political meltdown; but it perforce ends up in performative mode, allegorical evidence of what the "prompts" issuing from actuality demand and impose.

The lead article, Tom Cohen's "Anecographics: Climate Change and 'late' Deconstruction," not only establishes a theoretical terrain for all to follow in *Impasses of the Post-Global*; it opens a window on the prevailing climate and mood at the moment when IC[3] crystallized. It was clear to us at that juncture that the established academic disciplines and subspecializations, even ones with noble traditions of theoretical innovation and acuity, were simply incapable of responding compellingly, mutating quickly enough and with enough plasticity, to respond to an escalating and continuing sequence of disasters, those engulfing the organization and systems of information, communication, government, and education to the same degree as the biosphere, the environment, and the economies of critical resources. The challenge we faced, and no one has been more attentive to it than Cohen, was to retrofit the medium of critical theory to upgrade its response-capability to the tenor and tempo of the recent political meltdowns accompanying climatic and ecological disasters. The climate of enduring, attenuated disaster called for a theoretical update seeping through to the performative level. It was not only the conceptual repertoire of theory but its very preconditions for inscription and the specifications of its performance that a turbulent, rapidly expanding domain of radical climate change was impacting.

Among Cohen's most original contributions to the field of critical interventions and counter-proposals so far has been his approaching it as a climate zone, with full appreciation for the turbulence that this bearing unleashes. Since his magisterial *Hitchcock's Cryptonymies*,[4] Cohen has worked consistently at monitoring the flows of the theoretical weather-zones from which he has learned the most and in whose ongoing updating he has been most active: deconstruction (as a field launched by Jacques Derrida, but from the outset receiving indispensable input and amplification from the likes of Jean-Luc Nancy and Bernard Stiegler) and rhetorical reading, as consolidated and introduced to a generation of innovative critics by Paul de Man. Drawing on ecologically astute philosophers and critics among Cohen's contemporaries including David Wood and Timothy Clark, what we find in "Anecographics" is a calm and

measured impact statement on just how far Jacques Derrida was able to torque the discourse of deconstruction toward engaging the same events and aberrations that prompted, say, IC³. We also find between its lines Cohen's prognostications regarding the most viable and plausible future ahead of deconstruction in its full diversity, both as a model for and force impacting on the "critical climate." No challenge that Cohen puts to the readers of *Impasses of the Post-Global* is more intriguing than beginning to think, paralleling a notable phrase from Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, the conditions for a "deconstruction without … Derrideanism."[5]

In the wake of this presentation-piece, to the volume as well as to the IC³ project, the two most prominent feedback loops of articulation and response torquing the *Impasses* are one setting out from the apprehension of Gaia as an encompassing system in demographic and cultural, as well as material terms, but whose representation, articulation, and critique present an intriguing challenge, even opportunity—to the most advanced digital and virtual technologies available; and a second, surely a complement as well as a supplement to the first, beginning with the crises facing language and mimesis even in thinking the abuse that Gaia, along with its human and animal inhabitants, has sustained. The marvelous Möbius strip articulated by these two groupings of contributions serves, in the best sense, as a "strange attractor" grounding and placing other crucial interventions.

It is, then, from a compelling systemic point of view that the present volume continues with Bruce Clarke's "Autopoiesis and the Planet." For some time now, Clarke has been engaged in the updating of systems theory's foundational contributions, made by the likes of Gregory Bateson, Norbert Weiner, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, and Anthony Wilden. He would hope to temper the claims of objectivity and stark subject-object polarity imagined, say, by "first-order cybernetics" with a second wave whose rallying cry gathers around the term autopoiesis, a figure of "circularity, operational closure, and self-referring processes" that immediately reoriented the playing field in 1974, when Humberto Maturana, Francisco Varela, and Ricardo Uribe invoked it in their ground-breaking article "The Autopoiesis of Living Systems, Its Characterization, and a Model." Clarke finds the above terms characteristic of the feedback loop between Terra and the largely human-devised modifications imposed on the eco-

system in the course of adaptation, improvisation, urbanization, and mechanization. It is, of course, this autopoietic dynamic that prompted James Lovelock and his associates to coin the term "Gaia theory" as an umbrella for increasingly tenuous prospects for these contrived "system-environment" interactions centered around the planet (as Niklas Luhmann termed them).

The encompassing interactive dimensions of the crises currently besetting the planet make a compelling, but by no means exclusive claim on serving as the base-position in the present volume's serial meditation on contemporary impasses in Terran logistical, demographic, teletechnic, and cultural capability. Clarke's intervention goes on to chronicle crucial contributions to the interactive, "second-order" autopoietic Gaia concept made by paleontologist Peter Westbroek, biologist Lynn Margulis, biophysicist and cyberneticist Heinz von Foerster, and astrophysicist turned systems theorist Erich Jantsch along with Lovelock. Throughout this sequence of major updates and modifications to the Gaia concept, Luhmann's effort to translate a broad range of philosophical, sociological, and linguistic models into their systematic terms and implications subtends the collective enterprise as a secret (or not so secret) sharer.

Clarke's systemic overview of Gaia serves as an illuminating framework for several related papers. Through the aerial photography of Subkanar Banerjee, Yates McKee, in "Of Survival: Climate Change and Uncanny Landscape in the Photography of Subhankar Banerjee," discerns the ghosts of disastrous impending transformation registered in faint geological legend: "Bannerjee's photographs eschew the typical iconography of crashing glaciers and melancholic polar bears that dominate the visual cultures of climate change discourse, instead calling for us to read the precarious traces, tracks, and vestiges inscribed in the rapidly transforming Arctic landscape." McKee is too acute a theorist to imagine that we access the ecological inconvenient truth through anything but an earth-writing slowly registered on photographic plates and digital screens, a notation unavoidably multidimensional and ambiguous at the same time that its implied narrative is dire. In the wake of his essay, we are all spectators at a climatic and geophysical spectacle made all the more fascinating and unbearable by the strain it imposes on our collective gaze and sensibility. With particular acuity, McKee traces the challenge that such benchmark

photographs as "Caribou Skeleton" pose both to theoretical discourse, as generated by none less than Jacques Derrida and Eduardo Cadava as well as to contemporary sociopolitical debate.

The challenge posed simultaneously by already documented geophysical crisis to representation and mediation themselves along with national, regional, and scientific and social welfare organizations does not relent in its urgency as the topos shifts from the Arctic north to the terrestrial aquasphere. In his "Shapes of Water," James H. Bunn assures us that our ability to read the ongoing progress report concerning this precious and increasingly impacted medium of life as well as "natural resource" inheres in our ability to discern water's inherent crystalline structure (proving, among other implications, the wisdom of the Chinese "five-phase" theory that relates, in more than incidental ways, water to metal). Bunn is a distinguished semiologist, whose past studies have treated certain infrastructures—among them spirals and wave-patterns—emerging from physics to assert a disproportionately strong hold on literature, the visual arts, and music in a vast array of cultural epochs and theaters. In his contribution to the volume, Bunn registers the vulnerabilities of the aquasphere by means of the very crystals, waves, and other fractal organizations that have, in the past, served to define and track this vital medium.

In "Global Warming as a Manifestation of Garbage," Tian Song pursues the same confluence of matter and signification to a point far beyond the possibility of any sub-system to assimilate the residue of contemporary material exploitation and deployment. The plastic bags accumulating in venues as restricted as remote Chinese villages and as vast as Beijing themselves become a semiological marker of current economic and ecological impasses as telling as the rifts and fissures faintly evident in Subkanar Banerjee's Arctic photography. The proliferation of quite up-to-date garbage in Chinese locations that had for centuries been inimical to it takes place, in Song's account, against a backdrop of geophysical equilibrium, mathematically schematized, forever disrupted. Both abstractly, then, and as pursued through the media of ice, water, and synthetic material, the Gaia system is defined by the insults it has sustained and the free-floating disequilibrium into which it has been plunged. Systematic thinking nonetheless furnishes an indispensable template for observing

and articulating the evidence of the related disasters and the sequential developments/mutations ensuing from them.

A significant counterpoint to the pursuit of semiological patterns and drifts within indispensable geophysical elements emerges in those contributions setting off from a fundamental crisis in mimesis itself, one manifest in the most dramatic instances of filtration, exclusion and liquidation performed by social systems. While it is undeniable that contemporary trends in, say, undocumented exploitative labor or sex-trafficking bear the mark of their times, are facilitated by contemporary fashions in communications, transportation, manufacture, and related technologies, the sacrificial logic by which the impacted populations bear the brunt of socioeconomic shortfall is, according to Rey Chow, the feature of ages-old and ubiquitous symbolic and semiotic negotiation. By this logic, attenuated social under-privilege, ostracism, and deprivation, even of essential materials and substances, is a function of such infelicities in the matrix of representation itself as a fundamental inability to process social undecidability, to sustain ongoing relations of symmetry and indeterminacy. For Chow as for Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, Giorgio Agamben, particularly in *Homo Sacer*, highlights the point at which a priori categorical philosophical judgment and logic converge with the most deleterious social engineering that human communities are capable of devising. In an appreciation of the cultural and theoretical sources that Agamben is capable of mobilizing in the analysis of only too tangible punitive armatures and mechanisms, Chow appeals to René Girard's great mimetic coup: his understanding of the irrecuperable human tragedy of sacrifice, particularly of scapegoated populations, in terms of meaning-systems' inability to sustain unresolved doubling or parity. Her acute exegetical tactic is an indispensable warning to all of us who would leap into the technical, communicative, and logistical particulars of today's catastrophes overlooking the fact that their very apprehension, let alone articulation, is contingent on the distortion-effects as on the equivalencies configured by representation.

Following Girard, Chow's essay and the considerable segment of the volume caught in its drift treat mimesis as "an originary force rather than a secondary phenomenon whose rationale/justification comes from somewhere else." "To desire is, behaviorally speaking, to compete with a rival

in a vicious circle of reciprocal violence, in which the antagonists become increasingly indistinguishable from one another The only way in which the circle can be broken is through sacrifice—that is, through an artificial process in which someone who is, like everybody else, a member of the community becomes chosen as a scapegoat and expelled as a surrogate victim 'Social coexistence,' he [Girard] writes, would be impossible if no social surrogate existed, if violence persisted beyond a certain threshold and failed to be transmuted into culture.'" Chow thus reminds us that ominous news and threats seeming to proceed from emergent conditions of environmental stress, resource shortage, overpopulation, and so on, have in fact been mediated by short-circuits as venerable as culture itself, ones tricking the field and system of mimesis. It is the mimetic overload in which the crises of non-metabolized population growth and shift, climate, water, oil, and fire are already couched that allows each new epiphenomenon to place us at the brink, in a disaster site whose particular melange of conditions seems unprecedented.

In broad but lucid strokes, then, Chow's contribution furnishes a backdrop to interventions by Samuel Weber, Alberto Moreiras, and Ewa Plonowska Ziarek. Whether the phenomenon under critical review is the classical notions of survival and recuperation underlying the contemporary ideology of security (as in "Homeland ..."), the complex (even Spinozan) pyrotechnics of identity conditioning the "marrano register," hunger strikes on the part of early twentieth-century suffragettes as an applied instance of Agamben's "bare life," or the unprecedented menace posed by Alfred Hitchcock's skies, brimming under certain conditions with predatory birds, the downbeat in these essays is on the sublime double-bind in mimesis itself foreshadowing and coloring specific contemporary incursions of the Real.

Samuel Weber, whose *Targets of Opportunity: On the Militarization of Thinking*,[6] has attained canonical status as an overall incitement to the IC^3 project, furnishes us with a brief but particularly disciplined instance of deconstructive readout as etymological survey at the deep-conceptual strata of cultural formation. His deft pursuit of such constructions as the distinction between polis and household, survival, and salvation as they emerge in key texts by Plato and Aristotle, showcases the powerful appeal of enduring Western philosophical concepts (as well as of the Great

Books curricula from which they figure prominently) to current military planners.

Alberto Moreiras's groundbreaking studies of linguistic and spatial boundaries under global conditions gravitate as much in the direction of philosophy as a conceptual repository and generator as Weber's. With impressive rigor, he teases out the full conceptual nuance of complexities in the assumption and declaration of identity prompted by the double-bind logic of the Spanish Inquisition:

> The marrano register is not primarily interested in a relapse into Judaism. It concerns, rather, the pulsional drive to find strength in the subjective deconstitution caused by the fall of the shadow. The marrano shadow ciphers the melancholy moment in the wake of which it becomes necessary to develop an affective position which would not simply be anti-melancholy. The game consists of embracing melancholy and its other. From its inception the marrano register is already a double register.
>
> We are multicultural to the extent that we are hybrid, but we are hybrid insofar as our identity is constituted in a differential relation with every other identity. This differential relation is already the sign of hybridity. The hybrid register is openly anti-marrano. It is still an identitarian register.

Arising in the late Middle Ages, but nuanced, as Moreiras makes certain to point out, by the foundational early-Modern reasonings of Spinoza, the marrano register is a battery of adaptive social and performative tactics in the background, say, of the subaltern relations analyzed so deftly by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi Bhabha. Although the contemporary emanation of the marrano register arises in the context of such trends as persistent colonial social hierarchies (even where colonial rule has long disappeared) and the makeshift living conditions entailed by massive diasporas in the quest for work and political stability, this phenomenon is, at its core, a crisis in the looped wiring of representation and performance themselves.

A fascination with Foucauldian biopolitics as it is mobilized, figured, and performed by the construct of bare life in Giorgio Agamben's decon-

structive reading, in *Homo Sacer*, of the World War II camps as "zones of indistinction" is the starting point for Ewa Plonowska Ziarek's taut quest for further zones of relevance for bare life. Ziarek is at once taken with how many situations of political resistance put bare life itself, life stripped of its defining cultural contexts and communal housing, on display. And, she evinces frustration at Agamben's exclusively conceptual treatment of such phenomena as the homo sacer himself, who can be killed at any time with impunity but not communally mourned or commemorated, the legal rationales distilled in different political formations over the centuries for imposing this status on marginal and tenuous individuals or populations, and the World War II camps themselves, ultimate extensions both of this logic and its multifaceted execution. While Ziarek's frustration may well be less with Agamben's conceptual or scholarly lapses than with the specific project-design he crystallized for *Homo Sacer*, we are in her considerable debt for extending in an inventive and resonant way the relevance of the bare life construct: how Orlando Patterson can deploy it in his analyses of slavery, how it serves as a "secret sharer" in the sexual violence and exploitation enacted in prison camps and similar installations, and, most astonishingly, how the suffragettes transformed it, as highlighted by the urgency of the hunger strike, into a particularly effective tactic of political resistance. In Ziarek's treatment, the persistent value of "bare life" is as an abject signifier rendered all the more vivid in the denuding to which it has already been subjected.

Impasses of the Post-Global closes with the three interventions most tightly adhering to the job description for philosophy and critique distilled by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in the course of their "Capitalism and Schizophrenia" diptych: the critic as flow-monitor. The co-presenter to this volume has elsewhere argued that flow is the persistent and dominant phenomenon under Deleuze/Guattari's scrutiny.[7] Like mimesis itself, flow is an ambiguous and intractable signifier, one doubling back on and in certain respects counteracting itself. Deleuze/Guattari do not worry too much about resolving or deciding its dual material and semiotic constitution. There is a flow of money, commodities, and sexual impulses, secretions, and traffic, just as there are slippages and glides of meaning and volatile trajectories of the signifier. Flow is neither "inside"

nor "outside" language, as in complex ways it both definitively is and is not language.

By honing in on Martin Heidegger's notion of worlding and its vacuous contrary moment ("unworlding"), Krzysztof Ziarek performs the significant service to the volume of raising the question of the current atmosphere or climate of post-global conditions. The post-global is nothing if it has not had the effect of radically altering the mood of transactions in a terrestrial variance of locations (social as well as geographical), and at a vast range of scales. Allowing atmosphere or mood to enter rigorous philosophical deliberation opens the field to the X-factors (incursions of chaos and turbulence) increasingly at play in catastrophic surprise. Ziarek acutely traces the inception of a key series of global and post-global apprehensions in Heidegger's work starting out in his 1955 "Overcoming Metaphysics" and continuing in comments related to his 1962 lecture, "Time and Being." Ziarek does well to remind us that Heidegger's philosophy remains a vital and hardly exhausted resource for dealing with the distractions ensuing from sensational media and breakneck technologies of production and communications (it occupies a prominent place, for example, in Michael Heim's 1993 *The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality*).[8] At a moment "of global climate change, world-wide economic instability, and genetic and informational possibilities and threats," Heideggerian thought issues a challenge "to open thinking to a questioning otherwise foreclosed to it The age of globalization tends to perpetuate and intensify precisely the global or planetary unworlding, and to such an extent that the very issue of world is no longer experienced as an issue or question." Acute contemporary theorists will continue to press their appeals to and deployments of Heidegger in the direction of critical performativity and of context-specific readings of different technologies and their claims to innovation and indispensability. The play of language such as Heidegger has liberated and deployed it, in its etymological roots as in its refined philosophical vocabularies, is far more radical and suggestive than the homiletics to which Heidegger studies all-too often gravitate.

Swept up in the turbulent economic exchange and prospects of the current phase, Randy Martin, an expert in the performative dimension of Cultural Studies, hones in on the historical paradoxes and logical anomalies of bailout—as image as well as strategy. "Bailout prompts a haunting,

a return of a spectral post-scarcity socialism even while the referents of public ownership, nationalization, expanded entitlement hint at a sea-change in the name of a trope meant to ease anxieties and stay the course For the climate change afoot may not foretell an absolute beginning or end, but a refiguring of the social imaginary—in this case that of nothing less than neo-liberalism itself. It would seem to make all the difference in the world to present understanding if, rather than believing that we are being delivered to a new era, we come to notice that whatever winds prevail, the countercurrents were likely there all along." For Martin, bail-out strategy is symptomatic of the extractive mania and free-market economics that have prevailed since the advent of Reaganomics; it is hardly a countermeasure to these trends. The present writers can only second and affirm Martin's admiration for and appeal to Naomi Klein's lucid narrative of the global, U.S.-driven dissemination of Friedmanian economic principles in her 2005 *The Shock Doctrine*. In Martin's imagistically responsive as well as economically rigorous rendition, "Shock would describe the queasy condition of navigating between subject and object, of intervening without guarantee, of rippling waves of consequence ungoverned by intentionality."

Shock, whose multifaceted incursion into urban experience, industrial production, mass entertainment, and interpersonal encounter had been tracked in a systematic way as early as Walter Benjamin in his writings, of the mid and late 1930's, on the emergent media and around Baudelaire, is both an ultimate arbiter and new configuration for flow. Naomi Klein's account, in her splendid *The Shock Doctrine* reaches back to images of shock treatment and brainwashing in Cold War cinema (e.g. "The Manchurian Candidate") as a cultural icon for a cycle of economic destabilizations that has now encompassed the globe and returned, so to speak to its home base. As Klein tracks these economic meltdown effects, from Latin America to East Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and back again, she discerns their deep underlying pattern: severe indebtedness to such institutions as the World Bank and IMF implemented as a condition of foreign aid dynamically linked to a sudden and severe curtailment of social welfare infrastructure and expenditures. My own entry to the ledger of responses in the face of endless catastrophe takes off from wonder at the parallelism between Klein's journalistically time-lapse montage of

the precedents leading to the current crises (demonstrating that history, as anticipated by astute and committed journalism, can indeed catch up with itself) and the trope of auto-immunity that added so much wisdom to Jacques Derrida's political writings. National sovereignty and the multifarious forms of its exercise is, for Derrida, merely another miasma of selfhood ("ipseity"), whose structures and mechanisms are analyzed at the very roots, i.e. in signature texts by Plato and Aristotle, of Western philosophy. Invoking such tangible instances of political abuse as torture, as well as its enabling underlying figure, the wheel, Derrida painstakingly demonstrates in Rogues that unilateral political aggression will eventually attack the logic rationalizing it and the political system promulgating it—in outbreaks of auto-immune dysfunction. The current coming to terms with the economic meltdown and the radical rethinking of labor, industry, and work that it necessitates can still benefit—significantly—from the application of auto-immune dynamics and logic to its analyses and self-analyses. The fact that Naomi Klein's discernment of an underlying pattern and logic to what might seem a cluster of unrelated economic accidents eventuates at a figure—auto-immunity—that the most inventive philosopher of our age deploys in very different contexts and at a markedly different grain to parallel phenomena is an authentically noteworthy happening and surprise. This discursive epiphany strongly suggests both that astute chronicle will eventuate at the theory requisite to the events within its compass and that the most powerful theory retains a footing in the tangible imagery making it possible. The conjunction between Derrida and Klein may offer scant recompense amid the ongoing concatenation of global climate events and socio-economic destabilizations. But it encourages those of us engaged in cultural programming, critique, and production to stay at our posts with our eyes still trained on the scrolling screen.

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The "volume" you have before you would more accurately be described as a carefully selected collation, bound by nothing more substantial than an electronic paper-clip, of reactions gauging the impacts of a current Prevailing Operating System whose implications are at once economic, sociopolitical, technological, technocratic, cultural, and educational.

The respondents who have graciously contributed their reactions and feedback to a suspended catastrophe-in-progress whose parameters seem to morph with increasing acceleration, are all acute and close readers schooled in several of the dominant theoretical paradigms through which the flows of power, money, information, memory, and material can be monitored.

The two companion volumes of *Theory in the Era of Climate Change*, emanate from a series of colloquia and workshops organized largely by one of the series co-editors, Tom Cohen, 2005–09, in diverse locations including Beijing, Albany, and Buffalo under the aegis of the Institute of Critical Climate Change. In planning and coordinating these events, Cohen was aided and abetted locally, at his home institution, the State University of New York at Albany, by Mike Hill, the departmental chair (English) and Mary Valentis. At the antipodal extreme of the SUNY system, the inaugural events were planned and external support solicited in collaboration with Henry Sussman, editor of the present volume, who, in March, 2009, extended the IC^3 event-series with a conference sponsored by the University at Buffalo called "Idioms of the Post-Global." That event, which included eloquent status reports on fish in Alaskan waters by documentarian Sarah Elder and on contemporary regimes of cognition by philosopher Catherine Malabou, left a palpable imprint on the present volume, which contains several of its interventions.

The IC^3 project has from its outset been at its core an incitement to torque the suggestive and empowering treasury of contemporary theoretical inquiries, improvisations, interventions and performances toward the actuality, in several senses, of an interrelated, if open-ended sequence of ecological, demographic, economic, and informational contemporary disasters. These not only vie for our attention on a daily level but tangibly affect the potentials of cognition, interpretation, and expression on a terrestrial scale. More than the standard call for "political relevance," itself as much a symptom of consensual acquiescence as dissensus, the challenge that IC^3 has issued in the several venues of its happenings has demanded a performative resonance with the violence of the unfolding catastrophe; a heightened sense of the complicity and role of the mass-media, cybernetic technology, and autocratic systems of public administration in the chain of disasters; reaching toward a phenomenological accounting of

the severe curtailment of interpretative, communicative, and cultural resources and potential that current conditions impose.

This book goes to press in the very recent wake of the Japanese tsunami of late winter, 2011, at a moment of intriguing possibility in the Middle East, conditioned as ever, however, by the contingencies of multilateral intervention. The individuals most deserving of the editor's and contributors' appreciation belong to the rhizomatically distributed collectivity of cultural scholars, critics, and theorists, whether in the ranks of the instructors or the students, who continue to bring their full talents and intelligence to bear in synthesizing and extracting sense from the accelerations and radically altered flow-patterns with which terrestrial systems are currently beset. In very different ways, the following interventions all contribute to a picture in which these patterns—of climate, intellectual as well as meteorological, of adaptation, feedback, and mutation, are experiencing unprecedented degrees of stress and burnout. Persistence under these conditions at the generative margins of theoretical paradigms and environments is, in itself and for its own sake, an achievement eliciting serious celebration.

Attempting, collaboratively with Tom Cohen for some years now, to factor current exacerbating climatic and atmospheric conditions into the purview and performances available to contemporary critical theory has been a consistently edifying experience. It has gone a long way toward counteracting and in many ways undoing the stasis emerging from the professional and institutional organization of innovative critique and theoretical update.

Notes

1. Jennifer Gabrys, "Sink: the Dirt of Systems," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 27 (2009), pp. 666–681.
2. Avital Ronell, *Crack Wars: Literature, Addiction, Mania*.
3. Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, 40.
4. Tom Cohen, *Hitchcock's Cryptonymies*.

5. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 82: "This *condition of possibility* of the event is also its *condition of impossibility*, like this strange concept of messianism without content, of the messianic without messianism, that guides us here like the blind."

6. Samuel Weber, *Targets of Opportunity: On the Militarization of Thinking*.

7. Henry Sussman, "Deterritorializing the Text: Flow Theory and Deconstruction," *Modern Language Notes*, 115 (2000), rpt. Sussman, *The Task of the Critic*, 129–51

8. Michael Heim, *The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality*, 7–8, 55–71.

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Chapter 1

Anecographics

Climate Change and "Late" Deconstruction

Tom Cohen

"The relationship between earth, terra, territory, and terror has changed."

– Jacques Derrida[1]

" … might not environmentalism provoke a certain materialistic mutation within deconstruction?"

– David Wood[2]

"The environmental crisis is inherently deconstructive, viciously so, of current modes of thought in politics, economics and cultural and literary theory. At the same time, the lack of engagement with environmentalism in deconstructive thinking seems increasingly damaging."

– Timothy Clark[3]

The specter of climate change arrives like a time experiment: if there were a dominant species that accelerated its own disappearance by consuming and altering its planet, how would that effect critical orientations? One response may understandably be either occlusion (as in America today) or what we might call the relapse, the attempt to restore what is taking place or going under (in Nietzsche's sense). Let us pretend such a thing exists and one is no longer in the zone of limitless imaginary time, of endless generations to come, and let us pretend, in the case of deconstruc-

tion, this emerged to full media light just after Derrida's death (who lived to write of terror, "9/11," the American suicidal "auto-immunity" spiral). How does one address that this appears nowhere in his text, which seems to have missed little: as an oversight or as a constitutive occlusion? Today, a few years later, the façade of a "war on terror" has evaporated to disclose an accelerating set of ex-anthropic vortices that displace the polemic with neo-liberal triumphalism (the then "new world order" of the 1990s). The positive nature of these disclosures is often overlooked by the quality of threat they induce or compel anestheticization before. Hyper-financialization threatening "currency" as such, "peak" everything (oil, water, agriculture), neo-feudal telecracies, calculations of "population culling" going forward decades, and what have become the disaster porn entertainments of media. In contemplating how or whether 20th-century critical preoccupations mutate before or with such *other materialities,* one would have expected "deconstruction" to be most pliable—with its indexing of a non-human trace not bounded to historical narratives. But what we will call here "climate change" (rather than "environmentalism" or "ecological" thought, both of which seem bound to the mimetic orders that arguably fuel hyperconsumption) appears almost nowhere in Derrida and appears to have been avoided by his most feverish exegetical heirs, those presuming to prolong the brand or canonize the archive. If, during what cannot quite yet be called the 21st century, there is a shift away from 20th-century preoccupations within a human narrative—an "otherness of the other," social justice, cultural agency—toward what cannot be fit into an "otherness" model as such—cultural others, subalterns, animals—why did deconstruction appear to blank on this?

This question seems to have been posed by David Wood and Timothy Clark, both of whom I quoted in this essay's epigraphs, before the 21st-century horizons neither contemplated nor addressed by Derrida—yet promising to engulf and alter critical legacies in uncharted ways. I will attempt to dialogue with these citations in the following essay. As opposed to the term "environmentalism," which is loaded with definitional assumptions and political agendas (some already regressive), I will call this advent by the impersonal name or non-name "climate change." The phrase is verbally redundant but impersonal and indifferent to "man." Keeping in mind that if the ruse of "9/11" was that it pretended there

was a spectral other still to wage war with, a human-on-human contest, what it concealed from view was the threat without enemy—faceless, "anthropogenic," out of which the disappearance of species, of "life as we know it," becomes calculable. While today one may speak of an emergent *climate change imaginary* that permeates discourse and referential chains, an imaginary replete with "climate change subjectivities" captured by the rhetorics of *crisis*, the latter's tie to apocalypticism and disaster-porn appears too familiar.[4]

A Grand Mal d'Archive

Could one step outside the type of academic exegesis plentifully represented today—such as the hagiography and mimes of mourning and self-inscription—and imagine that Derrida had lived another decade or two? Since according to certain maps there was a second or "late Derrida" or its simulacrum (denied but tolerated by him), might there not have been a third phase—after the hiatus of what we will call the mainline crowd-pleasers, such as "ethics," "religion," and the "political?" Such might have been a final turn to the ex-anthropic strands of early and more marginal texts.[5] May these have been effaced by a "late" phase in which Derrida turned back from the openings toward allo-humanist lines of thought—earlier or scattered openings in his work that may have lost readers at the time (or for decades)?

Might a labor of consignation evident in the *aprés* Derrida—a "turn" accelerated by public rituals of mourning—have led elsewhere than to the auto-immune phase one witnesses today: that is, not turning to the exegetical normalization of Derrida's writings to the point of recommending, as some legacy-keepers now do, the retirement of "deconstruction" with a full focus on "Derrida studies," a Derrideanism without deconstruction that ennobles the proper name? Might it instead have attempted to reconfigure itself toward unprecedented 21st-century horizons that Derrida had not lived (or chosen) to address? In fact, does not a period of consignation not, precisely, converge with what he meant by declaring that his work would disappear after death?[6]

One could imagine a deconstruction after Derrida's death that did not immediately circle back to his immense production, manage it, congeal

imagined orthodoxies, erase the rogue in favor of the saint that presumed that proximity or contact meant inheritance, and so on. This other deconstruction would blink, look about the new 21st-century horizons, and instead ask (as if anew) what "deconstruction" would do before these horizons, those of neither metaphysics nor institutions, but material, biomorphic, geomorphic horizons, as if from outside, from without the human enclave altogether and without face—neither other nor wholly other, since processual and banal.[7] And might it—this absent "deconstruction"—ask what adaptation, what contretemps, what challenge or accelerating catalyst this newly disclosed *combinatoire* of shifting referentials did not present? Since "deconstruction" after Derrida wraps itself in its auto-immune moment turned toward its own recycling without orientation or clear opponent, does it not pose the question inversely of a deconstruction without "Derrida," a deconstruction without "deconstruction," and without the proper name or imaginary of a family or style to retreat to?

Derrida lived to comment upon "9/11" and the intricate discussion of terror and the auto-immune responses (of "America"), just as he made it through the neo-liberal fantasy of totalization entering the 90s. Yet in both cases, his contretemps are inscribed in the topical theatre of the day. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida will rise in mock-Mosaic form to address his "ten plagues," or rather telegraph them, as he says, pretending to do so in ten words: unemployment, homelessness, economic wars, free markets, debt, arms industries, nuclear weapons, inter-ethnic wars, mafia drug cartels, and problems of international law(lessness).[8] Strange Morse code, and stranger still the covert messages thus imparted—since the "ten plagues" in fact are banal enough, human-on-human ills, institutional. In fact, he seems to almost have difficulty finding ten (drifting into weak international laws and mafia-states). There is no mention of "climate change," oil, mass extinctions, toxification, water, and so on. David Wood, dismayed that these "ten plagues" did not include the environment, reports that Derrida conceded ("willingly") that ecological catastrophe would be an eleventh. In "On Being Haunted by the Future," Wood does not consider that it could not be on this list and that its occlusion is also already a textual mark. The problem seems to be that of willing a *green deconstruction* to begin with.

The swarming logics of climate change arrive to deconstruct the artefactual real of human modernity as if from without (though this arrival discloses that there was no "outside" as such). For Clark, "What Derrida once called 'Western metaphysics' is now also a dust cloud of eroded topsoil, a dying forest and what may now be the largest man-made feature detectable from space, the vast floating island of plastic debris that spans a large part of the Pacific ocean" (*Toward* 49). In addressing terror, Derrida is still analyzing "the political" as he pretended to appropriate it—even where that can appear as a diffuse or undefined "progressive liberalism."[9] Derrida's "terrorism" mimes a human-on-human drama, a war of doubles logic, the work of an enemy "other" of sorts (pretending to be like "us," flying "our" planes, then detonating). Derrida chooses to be for the West, not bin Laden, in whom he sees no future at all. While the West at least can, in time, strive to perfect its institutions, Bin Laden's "actions and such discourse open onto no future and in my view, have no future. If we are to put any faith in the perfectibility of public space and of the world juridical-political scene, of the world itself, then there is, it seems to me, nothing good to be hoped for from that quarter" (*Terror*, 106). That is fine, a commitment to Europe, to institutions capable of development, unclosed at least if brutally corrupt if not criminal. But from a perspective of planetary or species survival, it is hard to maintain that Bin Laden's vision—retreating from Western globalization to 12th-century modes of production—may not be defended, irrespective of ideology. Bin Laden recently attached his Jihad to the cause of stopping those responsible for ecological catastrophe and climate change. Such logic is not essentially different from what Žižek proposes as the sole possible answer to the prospect of ecological disaster. First, concede that the catastrophic is irreversible and no longer avoidable in its worst implications, so that at least one does not go through the gymnastics of denial and hope. This idea is indebted to Dupuy's suggestion that we already regard the present retrospectively, as a moment that from the perspective of that catastrophic future might have been avoided.[10] Second, Žižek suggests instituting a Maoist-Leninist green state, brutally policing uniform levels of consumption, restitution local denunciations, and so on.[11] Who could say, from a non-Western and non-humanist perspective, that perhaps a thousand years of Taliban would not interrupt a suicidal direction of the species it-

self, allowing something else to emerge and creating new civilized forms into millennia? If so, the context of a choice is altered. The new *aporia* of "climate change" are refreshingly bracing and absolutely ruthless, like the future prospect of a geo-engineering scramble that can patch up one catastrophe at one time (e.g., aerosol deflection) but exacerbate another (e.g., monsoons, droughts, pollution).

The trouble seems to be in willing a green deconstruction to begin with—that is, in presuming the green politics of environmental metaphors to be a given or exigency, even in its less organicist forms, or to insist there be a transposition of it, that this name and critical signature be carried on, re-initialized, and so on, by fealty. To inquire of "deconstruction" and "environmentalism" raises a conundrum about both terms. Does "deconstruction" now name a vague network of writings touched by Derrida, or a trans-epochal effect with numerous names and texts, or primarily "Derrida himself" —and if the latter, then which Derrida, at the expense of which others? (The construct of a "late Derrida" here renders this a question.) Or, differently put, which among a multiplicity of Derridas should be now produced, not uniform but contradictory: some "at war" with others, some with themselves (for instance, an ex-anthropoid vector, on the one hand, and the crafted institutional "late Derrida" of *hospitality* on the other)?[12]

Both Wood and Clark are diplomatic. Each more or less brushes aside, as one might today, the import of a "democracy to come" or "weak messianism" and such maneuvers. Wood asks that the phantom "New International" in *Specters of Marx* be extended to include other life forms: a new biocentrism (though one ignores that a trace neither living nor dead, or "life/death," may not simply be "biocentric" at all). Clark asks instead that it include the unborn, the "future," the generations vandalized in their being and reserves by a feeding frenzy of the artefacted present—a sort of "time bubble" and spellbound telecracy of today. This "new" time of abrupt geomorphic mutation is far more out of joint than the dark underbelly of another "new world order." This *time* is not of phenomenology nor of its deconstruction. For however disjointed the phenomenological present was, it was always a present that differed from itself. The logics of "climate change" are even more counter-Hamletian since they inhabit a

present that is zombified by what it knows would be now irreversible, yet which it does not see, and hence occludes.

The disclosure of the biosemiotic logics of "climate change" and their impact on historical and cognitive *aporia* compels a different question—as well as what might be called a future conditional back-glance at "deconstruction" itself, or the deconstruction produced today.

What emerges, then, when a biomorphic and geomorphic turn becomes manifest (since it was never other) that folds the archive in its entirety one more time, scattering its referentials? Must one pretend to address an outer rim to the *an*archival, at the point it loops back before and into itself, or is there no "the" archive (but many differentially interembedded archival machines, including organic and inorganic processes, genetic codings, eco-niches)? Does what one would have to call human mnemotechnics—out of which memory and world co-derive with their blinds—interface legibly with ex-anthropic "archival" modes that are proleptic and that animate, read, or produce themselves forward? What is called evolution, genetics, photosynthesis, mutation, biomorphism, the transference of biomass, and so on would indicate such monstrous counter-archives where the perpetual anteriority of marking systems whose technics, machines, and inks have accompanied the era of hydrocarbons would collude with, consume, and alter these inorganic and organic effects.

No Revelations: Not "Not Now"

The phrase "climate change" is, then, less an encompassing term than one without a prescribed mode of reference—a non-name that is fractal. One can fill in a myriad of macro- and micro-threads, intersecting active backloops and different proleptic narratives from polar ice to microbials, medical toxins to oil, hyperindustrial psychotropies to species extinctions, geopolitical corporate plundering and regime maintenance to food riots, the credit collapse and scientific prospects of synthetic biology and geo-engineering, resource wars and, yes, "weather" militarization and "population culling." All these narratives correspond to different *combinatoires* as the calculations of time scales are adjusted. This "long now"—as Stewart Grant's foundation of that name calls it (stretching

10,000 years in either direction from the putative present)—must be enfabled from geomorphic or biomorphic times, in which scores of years may be noted as a mere point, or suddenly tip into cataclysmic mutations (methane bubbles, abrupt die-offs). "Climate change"—even of the anthropogenic variety (assuming this term is not, still, a plea for human sovereignty, blame, or centrality)—appears outside of short-term calculations of the compressed experience of the daily, memory programs, or mediacratic spells. Yet climate change is not a fable or, as Derrida says of nuclear war, an "apocalyptic imaginary." That is, the catastrophic possibility imagined by Derrida—the nuclear erasure of life—was, for him, potentially present in the archive before its actuality. Noting this, Derrida did not consider a more radical destruction beyond possibility and potentiality in its "quasi- transcendental" differential forms.

This destruction is not apocalyptic at all. That is: there is no calamitous precise instant, no revelation, and it is in its way irreducibly banal—a matter of chemical compositions, physics, molecules, biomass, and the feeding of energy off organic waste of dead terrestrial species, a form of necrophagy. It suggests a blunt revolution of epistemological settings for which Žižek—who then curiously returns to a Christian apocalyptic wedded to a green Leninist ideal—avers: "everything should be rethought, beginning from the zero-point" (*First as Tragedy* 87). It is what contemporary thought seems reluctant to conceive, a force beyond any model of sovereignty.

Thus, 20th-century historical and cultural critical maps are seemingly interrupted as the geographic template shifts from human-on-human events to what lies outside of and encompasses those dramas, a trajectory of dispossession indexed to auto-extinction. These mutations are nonetheless all about "reserves," representation, survival (ultimately between groups, localities, or national entities), and the wearing away of premises and of whatever we confirm as "life as we know it." One can insert the topoi of "climate change," then, into any 20th-century-derived critical idiom (culturalism and … emancipatory thought and … deconstruction and), and step back, allowing some variant of this metamorphosis to proceed as the later breaks, contracts, contradicts itself, must try to mutate—or goes into a blind, a relapse, doubling down on itself, and so on.

What if *deconstruction* were itself the byproduct or the point of orientation toward a movement of ex-position that could not, finally, be delineated or given one name (Derrida, de Man, Wittgenstein, Nietzsche, Plato, or just script)—and not only because there might be types or even a typology of trace? It would have to peel back from its current preoccupations and recuperations—reactive gestures of literalizing "ethics," domesticating the animal, naturalizing deconstruction.[13] It would then be able to interrogate those vectors in Derrida's work that appear non-recuperable and, for that reason, would never quite have been mourned.[14] These would not have been enough on which to gamble the survival of an imperial production. What if this legacy (a clogged and tiresome term, much as inheritance implies capital and resulting family plots) were best served today (should that be some end in itself) by cutting it up into incompatibles, contradictory pulsions, violent forces that would give themselves over to the fascination of rehearsal in variation?

The perspective of "climate change" questions the rhetorical premise of today's hagiographic or normalizing readings by recalling the rogue Derrida, but this time in earnest: that is, the limitless strategician and seducer (a term to be heard neutrally). It casts a different light, say, on Martin Hägglund's recent *Radical Atheism—Derrida and the Time of Life*, which argues that a systemic misreading and retheologization trends through the mainstream Derridean commentators (it is an impressive list). A persistent relapse and recuperation occurs which Derrida's early writings patently exceed.[15] However melancholy it is to think that a book of the 21st century needed to point out to Derrideans that Derrida was not theotropic (in the diverse senses of this term), the image that evolves suggests a strategic choice made by Derrida. He would appear to have artefacted a "late Derrida" that he could, at the same time, disown, or whose host discourse he could sabotage after waiting a generation or two. Specifically, that artefacted Derrida would enter into the main arteries of humanistic traditions (religion, ethics, politics, or what we might call REP) in order, as a pivot, to counter the entrapping clichés of him as anti-humanist "post-structuralist" (he saw what happened to de Man).[16]

Did Derrida strategically generate an artefacted "late phase," a Trojan Horse strategy that would —after the current generation of carriers—deform the predicates of the main arteries of academic and humanist

thought over time? If deconstruction assumes that where there is archive there is also a necessary contamination and the imminent extinction generated by techno-genesis, or if Derrida presumed to account for every future reading of his text (as he says of Joyce), then he would have calculated the auto-immune moment and recuperation that his death would trigger. Derrida's calculation of survival, however, veers from many of deconstruction's own premises; thus, among the Derridas one might want today to revive and inspect is the rogue—since we have already had the dear friend, Jewish saint, Proteus unbound, and so on.

This is the missing logic implied by Hägglund, since if Derrida tolerated the production of "late Derrida" around him (yet would chase Nancy to the shed for daring to metaphysicize touch), it could only be by a sort of higher duplexity or contamination of strategies—a contamination which his concept of archive accepts as necessary and structural. Rather than slowly turn "deconstruction" into a self-disowning intellectual moralism and stylistic groupthink, still haunted by an imaginary of persecution and the illusion of familial clustering, the figure of "climate change" or eco-catastrophe arrives as a gift and de-orientation—though not in the sense of re-initializing his text as "for" environmentalism or leading to a "green" econstruction (in Wood's offering). In fact, one might say that Derrida's "late" phase involved a strategic practice of hospitality according to certain rules, complications, inversions—accepting the deployment of certain words ("justice," the "wholly other") without marking them, hovering at the edges of the eco, without summoning the ecologico-graphic dispossession. "Hospitality" appears, instead, as a sort of holding strategem, a jungle-gym for practicing aporetic logics mostly in what appear primarily as "systems of law and communication."[17]

But "climate change" is not apocalyptic, any more than it enters the *combinatoire* of hospitality or the home.[18]

Derrida's analyses of "nuclear" extinction and war, along with the possibility of the extinction of the archive (and life forms), interfaces curiously with "climate change." He speculates on the literariness of the "nuclear war" as organizing threat, and this threat's weave into apocalyptic imaginaries. Let us adapt Žižek's or Dupuy's premise and imagine a future dissident reader, who would read these "apocalyptic" texts of Derrida, after the apocalypse had been eclipsed by less revelatory destructions. Such

a reader would look back from decades hence, perhaps, for we are conjuring this reader, too, as "to come" (from another state or stage in this terrestrial mutation). This reader might regard the entirety of critical culture today as strangely spellbound and, as such, not entirely disconnected from the relapses we witness on the political, international, mediacratic, and cultural fronts. That "deconstruction" today cannot ask itself the hard questions that might be posed by a "reader to come," cannot turn against itself or play the contretemps, and cannot give Derrida the confidence to respond or reconfigure before them as a plastic force of assault and violence whose referentials survive by mutation, tells its own story. How, today, do we negotiate these revivals of past apocalyptic logics and figures as we face a "to come" that both refuses any revelatory intervention and threatens to annihilate not with a bang but a whimper, not in the form of an intruding other but of an "outside" that was never exterior?

Derrida examines these missiles and missives, yet must align the apocalyptics of the nuclear threat (around which Cold-War geopolitics were organized) with the standoff logics of war between two sides. Yet nuclear war also is analyzed by Derrida as a fable allied to the era of literature. Nuclear war is a fable since it never has happened, so one does not know what is feared and warded against (or unconsciously desired). Thus, Derrida says that deconstruction is itself of the nuclear era, watched over by it (with its Cold War trace). What, however, would exceed the era of literature, or not occur in the mode of nuclear strikes in the reversible suspension of a non-present "present" which the flash of fiery erasure too enphantoms, similar to the model of the impact, the caesura, the sudden blow, the chiasmic exposure, the epoche, and so on? "Climate change," in contrast with these fabled nuclear apocalyptics considered by Derrida, can be thought of as cinematized, breaching decades and millenia as in a micro-instant, much as the sixth mass extinction event on earth—the only such event accomplished by an organism—might cover a century or be traced back millennia to the megafauna. That is, its time would not be "of literature," archive or time-space differance but cinematic in terms of its inhuman, machinic, and interrupted temporality.

For Derrida, the nuclear fable is ciphered through a war for recognition, of two human-like others who could commit annihilation (by decision) in the name of mastery, or in this case, "the Name" itself (since

there would be no one left to recognize the Master potentially). One reason "climate change" is without "Name," and doesn't ascribe to the narrative of human-on-human war in the name of the "Name," is because it eludes the analytic of the name. Derrida:

> But as it is in the name of something whose name, in this logic of total destruction, can no longer be borne, transmitted, inherited by anything living, that name in the name of which war would take place would be the name of nothing, it would be pure name, the "naked name." That war would be the first and the last war in the name of the name, with only the non-name of "name." It would be a war without a name, a nameless war, for it would no longer share even the name of war with other events of the same type, of the same family. Beyond all genealogy, a nameless war in the name of the name. That would be the End and the Revelation of the name itself, the Apocalypse of the Name. ("No Apocalypse" 30–31)

Yet "climate change" is not of a human other, does not occur in a flash, cannot occur in the name of "the Name" (and, in essence, is un-nameable). It requires no decision, unless that be the elusive counter-decision against what today accelerates its vortices—a "decision" to throw the brake on, say, hydro-carbon emission in the illusion of a sovereignty that is non-existent (Copenhagen). It is without the agency of war explicitly, but folds all war into itself (resource wars) and redistributes them as invisible wars in which totalities hang in the balance as its own blind-spot. The nuclear strike corresponds with an anti-linear counter-strike on the placeless "event," which wants to read itself as instantaneous, a decision, the irreversible, the inversion of the non-present "present" or its rhetorical or narrative premises. But perhaps not only this model but its deconstruction would partake of a blind even when in excess. And who would expect or think, in the early 80s and before, that rather than the hypothetical nuclear strike between a binarized standoff modeled on war, recognition, and the pleasures of annihilation, there might be a relentless shrinkage of earth's ass's skin of surfaces and biosystems, a dispossession that would proceed from the ground up, as a slow, miserable population culling over decades? Who might have anticipated a turning of the biosphere

into an inhospitable zone—as if the figure of the home had forcibly been recast as a trope of its own hyperconsumption? Such a mutation could not be figured as apocalyptic, of the instant, or remotely redeemable.

By asking after the tropology of "climate change" it would be possible to explore the figures and failed personifications by which ecological damage is tracked, politicized, put into media or entertainment vehicles, or gets absorbed as an assented to acceleration. This is a step Wood avoids altogether. He does not ask how a "deconstruction" might read or resist "environmentalism" as a configuration, rather than be accommodated to it. Wood does not consider what modes of ethics may arise from logics of competitive survival that are likely to compel the exact opposite developments of what any progressive program might wish to shape. That is, if the polity is pressured, as if from without, from what can no longer be considered as "environment," it would usher in events that would not be those of justice or democracy to come. New Orleans after Katerina might be a rehearsal in petto: abandonment of the underclass, a virtual triage, a hole in the symbolic, the invasion of the "homeland" from without. Unlike the missiles become missives of Derrida's analysis, which launch toward targets and make speed a desideratum, the climactic in general and what issues from it is radically counter-linear, a mutating hive of feedback loops of counter-referential force-lines, tensions, and transferences. It is not deconstructible, is not narrateable, implies "futures" more calculable than archival pasts, is not of the era of "literature"—or even containable within a designated tropology. Yet it "is" and assumes the perspective of non-personifiable agencies.

Destructive Affirmatives

"Today," certain sutures in Derrida can be read against themselves, as "at war" with themselves, and ruptured from the anesthetized routines of mourning and consignation. From such a point of view it is as if—today—nothing of note were occurring beyond the horizons that Derrida was exposed to. It is as though one remains within the Derridean problematic that emerged from the nuclear era, attached to it, to thinking with and against the sudden flash—rather than the relentless anthropogenic draw toward extinction events beyond cognitive maps or precedence

in memory formations. We might imagine, in contrast with this fidelity to the apocalyptic, messianic and "to come," different referentials that would shatter these rehearsals, opening onto a monstrous future whose logics were not anticipated and that would break the very protocols upon which Derrida had more or less gambled. Such different, non-apocalyt-pic, horizons would suggest not that "deconstruction" be rescued from itself (Wood's econstruction?), but that its auto-immune phase be left to suicide unimpeded. Only if the legacy that sought to maintain and conserve itself were to spend itself utterly and die its own death would it be possible to release what survives unburdened by the proper name, numbing recitations, the dedicated imaginary of managers and heirs. For this crippling survival of deconstruction that devours its own host also draws a parallel between the systemic relapse of contemporary theoretic tribes. The shudder and attempt to restore, recuperate, or restitute yet a bit longer the familiar order or façade accelerates the very disappearance of a phantom "homeland" it would guard against. Not environmentalism, then, but something else that is no longer "literature" or of its age—and yet which, because of that, rereads the archive in its entirety with different referentials.

Do the horizons of climate change alter and turn against the systemic premises of 20th-century representational and critical practices? Clark mentions the dead-end of a postcolonial ethics that parallels the neo-liberal faux promise, in the era of the democratic imaginary, of a world of American-style consumers, i.e., restored subjectivities. But what does the beyond of an era of literature—which is also to say of the archive in one of its epochal configurations—indicate, if not a *mal d'archive* in the tro-pological itself? This would open not the transit circuits of metaphorics and anthropisms, but the contretemps to tropology itself. It would be not a caesura from without, as Wood implies, but an internal break with the very premises that support it, a counter-gaze without personification, a perspective without "man" altogether. Such a perspective affirms even the implications of extinction in order to get on with the clarifications at hand. One should not assume that the auto-immune phase of "decon-struction" today, X-rayed by the problematic of "climate change," though entirely scripted, was inevitable. That is, it should not appear as seamless and possible that one might simply supplement the corpus of Derrida's

work with "and environment" or "and climate change" that he accidentally failed to mention. It may be conceived as an obvious turn for which an alternative would nonetheless be thinkable, though to consider the ellipses in Derrida's thought would occur at the expense of the memorialization of the capital of the name, the legacy, the mimic style, and so on. Such untimely questions might ask, for example, what "deconstruction" would do in the 21st century's model of inhospitality?

That is, rather than playing the standard riffs of the *aporia* of the ethics of the "otherness of the other," one might experiment with addressing—as it were, without a net—the entirely new and exitless *aporia* emerging across every discursive field (the political, the economic, the referential). The seemingly toothless "ethicism" Derrida seemed to license (an all too human "ethics of literature?"), in the name of a "justice" that had no necessary human reference, more pre-Socratic than legalistic in invocation—which, in essence, could turn against a broader criminalization of the human—now enters the Olympics of para-ethical aporetics. What decisionism arrives in the face of an "ethics" of this dimension, the responsibility and irresponsibility toward "futures," the affirmation of disappearance, or survivalist logics and rationalizations, of triage (long term or short, economic and organic)?

These other aporetics are already emerging. One is named by Clark in scanning the replay of postcolonial orthodoxies—not the identifications of historical injustice and their address, but the premise that such address implies a universal restitution of the oppressed into the equalizing promises of 90s neo-liberalism: that this justice is measured by the model of freedom to consume, thus accelerating the autophagy of resources (China and India normally enter this discussion). Another is the global debt trap itself. One encounters such *aporia* within 21st-century protocols, such as the rhetorical clash between the wishes of emancipatory agendas and the real, or feminism and advocates of population control. Within critical culture, the prioritization of a rhetoric of *praxis* marshaled by a return to "history" now seems to have played into this accelerating impasse quite literally—preserving a "political" imaginary that led straight to the implicit suspension of practical effect or politics (and more or less accompanied the advent of the Bush catastrophe). That anything calling itself deconstruction today is not fully immersed in the relative joys of

exploring the exitless rhetorical labyrinth of telecratic spells, which are the new "commons," and the anesthetization of the public and private spheres, seems curious (and suggests curatorial obsessions). Others arise which may give today's crypto-humanist backwater of "ethical" conundracism and commodified "otherness" chills, having to do with virtual and real triage, the counter-cataclysmic choices of geo-engineering and bio-engineering. One has entered an irreversible zone before which the instincts of deterral, mitigation, sustainability, and the "regressive organicism" (Timothy Morton) of contemporal critical options appears part of the complex itself.

Perhaps one is even more in the time of the relapse that mimes the recreation of a semantic enclave, again and again, an *oikos*, at the heart of "today's" accelerations. Today, the "political" is repeatedly mourned (Agamben) while the era of post-democracy proceeds; Deleuzians swarm to the "affect" or embodiment side of the vessel (Protevi) while zombie "deconstruction" melds into an index of exegetical memoirs and academic cohorts (names too numerous to list); the feral eudaimonism and crypto-catholicisms of the "multitude" circulate (Hardt and Negri), while "animal studies" crystallizes as an anthropo-colonial dossier of one's pets (Haraway). Culturalists ply on, as the narratives of victimology of the 90s are applied to future cyborgs (Hayles); emancipatory faiths deny the calculus not of formal democracies to come but of an encircling era of techo-feudalism (Lovelock) if not species differentiation (the hyper-rich) and emerging survival logics ("human rights," alone, being all but irrelevant today), while new media studies revert to the phenomenological and pre-critical gesture of restituting a centered "human" (Hansen).[19] And, of course, there is what would call itself the "ethical," which sometimes speaks in a Levinasian gesture to facial otherness (Butler), peace, and recognition, and makes the practitioner feel part of the "good" (Benhabib). Finally, I suppose, one would include nihilist Lacanians who embrace, as the new ground zero, green Christian Leninism (Žižek). What emerges when the discourse of mourning (for pasts, for futures) recedes?

One turns from the gaze of this reader of the future, who may wonder about all this scrambling to preserve 20th-century legacies and ostrich-postures from the very discourses that, unfinished, promised to exceed that very fold.

This may cast the spellbound "present"—from the back-glance of readers beyond this generation, however far—in a weak and indulgent light. From this perspective, "climate change" arrives as a hyper-referential, ruthlessly positive opportunity, the contretemps of contretemps, invisibly welling up from within an-archival programs and interstices. The prospect of giving something up—from energy consumption or retirement accounts to semantic investments and academic rituals and normatizations of the latter's capital—disappears here as it does from the cultural programs of hypercapital (see "Copenhagen"). "Deconstruction" would not be killed despite innumerable announcements of its death, yet it would not have to be, since it would innocently enough commit suicide (as "deconstruction") in a fashion that an auto-immune moment can never read from within itself. Derrida seemed to more or less program this. Gambling on the entrée to academic humanism at its arteries and the bonding of followers with inheritance prescriptions, Derrida succumbed at least in part to a calculation of "survival" that he knew would be scrambled and dashed. He allowed late deconstruction to enter its auto-immune shell, and yet hoped, it seemed, to deliver his text to unborn readers. The irony would be that, as a matter of survival-relevance, Derrida blanked on the defining transmutation in the 21st century. So, if there was anxiety as to the turn "deconstruction" would take in the après-Derrida—between, say, memorialization, canonization, re-circulation, mourning rituals, family capital (what band of translators would put up the shingle "Derrida & Sons?"), and asking, without a map, where this legacy (to speak in familiar codes) might turn and reconfigure itself before radically emerging 21st-century horizons—well, that seems settled. The imbrication of (and with) mourning has been, again, a self-mourning that should not be transferred simply to a mourning for disappearing futures. What emerges to repeat again, when the discourse of mourning and face recedes?

Such rituals of maintenance and memorialization preclude questions of futurity arising precisely by their hysteria about insisting on a radically open or promissory to come. Our earlier imagined future dissident reader in her stupidity cannot bring to the ghosts of deconstruction irrelevant pharmacopic suggestions, with the irritability of future-hindsight. She cannot advise: 1) suspend the misread or supposed ban on address-

ing "futurity," which penetrates the "present" today as anteriority had—a memory of "futures" (*Toward* 52); 2) break the homogenization of the Derridean corpus by releasing incompatible Derridas "at war" with themselves; 3) explore without a net how a certain "spirit of deconstruction" (as Derrida speaks of a "spirit of Marx") might enter the contemporaneity of a ruptured set of temporal metrics, without a name; 4) practice the contretemps against your own rituals of academic capitalization; 5) relinquish the mourning posture that re-inscribes its carriers in a groupthink which "deconstruction" once (and Derrida always) took as a prime target (now that there is no "metaphysics" or it is proven so systemic as to be the effect of consignation itself).

If Derrida strategized the production of a "late Derrida" whose supposed "turn" he disowned simultaneously, and this to block the clichés of an anti-humanist "post-structuralist" by entering mainstream humanist institutions—even to the point of crowd-pleasing caricatures ("deconstruction 'is' justice")—it would be "monstrous" again if in this calculation of survivability Derrida *erred*: that is, that it would be, precisely, the side of Derrida drawn outside the human effect and constitution (the *oikos*) that would arrive, after his death, as the change of referentials spawning a 21st century.

Then someone asks: would a *living* "deconstructive" project not rather attempt this third phase on its own—the master leaving this task open, incomplete, by default, structurally, like some properly excommunicating challenge and gift? Which would a contemporary "deconstruction" then be: redeploying these energies and strategies, in exploratory fashion, before 21st-century horizons unaccounted for in his text, or blocking those out to rehearse, canonize, and normatize a zombie deconstruction? One would want to say the former, even if (or precisely because) that would mean an unrecognizable turn or departure, without proper name, without rehearsals, without a net, a deconstruction without "deconstruction" (or Derrideanism). That might mean waiting for yet another generation beyond those pretending to a corporate afterlife, or returning to a romantic promise of the 80s, or restaging familiar motifs in conferences ("… and Specters," "… and Psychoanalysis," and so on). If a hypothetical "late Derrida" was in part a strategic creation, then those closest to it (translators, truly significant scholars such as Hägglund re-

views) would understand that they, too, were to be viral carriers, were to be *played*, in Derrida's calculations. This decay of the brand falls into and echoes with a wider relapse today. The return of Deleuze studies to "affect," the return to phenomenology, the implicit organicism of post-humanists, various forms of embodiment, and liberationist politics running on as if nothing had altered are akin to Obama's restitution of the term, "Wall Street": a doubling-down in the idioms in which the 20th-century had long invested. Thus Clark: "It is far easier for critics to stay inside the professionally familiar circle of cultural representations, ideas, ideals, and prejudices, than to engage with long-term relations of physical cause and effect, or the environmental costs of an infrastructure, questions that involve nonhuman agency and which engage modes of expertise that may lie outside the humanities as currently constituted" (*Scale,* 75). The zombie deconstruction of today—like much else (zombie banks, zombie democracy)—stands to be reinvigorated by what it can only crash against and redistribute itself within, at the sacrifice of (its) capital, and name: the ahorizons of "climate change." What other *aporia*? Not the "pathos" of undecidability. Not the enigma of a "democracy to come" whose nonexistence would be different than even Derrida projected—since the mutations of "formal democracy" in the U.S. or India contain the logic to spell, as Arundhati Roy observes, the death-knell of human life on earth as such: accelerated hyperconsumption and corporate sovereignty.

Whatever it means for life forms as we know them, *climate change* is destructively wired to and saturates telemorphic circuits of exchange, biosemantic reserves, protocols of personification, perceptual regimes and spells, the linguistic hypothesis of a *home*. It encircles the "present" as a hyper-referential that might be considered ruthlessly positive, almost joyously so—at least for thought.

It has been possible to speak, recently, about an emergent "climate change subjectivity" that can be mapped, to its disadvantage, as caught between a sort of will to save and restore (environmentalism, sustainability) and cognitive deflection (denial, derealization).[20] Such suggests the emergence of a *climate change imaginary* that has permeated diverse discourses without achieving a common template. Yet rather than tracking the arrested doubleness of a "climate change subjectivity" captured by the rhetoric of crisis (as misleading as that of apocalypse and linked

to it), one can as easily speak of an *asubjectality* that does not fit into either option above, for which the premise of irreversibility (and the positive apprehension of extinction, say) serve as a point of departure. Such a concept presupposes what could be called an *anecographic* thought, un-invested in any proper name it would ennoble or recuperate as legacy. It would integrate new referential agencies and decouple from the hermeneutic reflex of creating an *oikos*, interiority, home, or "we" in recognizable forms, since it knows it will not recapture a communal politics, a metaphysics to deconstruct, or a perpetuation of the familiar conceptual preoccupations before *aporia* that, in fact, have always represented one limit of the conceptual machine today—the one which has walked hand in hand with the accelerations now disclosed. Those *aporia* are not hard to find, from the global debt trap to the calculus of disappearing reserves. What, one might begin again, has writing and archivization ever not had to do with metaphysics (if that ever existed) and the hydrocarbon era, ink with oil, perceptual programmings determined prehistorically with telecratically induced anaesthetics today? The geomorphic fold occurs at the rim of the mnemo-scape that Derrida would patrol, hold vigil over endlessly, invent into, dart beyond, but restrict himself and at times turn back into rhetorically as by a contract to a readership or a constitutive blind. Metaphysics never "existed," of course, could not be made the pretext of a deconstruction, would turn out to have been all along a referential reflex and hermeneutic effect sanctioned by the social imaginary it conjures. This war between Derridas (the *Derridawars*) might now be read together with the invisible ones that encircle the earth today, autogenic, accelerant, forecasting not only the obvious "to comes" (water wars, survivalist contests) but those internal to the global system—the spitting away of a hyper-plutocratic class separated in near-speciesist terms and the prospect of techno-feudal states before an era of global population culling.[21]

Notes

1. Jacques Derrida, "Autoimmunity—Real and Symbolic Suicides", in Giovanna Borrodori, Philosophy in a *Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, 85–136.

2. David Wood, "Specters of Derrida—On the Way To Econstruction", in *Ecospirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*, 264–290.

3. Timothy Clark, "Toward a Deconstructive Environmental Criticism", *Oxford Literary Review*, 30:1 (2008), 44–68.

4. Ben Dibley and Brett Neilson, in "Climate Crisis and the Actuarial Imaginary: The War on Global Warming," open this prospect: "What kind of subject, then, is the political subject of climate crisis? In so far as this subject partakes in a fluctuation between cosmopolitan recognition and the fetishist's denial, it seems to remain caught in the antinomies of modern citizenship: between membership and exclusion, rights and duties, participation and representation, formal equality and substantive inequalities, and so on. Whatever else this oscillation might imply—which is to say, however emptied of meaning it and its formal correlate of citizenship might be—it sets the terms by which crisis after crisis is defined on the cusp of modernity's exhaustion. In the delicate environment of the earth's atmosphere, this exhaustion manifests itself as an excess of greenhouse emissions, depletion of fossil fuels, acidification of the oceans and warming of the air. The exhaustion of modernity is not just some pretty theoretical trope. However, the ways it is figured in accounts of risk varies widely" (147).

5. One could identify less obvious sites relatively marginal to these investments that open ex-anthropic corridors which Derrida, nonetheless, chose not to highlight (and which would likely have cost him in terms of readership and brand). "Violence and Metaphysics" exceeds and renders peculiar much that latter involves the appropriation of Levinasian tropes of "otherness" (as Martin Hägglund implies), and even "Structure, Sign and Play" addresses in closing yet another "dance" or metrics, as does *Specters of Marx*'s "visor-effect"? *On Touching* seems to perform at a certain limit of the archive which he does not want to cross over from, instead continually turning back to remind scions, as if yet again, of the deconstruction of phenomenology—a perpetual point of departure for Derrida that might be supposed, by then, to be simply subsumed. And there remains the least political and least humanisable zone, the unusable and depersonified non-site of *khora*, where inscriptions are posited out of which perceptual worlds and mnemotechnics occur—the non-site at which a "politics of memory" would need be violently and otherwise hypothesized.

6. Derrida describes this activity in *Archive Fever*: "Consignation aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration. In an archive, there should not be any absolute dissociation, any heterogeneity or secret which could separate (secernere), or partition, in an absolute manner. The archontic principle of the archive is also a principle of consignation, that is, of gathering together" (10).

7. J. Hillis Miller's *For Derrida* finds itself speaking "for" Derrida as if against trends of appropriation called Derridean today. Peter Sloterdijk addresses a "post-Derridean situation" in *Derrida, An Egyptian*: *On the Problem of the Jewish Pyramid*, querying a reading that would be "an antidote to the dangers of a cultic reception" (xiii). He ventriloquizes Boria Groys as "convinced that the work of philosophy from the neo-Derridean position can only continue if its carriers change direction and do something else. One could define the change of direction … in the après-Derrida in the following terms: where there was grammatology, there must now be museology—the later could be termed archival theory" (69). Groys "enquires as to the transformation of mere life through its transference to the archive. Of all Derrida's readers, he is the one who honours him by leaving the paths of imitation and exegesis" (72).

8. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (77–82). Derrida later takes up and complicates the chosen number "ten" of this section (fingers, the digital) in ways of that would be of interest to read with and against the my remarks here (142).

9. Thus Clark in "Derangement of Scale": "Reconfiguring a notion of the subjectivity as openness to the other etc., instead of an autonomous self-presence, and attention to *aporia*s of freedom/equality and conditional and unconditional hospitality, do not alter the basic terms of Derrida's commitment to a liberal progressivist tradition whose assumptions of scale are here at issue."

10. Slavoj Žižek in "Nature and its Discontents" (67–8), proffers a Benjaminian mode of active interventions in virtual pasts prefaced by a complete assumption of the "catastrophe" premised on Jean-Pierre Dupuy's *Pour un catastrophisme eclaire*.

11. Slavoj Žižek is one of few theorists to engage these impasses directly in *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, where he weaponises the zero-degree logics of "ecological catastrophe" in a jeremiad against the decade's "critical Left." For Žižek the logic of eco-catastrophe benefits from specifically Christian apocalyptics, which he would appropriate for a sort of green Christo-Leninist global conversion. (83) The heritage of apocalyptic thought would be retained but diverted: "Perhaps the solution resides in an eschatological apocalypticism which does not involve the fantasy of the symbolic Last Judgment" (132).

12. Alternately, the term "environmentalism" has already evolved into its others, and been targeted by some scientists as harmful, a diversion from the eco-catastrophic real at this late date, its logics no different than the phantom of geo-engineering (our missing Plan B) it often eschews, the management of a totally artificed "environment," and so on. That includes entrapping moralism, theotropisms, and a concept of the local (environs) that accelerates the

cataclysms it would impede. See "Are environmentalists bad for the planet?" by John Rowlatt: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00q3cnl/>.

13. Johanna Zylinska, "Bioethics Otherwise, or, How to Live with Machines, Humans, and Other Animals": In this piece, Zylinska examines how today's animalists' recurrent focus on their empathic relations to subordinate pet mammals (cats, dogs, horses) has delimited a discourse that waivers between an extended anthropism and soft humanism—implying that, rather than projecting outward identification with favorite domesticated mammals ("being undone by pet love") one must begin to read backwards from microbes, insects, and so on, toward the human construct: "what happens if this animal is not just a dog, a cat or a horse from the family of befriended or domestic animals, but rather a parasite, bacteria or fungus?" A recent example of how a sort of masked regression is constitutive of "animal studies," is Cary Wolfe's "Cognitive Science, Deconstruction, and (Post)Humanist (Non) Humans", where one is given a critical review of animal theorists as if pivoting around a Derrida citation. Wolfe bases his address on explaining to readers that "language" matters, an echolalic offering from 80's deconstruction emerging in a time-warp, and concludes that while he doesn't know if he is or is not a post-human, we must approach with "humility" the thought of animalian subjects.

14. I have tried, in "Toxic Assets: Paul de Man and the Ecocatastrophic Imaginary," to sketch an anti-genealogy of the "late Derrida" in relation to the suicidal deconstruction of Paul de Man and the former's rhetorical adjustments to the latter's crashed brand with the "de Man affair" or its threat to deconstruction (intentional or otherwise). The import I suggest is that, left in the wake of this decision and its ramifications for Derrida's strategy, is the occlusion of a different "materiality" (contrary to Derrida's deft appropriation as a "materiality without matter") what would be a "matter without 'materiality'" that is irreversibly ex-anthropic.

15. That disappearance of an originary violence is charted by Martin Hägglund's *Radical Atheism—Derrida and the Time of Life* as a systemic relapse and return to theotropisms by many of his foremost commentators, in the mode of exegesis, attendant to the construction of a "late Derrida" focused on religion, ethics, and politics.

16. See my "Toxic Assets."

17. Clark: "*Of Hospitality* (2000) argues how the supposedly inviolable interiority of the home is already de-constituted, turned inside-out, by its multiple embeddings in public space, the state, the telephone line, monitored emails etc., yet there is residual idealism in Derrida's exclusive attention to systems of law and communication. The focus on the moment of decision in individual consciousness and its pathos (its ordeal of undecidablity etc.)

seems narrow and inadequate in a context in which things have now become overwhelmingly more political than people" (*Scale*).

18. "Environmentalism" can be heard, today, not at the effort to bring about a successful green infrastructure but a long surpassed premise, one understood, in any case, as positioned today reactively and as a techno-managerial ideology. It segues seamlessly into the reactive geo-engineering experiments to come (the missing *Plan B*), for which all environments would be artificially serviced, a park-earth managed by technocrats. If Copenhagen publicly indexed the impossibility of a global response to ecocatastrophe, the follow up, Cancun, seems to have turned the corner in accepting its irreversibility by turning to issues of adaption rather than pre-emption. In so doing, it put on display where Capital, too, anticipates the prospects of geo-engineering as a profitable target of industrialization itself.

19. Timothy Morton, in *Ecology without Nature,* opens a critique of how the writing of nature indexed to a misreading of Romanticist tropes has become endemic to critical thought itself—which he terms *ecomimesis*. That is, the manner in which an *oikos* is perpetually re-posited out of mimetic ideology or practices he terms "beautiful soulism": "the "new organicism is possibly even stranger than the old one. In the new organicisim, 'emergent' formal organization—compared with the growth of flowers or the spread of clouds—depends upon the operation of some essentially algorhythmic process." (191) From this perspective—which Morton gothically tropes as "dark ecology" without redemptive traits or reflexes—he opens a critical auto-deconstruction, of sorts, of contemporary critical idioms which he finds shaped, repeatedly, as "regressive organicism." It is in this sense, transposed, that Žižek excoriates the ecological itself as the repository of residual ideology (or ideation) today.

20. Ben Dibley and Brett Neilson, in "Climate Crisis and the Actuarial Imaginary: The War on Global Warming," open this prospect: "What kind of subject, then, is the political subject of climate crisis? In so far as this subject partakes in a fluctuation between cosmopolitan recognition and the fetishist's denial, it seems to remain caught in the antinomies of modern citizenship: between membership and exclusion, rights and duties, participation and representation, formal equality and substantive inequalities, and so on. Whatever else this oscillation might imply—which is to say, however emptied of meaning it and its formal correlate of citizenship might be—it sets the terms by which crisis after crisis is defined on the cusp of modernity's exhaustion. In the delicate environment of the earth's atmosphere, this exhaustion manifests itself as an excess of greenhouse emissions, depletion of fossil fuels, acidification of the oceans and warming of the air. The exhaustion of modernity is not just some pretty theoretical trope. However, the ways it is figured in accounts of risk varies widely" (147).

21. In America this is an open secret, now, with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to equate corporations with individual rights: the zombie "individual" without body controlling the entire façade.

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Chapter 2

Autopoiesis and the Planet

Bruce Clarke

The biosphere as a whole is autopoietic in the sense that it maintains itself.... Planetary physiology ... is the autopoiesis of the cell writ large.

– Margulis and Sagan, *What is Life?*

From its inception in 1971 as a cybernetic theory of biological form, to its current presence on research fronts extending from immunology to Earth system science to sociology, from geobiology, artificial life, and cognitive science to a range of literary and cultural theories, the concept of autopoiesis has developed on the margins, not in the strongholds, of mainstream Anglo-American science. It may be that its persistent Continental and countercultural vogue has made it suspect there, and also, that its outsider status within this scientific academy has increased its extra-scientific traffic. Additionally, as a recent Italian commentator has pointed out, "autopoiesis originated in a time-window (the early 1970s) when the world of biology was completely dominated by a vision of DNA and RNA as the holy grail of life. Alternative views about the mechanism of life didn't have much chance of appearing in mainstream journals" (Luisi, "Autopoiesis" 179). The concept of autopoiesis is interesting, then, for its multifarious cultural history, itinerant discursive career, and contrarian stance. Moreover, it has been particularly important for enabling microbiologist Lynn Margulis to outline a *second-order* form of Gaia theory (see Clarke, "Neocybernetics"). Here I will connect the conceptual linkage of autopoiesis and Gaia theory to the wider discourse of self-referential systems.

Autopoiesis marks a reorientation "from interest in design and control to an interest in autonomy and environmental sensitivity, from planning to evolution, from structural stability to dynamic stability" (Luhmann, *Social Systems* 10). In this remark, social systems theorist Niklas Luhmann glosses the distinction of his cybernetic mentor, Heinz von Foerster, between first- and second-order cybernetics (see Foerster, ed., *Cybernetics*). First-order cybernetics is hetero-referential, it concerns "objects" such as natural or technological systems. Second-order cybernetics observes the self-reference of "subjects," that is, the necessary recursivity of cognitive systems capable of producing observations in the first place. However, from the recursive logic of second-order cybernetics it follows that the traditional distinction between objects and subjects is (un)grounded in the primary self-reference of observing systems (see Luhmann, "Cognitive Program"). In *Autopoiesis and Cognition* (Maturana and Varela), the inventors of the concept made their definitive case for considering autopoietic systems, such as living cells, *cognitive*—not merely as observed systems but more fundamentally as *observing* systems. As a part of the process of its self-making operation, a biological autopoietic system produces and maintains a boundary, a membrane by which to regulate cognitions of its environment. Bound up in a higher-order reiteration of those same dynamics, we cannot look at Gaia as a planetary whole without looking, self-referentially, at ourselves, a part of Gaia, looking at Gaia. In either case, "objectivity" is surpassed by participation.

The system concept in its proper theorization denotes a complex ensemble unified in such a way that a *process* emerges from, and only from, the interdependent interactions of those elements. Systems theory attends to both the elements and the processes of the systems it observes, precisely because in self-referential systems those elements are themselves the *products* of those processes—just as, in the Gaian view, the forms of living organisms coevolve along with the forms of their environments. Autopoiesis and Gaia fit together as interlocking, micro- and macro- modes of systems theory: biological autopoiesis defines the minimal formal requirements for living systems, beginning with the cell, and Gaia captures the "planetary physiology" of the biosphere, for which the atmosphere is the autopoietic membrane.

Both theories participate in the travails of an epistemological transition by which the contingencies of self-referential systems now determine the bottom line of any possible observation. "Constructivism is the form assumed in reflection on the system of science facing its own extravagances" (Luhmann, "Cognitive Program" 151). The periodic ups and down of Gaia theory, as that concept of planetary self-reference and self-regulation has crossed between scientific and cultural discourse at large, bears out the travails of this transition. However, in the current upheavals in the Earth system as observed with reference to the place of the human within planetary dynamics, the climate crisis has made the stakes of these throes of transformation even clearer. If we are to render our technoscientific culture fit for the long term, then we will have to complete a pervasive redistribution of the ways that knowledge, scientific and otherwise, is constructed and communicated. A systems-theoretical observation of our geobiological situation within the planet we inhabit is a good place to start this rebooting of interrelations between science and society.

Both autopoiesis and Gaia (in its original form as *the Gaia hypothesis*) were first published in the same year, 1974. Their conceptual histories have become significantly intertwined. But to begin with, Gaia theory has been if anything more controversial and more widely disseminated than the discourse of autopoiesis. In a 2004 article, the Dutch paleontologist and emeritus professor of geophysiology at Leiden University, Peter Westbroek, offers an account of his own scientific development focused on the advent of the Gaia concept. He begins by evoking his participation in a scientific meeting convened in San Diego in 1988 to debate the Gaia theory. The counter-arguments at that meeting were so critical that for a while Westbroek backed away from Gaian science. However, by the 2000 Gaia theory meeting in Valencia, Spain, even some of the skeptics of 1988, such as geophysicist Jim Kasting of Penn State University, had come around. For Westbroek, the improved fortunes of Gaia theory in the new millennium have been part of "the new wind blowing through the earth and life sciences since the beginning of the '90s. The geological forces of life are hot stuff at present, as are gaian feedbacks; new scientific journals appear on 'Biogeology' and 'Earth System Science,' while the old ones eagerly compete for copy in this burgeoning field" (West-

broek, "Gaia" 415). But as Westbroek admits, in mainstream science Gaia remains hands-off:

> And Gaia, what about Gaia? When you look through the literature you can hardly find a trace of it. Research on Gaia is OK, but do not mention that name if you want a job! Gaia is taboo. The scientific inquisition is watching you. With the primacy of physics evaporated and global biology on its way, what else is standing in the way of Gaia? The problem is epistemology. (415)

Landing square in the midst of the epistemological upheavals of post-classical science, both autopoiesis and Gaia theory are roiled by the philosophical turmoil centered on systems theory. As Gregory Bateson once remarked in conversation with Stewart Brand about the millennial implications of cybernetics: "We didn't realize then (at least I didn't realize it, though McCulloch may have) that the whole of logic would have to be reconstructed for recursiveness" (Brand, "For God's Sake" 33). All of our systems are in turmoil, and so are the theoretical bases by which we try to understand how these systems operate. Taken together, the systems concepts of autopoiesis and Gaia epitomize a shift in the aims of scientific rationality, from instrumental control without due regard for environmental ramifications, to the observation and integrated coordination of system/environment relations. They entail more reflective ethical stances toward such contingencies of interrelation. An autopoietic reading of Gaia theory, as advanced by several prominent bioscientists and systems theorists, allows that premier model for the recursive turn in second-order systems theory to scale up from cellular dynamics to psychic, social, and planetary systematics. The autopoiesis of the planet links life, mind, society, and biosphere, even in their systemic differentiations, in a way that threads the world with a common mode of operation-in-context. Second-order systems theory thus creates a conceptual framework large enough to contain and sufficiently complex to guide the requisite thinking of ecosystematic interconnectedness thrust upon us by the literal climate crisis.

The Evolution of Autopoiesis

A certain renegade and globetrotting streak runs through the pedigree of autopoiesis. The concept was invented by the Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, and initially vetted by the Austrian-émigré cyberneticist Heinz von Foerster. The concept of autopoiesis may be traced in utero within Maturana's 1970 paper "Neurophysiology of Cognition." In this essay, the particular physiology of cognitive processing in the nervous system is referred back to that of living systems in general: "Although the nervous system expands the domain of interactions of the organism by bringing into this domain interactions with *pure relations*, the function of the nervous system is subservient to the necessary circularity of the living organization" (Maturana, "Neurophysiology" 8). In 1971, Maturana and Varela coined the neologism of *autopoiesis* as a singular term for this cluster of interrelated concepts—circular organization, operational closure, and self-referring processes, a name for the self-referential or recursive form of the "organization of the living." With an acknowledgment of von Foerster's assistance in translating and placing the article, the first English-language publication of the concept of autopoiesis occurred in 1974:

> The autopoietic organization is defined as a unity by a network of productions of components which (i) participate recursively in the same network of productions of components which produced these components, and (ii) realize the network of productions as a unity in the space in which the components exist. Consider for example the case of a cell: it is a network of chemical reactions which produce molecules such that (i) through their interactions [they] generate and participate recursively in the same network of reactions which produced them, and (ii) realize the cell as a material unity. (Varela, Maturana, and Uribe, "Autopoiesis" 188).

At its inception, the discourse of autopoiesis was coupled directly to a self-referential description of the cognitive process that produces the discourse. Observed both *as* and *by* an autopoietic operation, the minimal organization of life, the cell, takes the form of a closed circular process of self-production (autopoiesis) within a system open to environmen-

tal interaction (cognition). In other words, while the environment can (and must) feed such a system, and can bring about responses within the system that compensate for environmental perturbations, neither the environment nor the observers it contains can *operate* (or control) the system. All mythical tales and literary fantasies to the contrary, life cannot be endowed from without. Open to the material-energetic flux of its environment, an autopoietic system is closed or "information-tight" in the sense that it is self-operating, or autonomous. It self-maintains the continuous production of the components that bind and replenish the system that produces the components that bind and replenish the system, and so on, until or unless the co-realization of the living system and its medium can no longer conserve their co-adaptation, and the lapse of autopoiesis induces the death of the system.

The inclinations of both Maturana and Varela were to tamp down efforts by others to extend autopoiesis beyond biological systems. They insisted on its delimitation to the realm of molecular dynamics, on its material specificity as a membrane-bounded process of biological production. As Varela put it in 1980, "autopoiesis is a particular case of a larger class of organizations that can be called *organizationally closed*, that is, defined through indefinite recursion of component relations"; however, it "is tempting to confuse autopoiesis with organizational closure and living autonomy with autonomy in general" (Varela, "Describing" 37). With regard to social systems, he was quite definitive: "Unless a careful distinction is made between the particular (autopoiesis and productions)"—meaning that in autopoiesis proper, the *system produces itself*, produces the very elements that compose it as a system—"and the general (organizational closure and general computations), the notion of autopoiesis becomes a metaphor and loses its power. This is what has happened, in my view, with attempts to apply autopoiesis directly to social systems" (*Ibid*. 38). Varela's particular concern is warranted for theories that posit *persons* as the elements "produced" by social systems. Placing the autopoiesis of social systems on a non-metaphorical basis would have to locate an alternative rationale.

Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory has arguably established a properly non-metaphorical approach to the autopoiesis of social systems. Luhmann proceeds like so: "If we abstract from life and define autopoi-

esis as a general form of system building using self-referential closure, we would have to admit that there are nonliving autopoietic systems, different modes of autopoietic reproduction, and that there are general principles of autopoietic organization that materialize as life, but also in other modes of circularity and self-reproduction" (Luhmann, "Autopoiesis" 2). So far this could appear to conform to Varela's notion of "the general (organizational closure and general computations)," that is, to no more than a metaphorical extension of closure in the absence of *self*-production. What maintains Luhmann's social appropriation as autopoiesis proper is that "the particular (autopoiesis and productions)" is *supplied by communication itself*. In social autopoiesis, communications are the social products that continuously reproduce the system of further communications.

> Social systems use communication as their particular mode of autopoietic reproduction. Their elements are communications that are recursively produced and reproduced by a network of communications and that cannot exist outside of such a network. Communications are not "living" units, they are not "conscious" units, they are not "actions." Their unity requires a synthesis of three selections, namely information, utterance, and understanding (including misunderstanding). This synthesis is produced by the network of communication, not by some kind of inherent power of consciousness, nor by the inherent quality of the information. (*Ibid*. 3)

Further, Luhmann observes the operational differentiation but "interpenetration" of social and psychic systems. Both are autopoietic. Either co-emerges with the other; either presents the immediate environment of the operation of the other. For both, the elements of autopoietic self-production are the forms of systemic events proper to each: events of consciousness for psychic systems, events of communication for social systems: "In the areas of the theory of consciousness or the theory of communication, the event-character of elements that cannot be further dissolved forces itself upon us. A sentence is a sentence, it is spoken when it is spoken, and no longer afterwards and not yet before. A thought or a perception, when I see something, is current in this moment and no longer afterwards and not yet before, so that the event-character of the

operations becomes obvious" (Luhmann, "Self-Organization" 150). However, biological autopoiesis has its own clock with regard to the material-energetic contingencies of metabolic self-production: "The formal definition of autopoiesis gives no indication about the span of time during which components exist Conscious systems and social systems have to produce their own decay. They produce their basic elements, i.e., thoughts and communications, not as short-term states but as events that vanish as soon as they appear. Events too occupy a minimal span of time, a specious present, but their duration is a matter of definition and has to be regulated by the autopoietic system itself: events cannot be accumulated" (Luhmann, "Autopoiesis" 8–9).

Over numerous volumes published from the 1970s to the 1990s Luhmann carried out the most rigorous and pervasive extension of autopoiesis outside of biological research in particular and the scientific academy proper. Above and beyond its own ongoing establishment in sociology, legal studies, literary theory, media theory, and other discursive disciplines, Luhmann's work can deepen and augment the other discourses of autopoiesis specific to other environments and modes of system production. We must get past whatever idiosyncratic preferences stand in the way of integrating biological, psychic, and social autopoiesis into a comprehensive systems theory adequate to contemporary hypercomplexities and the manifold of environmental challenges our current systems confront. The autopoietic reformulation of Gaia theory is one important vector for this conceptual integration.

The Evolution of Gaia

Along one line of development, then, the concept of autopoiesis has unfolded with second-order systems theory as a discourse of epistemological constructivism. Here autopoiesis has been exported beyond its original living borders into the realms of mind and society—the metabiotic organizations of consciousness and communication that have emerged from the evolution (or Gaian proliferation) of living systems. In this realm Luhmann's theory stands out as the most successful and far-ranging exaptation of autopoiesis to metabiotic systems theory. Many observers consider Luhmann's definition of the elements processed by social autopoi-

esis as communicative *events* (as opposed to, in the biological instance, molecular dynamics) and his subsequent specification of the *temporalization* of autopoiesis to be his primary innovations, his most important contributions to the field of general systems theory. Along another line of development, as we have noted, autopoiesis has been brought up to the level of the biosphere with geobiological systems theories of planetary regulation, the Gaia theory of James Lovelock as elaborated, following some critical commentaries given by Varela himself, by Lynn Margulis.

In the final chapter of her memoir *Symbiotic Planet*, Lynn Margulis narrates the first-order cybernetic framework of Lovelock's original Gaia hypothesis: "The term Gaia was suggested to Lovelock by the novelist William Golding Lovelock asked his neighbor whether he could replace the cumbersome phrase 'a cybernetic system with homeostatic tendencies as detected by chemical anomalies in the Earth's atmosphere' with a term meaning 'Earth.' 'I need a good four-letter word.' … The name caught on all too well" (Margulis, *Symbiotic Planet* 118). Lovelock's initial hypothesis had modeled the sum of the biota as a thermostat controlling the viability of the abiotic environment. As its critics were quick to point out, the limitations of this scheme were several. For one, it overcompensated for traditional geoevolutionary accounts, in which life always played the passive partner having to adapt itself to the whims of a capricious and overbearing environment, by placing life itself *over* and in charge of its environment. For another, this biocentric version of Gaia in turn prompted Lovelock to venture the first-order cybernetic vocabulary of *optimization*, looking at the cybernetics of Gaia as one would at the engineering of a control mechanism.

In the development of his hypothesis into a theory, by the later 1980s Lovelock had both relinquished the rhetoric of optimization—at least to the extent of replacing notions of *optimal* with, at best, *viable*—and brought life and Earth back into realignment as a coupled meta-system. Gaia *theory* integrates life with its terrestrial environment into a geobiological system whose coevolution has been a composite phenomenon of co-emergence, bounded by a self-organized atmosphere filtering the input of solar radiation:

> Through Gaia theory, I see the Earth and the life it bears as a system, a system that has the capacity to regulate the tempera-

> ture and the composition of the Earth's surface and to keep it comfortable for living organisms. The self-regulation of the system is an active process driven by the free energy available from sunlight Gaia had first been seen from space and the arguments used were from thermodynamics. To me it was obvious that the Earth was alive in the sense that it is a self-organizing and self-regulating system. (Lovelock, *Ages of Gaia* 31)

But in point of fact, Lovelock has never entirely relinquished his commitment to "strong Gaia"—the conviction that Gaia is in some sense *alive*, even if only, as here, in virtue of its being a *system*. Varela once called Lovelock out on this orientation, in terms of, with reference to the theory itself, "some of the more animistic notions that have parasitized it" (Thompson, ed., *Gaia 2* 211). In her account of Gaia in *Symbiotic Planet*, discussing Lovelock's tendentious troping of the properly scientific system-concept of Gaia, Margulis confessed:

> I regret this personification Gaia, the system, emerges from ten million or more connected living species that form its incessantly active body Gaia … is not an organism directly selected among many. It is an emergent property of interaction among organisms, the spherical planet on which they reside, and an energy source, the sun. (Margulis, *Symbiotic Planet* 118–19)

Restated in the terms I use to distinguish biological from social autopoiesis, Margulis is saying that, literally considered, Gaia is not a *biotic* but a *metabiotic* system.

Let us briefly trace the development of this *second-order* Gaia theory. *CoEvolution Quarterly* for Summer 1975 presented the first publication of the Gaia hypothesis in a non-specialist journal. Margulis and Lovelock led their readers into the topic with a seventeenth-century engraving and a discussion of Harvey's demonstration of the circulatory system of the body, presenting this earlier discovery as an analogy for the atmosphere's Gaian role as a circulatory system in relation to the planetary "body" (Margulis and Lovelock, "Atmosphere"). Fatefully, however, to this more popular article was appended a separate section titled "Gaia and Cybernetics," an excerpt from a more technical piece that had been published

the year before, with Lovelock rather than Margulis as the lead author (Lovelock and Margulis, "Atmospheric Homeostasis"). That excerpt gave mathematical formulae for the application of Shannon and Weaver's information theory to the thermodynamics of living systems. The next number of *CoEvolution Quarterly* devoted an entire page to a letter to the editor from Maturana and Varela's colleague Heinz von Foerster, asserting defects in the information theory presented in "Gaia and Cybernetics." Nonetheless, von Foerster supported the main innovations of that presentation: "I found Lovelock's and Margulis's ideas too important to see them becoming vulnerable because of deficiencies of a different kind. As a comment on their—or anybody else's—classification of Life I suggest that you reproduce 'Autopoiesis: The Organization of Living Systems, its Characterization and a Model'" (Foerster, "Gaia's Cybernetics"). Von Foerster's constructive criticism is to my knowledge the first and original suggestion of a relation between the cybernetics of Gaia and the theory of autopoiesis as a description of the operational organization of living systems.

Erich Jantsch's *The Self-Organizing Universe* of 1980 took autopoiesis in the opposite direction from Luhmann, back to the abiotic nexus of dissipative structures, and then, forward once more to the singular superorganic system of Gaia. Jantsch aligned the concepts of self-organization and evolution to connect emergent forms in physics and biology to cosmological events and cultural repercussions. Given that autopoiesis can be construed as a theory of minimal life emerging from prebiotic autocatalytic processes, underscored by its readiness for computer modeling as such, Jantsch proceeded to backdate the evolution of autopoiesis from biotic cells to abiotic chemical reaction systems: "In the more than 3000 million years before the appearance of the first multicellular organisms, three main levels of autopoietic existence appear: dissipative structures, prokaryotes and eukaryotes. In macroevolution, however, the identification of autopoietic levels is more difficult. Nevertheless it seems that the prokaryotes are matched on the macroscopic branch by the autopoietic Gaia system" (Jantsch, *Self-Organizing Universe* 131).

Jantsch alluded here to the now broadly accepted account of Lynn Margulis's serial endosymbiosis theory: all nucleated cells (eukaryotes) evolved from the viable merger of distinct forms of bacteria (prokary-

otes) (see Margulis, *Symbiosis*). Even before the appearance of eukaryotes about 1.5 billion years ago, Margulis and Lovelock have argued, once the bacteria had achieved critical mass on their own and blue-greened the planet, the phenomenon of biospherical self-regulation binding the biota and their total geological environment into an emergent whole earth system—Gaia—had already appeared (see Lovelock, *Ages of Gaia*; Margulis and Sagan, *What is Life?*). While Jantsch may be said to have stretched the idea of autopoiesis too thinly over multiple arenas of application, his was nonetheless a seminal grasp of its possibilities as a unifying concept within systems theory. And while von Foerster was likely the first to put the two concepts side by side, without suggesting that Gaia was itself autopoietic, Jantsch may have been the first to directly assert the autopoietic nature of the Gaia system.

In 1988, Lovelock, Margulis, and Varela participated in a Gaia theory symposium in Italy. Its vigorous concluding symposium began with Varela's lengthy assessment and critique of Lovelock's Gaia theory. His tour de force of scientific conversation provides a definitive second-order cybernetic perspective on Lovelock's first-order orientation. First of all, as mentioned above, Varela addressed Lovelock's continued use of phrasings that hypostatize the "life" of Gaia, and he implicitly suggested for that complex coupling of biotic and abiotic component systems, instead, a generalization of the discourse of biotic autopoiesis allowing for the "living-like" operational autonomy of *metabiotic* systems:

> Jim has made it very clear … that Gaia cannot be described as other than having the quality of life But it seems to me that this difficult issue can perhaps be helped and clarified by making a distinction It is the difference between being alive, which is an elusive and somewhat metaphorical concept, and a broader concept, which is perhaps easier to tackle, that of autonomy. The quality we see in Gaia as being living-like, to me is the fact that it is a fully autonomous system … whose fundamental organization corresponds to operational closure Operational closure is a form, if you like, of fully self-referential network constitution that specifies its own identity Autonomy, in the sense of full operational closure, is the best way of describing that living-like quality of Gaia, and … the use of the concept

> of autonomy might liberate the theory from some of the more animistic notions that have parasitized it. (cited in Thompson, ed., *Gaia 2* 211)

Although Varela would not have put it this way, the recognition that there are metabiotic modes of autonomy based on autopoietic closure—that broadly considered, as Luhmann has argued, autopoiesis describes a general mode of systemic self-reference, *one* form of which is biological—underwrites the extension of autopoiesis to a properly metabiotic observation of Gaia.

Margulis's later adaptations of autopoiesis to Gaia theory appear to have been informed by the points Varela expressed in this exchange: "The simplest, smallest known autopoietic entity is a single bacterial cell. The largest is probably Gaia—life and its environment-regulating behavior at the Earth's surface. Cells and Gaia display a general property of autopoietic entities: as their surroundings change unpredictably, they maintain their structural integrity and internal organization, at the expense of solar energy, by remaking and interchanging their parts" (Margulis, "Big Trouble" 267, 269). Margulis and Sagan would seem to echo Varela again in the way that they have stressed Gaia's *participation* in, rather than *identity* with, the form of life per se: "The biosphere as a whole is autopoietic in the sense that it maintains itself As an autopoietic system, Gaia therefore shares an essential quality with individual living systems" (Margulis and Sagan, *What is Life?* 20).

In short, the biologist Margulis has effectively remediated the chemist Lovelock's homeostatic or first-order cybernetic animism—that is, she has followed a second-order systems-theoretical resolution of the central problem with the overly "strong" form of the Gaia concept. If Gaia is "not an organism," but is, nonetheless, "an autopoietic system," then Margulis has essentially retraced for Gaia a metabiotic course parallel to that by which Luhmann has carried the theory of autopoiesis over into the metabiotic co-emergence of psychic and social systems, consciousness and communication. This suggests that one could point to the formal echoes of these operational parallels among autopoietic systems to account for the powerful ways that Gaia has always propagated its prosopopoeias within meaning systems. That is, the Gaian system's overlapping forms of life and Earth resonate with the forms of human psychic and social

systems, and these system/environment frequencies go all the way down and all the way out. Gaia's systemic resonance for consciousness and communication produces both its mythic and its scientific faces—its primal intuitions, its historical articulations, and its belated re-cognitions.

The Autopoietic Planet

As the conversation around Varela's critique of Gaia theory at the 1988 symposium continued, the conceptual shift from first- to second-order cybernetic models—from homeostatic regulation to autopoietic recursion—became more explicit. Varela went on to discuss the complex adaptability of Gaia's ongoing emergence as a globally distributed network of systems, a planetary network that, like an immune system, continues to learn on the job. In that case,

> the best model for Gaia is not one of the old tradition of feedbacks added together, but one of a fully distributed network I believe that one will not have a fully convincing argument for Gaia until the full plastic network qualities of Gaia become apparent. For then, you see, you will actually be able to put your finger on the learning capacity of Gaia to show just how it becomes adaptive. (cited in Thompson, ed., *Gaia 2* 212)

We note a related neocybernetic observation in another passage from Peter Westbroek's discussion of Gaia theory, in which he invokes the systems approach of the French theorist Edgar Morin. According to Westbroek, in *La Vie de la Vie* (*La Méthode*, II), Morin

> provides a dazzling picture of a major phase transition in biology, that is, the spontaneous emergence of smoothly operating ecosystems from "egocentric" organisms and their inanimate surroundings. He shows how multiple antagonisms may generate solidarity and generosity and how the omnipresence of noise and misunderstanding in a signaling cacophony may give rise to understanding and mutual collaboration. Thus, a flexible ecosystemic organization arises, autonomous, acephalous, yet capable of learning by selecting its constituent parts. By implication this brings home the idea of Gaia *learning* over

> the eons to recycle nutrients, to detoxify the global habitat, and to regulate the global climate. Recent advances in Earth System Science are revealing how and when the various steps in this learning process were accomplished. (Westbroek, "Gaia" 418; italics in the original)

As we can draw from Westbroek's overview of complexity theory and Gaia, in contemporary systems theory the rigid structural paradigm of traditional holism gives way to fluid self-organizations from noise. The proper frame of such observations is the system/environment distinction. With Gaia, it may be, "the whole system uses itself as environment in forming its own subsystems and thereby achieves greater improbability on the level of those subsystems by more rigorously filtering an ultimately uncontrollable environment" (Luhmann, *Social Systems* 7).

It is also interesting that a recent study of autopoiesis by workers associated with Varela's research group, developing a mathematical model of minimal life, defends the plausibility of Gaian autopoiesis in a manner that also addresses one of Varela's standard complaints about social autopoiesis, that it cannot indicate a boundary by which to enclose its domain of operations. In the midst of their article "Autopoiesis and Cognition," Paul Bourgine and John Stewart address the issue of higher-order autopoietic systems. They ask: "What is necessary in order to consider multicellular organisms as autopoietic systems, not just because they are made up of first-order autopoietic systems, but as second-order autopoietic systems in their own right?" (Bourgine and Stewart, "Autopoiesis" 336). Their answer is that: "What is required for this is a 'boundary' defined in *functional* terms," that is, in terms other than the material ones so literally presented by cellular membranes (*Ibid*. 336). Moreover, "these considerations are even more compelling if we consider the possibility of a third-order autopoietic system including among its components both first- and second-order autopoietic systems. One possible candidate here is the whole ecosphere of the planet Earth, considered in the light of Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis. This is certainly a system consisting of a network of processes that continually produce the components (including first- and second-order autopoietic systems) that reproduce those processes":

> It must be an open question at present whether the terrestrial ecosphere actually is a *bona fide* autopoietic system We do not want to rule out this possibility simply because the ecosphere does not have a single clearly reified membrane Our point here is not to argue particularly for or against the hypothesis that Gaia, or an insect colony, is a third-order autopoietic system. Our point is rather that for these to become tractable questions, we require a renewed definition of autopoiesis that does not depend on an excessively reified definition of "membrane" or "boundary." (*Ibid*. 337)

Bourgine and Stewart's emphasis on the functional rather than material instantiation of the autopoietic boundary delineating the system/environment dyad does several important things. It further promotes the integration of autopoiesis into the Gaia paradigm, and by doing so, it augments the concept of autopoiesis by integrating its cellular origins with its higher-order, ultimately metabiotic natural extensions. Their autopoietic spin on the Gaia concept is precisely *metabiotic* up to the "sentient" borders of life and mind, where it joins Luhmann's metabiotic extension of biological autopoiesis to both consciousness and communication. Both psychic and social systems are higher-order natural systems self-producing their metabiotic forms only within the medium of living systems. The autopoietic "selves" of psychic and social systems are not organic but systemic—co-emergent, co-evolving, functionally bounded differential forms of virtual autopoiesis spun off from the literal metabolic looping of living systems. In this way, autopoiesis comprehends the interconnections—the structural couplings as well as the operational differentiations—among natural systems, in a way that can guide our critical efforts at comprehensive thinking past the pitfalls of holistic totalization and specious unification. Moreover, nothing and no one controls *these* systems. Beyond these considerations of theoretical comprehension, our challenge is to *get right* with autopoietic systems.

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Chapter 3

Of Survival

Climate Change and Uncanny Landscape in the Photography of Subhankar Banerjee

Yates McKee

"Will we fight to ensure that everyone has a right to survival?"

– Vandana Shiva[1]

"There can be no image that is not about destruction and survival, and this is especially the case in the image of ruin."

– Eduardo Cadava

1.

In Subhankar Banerjee's photograph, a flat, abstracted field of tans and browns transitions unevenly into an area of formless grey at the two upper corners of the picture. Appearing near these zones of indistinction are several clusters of black pock-marks, giving the impression that the central field is already suffering from a kind of internal deterioration. Traveling up the central expanse of the image is a series of imperfect lines that overlap, interweave, and reinscribe one another. At the bottom of the image, the lines stand out so sharply against the ground as to indicate a microscopic pattern of print-making at work in the contours of the lines themselves; they then vanish altogether, only to reemerge as they approach the dissolving borderline at the top of the image. Fading in and out of visibility like a phantom, the lines undergo a slight diagonalization as they make their vertical procession, a compositional cue that sets the

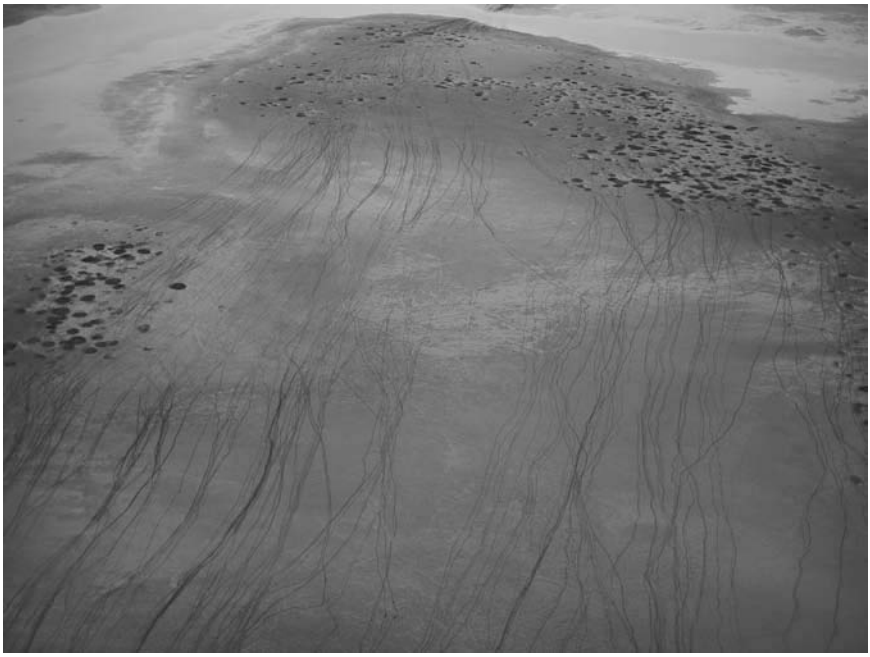

Figure 1: Subhankar Banerjee, *Caribou Tracks on Wetland*, Teshekpuk Lake Wetland, 2006

image up as landscape, albeit one in which the typical perspectival calibration of figure, ground, and horizon-line has been subjected to a kind of implosive derangement.

The title of the photograph, *Caribou Tracks on Wetland*, marks the otherwise abstract lines traversing the picture as tracks, traces, or vestiges left behind by living creatures in their passage across the surface of the earth. In an earlier epoch, it might have seemed feasible to take the indexical causality ascribed to these tracks by the title at face value; they would pertain properly to the caribou, ephemeral signatures of absent bodies that would nonetheless confirm the creature's migratory paths as they have been governed since time immemorial by the seasonal patterns of their polar habitat. In "our" time of climate change, however, any such appeal to the natural predictability of climate, season, weather (*temps)* is no longer possible—if it ever was—putting the legibility of these tracks and the dissolving ground into which they were impressed radically into question. Photographically suspended between preservation and destruction, inscription and erasure, memory and oblivion, these vestigial remainders testify to a coming-to-pass and a living-on; but of who, or what?

In its posing of this enigmatic temporality of survival, *Caribou Tracks on Wetland* is an exemplary work with which to begin a consideration of Banerjee's long-term photographic project concerning the effects of so-called anthropogenic climate change on the landscapes and ecologies of what he calls the "Near North" of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and its border regions. Shown in venues ranging from the Smithsonian Museum to the *The New York Review of Books* to the nongovernmental counter-summit shadowing the 2009 Copenhagen climate conference, Banerjee's photographs eschew the typical iconography of crashing glaciers and melancholic polar bears that dominate the visual cultures of climate change discourse, instead calling for us to read the precarious traces, tracks, and vestiges inscribed in the rapidly transforming Arctic landscape. Banerjee's images at once address and interrogate the identity, agency, and responsibility of the *anthropos* that has recently begun to hold itself accountable for the irrevocable destabilization of the naturally-given climatic horizon against which the lives and deaths of human and nonhuman populations have hitherto been assumed to take place.[2] Recalling Eduardo Cadava's axiom that "the possibility of history is bound to the survival of the traces of what is past and to our ability to read those traces as traces," Banerjee's landscapes of survival, as I will call them, enact a politics of both memory and futurity in which the question of climate change is exposed to claims for what activists recently converging on Copenhagen for the COP15 summit have begun to call "climate justice."[3]

The imperative of survival sounded by Banerjee's images is thus situated between a) a quasi-transcendental register concerned with the temporal structure of life-in-general b) a biopolitical concern with the uneven allocation of economic, ecological, and mediatic life-support systems across the globe and c) a self-reflexive meditation on the violence of photography as a medium that simultaneously freezes and immolates the actuality of life, thus allowing life to outlive itself as a mediatic or archival trace that opens onto an incalculable future. Read in relation to Banerjee's photographs, survival thus emerges as a polyvalent keyword for thinking through critical climate change, understood as both an incalculable alteration of the planetary climate system as well as the ethico-

political reorientation of the 21st century Humanities in response to the latter crisis.

2.

In a now-famous passage from his final interview, Jacques Derrida grants survival a quasi-transcendental status. As if stipulating a protocol of reading to his audience with regard to his own imminent end from beyond the grave, Derrida offers a certain affirmation of life as an irreducible force at work in the apparent finality of death. Derrida's affirmation does not of course involve the simple sublation of death into a triumphant continuity of life, but rather an unsettling of both poles that exposes their mutual dependency and contamination. Derrida describes this undecidable impasse in terms of *survival*, or "living-on":

> Life is survival. To survive means to continue to live, but also to live after death All of the concepts that have helped my work, especially those of the trace or the spectral, were linked to 'survival' as a structural dimension. Survival constitutes the very structure of what we call existence. We are structurally survivors, marked by the structure of the trace, of the testament. Everything I have said about survival as the complication of he life-death opposition proceeds in me from an unconditional affirmation of life. Survival, this life after life, life more than life, the most intense life possible.[4]

In a moving obituary published in a special issue of the arts journal *Grey Room*, Cadava marks this passage as an exemplary deconstructive lesson concerning the memory of deconstruction itself. According to Cadava, if deconstruction is to survive, or better, if deconstruction *qua* survival is to survive beyond its academic entombment, if it is to have stakes, claims or effects in the future, it would be necessary for us, Derrida's survivors, to move the "multiple legacies" of deconstruction in new directions, requiring that articulate them unforeseen histories, discourses, and problem-sets including "politics, religion, economics, ideology, rights, nationalism, racism, colonialism, genocide, torture, the media, university institutions, capitalist imperialisms of all kinds, rogue states, the war

on terror … " ("Derrida's Futures" 77). Collectively, these problem-sets constitute what Cadava calls "the signature of 'our time'," the ethico-political urgency of which he signals by putting the phrase "our time" in quotation marks in order to mark the non-self-identity of both the "we" and that "time" that such a putative collective subject would share. Cadava's litany of *topoi* closely echoes that put forth by Derrida himself in *Specters of Marx*, including what appears from our current vantage point to be a conspicuous absence: the question of ecological crisis in general and planetary climate-change in particular.[5] While it is beyond the scope of this paper to account for this strange silence, survival can nevertheless be "set to work" in thinking climate change and the conflicts surround it as precisely as an unhinging or disjoining of what Cadava calls "our time."[6]

The setting-to-work of survival entails, among other things, a consideration of the histories within which the word has been inscribed. In particular, it is relevant to note the ubiquity of survival as an ideologeme in Northern discourses of environmental crisis since the late 1960's, when books, conferences, and reports with titles such as *The Crisis of Survival, Science and Survival, Blueprint for Survival,* and *Ecological Conscience: Values for Survival* began to proliferate. Appealing to a general precariousness of the human species preceding any merely political interest or partition, survival has long functioned as a transcendental imperative concerning the potentially suicidal disjuncture between the inhuman temporality of technological evolution on the one hand and the redemptive cultural, moral, or spiritual self-awareness of humanity on the other.[7] As Al Gore put it recently in the first annual "Green" issue of *Vanity Fair,* "What is at stake is the survival of our civilization and the habitability of the Earth. As one eminent scientist has put it, "the pending question is whether an opposable thumb and a neocortex are a viable combination on this planet."[8]

Left-wing thinkers such as Wolfgang Sachs have over the past two decades made an important point of critically exposing the depoliticizing implications of what he calls "survival as the *new raison d'être* of planetary management"—i.e. the positing of the bare biophysical existence of humanity *qua* species as an unquestioned basis on which to make decisions concerning economic development and environmental regulation on the part of global elites.[9] While such critiques have proven indispensable in

establishing ecology as a site of antagonism rather than taken-for-granted consensus, survival can be productively re-mobilized as both a figure of reading and an ethico-political imperative aligned with the concerns of critical climate change put forth in the current volume.

Rather than a mere semantic frill to be sanctimoniously invoked or critically demystified, the survival would need to be recognized in its aporetic structure, which is to say, its suggestion of a fundamental dependence or indebtedness on the part of life for its own endurance in time on a set of sustained and sustaining conditions that are irreducible to the being-present of the life in question.[10] Judith Butler has recently brought the quasi-transcendental aporia of survival—"the very structure of existence" as Derrida calls it—into dialogue with an analysis of what she calls the "uneven allocation of precarity" in an expanded global frame of biopolitics. For Butler, the "survivability" of lives depends not only on the reliable allocation of material life-support networks, but also, and perhaps more primordially, the conditions of the "representability of life itself: what allows a life to become visible in its precariousness and its need for shelter, and what is it that keeps us from seeing or understanding certain lives in this way? This problem concerns the media, at the most general level, since a life can be accorded a value only on the condition that it is perceivable as a life" (*Frames of War* 51). In other words, crucial among the conditions of non-life on which life depends for its continuation—the "sustained and sustaining conditions of life"—are those mediatic practices and aesthetic frames through which lives are able to appear as livable, grievable, and thus worthy of protection. As Butler puts it, "in this way, media and survival are linked" (*Frames of War* 181).

Banerjee is concerned with precisely such a relay between media and survival, which he stages in terms of the specific formal and historical problems pertaining to photography as a medium. The images exemplify Cadava's axiom that "there can be no image that is not about destruction and survival, and this is especially the case in the image of ruin" ("Lapsus Imaginus"). Banerjee's images are "images of ruin" in several overlapping aspects—in their general status as photographic traces, in their picturing of the destructive effects of climate-change, and in their ungrounding of the humanity routinely held accountable in mainstream ecological

discourses for its own suicidal undermining of the life-support systems of the planet.

Banerjee stages this ungrounding in part by photographing the very ground of the Arctic region itself, a ground that is rapidly losing its physical stability and life-support capacity as it is exposed to the ever-intensifying quantity of solar energy trapped in the Earth's atmosphere by the residual traces of two hundred years of fossil-fuel capitalism. Specifically, many of Banerjee's photographs are concerned with the ruination of permafrost, the frozen layer of compacted soil, decaying vegetal matter, and living vegetation that underlies much of the Arctic terrain and acts as an essential support to regional life-forms. Banerjee's photographs of the dissolving ground simultaneously perform a kind of second-order allegorical meditation on the relay between the disjunctive historical temporality of climate change, on the one hand, and that of photography on the other. Indeed, Banerjee's images are structured by a play of freezing and unfreezing in which the photographic immobilization, displacement, and public witnessing of otherwise ephemeral physical transformations to the landscape becomes among the conditions of possibility for the preservation of the life-forms depending upon it—"survival and media are linked."

Banerjee's photographic project at once insists on the centrality of visual media to addressing climate change while complicating visuality itself, suggesting that a certain encounter with invisibility if not blindness is the condition of any responsible engagement with climate crisis. In Banerjee's photographs it is in what we *do not see* and *cannot be seen* that the most important work is done.[11] In other words, the evidentiary traces of climate-change phenomena that appear in Banerjee's photographs only do so on the condition that they resist being reduced to sheerly visual images; rather, the photographs speak to a certain non-self-evidence of evidence, calling out to be read *as* texts and *in relation* to other texts that are not confined to the images themselves as considered in an idealist vacuum. Indeed, Banerjee forcefully emphasizes the importance of supplementary elements to the operations of his photographs, asking us to read the formal structuring of color and light, figure and ground, detail and prospect, scale and perspective, framing and cropping at work "inside" the image in relation to the social, discursive, and institutional

Figure 2: Subhankar Banerjee, *Caribou Skeleton*, Barter Island in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 2006

conditions that mark the circulation, display, and reception of the photograph on the other.

3.

In *Caribou Skeleton* a desolate shoreline appears to recede into the distance and curve back towards us at the same time. This circular curving-back is interrupted, however, when the landscape meets a kind of terminal-point in the upper-left-hand corner of the image, giving way to a seascape in which the horizontal dividing-line between water and sky has been all but effaced in a formless expanse of grey. The incomplete recursivity of the shoreline is thrown into relief by the darkness of the sand immediately at the water's edge, the first of several succeeding bands of chromatic saturation and accumulated detritus indicative of the natural ebb and flow of the tide. But the rhythmic patterns of the tidal residue are unsettled by the striking presence of a bleached spinal column and rib-cage lying adjacent to the sea, the zoological identity of which is sug-

gested by the title of the photograph. In an earlier era of the arts and humanities, we might have been content to read these skeletal remains as an allegorical reminder of transience. Such a reminder would keep in check the arrogant aspirations to timeless monumentality on the part of a humanity in denial of its own exposure to the ruinous finitude it shares with other mundane creatures, undercutting any aesthetic idealization of nature as a realm of enduring plenitude: *et in arcadia ego.* Yet when read in relation to the extensive caption Banerjee insists on attaching to it, these photographic remains function less as ciphers of a worldly finitude as such than as an occasion for politico-ecological reading of the ever-intensifying derangement of seasonal and atmospheric dynamics in the polar region for both human and nonhuman populations:

> Nearly a thousand caribou from the Teshepuk Lake herd came over to the ANWR, making a 240 mile journey in the winter of 2006. Robert Thompson, my Inupiat friend from Kaktovik stated that this had never happened before, and that the tundra froze and that the caribous came looking for food. The tundra also froze around Kaktovik, resulting in the death of several hundred animals that winter. I photographed the skeleton of such an animal the following summer. The Arctic is experiencing rain during autumn and winter months, a severe climate change phenomenon. The rain is causing ice-crust on the tundra…Ice crust formation resulting from freeze-thaw events affects most Arctic land mammals by encapsulating their food in ice, severely limiting foraging ability and killing plants…dramatic population crashes resulting from ice crusting due to freeze-thaw events have been reported and their frequency appears to have increased over recent decades. (Caption, "Caribou Skeleton")

In other words, the altered migratory trajectories of the Caribou is itself an index of global warming, as is their "unnatural" expiration on terrestrial grounds over which the creatures would not usually pass—including the unseasonably wet lands in which their tracks are impressed in a photograph such as *Caribou Tracks on Wetland*. Banerjee thus insists that we read these remains and traces as in some way anthropogenic, as

self-portraits of humanity. Yet he also questions the putative unity of that humanity in its own self-induced risk by conjuring the voice of Robert Thompson, his "Inupiat friend" who provides the artist with a local assessment of the ecological implications of freeze-thaw dynamics not only for caribou populations, but also for the indigenous populations whose cultural and economic practices revolve around the relatively predictable patterns and dynamics of the caribou as a source of material sustenance.

Banerjee's attention to the concerns and claims of indigenous communities unevenly exposed to the effects of climate change should be understood in relation to his critical transformation historical genre of landscape photography. In his numerous statements and interviews, Banerjee has acknowledged an originary complicity with this legacy by way of a biographical fable that functions as one among many contexts in which we should read his images. Emerging from a middle-class post-colonial Indian background, Banerjee immigrated to New Mexico in 1990 to study theoretical physics, and then computer science, and later took up a job as a research scientist in Seattle in the late 1990s, where he developed an amateur interest in photographing the governmentally-protected "wilderness preserves" of the Pacific Northwest. Banerjee soon set his sights on Alaska—not the mere touristic landscapes observed from luxury cruise ships, but rather the rugged wilds of the "Far North" in the Arctic region, areas only accessible with the hired assistance of Native-American guides. According to Banerjee, "In late 2000, when I started planning for my Arctic journey, my main motivation was to go to a place untrammeled by tourism or industry, a so-called pristine wilderness or 'last American frontier.'" Having gone in search of a pristine wilderness, Banerjee's contact with native guides, initially confined to the level of a sheer economic exchange quite familiar to colonial and postcolonial tourist scenarios around the globe, soon became a form of ecological re-education. According to Banerjee, "After eight years of intense engagement with the Arctic land, animals, and peoples I now think about the Arctic very differently. I no longer see the Arctic as the 'last frontier'; instead I see it as the most connected land on earth," as evidenced in phenomena ranging from the melting of permafrost to the migration of "Persistent Organic Pollutants" from the exhaust-pipes and power plants of U.S. cities into the bloodstreams of human and nonhuman Arctic populations, to the

more visually dramatic activities of transnational energy companies prospecting in the region for fossil-fuel deposits that will further intensify the dynamics of global warming.

Banerjee situates his account of this transition from a naive desire for "wilderness" to an ecologically informed post-colonial approach to the region in terms of the history of U.S. landscape photography dating back to mid-19th century era of imperial expansion through to the formation of the National Parks systems and beyond. Rather than merely depict preexistent Western landscapes, according to Banerjee, "photography has played a critical role in the American land conservation movement from its inception. The medium not only helped preserve many important lands but also helped define how we relate to these lands, how we imagine them, and our place in them." Banerjee cites the work of Timothy O'Sullivan and William Henry Jackson, both of whom worked for the US geological survey in 1860s and 1870s to survey the lands along the transcontinental railroad in terms of their possibilities for capitalist resource-extraction and settler-colonization.[12] Banerjee notes that, ironically in light of the mandate of the geological survey with which he was working, Jackson's photographs of the Yellowstone plateau became key points of reference for the US Congress declaring Yellowstone to be a "National Park" in 1872, with numerous other Western sites to follow thereafter. According to Banerjee, Jackson's photographs canonized a "strategy of picturing land-as-scenery, something to be seen and appreciated from a distance and for its aesthetic beauty." Effacing both the preexistent histories and ecologies of native American peoples as well as the photographer's own role in colonial expansion, these "iconic images introduced Eastern viewers to the idea of vast, open, and majestic landscapes further in the westThrough these photographs, a viewer could imagine himself in that space—with a tourist's sense of belonging or entitlement. This voyeuristic and distanced relationship to the land, this idealized notion of landscape, practiced with great success by artists such as Ansel Adams, characterized much [landscape] photography of the 20th century."

In one fell swoop, Banerjee at once testifies to the rhetorical and ideological power of this photographic legacy as an active historical force in its own right, and indicts this legacy for its complicity with an "idealization" of landscape that implicitly contributed to the ecological crises that

Figure 3: Subhankar Banerjee, *Exposed Coffin*, Barter Island in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, 2006

we confront today. In an exemplary analysis, Banerjee writes, "this photographic approach … did as much to destroy the land as it did to preserve it." First of all, such a fetishization of isolated sites of aesthetic beauty contributed to the intensification of touristic visitation of these very sites, thus contributing to the further disintegration of the putative purity that made them attractive to visitors in the first place. More urgently, however, the fetishistic isolation of such "natural sites" enforced an ideology of wilderness as a sacred zone of purity set over and against the realm of the human, thus implicitly marking such places as outside history, and other places as "unnatural" and thus unworthy of consideration in ecological terms. Echoing the environmental historian William Cronon, Banerjee suggests that this ideological framing of wilderness resulted in more than two decades worth of environmentalist campaigning devoted to the preservation of wilderness as an aesthetic amenity defined over and against the menace of "human intrusion" while ignoring the intensification of local, regional, national, and global ecological crises related to unsustain-

able patterns of capitalist development and the uneven allocation of environmental risk for differently situated human populations.[13]

Banerjee contests hegemonic visions of the region as historically "untouched" in a number of ways. For instance, in a remarkable photograph entitled *Exposed Coffin* that inversely echoes the compositional layout of *Caribou Skeleton*, we see a narrow strip of vegetated land situated a few feet above a beach bearing the regularized marks of tidal protension and recession. Appearing prominently in the foreground is a crudely fashioned rectangular wooden box surrounded by an outline of eroded soil; scattered around this eroded recession are bleached-out members suggestive at once of disturbed skeletal remains and the arbitrary driftwood otherwise cast across the beach. Banerjee writes that, according to an Inupiat friend, the coffin would not pertain to an indigenous inhabitant—who would have been buried according to culturally specific protocols and markers in established funerary zones—but rather an North American or Russian whaler from the late 19th century, which is to say, a primitive precursor to contemporary energy-industrialists looking to the Northern region as a site of resource-extraction. The buried coffin emerged from the frozen ground as a result of anthropogenic thawing; according to Banerjee's interlocutor, it is likely that the skeletal contents of the coffin were disturbed and scattered by a polar bear displaced from further North searching for food as Caribou herds move further south due to the drastic flooding/freezing of their traditional foraging areas.

Exposed Coffin and its caption are exemplary for Banerjee's practice overall. Banerjee records the insidious feedback loops between energy-extraction and the very carbon-based climate-change processes that make such extraction possible through the thawing of Arctic ground; yet this thawing of the ground also inadvertently brings forth a kind of historical testimony as to the irreducible imbrications of the region in transnational geoenomic processes, thus undermining any appeal to the simple "preservation" of the Arctic as a pristine wilderness that would be set over and against "man-made" effects.

Figure 4: Subhankar Banerjee, *Known and Unknown Tracks*, Teshekpuk Lake Wetland, 2006

4.

As Banerjee has often noted, among the most effective ideological strategies mobilized by the energy industry and its advocates has been to portray ANWR as a "barren, frozen wasteland," awaiting capitalist investment to bring forth its full productive potential. For decades, liberal activists and legislators in the US have countered this image of the region as a "wasteland" by emphasizing its aesthetic beauty and ecological fecundity as an "untouched" wilderness in the lineage of John Muir and Ansel Adams. While opposed at one level, these two images converge in their occultation of the historical covalence of the region with the processes and contradictions of capitalist modernity, including "climate change, resource wars, and migrations of toxins [that] makes the region a reminder of the consequences of our carbon footprint."

Banerjee's invocation of the ecological trope of "our carbon footprint" returns us to the enigma of the vestige at work in *Caribou Tracks on Wetland*.[14] According to Jean-Luc Nancy, the vestige is "just a touch right at the ground … the vestige is the remains of a step, a *pas*. It is not its image,

for the step consists of nothing other than its own vestige" (Nancy, "Vestige" 96). Rather than preserve a determinate presence, the vestige marks an irrecoverable passage that cannot be resolved into an identifiable image that would enable us to secure a position of cognitive mastery in relation to the traces in question. The vestige testifies to an irrecoverable passage that nonetheless leaves behind a kind of anonymous signature severed from any limited identity, agency, or responsibility: "a vestige shows that someone has passed but not who it is" (Nancy, "Vestige," 94).

The condition of non-identity and non-knowledge associated by Nancy with the vestige resonates closely with Banerjee's photograph *Known and Unknown Tracks*. Taken from an elevated but non-vertical aerial perspective, the photograph records the infinitely receding procession of three mechanically straight parallel track lines across a flat, greenish-tan plain bordered near the top of the image by indeterminate bodies of water. Vanishing into the distance, these lines intersect at a perpendicular angle near the bottom of the picture with an equally mechanical track line that proceeds horizontally, thus suggesting the parameters of a kind of calculative grid that could in principle extend itself in all directions across the surface of the earth. Traversing this rectilinear configuration of mechanical tracks, we witness the faint tracework of infinitesimal trails proceeding in a haphazard but determinate direction toward the horizon-line as a kind of counter-inscription that recalls the vestiges that simultaneously appear and disappear in *Caribou Tracks on Wetland*.

Even more overtly than in the latter photograph, however, the identity of the being responsible for the tracks in this photograph is rendered uncertain. While at first glance the photograph might appear to put forth a binary opposition between the rectilinear gridwork of the "human" track and the "natural" meandering of the migratory pathways of animal populations, the title of the photograph deliberately puts any such opposition in question—which are the "known" tracks, which are the "unknown"? Far from indulging a aesthetics of mystery for its own sake, Banerjee is at pains to mark the specific agencies at work in the physical creation of the mechanical lines to which we bear witness in the photograph: "transnational energy companies have for years lobbied the US congress to gain access to the fossil-fuel deposits underlying the Arctic regions of Alaska." The intensifying exploitation of such energy-resources, indexed by the

trails left behind by extraction-equipment in the increasingly soggy tundra of the Arctic, both benefits from and exacerbates the phenomena of climate change. As permafrost and glaciers thaw due to the centuries-long accumulation of greenhouse gases, new deposits of long-frozen energy-resources (especially coal and natural gas) become more easily available for corporate exploitation, thus creating a massively unsustainable feedback-loop between profit-driven resource-extraction and the biospheric life-support systems of the planet. The "ground zero" of such effects is the very Arctic region now being targeted for energy-development, and, more specifically, the politico-ecological networks linking human and nonhuman populations in that region.

Thus, the animal tracks that faintly appear in both *Known and Unknown Tracks* and *Caribous Tracks in Wetland* are not "natural" in any simple sense; though physically created by animals passing over the terrestrial surface of the Arctic, the trajectory of these animals is marked by anthropogenic forces, as indirectly evidenced by the encroaching inundation of the shore line at the top of the photograph and the complex alteration of migratory patterns related to the freezing and thawing of permafrost explained in the caption above. Should these "known and unknown tracks" thus be regarded as a kind of anthropogenic self-portrait? Should the "unknown" dimension of the tracks be assimilated back into the self-consciousness of "humanity"? To reiterate, Banerjee does not aim to create ambiguity as to the immediate cause of the physical marks he documents in the landscape for its own sake; but he puts the immediacy of this causality into question, expanding the scope of responsibility from the specific machines and companies involved in the exploitation of Arctic territories to the broader policy architectures which enable such activities to go forward, the ideological tropes that support such policies, and ultimately the citizenry that has either actively supported or passively acquiesced to the corporate colonization of the Arctic for the purposes of fossil-fuel extraction. The boundaries of the "we" implied by Banerjee's invocation of "our carbon footprint" are thus deliberately open-ended, implicating any and everyone who views his images, but especially those of us who uncritically partake of and legitimize contemporary fossil-fuel capitalism and the uneven allocation of ecological risk it entails

Figure 5: Subhankar Banerjee, *Gwich'in and the Caribou—Charlie Swaney and Jimmy John*, near Arctic Village, 2007

5.

While throughout his work over the past decade Banerjee has used his photographs and their supplementary frames (discursive, institutional, presentational) as a platform from which to amplify the political claims of indigenous peoples unevenly effected by climate change, he has until recently avoided creating figurative images of such groups. This is in part due to reluctance to overtly engage the legacy of so-called "salvage ethnography" running through US landscape photography, in which the visible presence of indigenous people in the landscape is only registered in terms of a melancholic meditation on their inevitable, if tragic, demise with the "progress" of capitalist modernity.

Banerjee is well-informed about the problematic "refusal of covalence" operative in traditional anthropological documentary, in which the "over there" of a so-called remote location is coded as pertaining to the "back then" of a pre-historic temporality set apart from the global modernities of both the artist and audience. In his photographic series *Gwich'in and the Caribou* (2007), for instance, Banerjee scrupulously documents

the hybrid technological apparatus comprising contemporary Gwich'in hunting practice, in which snowmobiles, polar-fleece gear, radio-systems, and rifles cooperate with skinning knives and inherited tracking techniques in killing and preparing Caribou for both economic and cultural purposes. Rather than an idealized harmony with nature, Banerjee foregrounds the sacrificial violence of indigenous people's hunting practices through the chromatic intensity of caribou blood against the snow-covered arctic landscape.

Banerjee considers these portraits, and his photographic project more broadly to involve a displacement of "land as scenery" by what he calls "land-as-home." However, home for Banerjee ceases to be a matter of a spatially bounded and ontologically grounded place and becomes instead a meditation on the undecidablity of the boundaries of the *oikos* and the identity of those who dwell therein; on the one hand, the phrase "land-as-home" insists that we read the landscapes in question as sites of inhabitation for intersecting human and nonhuman populations, rather than either empty wastes or pristine wilderness. On the other hand, Banerjee's phrase also suggests that the polar region in question is "our" home as well. Indeed, the polar ice caps are the fundamental climate-control mechanism of the earth, having served for millennia as a kind of axial balance of the atmospheric, oceanic, and meteorological patterns that made life possible throughout the planet.

Faced with an unprecedented anthropogenic unbalancing of this polar axiality, however, Banerjee's evocation of "land-as-home" does not simply bring together the "here" and the "there" in an all-encompassing global *oikos*, or household. Rather, Banerjee asks us to read planetary ecology in general and the "Near North" in particular in terms of the unhomely, or the uncanny.[15]

Jean-Luc Nancy's reflections on the enigmatic logic of the vestige, referred to above, are echoed in slightly later paper entitled "Uncanny Landscape." According to Nancy, landscape as a modern Western aesthetic genre emerges from a logic of what he calls "depopulation" over and against the "country" as a space of dwelling and cultivation for the figure of the peasant. While marking "the peace of the cloud and the order of the oak, the uncultivated earth on which the deer passes," landscape *qua* genre is marked by a certain "uncanny estrangement [that] occurs in

Figure 6: Subhankar Banerjee, *Storm over Kasegaluk Lagoon*, along the Chukchi Sea coast, 2006

the suspension of presence." Nancy continues, "this suspension is always a question of passage, or a passing on. A landscape is always a landscape of time, and doubly so: it is a time of year (a season) and a time of day (morning, noon, or evening), as well as a kind of weather [*un temps*] rain or snow, sun or mist. In the presentation of this time … the present of representation can do nothing other than render infinitely sensible the passing of time, the fleeting instability of what is shown" (Nancy, "Vestige" 94). Among other things, what is "shown" in its fleeting instability is depopulation itself, the voiding of human presence as the condition of landscape—a point echoed by Banerjee in his attention to the complicity of traditional landscape photography with a dialectic of colonial expansion and aesthetic preservation of "untrammeled wilderness." Thus depopulated, landscape projects itself as a realm of purely natural temporality; but it is nevertheless frozen or suspended into a singular moment by artistic representation, arresting the very temporality to which it would bear witness in its claim to be devoid of human presence. The uncanniness of landscape identified by Nancy in the very origin of the genre—both its originary "depopulation" of the country and its paradox-

ical freezing of natural temporality—is exacerbated by Banerjee throughout his *oeuvre*, but its apogee is arguably the photograph *Storm over Kasegaluk Lagoon.*

Like *Caribou Tracks on Wetland* and *Known and Unknown Tracks*, the photograph is taken from an aerial elevation, but nevertheless provides enough perspectival orientation for the establishment of a horizon line *vis-à-vis* some modicum of a landscape. However, in this image, any terrestrial land-mass has all but succumbed to inundation, and the horizon-line between sea and sky has itself has begun to dissolve into the faint monochromatic grey of an all-encompassing storm cloud. A few patches and swathes of solid ground appear to persist in the right portion of the image, and some residual resistance between water and land is indicated in a series of faint bands of surf that proceed out into the seascape in an echo of the eroding shoreline. As they curve around the shoreline and down into bottom section of the photograph, these surf-lines begin to mingle with a smattering of white fragments, some of which cling precariously to the shoreline in the bottom right-hand corner.

The undecidablity between the tossing of surf and the clinging of ice might suggest an immemorial seasonal transition; but by now we know to read such climactic phenomena in terms of this irreducible, though still uncertain, relay with anthropogenic processes. To paraphrase Walter Benjamin's remark on Eugene Atget—Banerjee photographs every single inch of the Arctic as if it were the scene of a crime. To reiterate, the culprit of this crime is not identified in any finite way, thus preserving a certain structural anonymity that both implicates and exceeds the specific culpability of capitalist energy developers, their deliberate advocates, and their unwitting accomplices in everyday energy consumption. And, while the victim of such crimes is also in principle indeterminate, Banerjee is emphatic as to who will—and already is—bearing the brunt of such climatological disequilibrium.

In the caption to *Storm over Kasegulak Lagoon*, Banerjee writes:

> With climate change the Inupiat people of the Alaskan Arctic Coastal Region in recent years have been experiencing more frequent and severe-intensity storm than anytime before they can remember [M]ore open water open water on the ocean … combined with severe storms are making traditional hunt-

> ing more dangerous. The international scientific community has stated that rising temperatures are altering the Arctic coastline and much larger changes are projected to occur during this century as the result of reduced sea ice, thawing permafrost, and sea-level rise. Thinner less extensive sea-ice creates more open water, allowing stronger wave generation by winds, thus increasing wave-induced erosion along Arctic shores. Sea-level rise and thawing coastal permafrost exacerbate this problem. The village of Shishmaref, located on an island just off the coast of Northern Alaska and inhabited for two thousand years, is now facing the prospect of evacuation.

Combined with this caption, the temporal traces of erosion and dissolution frozen in Banerjee's photograph place Nancy's trope of "depopulation" in a new light; depopulation would thus no longer encompass simply an ideological operation of landscape as an aesthetic practice, but rather, or also, the physical effacement of the life-support systems of indigenous people and the creation of a new biopolitical category of the "climate refugee."[16] Banerjee rearticulates these two senses of depopulation, presenting a landscape apparently devoid of humanity that we cannot help but read in terms of the ever-intensifying dissolution of the very ground upon which communities such as Shishmaref depend for their existence. Banerjee chooses not to picture Shishmaref and its inhabitants directly, but rather to evoke the memory of their potential loss—and resistance to that loss—in advance. Far from the imperial nostalgia of the 19th century frontier-painter George Catlin and early 20th century photographer Edward Sheriff Curtis, who presented indigenous people as melancholic specimens of a "doomed race," Banerjee's depopulated, uncanny landscape acts as a "gesture of address [that] affirms the right to memory of a future survival, a *reste*, where it might otherwise be effaced and its effacement silenced" (Keenan 159).

Such a "right to a memory of future survival," informs the claims of contemporary Inuit activists such as those put forward at Klimaforum09, the nongovernmental counter-summit shadowing the 2009 Copenhagen climate negotiations. If in mainline ecological discourse survival has historically involved a narcissistic appeal to humanity as perpetrator, victim, and savior of the climate crisis—epitomized by the Save Our Selves

Figure 7: "Climate Justice or Chaos?"

campaign associated with the Live Earth concerts and its accompanying *Global Warming Survival Guide*—indigenous activists have recoded survival as a biopolitical rights-claim that seeks redress for the uneven allocation of climate-related vulnerability along already-existing lines of marginality and disenfranchisement.[17] As Banerjee himself puts it during a presentation of his work with Gwich'in activist Sarah James at Klimaforum09, "climate change is a great human rights issue… right to survival is one of the first rights people should have—access to their food, access to their water—and that's being seriously threatened up in the Arctic" (Interview with Amy Goodman). The right to survival invoked by Banerjee is irreducible to a question of sheer material resources, for the latter—hunting for instance—are themselves inscribed in specific cultural repertoires, technical practices, and ecological knowledges that make up a kind of ethnomnemonic archive that is itself threatened by climate-related displacements such as that with which Shishmaref is currently undergoing (Sutter). Thus a certain survival of historical memory is inextricable from the survival of living beings. However, historical memory is not only a matter of a cultural tradition in the limited sense; it is also a kind of bear-

ing-witness to the incalculable violence of colonialism as it lives on in the present, making any "tradition" a kind of remnant or survival that must be kept alive by something other than itself.

Such an avowal of the accumulated burdens of colonial and postcolonial history is the starting point for the discourse of climate justice as articulated by indigenous and other activists at Klimaforum09, including three members of a youth delegation from Shishmaref who traveled to Copenhagen as "witnesses to the impact of climate change" (Sutter).

Climate justice demands that any response to climate crisis take into account the historically disproportionate responsibilities for greenhouse emissions on the part of corporations, governments and consumers in the Global North, and the uneven allocation of the environmental costs involved among already-vulnerable communities—including those within the Global North itself.

Climate justice thus entails a kind of reparations program that goes far beyond the calculus of emissions-reduction, calling in addition for substantial financial assistance with systems of mitigation, protection, adaptation, and sustainable, equitable development for those already exposed to catastrophic climate change or who will be exposed to it in the near future.[18] However, climate justice cannot be reduced to a series of specific grievances and proposals, even though the latter are obviously essential to it. Informed by the polyvalent imperative of survival, claims for climate justice also have the power to introduce a kind of disjunction in our sense of time and history analogous to the alteration of environmental cycles and horizons effected by climate change itself. Etymologically, climate is already a matter of "the tendency of incline or drift away from understanding … what falls from the sky and what falls away from understanding" (Cadava, *Emerson* 4). Climate justice, then, would not entail a simple regulative ideal known in advance that would stabilize horizons and restore a harmonious domestic balance to the planetary *oikos*. Like climate itself, in the radical sense, climate justice would open onto an incalculable future that would nonetheless be structurally haunted by the injustices and violences of the past. Marked by traces, trails, and vestiges of a global ecological history in which the self-destructive activity of "humanity" is put under erasure, Banerjee's uncanny landscapes speak to a project of climate justice that "carries life beyond present life or actual

being there…not toward death but toward a living-on, namely a trace of which life and death would themselves be traces and traces of traces, a survival whose possibility in advance comes to disjoin or disadjust the identity to itself of the living present" (*Specters of Marx* x).

Notes

1. Vandana Shiva and J. Banopadhayay, "Science, Environment, and Democratic Rights" (1985). < http://www.pucl.org/from-archives/Industries-envirn-resettlement/science-environ.htm>.

2. The NASA Earth Observatory Glossary defines "anthropogenic" as "Made by people or resulting from human activities. Usually used in the context of emissions that are produced as a result of human activities." http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Glossary/?mode=all. According to the Merriam-Webster Science Dictionary, anthropogenic means "Caused or influenced by humans. Anthropogenic carbon dioxide is that portion of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that is produced directly by human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, rather than by such processes as respiration and decay."

3. Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History*, 64. On climate justice, examined further below, see www.actforclimatejustice.org, where climate justice is defined as "a vision to dissolve and alleviate the unequal burdens created by climate change. As a form of environmental justice, climate justice is the fair treatment of all people and freedom from discrimination with the creation of policies and projects that address climate change and the systems that create climate change and perpetuate discrimination." On the centrality of this concept to the mobilizations in Copenhagen coalescing around the KlimaForum09 countersummit (klimaforum09.org), see Mark Hertsgaard, "A Planetary Movement."

4. Jacques Derrida, cited in Eduardo Cadava, "Derrida's Futures," 20, 76. This passage is discussed in a similar vein by Judith Butler in "On Never Having Learned How to Live," 27–34. Pheng Cheah discusses this passage in terms of the "untimeliness" of the political in Derrida's work, which is to say, the irreducibility of the political to a self-present ideal of community or sovereignty in "The Untimely Secret of Democracy," in *Derrida and the Time of the Political*, 79–80.

5. Among the very few mentions made by Derrida of the question of ecological crisis is in a difficult little text entitled "Economies of the Crisis" (1983), reprinted in *Jacques Derrida, Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971–2001*. Announcing a "crisis of crisis"—the withdrawal of any stable horizon that could then fall into crisis to be addressed, ameliorated, or readjusted as such by philosophical or scientific expertise—Derrida writes that "in its turn

in crisis, the concept of crisis would be the signature of a last symptom, the convulsive effort to save a 'world' that we no longer inhabit: no more oikos, economy, ecology, livable site in which we are 'at home'" (70). For Derrida, discourses of crisis "economize" crisis, implicitly setting up the continuity and predictability of non-crisis as the normal state of life. Derrida's point is not of course to ignore or dismiss the actuality of economic or ecological crises, but to situate them within a certain continuity of instability, volatility, or incalculability that would displace any ideal of "being at home," for instance, as the proper state of existence to be restored by an ecological program. Derrida's phrase "livable site" is tantalizing, but he does not pursue it, treating it instead as an example of the metaphysical unity or groundedness that crisis-discourse holds forth as an object of imminent loss or destruction. Later on in the text, Derrida posits a series of questions that are quite germane to the question of critical climate change: "Us?… who is talking about crisis? Who is talking the most about it right now? Where? To whom? In what form? In view of what effects and what interests? By playing on what 'representations'? Who are the individuals, which are the interest groups, the countries that hold forth this discourse of the crisis, hold it forth or hold onto it?" (71).

6. See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Appendix: The Setting to Work of Deconstruction," in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. For Spivak, "setting to work" is something that would exceed the "descriptive and/or formalizing practices of the academic or disciplinary calculus. As long as the othering of deconstructive philosophy remains confined to discourses at least accessible to related academic disciplines…it gives rise to useful but restricted debates." Spivak goes on to suggest an encounter between deconstruction and the "marginalized cultural systems" that mark "counterglobalist or alternative development activism." However, she cautions that even in the "rare case that it risks setting itself to work by breaking its frame" by engaging such activism, "[deconstruction] is still not identical with the setting to work of deconstruction outside the formalizing calculus specific to the academic institution" (431). Spivak thus intimates that "deconstruction" is something that occurs in or even as the world, and that deconstruction in the limited academic sense is always already playing catch up to an incalculable world that precedes it. Indeed, a certain deconstruction is already at work in both "anthropogenic" climate change, as well as in the rights-claims for "climate justice" that have recently begun to be made by the "counterglobalist or alternative development activists" invoked by Spivak, for whom climate change has in recent years become a primary site of antagonism. In his own modest way, Banerjee, the photographer under consideration here, has attempted to set his images to work along the lines suggested by Spivak, learning from and collaborating with indigenous activists in a variety of ways.

7. See especially *The Ecological Conscience: Values for Survival*. For an account of the conflict between Malthusian and social-democratic interpretations of the ubiquitous ecological trope of species-survival in the 1960's and 1970's, see

Andrew Feenberg's "The Commoner-Erlich Debate: Environmentalism and the Politics of Survival."

8. Al Gore, "The Moment of Truth," *Vanity Fair*. On anxieties about the self-undermining of humanity by the becoming-autonomous of technical developments that belong to and spring from the evolutionary process of "hominization" itself, see Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, Part I.).

9. Wolfgang Sachs, "Environment," in Sachs, ed. *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. A similar critique of the term was launched by a young Jean Baudrillard at the 1970 Aspen environmental summit, where he remarked that "what is at stake is not the survival of the human species but the survival of political power" ("The Environmental Witch-Hunt"). For Baudrillard and many others at the time, ecology was seen as a kind humanist smokescreen that functioned to siphon off the antagonistic energies marking the capitalist system in favor a "global village" harmoniously unified in its quest to preserve itself from its own self-induced crisis.

10. Understood in light of the disjunctive temporality of externalized or automated technical devices, systems, and programs that at once sustain and put at risk the status of the human, Bernard Stiegler marks survival as "the pursuit of life by means other than life." See Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 137. On the constitutive indebtedness on the part of the living to the heteronymous "gift of time"—which includes but is not exhausted by the question of technics—see Cheah, "The Untimely Secret of Democracy," 75–77.

11. See W.J.T. Mitchell, "Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture," in Keith Moxey, ed *Aesthetics, Art History, Visual Studies*. "Visual culture entails a meditation on blindness, the invisible, the unseen, the unseeable, and the overlooked." This premise informs Mitchell's groundbreaking postcolonial genealogy of landscape aesthetics in Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power*, a book that resonates closely with Banerjee's own critical inhabitation of the traditions of US landscape photography.

12. See Alan Trachtenberg, "Naming the View" in *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Matthew Brady to Walker Evans*, 119–163.

13. William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," in Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. Cronon's volume contains one of the generative academic treatments of the U.S. environmental justice movement, Giovanna Di Chiro, "Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and Social Justice."

14. For the founding statement of "ecological footprint analysis," see Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees, "Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth." The authors describe ecological footprint analysis as "a planning tool that can help translate sustainability concerns into public

action … it accounts for the flows of energy and matter to and from any defined economy, and converts these into the corresponding land/water are required to support such flows," 3. Over the past decade, this paradigm has been extended to a calculation of the fossil-fuel usage and corresponding C02 emissions involved in specific activities of corporations, governments, and consumers, providing a kind of metric for ecological self-admonishment that in many cases slips over into self-congratulation when this or that activity, policy, or decision is said to have "reduced one's carbon footprint." Banerjee's use of the term both speaks to the necessity of calculating such ecological responsibilities while also pointing beyond it to the incalculable "ground zero" of the hyperaccumulated carbon footprint left by 200 years' worth of fossil-fuel capitalism on the Arctic region.

15. On the figure of oikos in ecological discourse and the destabilization thereof vis-à-vis figures of ghosts, haunting, and survivals, see my "Haunted Housing: Eco-Vanguardism, Eviction, and the Biopolitics of Sustainability in New Orleans." A key point of reference in the latter essay is Mark Wigley's discussion of what he calls the "violence of the house" in *The Architecture of Deconstruction*.

16. See the Environmental Justice Foundation report "No Place Like Home: Climate Refugees," http://www.ejfoundation.org/page563.html. "Climate change is set to create millions of environmental refugees—people forced from their homes and land—by rising temperatures, sea-level change and extreme weather events. Many will be among our planet's poorest and most vulnerable people. These will be the first victims of our failure to prevent uncontrolled climate change. People, who without international help and new binding agreements on assistance, will have nowhere to go and no means to survive. EJF's 'No Place Like Home' campaign is dedicated to arguing their case. Putting the call to governments and our political leaders for a new agreement on environmental refugees, guaranteeing them rights and assistance and a fair claim to our shared world EFJ contends that the formal legal definition of refugees needs to be extended to include those affected by climate change."

17. Live Earth/David de Rothschild, *The Live Earth Global Warming Survival Handbook: 77 Essential Skills to Stop Climate Change—or Live Through It*. The cover of this book features the ubiquitous icon of a polar bear set afloat in a sea of melted ice, in this case buoyed by a life raft. As the most charismatic and photogenic animal of the North pole, the polar bear has functioned as a somewhat insidious object of both aesthetic appreciation and anthropomorphic projection at the expense of historically informed politico-ecological analysis. However, this creature might be rethought with reference to the etymology of the word Arctic, which derives from the Greek word arktos—bear—which was used to refer to the astral constellation ursa major. Rather than a sheer natural life standing apart from humanity, the arktos was

a tropological figure for reading the orientation of the planet via the stars. Starlight, having traveled thousands of light-years from its now-exhausted source, is always a matter of oblivion—but also survival. As Eduardo Cadava puts it, "Like the photograph that presents what is no longer there, starlight names the trace of a celestial body that has long since vanished. The star is always a kind of ruin. That its light is never identical to itself, is never revealed as such, means that it is always inhabited by a certain distance or darkness" (*Words of Light* 30). Of course, ursa major and arktos are both inscribed in a certain European cosmological tradition, making the very name "Arctic" a cipher of colonial expansion and the occultation of indigenous place-naming systems.

18. See the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, "Inuit Call to Global Leaders: Act Now on Climate Change in the Arctic" released November 13, 2008. http://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/files/uploads/icc-files/PR-2009-11-13-call-to-action.pdf

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Chapter 4

Global Warming as a Manifestation of Garbage

Tian Song

In the ancient times, there were ten suns over the sky. The land was burnt.
Rivers and lakes were dry, trees did not grow, and animals were dying. A hero appeared.
This is Houyi, a talented archer. He had a strong bow and sharp arrows.
Houyi shot down nine suns and kept one. The land survived and flourished again.

– *The Book of Mountain and Sea*

When Svante Arrhenius published his idea in 1896 that "As human activity puts ever more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, global warming becomes ever more likely,"[1] his contemporary scientists thought it was a joke. After the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Al Gore won the Noble Peace Prize in 2007, global warming became accepted as a fact rather than a theory or a hypothesis. This award may have even shaken former president George W. Bush from his intransigent denial.

By looking at the first and second law of thermodynamics—the law of the conservation and transformation of energy and the law of increasing entropy—we can skip the complex technological details of the greenhouse effect and interpret global warming as a direct manifestation of something more basic: garbage and a consequence of human behaviors in industrial civilization.

The earth is a closed system that exchanges energy with the outside: it absorbs solar energy and emits thermal radiation; but it has almost no

mass to exchange with the outside. Normally, the earth absorbs and emits equal amounts of energy in order to remain a system in a state of heat balance. The temperature of the earth basically depends on the energy it receives from the sun. In the course of natural history, the plants on the earth have retained a certain amount of solar energy, in turn decreasing the energy emitted by the earth. There are, of course, many natural activities that release energy from inside the earth, such as volcanic eruptions, but these cannot be modulated by human behavior, and we could view them as a constant. Undoubtedly, humans have released more and more energy since industrial civilization, especially after World War II. The coal and oil we are using right now, according the orthodox theory, were the solar energy of ancient times that were stored by plants and organisms. Hence, when we burn coal and oil, it is just like hanging the ancient suns in the sky again.

The final state of energy after its usage is heat, which, when radiated, will increase the average temperature of the earth. If the earth still emits the same amount of energy into outer space, and if the earth tries to keep the same level of temperature, it must emit more energy to outer space. Yet as an isolated body in space, the only way it can release energy is through radiation. But ironically, as an approximate black body, the energy it radiates only depends on its black body temperature to the 4th power. We are then faced with a jarring dilemma: if the earth wants to radiate more energy, it has to increase its temperature. This is just the problem we are facing, global warming.

Now let's see how much extra energy humans release every year, or how many more suns we put in the sky.

The energy that the sun radiates to the earth can be regarded as a constant, the Solar Constant. On average, since 1978, it has been measured at 1367 Watts per square meter by satellites outside aerosphere.[2] Given that the section area of the earth is 127,400,000 square kilometers, the overall energy the earth accepts from the sun is 1.740×10^{17} watts. For one year, it's $1.740\times10^{14}\times365\times24$ kilowatt hours, i.e., $15{,}242.4\times10^{5}$ billion kilowatt hours. In 2006, the world total net electricity consumption was 16,378.62 billion kilowatt hours.[3] All these kilowatt hours will ultimately be transformed to dissipated heat. It is approximately one ten-thousandth of $15{,}242.4\times10^{5}$ billion kilowatt hours, the energy released

by a sun every year. One ten-thousandth seems to be a small number. However, let's consider other factors, such as: 1) because of absorption and reflection, only ten percent of the solar energy can reach the surface of the earth; 2) on the earth surface, only 25 percent is land, and only a small part is habitable for humans; 3) even in societies, humans are not the only species to live on the energy from the sun. Thus, by a rough estimate, the energy that humans have used is close to or even greater than the amount humans could have from the sun. This means that not even one sun is enough to support the human lifestyle, if we can somehow collectively curb fossil energy use. But, if humans keep expending fossil energy, the temperature of the earth will continuously increase. As a result, global warming becomes an unavoidable consequence of industrialized civilization.

As long as humans continue their contemporary ways of life, more and more energy will be used, and global warming will become increasingly severe.

Now clean energy, or green energy, is a buzzword, and many people pin their hopes for humanity's future on it, but no matter what kind of energy is used, its ultimate state is heat. There is no kind of energy that can be named clean energy. The central issue is not what kind of energy humans use, but how much energy. If they surpass the limited amount one sun can bestow, any kind of energy will be "dirty."

The Economic Chain is a Transforming Chain of Matter and Energy

Let's start with a simple question: why can we drink a bottle of mineral water coming from some remote mountain on any street corner of any city whenever we want to? Such a thing happens so frequently that we do not feel anything strange about it; the experience is part of daily life. Only 20 years ago when bottled water first appeared in supermarkets most Chinese viewed it as weird: who would be so rich and so silly as to buy it? How things change. What does it mean?

The simple answer is this: we are able to buy it, and we are able to afford it. Why can we buy it and afford it? Because of economic development, we can exploit mineral water from the source at a low cost, then we can bottle it and transport it all over the globe. This is the upper link of

the transformation chain of mineral water. The consequences of the upper link are the following: 1) a large amount of water is taken away from its original place; 2) the water will no longer play its original ecological role for humans, animals, and plants there. The water companies obviously do not pay their workers enough compensation, since if they did the bottled water would be too expensive to afford.

But only considering the upper link of the economic chain is not enough to answer my question: why can we drink a bottle of mineral water on any street of any city? Answer: because we can throw the empty bottle into any garbage can in the streets. This thoughtless action concerns the latter half of the economic chain. Why can we throw the empty bottle into any garbage can? Because the garbage in the can will be transported to some garbage dump outside the city by a large group of cleaners employed by the city. Why can the city build garbage dumps outside the city? Because the city is able to buy land for its garbage dumps at a low price, given its economic and political power. If we continue asking questions in this way, we can trace the rest of the economic chain, and reach its lower link.

Similar to the upper link, the consequence of the lower link is that humans, animals, and plants living in the location of the garbage dump can no longer live there as before, and the ecological system at the site of the garbage dump is destroyed.

The importance of this lower link is no less than the upper link. If you were not allowed to throw the bottle into a garbage can, you would have to keep it in your bag or take it home. If that were the case, would you drink bottle after bottle without hesitation? In industrial civilization, when we drink a bottle of mineral water in a city we indirectly harm the ecological systems at the very source of our water and the place of the garbage dump.

Bottled water is, for me, a symbol for everything in modern industrial cities—from TV sets, to cell phones, computers, handbags, cars, buildings, highways, and other commodities that do not cease existing when we have used them. Where did they come from? Where will they go? When we trace back the source of everything in a city, we eventually arrive at places such as forests, natural bodies of water, and mines (including coal and oil). When we follow the path, we end at garbage dumps.

Here, I generalize the concept of garbage—but it should be understood as the opposite pole of all discussions of vanishing resources such as high-quality petroleum or water. In general, garbage includes solid garbage (the original meaning of this term), liquid garbage (waste water) and gaseous garbage (waste gas), as well as dissipated heat (waste heat), the final state of all types of energy after usage. Viewed from a thermodynamic perspective, the term "garbage" can be defined as matter and energy in a higher entropy state. Viewed thusly, global warming becomes a manifestation of the garbage problem. Everything in modern cities goes through the same economic chain, which is also a chain of transformation of energy and matter.

An Additional Explanation of Limited Earth

"We have only one earth," seems the consensus of humans across the globe. The slogan can even be seen on a wall of a small village in China. It is usually interpreted in this way: the earth is limited, energy and resources are limited, and we must economize on energy and resources so that we can develop continuously. This is the scenario of so-called sustainability. But this interpretation considers only the upper link of the chain through which matter and energy are transformed, i.e., the former half of the economic chain. Considering the lower end of this chain, i.e., its economic process, we need to add: the capacity for containing garbage is limited too.

As a dynamic system for keeping its body in order, a living person has to: 1) take food in, and 2) discharge waste out. Similarly, as a bigger dynamic system a city has to: 1) take in energy and matter in a lower-entropy state, such as food, vegetables, water, coal, oil, natural gas, electricity, etc. from the outside, and 2) discharge that energy and matter in a higher-entropy state to the outside.

Viewed as a dynamic system, a city behaves like a heat engine. The more powerful it is, the more energy and material it needs to import and the more waste it must discharge to the outside. Garbage, or waste, is not avoidable in the operation of a heat engine. This is a simple application of the second law of thermodynamics. No heat engine has 100% efficiency. Otherwise, it would be a perpetual motion machine. A modernized

city, like a huge heat engine, connects the two ends of the transformation chain of energy and matter: at one end are forests, minerals, and natural water, the energy and matter of lower-entropy states; at the other end is garbage, the energy and matter of higher-entropy state.

Industrialized civilization engine inputs natural water, mines, and forests, and outputs garbage. The more highly developed a city becomes, the more powerful the engine is, and the faster it transforms nature into garbage. Therefore, in the countryside around every big city, there must be many great garbage dumps. Even if the size of the city does not expand, and the living standards are not raised, new land for dumping garbage is still necessary. Beijing is an example of a city besieged by garbage. An aerial survey in 1983 showed that, within the city's 750 square kilometers, there were 4,699 garbage dumps! An official said in 2009, in Beijing, that the annual rate of increase for garbage had reached 8%, and that all available garbage-treating facilities had been working in excess of their maximum capacity. The daily municipal garbage production had reached 18,400 tons, and the corresponding capacity for waste treatment was 10,400 tons. As Xu Nan indicates in "To Look for the Way out of Garbage Dumps Besieging the City," within four to five years, there will be no place to dump the garbage.

Most substances in garbage are not produced by nature, but by humans. Many of the different materials in garbage never occurred together in nature, and we hardly know what kind of chemical reactions can result, what kind of compounds will be produced, and what consequences will result. It's not rare for garbage to explode, or for leakage on the scale of Love Canal to escape. Only a few of these potential catastrophes were explored by laboratory experiments. Garbage dumps have become the most mysterious and dirtiest places on earth. Even if we were to dig pits with steel or concrete walls to confine the solid waste for millions of years, the situation would still be horrible. The contents of these garbage coffins cannot be part of any natural ecological system of the earth. In the crazy tide of modernization and globalization, these coffins will eventually cover the earth.

What is discussed above is only solid garbage. It seems that solid garbage can be treated most easily and relatively locally. As for liquid garbage (waste water) and gaseous garbage (waste gas), they directly join

into the global flow of matter. Wastewater is ceaselessly discharged into rivers, lakes, and seas; and waste gas is interminably sluiced into the sky. They aggravate air pollution and water pollution on a global scale, regardless of how they are treated. In this way, environmental pollution can be viewed as garbage in a dispersed state.

For the fourth state of garbage, dissipated heat, there are no stopgaps.

Generalizing from a human body to a city, and from a city to the globe, one conclusion is that in any modernized area on a global scale, modernization is based on two premises:

1. Energy and resources are transported continuously from non-modernized or sub-modernized areas.
2. Garbage is discharged ceaselessly to these same areas.

Modernization is therefore like a "food chain." The upstream nations or areas not only take the resources from the downstream, but also discharge their garbage into the downstream. Furthermore, any country engaged in modernization has to situate and hold its own "downstream." Not all nations or areas can control and maintain the downstream as their own.

In the Age of Limited Earth, Industrialized Civilization is Non-Sustainable

Throughout most of human history, Terra was almost infinite in relation to the human deployment of nature, and the potential for development was regarded as unlimited, too. During these earlier times, the level of development a nation was able to reach ultimately depended on readily available energy and resources. In those times, technology worked in two ways: 1) to exploit energy and resources in greater amounts and more quickly, and 2) to make use of resources and energy more efficiently. Because of the seemingly limitless Earth, new places could always be found and used as garbage dumps. So the garbage issue was only a simple and relatively insignificant issue related to saving or thrift; it was piddling and insignificant, while the energy and resource issues were tied to national policy.

Classical capitalistic economics is based on the very premise of an unlimited Earth. According to Adam Smith, the founder of classical capi-

talistic economics, through commercial exchange, different regions can interchange goods with each other and achieve a win-win result. Even under an unfair distribution system, every part in the economic system can obtain more production. That is so-called enlarging the pie. To expand the economic pie, it is necessary to develop new markets, to find new business partners, to exploit new resources, and to find new places to dump garbage. In this way, the pie can be made bigger and bigger, and the standard of living can be improved in every region. This win-win model is still espoused by most countries; more and more join the global capitalistic matrix, whether by design or default.

We have now entered a new period of history; I call it the Age of Limited Earth. We have only one Earth, and the Earth is limited. In the Age of Limited Earth, the capitalistic economy meets its upper limit immediately, i.e., the Earth itself.

To overcome the limits at the systematic ceiling, many people still pin their hopes on future science and technology. They hope that unlimited science and technology can break through the Earth's limitations. In fact, the validity of our contemporary life is based on future technologies that are not yet invented. Like a credit plan, we are spending technological and intellectual capital that we do not yet possess.

The belief in science and technology has a long history. Optimists imagined and expected many future technologies to solve the problem of energy and resources. It is often said that when wood was nearly exhausted, a new technology for using coal was invented; when coal was far from exhausted, a new technology for using oil and natural gas was invented. By this line of reasoning, humans will invent alternative energy and resources in the future again, and enlarge the pie again. This way of thinking considers only the upper link of the transformation chain of energy and resources. Considering the lower extreme of the chain, we find that, no matter how highly developed the technology, human-generated garbage may only be cut quantitatively but not eliminated; otherwise, the second law of thermodynamics is violated. The energy problem can probably be solved by new technology. For example, if cold fusion is realized, theoretically, we will possess infinite energy. But, this will make the garbage and resource problems all the worse. The more energy an engine

uses, the more raw materials it needs to take in, and the more garbage it generates.[4]

The garbage crisis will therefore exceed the crises in energy, food, and finance; it will become the most pressing geo-ecological threat of the near future. The next large-scale war will not be waged over taking something in, but over spewing something out.

Humans have overdrawn on the energy and resources of the entire globe; on the very spatial terrain for containing garbage. The Age of Limited Earth, of globalized monolithic modernization, is obviously doomed to failure. Simply speaking, if only half of the Chinese lived in a comparable way to Americans, the resources of the earth would not be sufficient. It will be problematic, to say the least, to isolate space for the garbage being generated as we speak.

Industrialized civilization is definitely non-sustainable. This provides the framework in which we ponder the problems of modernized globalization and globalized modernization.

Modernization is a "Food Chain"

Because of terrestrial limitations, globalized modernization means a contest for global resources. To maintain and lift their modernization level, the upstream nations and areas must ensure that they can obtain energy and resources from the downstream, and also discharge their garbage to the downstream. The unification of the global economies means that the energy and resources of the earth converge into one chain of transformations. The Washington Consensus, promoting the unification of global economies, can be viewed as a means that opens the flow of energy and resources transporting and transforming on a global scale. Contemporary international policies are surely profitable to the upstream countries because the policies were initiated and made by them.

If a traditional area wants to or is forced to join the modernization "food chain" and become a link in it, it can only join from downstream. This means that it has to provide energy and resources upstream, and accept garbage from there.

The "Guiyu garbage phenomenon"[5] is a good example for illustrating the "food chain" of the global economic system. Guiyu (贵屿) is a small

county in Guangdong province, China. Its main industry has been treating and recycling e-waste since 1990s. Millions of pounds of e-waste is shipped to Guiyu every year, mostly from North America, and to a lesser degree from Japan, South Korea, and European countries. Thousands of workshops of different scales manually treat the e-waste, using a range of primitive techniques. Copper, steel, aluminum and some other profitable materials are distilled from the e-waste. In terms of thermal dynamics, lesser amounts of low-entropy-state matter are distilled from the matter in a high entropy state, consuming large amounts of power and clean water (low-entropy-state energy and matter). At the same time, the land, water, and air in Guigyu are severely polluted, and people's health is seriously harmed.

"Chemicals, including mercury, fluorine, barium, chromium and cobalt, which either leach from the waste or are used in processing, are blamed for skin rashes and respiratory problems." In "In E-Waste Heartland, a Toxic China," Christopher Bodeen has bemoaned that "Contamination can take decades to dissipate, experts say, and long-term health effects can include damage to the kidneys and nervous system, weakening of the immune system and cancer."

Such a garbage recycling industry positively thrives on the pollution and deterioration of the environment.

The "yew-stripping event" is another good example to illustrate the "food chain."[6] At the beginning of the 1990s, a patent for making breast cancer medicine, paclitaxel, which is distilled from yew bark, was approved in North America. Then, more than 3 million "red bean yews" in the Northwest of Yunnan Province, China, were stripped completely from 1992 to 2001, and left dead or dying. Lijiang (丽江), a city in Yunnan Province, inhabited by the Naxi ethnic group (纳西族) who historically have had a special tradition of environmental sustainability, suffered the most serious damage. The economic chain-reaction was as follows: Local Lijiang peasants stripped the yew and sold the yew bark to packmen; packmen sold the yew bark to small companies; small companies sold it to the Hande company (汉德公司) in Kunming, which is supported by the government of Yunnan province; Hande distilled paclitaxel from the yew bark with technology provided by Kunming Botany Institute, Chinese Science Academy; Hande sold paclitaxel to medical

Figure 8: *Lige peninsula in Lake Lugu, October, 2000.*

corporations in North America, which produced cancer medicine. In this chain, all links made money. But the later the link in the chain, the more money it earned. The peasants stripping the yew gained the least money; and the medical corporations, the most. Which link, however, will bear the biological consequence of stripping yew? Of course, it is the local peasants, the lowest link of the "food chain."

In this food chain, the medicine company is the upstream, and the local people are the downstream. But, we should not ignore that the yew, the local ecological environment, is the bottom link of the chain.

As a downstream area, Lijiang provides a resource to upstream countries; while Guiyu accepts garbage from almost the same upstream countries. Viewed from the perspective of the transformation chain of energy and matter, the "yew-stripping event" shows the uplink of it, and the Guiyu garbage shows the downlink of it. In the contemporary unification of global economies, all countries in the world are involved in the same chain, the economic "food chain," i.e. the transformation chain of matter

Figure 9: *The entrance of Lige. Note that there is a garbage can in the center of the photo. October 2000.*

and energy. Being located in the downstream or mid-stream of the global modernization "food chain" is the background of all problems in non-modernized or sub-modernized countries and areas.

A Case Study: Garbage of Lake Lugu, Yunnan Province

Development is a big word in contemporary China. For traditional areas, are there other ways to develop, which neither provide energy and resources to the upstream, like yew-stripping in Lijiang, nor accept garbage from the upstream, like Guiyu? Tourism seems such an ideal way. But the garbage problem in Lake Lugu tells us that the so-called "ecological tourism" is hardly ecological.

Lake Lugu (泸沽湖) is a great and beautiful lake at the boundary of Yunnan and Sichuan Province, in the Southeast of China. Since the 1980s, more and more tourists have been visiting there.

In September 2003, I met Zhao Hua (赵画), an anthropological photographer. She took many pictures of the Nari people on the boundary of Sichuan Province and Yunnan Province. In January 2004, Zhao Hua told me that she would spend the spring festival with the Nari people close to

Figure 10: *Garbage can at the center of the previous photo.*

Lake Lugu. I asked her to find the places where Lige and Luoshui (落水) dump their garbage. Luoshui is another Nari village close to Lige. It is the first village there that developed tourism, and therefore is the richest village around Lake Lugu. It had Internet bars even before 2000.

One month later, Zhao Hua informed me that she had located the garbage dumps of Lige and Loushi. Outside the latter village, a hill hundreds of meters long was covered by six years' worth of garbage. There were plastic bottles, drinking packages, shoes, glass bottles, and batteries inside. Almost nobody from the village visited there; hence, nobody knew how bad the garbage problem had become.

As I stated above, the garbage problem in Lake Lugu is the internal problem of the industrial civilization. There are no industries around Lake Lugu, so there is no directly industrial garbage there. But they nonetheless had to deal with the garbage of industrial civilization. When they joined the "food chain" of modernization, the garbage problem was not avoidable.

The garbage there had two origins: that left by tourists, and that produced by villagers themselves after their living standard was raised. They

Figure 11: *Garbage dumped by Liege Village.*

made more and more money, and they began to use more and more industrial products in their daily lives, such as washing powder, shampoo, plastic shoes, etc., which are signs of civilization, development, progress, and so on. As a consequence, more and more non-biodegradable garbage appeared. The villages are at the bottom of "food chain"; they can't find their own downstream for dumping their own garbage, and can only dump their garbage on their own mountain.

A CCTV crew saw the pictures by Zhao Hua, and they made a TV program. I saw it when it aired. They did not consider an explanation such as the one I have provided above; rather, they framed it in a conventional way: that the garbage dumps happened because some certain officials were not dutiful. After its broadcast, the mayor of Lijiang government asked the county to solve the problem immediately. The garbage hill was closed for several days, the garbage was burnt and moved, and it disappeared from the hill. Then, interesting things happened. As garbage was still produced every day in Luoshui, but officers dared not allow the villagers to dump it in the original hill, they had to find a brand-new place. At first, they wanted to dump the garbage in the mountain of another village, but that village refused to accept it. At last, they had to dig a pit the

Figure 12

size of a basketball court, on the land of the party secretary of the village, as a temporary garbage dump.

In 2006, a formal garbage dump was established in a mountain valley tens of miles from Lake Lugu by the county government, which was designed by Tsinghua University. This is the only formal garbage dump in the area, and it was designed for the garbage from Luoshi, Youngning Township, and from a hotel run by the government. Some workers charge to burn some of the garbage, and compact the rest. This garbage dump was designed for a 20-year lifespan. The garbage dump looks like a white tinea on the mountain and can be seen from far away.

Readings taken of water visibility over a period of time in Lake Lugu can give us information about liquid garbage. Lake Lugu is very clear. In 2000 when I visited there, the visibility of the lake water could reach 11 meters. 1n 2004, when Zhao Hua visited there, the visibility was down to 9 meters. A journalist friend for Yunnan TV told me that the number was 14 meters in 1984. Obviously, the lake is becoming dramatically more polluted. Nari people have lived around Lake Lugu since the Han Dy-

Figure 13: *Garbage hill: six years of garbage from Luoshui village. Photographed by Zhao Hua, May 21, 2004.*

nasty, and they always drank lake water directly. But in 2000, I was told in Luoshui that the water close to shore was not drinkable, and people had to draw a boat to the center of the lake to take drinkable water.

Lige and Luoshui are symbols of traditional indigenous homelands. We can also view them as the boundary between traditional areas and industrial civilization. It is often argued that people in the village should pursue advancement, and that they have the right to advance or develop. It seems that tourism is an ideal way for the downstream to develop: it doesn't require people to cut trees, dig mountains, or bottle water, but instead just sing and dance, row boats for the tourists, and make money. But, what are the consequences after they have made money?

There is an internal paradox in so-called ecological tourism that takes biodiversity and cultural diversity as resources to be exploited in "development." Any "resource" will be consumed and exhausted. With respect to culture diversity, the indigenous patterns of singing and dancing were

Figure 14: *The garbage dump of Yongning in a mountain valley near Lake Lulu. Photographed on August 19, 2008*

originally people's way of life. When these were made into the resources of tourism, people began singing and dancing for money, with the result that these activities became not life itself, but a performance of life. When people make money, they want to live in increasingly modern ways; they no longer live as before, but as people in modern areas far from the village. Their singing and dancing lose authenticity and become a staged performance. This means that the deepest resources they used for development are actually lost. This is a palpable shrinking at the "spiritual" level.

Considering development merely from the material point of view, development means making more money. It is a way of lifting the standard of living, of being able to use more products emanating from industrialized civilization. In the meantime, however, the village must accept garbage from the industrialized sector. The garbage problem would definitely accelerate, as in the villages considered above. The garbage problem is intrinsic to industrialization.

In the transformation chain of matter and energy within industrialized civilization, both the territory for resources at the upstream and the territory for garbage at the downstream, the original ecological system will be destroyed after the resources are lost and garbage is dumped. This is not a

win-win situation, but a lose-lose situation. In the case of Lake Lugu, the two links happened in the same territory.

When the traditional people have used up their tourism resources (i.e., the clean water, the green mountain, the native and local culture), the temporary modernization will disappear immediately. But they cannot go back to their original "primitive" life again, because they have lost their original environment and culture.

At the very beginning, when people in Lake Lugu chose their path to development, they did not foresee they would develop a severe garbage problem. If they had known, would they still have chosen this way?

From "How" to "Why"

All human economic activities are no more than links of matter and energy within the transformation and transportation chain. Science and technology are currently the engine of the chain. The advancement of science and technology can only accelerate and strengthen the chain, but can't change the chain. Mineral water is a relatively simple product of industrial civilization. Turning on a TV, one can see more and more new products being advertised, all of which prove bewildering to people's eyes and minds, and ruinous insofar as they ceaselessly prompt the creation of new desires. All economic activity, such as updating a computer or renewing a cell phone, accelerates the chain-reaction to convert more forest, minerals, and natural water into garbage. Modern civilization is established on the remains of nature, constructed at the side of a garbage dump. As I discussed at the beginning of this paper, all the energy will turn into heat, the fourth state of garbage. Global warming is a byproduct of industrial civilization, of our modern way of life.

Why can we drink a bottle of mineral water on a city's streets? Because there is still natural water that can be exploited, there is still land that can be used for dumping garbage. But this lifestyle is not sustainable. We should think about not only "how": how to find and make use of more natural water, or how to increase the capacity for dumping garbage on certain land; but also "why": why must we drink a bottle of mineral water from a remote mountain in a city street?

What we need now is a new hero to shoot down the extra sun over the sky of industrial civilization, inside the mind of industrial civilization.

Notes

1. Spencer R. Weart, "The Discovery of the Risk of Global Warming."
2. Claus Fröhlich, "Construction of a Total Solar Irradiance (TSI) Time-Series from 1978 to Present."
3. "World Total Net Electricity Consumption, 1980–2006. Statistics gathered and furnished by the U.S. Government, Energy Information Administration.
4. I have discussed the legal dimension of these issues in my "The Third Class of Perpetual Motion Machine."
5. Greenpeace China conducted an investigation in Guiyu in 2001 and published some Chinese-language reports. An English-language publication incorporating the Guiyu case study is *Exporting Harm: The High-Tech Trashing of Asia*, prepared by the Basel Action Network (BAN) and Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition. See, in addition, reportage furnished by He Hainang, Chien-Min Chung, and Christopher Bodeen. The Guiyu phenomenon was reported in an expose in the well-known Chinese newspaper, *Southern Weekend*.
6. Zeng Lin, "The Red Bean Yew Being Barked are Weeping."

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Chapter 5

The Physical Reality of Water Shapes

James H. Bunn

"There is no doubt that that our body is a moulded river."

– Friederich Novalis[1]

"Life is animated water."

– Vladimir Vernadsky[2]

Among the several environmental energies, water seems most tangible and yet still elusive as it slips through your fingers in a wash, lovely to touch but impossible to hold, while it trickles to its lowest level. Water composes or "molds" most of our bodily substance into shapes, and yet its liquidity reminds that all of its living shapes, with their lofty compositions and complex systems, are utterly riverine and will necessarily slip and twist into other renewable life forms along the way.

In "Proverbs of Hell," William Blake wrote: "The cistern contains: the fountain overflows."[3] Although Blake may have been allegorizing reason versus the imagination, his primal insight about the liquid nature of water allows for his point of departure. Even the most up-to-date scientifically designed landfill, designed to contain toxic wastes, must eventually overflow and seep into adjacent ground waters. As the huge spill of toxic ash from a Tennessee Valley Authority landfill demonstrated recently, there is no containing its seepage. As we shall see in the section about Rachel Carson's work, the flow of water enables life but it also can transport killing poisons. Because water twists away, its elusiveness makes it impossible to hold and contain, both in times of drought and in times of excessive moisture. You can contain it for a while, but it will overflow eventually.

All over the world, in India, in the Tigris River of Iraq, in Kenya, in California's great Central Valley, drought is killing plants and animals and humans in huge numbers. In lowland contours, where water flows down inevitably, rising waters from melting glaciers and much more violent storms are drowning people, plants, and animals. As Orrin H. Pilkey and Rob Young caution us in *The Rising Sea*, rising waters from the seas are changing the topography of the land and are forcing islanders in the South Pacific and lowlanders from Alaska to Bangladesh to migrate away. What is to be done, even if we pledge to become global stewards? Nobody knows for sure, because there are no quick fixes to climate change. Certainly the most graphic descriptions of rising waters and overheated lands can be found in Al Gore's vivid illustrations in *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergence of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It.*

In *The Sacred Balance*, David Suzuki reminds that the human need for fresh water is the crux of the history of civilizations: "Human beings lived along waterways that were used for food and travel long before there was history. We can infer this fact from prehistoric middens and sites of habitation. And it was on the great flood plains that humans first established settlements, exploiting for agricultural use the regular floods that fertilized the deltas. At the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Mesopotamia the first civilizations arose, followed by settlements along the Nile River" (66–67). But if the Tigris River is drying up, does its demise condemn not only the way of life of the Marsh Arabs who live in its delta, but also Iraq's civilization at large?

Clearly, the great cycles of air and water and heat energy that compose the living forms in the biosphere are no longer balancing. The dynamic equilibrium of all of these cycles is imbalanced because of accelerating expenditures of energy by human civilizations. For instance, according to a United Nations report issued in March, 2009, the relatively small amount of fresh water available to the present human population, about 6 billion people, will be even smaller by 2050, when the number of humans is predicted to leap to 9 billion. This present and future demand makes water "more precious than oil or gasoline, but we take it for granted."[4] World agriculture consumes most of the water, followed by industrial and energy uses, and followed by domestic consumption. "Now climate

change and its effects on the hydrologic cycle pose new challenges to water management and water availability" (*Audubon* 12).

In these times of unpredictable incidents of climate changes, finding the right equity between too little water and too much is the increasingly difficult question of dynamic equilibrium. According to Herbert Read, in his *The Philosophy of Anarchism*, "The most general law in nature is equity—the development of balance and symmetry which guides the growth of forms along the lines of the greatest structural efficiency. It is the law which gives the leaf as well as the tree, the human body, and the universe itself, an harmonious and functional shape, which is at the same time objective beauty" (41).[5] I fully agree with this large claim about a natural law of balance and symmetry, so in this paper I pursue the question of the shapes of water and the living shapes in water, both in small scales and in large scales, not because we can easily solve the questions of an equitable distribution of water, but because I can say something about the morphology of water, which would be a beginning. That is, if we want to contribute to a re-balancing of the hydrological cycle and its place in the biospheric cycle, we need to begin to know the physical realities of water and its shapes.

In *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country,* Louise Erdrich describes her companion's upbringing within the influence of Lake of the Woods. Of the spiritual leader, Tobasonakwut, she says: "I have just decided that he and the lake are one person" (32). Is this a metaphor? Is it something more than an unapparent similarity? Is it a physical reality?

His people were the lake, and the lake was them. At one time, everyone who lived near the lake was essentially made of the lake. As the people lived off fish, animals, the lake's water and water plants for medicine, they were literally cell by cell composed of the lake and the lake's islands. Tobasonakwut's father once said to him, '*The creator is the lake and we are the waves on the lake'* " (34).

By way of her italics, Erdrich asserts that the water waves are something more literal than a metaphor for the Ojibwe people. As the narration continues, she and her companion were maneuvering through the waves and cross-currents of the lake, so the setting invisibly influences her narrative. Energy waves may flow through all things and may transport energy, but how do they *mold* animal life into streamlined mobile

forms? Are we, too, waves of the lake? What are the symmetrical shapes of the water that mold living forms, atom by atom, and cell by cell? How are large bodies of water like lakes similar in shapes to small puddles and even smaller molecular compounds of water? How are the shapes linked across scales from smaller to larger components?

Biosphere

Everyone knows that life forms cannot do without water, and many people know that water makes up 60–80% of tissues in the body (*Cycles of Life*, 11). So most of us, cell by cell, are eventually composed from the water we drink in our neighborhood, whether Lake of the Woods or Lake Erie. We are, largely, the lake. Most students of the environment know the hydrological cycle. Here is Vaclav Smil's summary:

> More than 97% of the Earth's water is in the ocean, and almost 90% of all water evaporated comes from its surfaces. About half of all solar energy absorbed at the Earth's surface is transferred to the atmosphere through the evaporation and condensation of water. The evaporating water absorbs heat as it changes from liquid to gas, then releases heat into the atmosphere when it condenses into droplets. (*Cycles of Life* 11)

But those droplets of fresh water comprise only about 3% of the water on the earth. The rest is salty water. Of that 3% fresh water, about half is consolidated in glaciers or locked underground, so the world's peoples gather mainly around lakes and rivers, which carry water from place to place.[6] Because water is not equably distributed around the geographies of the world, much of the histories of peoples involve the migrations and quarrels over those places where potable water flows. As populations increase over the next 50 years by one third, migrations will make the fight over arable land an intense squeeze play.

Environmentalists continuously seek to rephrase and redirect the question about the organization of the invisible forces flowing through an environment that sustain or kill us animals. Here is an epigraph taken from one of the earlier books featured in the environmental movement: "The flow of energy through a system acts to organize that system." This

is a sentence from Harold Morowitz's *Energy Flow in Biology*, and Stuart Brand put it at the head of his *Whole Earth Catalog*.[7] Furthermore, Morowitz says, "The major component of all functioning biological systems is water" (*Energy Flow in Biology* 46).

The very concept of a systemic biosphere first relies upon the spherical nature of the earth's rotation, and it implies further that the cycles of energy—water, air, light, and other visible and invisible energies, such as infrared and sonar frequencies of wave forms—are being organized and distributed in patterns around the globe. The sphere cycles because the earth rotates, together with the orbits of the sun and moon, and because the planet is held in mobile equilibrium with the other planetary bodies by means of gravity. The *bio*-sphere, where life forms congregate, cycles, because life forms also convert these energies, mainly induced by the sun's radiant hydrology. The great ocean currents that swirl around the continents are crucial carriers of life energy, from the basic element carbon and its compound carbon dioxide, to all the infinitesimal and huge forms of life within the sea's food chain (*Cycles of Life* 49–50).

Suzuki entitles his chapter on water, "The Ocean Flowing through Our Veins," in order to reinforce his large thesis that our bodies are necessarily connected to the earth by water, as well as the other primal elements. In his section on the oceans he describes the ways that ocean currents, together with the sun, induce the various climates and temperatures around the globe. While the air temperature of the globe changes rapidly, the oceans absorb huge amounts of solar energy, and their depths create a huge reservoir that discharges this energy very slowly. *Hence the oceans stabilize the globe's temperature (Sacred Balance* 70). As for the currents themselves, he says, "In the mid-latitudes, huge wind-driven gyres (circular systems of currents) transport heat polewards from near the equator, ameliorating terrestrial temperatures and weather. The warm Kuroshio Current flowing from the western Pacific Ocean south of Japan across to North America affects weather as far inland as the Midwest and from California to Alaska" (70). Suzuki also describes the ways that animal larvae and eggs have evolved to ride these currents. Elvers, small eels, also ride them to their local habitats around the world. Humans have also ridden these currents for migration and trade. Here is his eloquent summation about ocean currents: "… when we use the currents, we are in touch

with the great forces of the planet—its rotation in space, the prevailing winds, the slow, curling drift of ocean water transporting heat, maintaining the earth's atmospheric equilibrium. Connecting continent to continent, pole to pole, the currents are like a living web, moving and winding and mixing, wrapping itself perpetually around the whole world" (71). Currents, too, are shapes in water, and we necessarily live within them.

The Shape of the Water Molecule

The structure of a water molecule is peculiar, and its structural qualities make it remarkably sufficient for the support of the life forms in water (*Anthropic Cosmological Principle* 524–41). The study of water under both heated and frozen conditions is a complicated branch of thermodynamics that extends into related disciplines such as geology and geography.[8] Any biology or chemistry textbook will describe the water molecule's basic structure, and there are plenty of images available on the World Wide Web. The three atoms that make up H_2O have two hydrogen atoms bonded to the oxygen atom in a structure like a tetrahedron, in which the hydrogen atoms are always located at about 105 degrees to one another, much like a **V** or **Y** shape. A slight negative charge on the oxygen end of the molecule, combined with a slight positive charge at the hydrogen end, which makes for the **Y** symmetry, make it almost infinitely attractive to other water molecules. As Suzuki notes, the numberless symmetries of snowflakes derive from this dipolarity of water molecules (*Sacred Balance* 64–65). Under different conditions—such as vapor, as liquid, or as solid ice crystals—water molecules have different symmetrical clusterings, but all share that off-angular structure. For instance, the tetrahedral bond is to be found in hexagonal ice. Now the peculiarity of watery ice is that it is lighter in its solid state than in its liquid state, because its crystal structure contains more widely spaced lattices, where there is nothing but space between the lattices. Ice floats because there is nothing in the latticed spaces except space. Although we might assume that ice is more closely packed than water, it is in fact less densely composed. If ice were heavier than water, it would sink to the bottom upon freezing. But on the surface, ice protects and insulates life forms underneath it. Furthermore, surface ice insulates water from increasing vaporization by the sun's heat.

When global warming decreases the ice area on the surface of the Great Lakes during the winter, for example, water levels drop and life forms suffer from the decrease in habitat.

There is a lot more to the study of angular flow patterns. Without trying to diagram the possible molecular bonds of a water molecule, I can nevertheless quickly show how a symmetrical **Y** shape can lead algorithmically to a tree pattern. Draw a **Y** shape on a piece of paper. Add two shorter and thinner lines to each branch that make a smaller **Y**. Keep repeating. You get a tree diagram. The fractional **Y** is a fractal, and the repetitive instruction is an algorithm. The structure of the water molecule is pregnant with the possible replications of the leaves and trees, the model for Thoreau's famous progression in the sandbank scene in *Walden*. But notice that if we insist that the **Y** shape is driving the composition, as in the algorithm for drawing it, then it is seen as a derivative of the argument from design, with a humanoid designer or creator, just as Dr. Pangloss insisted that noses were invented for the purpose of holding spectacles.

In his classic work about the shapes of organisms, *On Growth and Form*, D'Arcy Thompson describes the symmetry of a tetrahedron, and more specifically of the atomic angle at which particles come together in three-space. The angle is always about 109 degrees, and it is usually called the tetrahedral angle:

> It is an angle of statical equilibrium, an angle of close packing, an angle of repose. In the simplest of carbon-compounds, the molecule of marsh gas, (CH_4), we may be sure that this angle governs the arrangement of H-atoms; it determines the relation of the carbon-atoms, one to another in a diamond, the simplest of crystal lattices; it defines the intersections of the bubbles in a froth, and of the cells in the honeycomb of the bee. (498)

What an inclusive sentence about the tetrahedral angle, with its triple succession of "an angle." An angle of repose is used in geology to describe the off angle at which particles cohere on a slope. And it also appears as the title to Wallace Stegner's best novel. Again, what does the tetrahedron structure have to do with water? "The bond angle of the free water molecule (104.5°) is only slightly less than the ideal tetrahedral angle (109.5°),

so water molecules tend to polymerize to form a tetrahedral structure. This structure is rigid in ice, but water polymers exist even in liquid water" (*Anthropic Principle* 528).

So the off-angled **Y** symmetry is not so much an archetypical *design* that is itself singly shaping the pattern; that would imply Thoreau's Creator extravagantly strewing **Y** designs. Instead it is a human urge towards seeing symbolic shapes, so it can be seen as a *sign* of a conservation principle of close-packing atoms in optimal symmetries that conserve energy. That is, the **Y** shape, and all other such branching shapes, derive from the *junction* of molecules, atomically composed together in atomic bonds, and more or less closely packed, as in the shapes of clustered soap bubbles or ice crystals or honeycombs or leaf and tree runnels. Here again is the real-world convergence of conservation and symmetry in large units, not just the atomic spin of quantum mechanics.

One recalls that soap bubbles are also least-resistant examples of spheroid symmetries that *dilate* in optimal shapes, but their inner air is an arrangement of expanding gaseous molecules. So too with ice and snow; their latticed spaces are dilated into symmetries of free beauty. With soap bubbles one sees the round shapes and not the **Y** junctions that denote their squeezed distortions. With rivers and capillaries, one sees the **Y** junctions and not the pressures from the surrounding plate tectonics that squeezed and shaped them into mountains and valleys.[9]

It depends on one's point of view. When one looks at **Y** junctions, one is seeing, either implicitly or explicitly, a sign of connection, of relation. In *Mind and Nature*, Gregory Bateson calls this kind of pattern that connects, a "metapattern" (11), asking, "What is the pattern that connects all living creatures?" (8). The answer is symmetry. A **Y**-shaped junction is a sign of orderly connection, found in nature, not a designed sign, that relates one pattern to another similar pattern. *A series of Y junctions may be seen as an energy network of transporting wave forms that allows for* communication *along its interconnections.*

It was Benoit Mandelbrot, in his 1972 book called *Fractals: Form, Chance and Dimension*, who first described these watery **Y**-shaped junctions in river networks as fractal eddies. In order to describe the "self-similarity" of fractals across different magnitudes of scale, he cites a 1917 study by Lewis F. Richardson—"over a wide range of scales turbulence is

made of self-similar eddies" (17). Sym Van den Lyn and Stuart Cowan introduce their book *Ecological Design* with an assertion about the different *scales* of water: "Jumping in scale a thousandfold at each step, we encounter a drop of water at a scale of one millimeter, a puddle at one kilometer, and the Antarctic ice at one thousand kilometers" (33). The great natural cycles link these scales of water through their flows of energy, from the small shape of the water molecule to the shapely currents in the biosphere.

Here is an example of a wave form from traditional art that makes their point visually. They use Katshushika Hokusai's woodcut *The Great Wave Off Kanazawa* (1829–1830) to illustrate a fractal image: "The similarity of forms, built up by self-similar patterning is a fractal, which is geometry of scale linking from smallest to largest…" (*Ecological Design* 38). Hokusai's *The Great Wave* is so illustrious that it appears on the covers of engagement calendars and memorandum books. Claude Débussy apparently was inspired by it in composing *La Mer*. There are many images of it, appropriated for different reasons online, and I invite you search for one. You can see in any reproduction that even Mount Fuji, looming in the background, is an inverted wave form, which is repeated in the small mountainous sea wave in the foreground. The print may be said to be composed of lots of different wave forms, from the very small to the very large. In an earlier version of the print, Hokusai did not draw froth forms at the tips of the breaking waves; instead he drew and inscribed flocks of small birds whose very abstract forms curved like the spume of wave tips. Wave and wing have the same torque and angular inclination. Are watery wave forms to be thought of as fractals, or are fractals not symptoms of the transfer of momentum by waves?

Across several magnitudes of scales of water, one can find self-similar forms of branching—from crystals to tree branches to river flow patterns. The first popularizer of the concept of fractals was James Gleick in his 1987 book entitled *Chaos*.[10] Later he wrote the text for one of Elliot Porter's books of nature photographs called *Nature's Chaos*. There he describes the structure of a river as being treelike. I quote it completely because of its summary inclusiveness of Y–shaped networking, repeated across different scales of magnitude:

> A river is, in its essence, a thing that branches. So are most plants: trees themselves, bushes, ferns. So is lightning, contrary to our common lightning-bolt stereotype, which is a sort of stretched Z. So is a human lung, a tree of ever-smaller tubes: bronchi, bronchia, and bronchioles, intertwining with another tree, the network of blood vessels.
>
> North America's largest river actually spans thirty-one American states and two Canadian provinces. It embodies without discrimination the great tributaries we think of as separate rivers; it is the Mississippi-Ohio-Tennessee-Arkansas Except in human perception and language, nothing separates its few wide and deep stretches from its small and narrow ones. Although it flows inward toward its trunk, in geological time it grew, and continues to grow, outward, like an organism, from its ocean outlet to its many headwaters. In the vernacular of a new science, it is fractal, its structure echoing itself on all scales, from river to stream to brook to creek to rivulet, branches too small to name and too many to count. (*Nature's Chaos* 13)[11]

The Y-shaped structure of a water molecule keeps being repeated across several levels of scale. Suzuki says similarly, "Across continents, the network of waterways resembles the circulatory system of the body. And in fact, that is the role that lake and river systems perform.... Patterns of rootlets, roots, and branches; rivulets, creeks, and rivers; veins and capillaries in living tissue—they all reflect the same physical realities and bind us all together in the Earth's vital processes" (*Sacred Balance* 57). This physical reality, too, is what Erdrich was learning about the lake and its people. The river flows through us and helps to shape us. If we want to understand climate change, and if we want to contribute to a re-balancing, we must understand these physical realities.

In his chapter on "Branches," Ball features the fractal dimensions of networks, and he summarizes a number of scientific studies that compare the arterial networks of blood capillaries and the branching patterns of trees; they both branch by a conservation principle of least work, a variant of the principles of least action, or least resistance (*Self-MadeTapestry*

127–128). In the section called "A River Runs through It," he features the work of geomorphologists, those who study the shape of landscapes. He describes the work of Luna Leopold and others who gauge the role of randomness in the shapes of meandering river channels and their distribution and buildup of sediment (153–155). Leopold analyses the scouring and filling of sediment in the creation of river meanders, and he uses both mathematics and geometry to measure river bends. The shapes of river meanders are too large a topic for this essay, but suffice it to generalize that the shapes of meanders slow down a straight-down rush of water to a large sink, and in so doing delay and trap morsels of life that enrich the surrounds.

Nature Fights Back

As a *national* issue, the environmental movement really began with the outcry that ensued following the publication in 1962 of Rachel Carson's magnificently instructive book *Silent Spring*. As Al Gore wrote in his Introduction to a new edition of the book, before its publication "there was virtually no public dialogue about the growing, invisible dangers of DDT and pesticides and chemicals.... Without this book the environmental movement might have been long delayed or never have developed at all" (*Silent Spring*, xv). Its publication, and the public outrage about its arguments, marks *Silent Spring* as one of the most effective teacherly instruments in the history of environmental writing.

Carson's entire thesis is that invisible poisons flowing through the environment cannot be limited to one specific purpose, nor to one exclusive locale, nor can they be finally contained, but these poisons are unintentionally spilling over and killing off birds and plants and animals, including us. Truly, a river runs through us. She arranges her chapters around earth, air, and water ecological cycles. Life forms flow through these cycles, but forms of death also build up and physically circulate back, primarily by the transportation of flowing water. Everything in nature cycles back because the globe spins on its own axis and because the globe rotates around the sun. All energy cycles interconnect even as one form of energy converts into others. If we want to do something about climate change, we need to cope with these physical realities.

Carson's entire book is an elegant fusion of technical know-how and know-whether. The book begins simply with an animal fable, about the death of birds, and the silent spring when no birds sing, but it follows immediately with a rigorously straightforward explanation of carbon as composing both the building blocks of life and "agents of death" (18). What is that peculiar atomic structure? Nowadays every rigorous environmentalist understands the conservation/symmetry principle of carbon as a building block of life. At the outset of their education, all students of biology and organic chemistry learn the structure of the carbon atom, but Carson wants a general audience, mostly uninformed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, to learn about these building blocks. Nowadays there are many excellent popular science writers who know how to describe with rigor and clarity the workings of an arcane topic. For instance, Smil describes extensively the ways that an airborne element like sulfur, spewing emissions from coal-burning power plants, contributes to the acidification of northeastern lakes and to an accelerating decline in forests (*Cycles of Life* 154–165). But Carson had to do much of that spadework for herself. She demonstrates over and over again that the chemical elements are destined to flow through all the interconnected energy cycles of water, air, and soil. So her large thesis, never before so persuasively argued, is that all life forms are interlinked through the circulation, and the cycling back, of chemical elements in the environment. Truly, a river runs through us.

Towards the end of *Silent Spring*, Carson rounds off her argument in a chapter called "Nature Fights Back." Carson's thesis is in keeping with her main argument about the rotation cycles of earth that flow and cycle back upon us as perpetrators. As she says, they boomerang back. "We can no more control nature than we can control the sun coming up." Or as Morowitz says, "In steady-state systems, the flow of energy through a system from a source to a sink will lead to at least one cycle in the system" (*Energy Flow* 33). That is a story about equal and opposite rotations. All energy cycles involve feedback loops. How so? The short answer is that the globe rotates and returns together with the other planets in the solar system.

Although nature cannot be ultimately controlled, its resources can be drastically diminished, especially those from the sea. Age-old fishing banks all over the world are being overfished—from the early example

of the shrimp fishery in Monterey Bay to the great cod fisheries off the Grand Banks, which have been fished since the 16th century by Europeans. Called by economists the law of diminishing returns, the fishing example is that bigger and bigger trawlers, accompanied by huge factory ships that are floating refrigerated processing plants, with more and more sophisticated equipment, are fishing deeper than ever for increasingly smaller catches. And yet we still consume Chilean sea bass, a deep dwelling fish that can no longer escaper the deeper nets. This is an example of positive feedback where the equilibrium cycle is disrupted. Some say that this fishing example is also a "tragedy of the commons," the idea that free gifts from the sea and the land and the air are unprotected by international laws because they are commonly shared but not privately owned and therefore unprotected. Suzuki says that air is truly a "global commons," and so are the oceans, but they need to be protected by new international environmental laws.

Washing Up

Suzuki shows that the molecular structure of water makes it a "universal solvent." Its dipolar electric charge allows it to break down both inorganic and organic compounds. We use it to wash up. We use it to break up dirt on our hands and on our dishes. We live at the junctures of rivers and lake, but we spill our liquid wastes so that the folks downstream suffer. As Carson showed, water can carry life forms, but it can also transport deathly chemical compounds. We use water to help dissolve oil spills, like the Exxon Valdez, and the more recent potash spill in Tennessee. The tanker was a container ship, and the embankments in Tennessee used state-of-the-art containment principles, but all liquids will eventually spill over. The ultimate sink for holding water is of course the ocean, and it is becoming more and more polluted by our spills of chemicals and plastics and other wastes. As David Bellido indicates in his "Truth on the Half Shell," oceans absorb at least ¼ of the CO^2 that humans load into the air through fossil burning.

In the practice of Engaged Buddhism, the Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, teaches mindfulness: both mindfulness in ordinary everyday chores, like washing dishes, as well as more extraordinary acts, like prac-

ticing peace or deep ecology.[12] When practicing to be mindful, he says, the most commonplace things in life can be seen as extraordinary. Water sustains all the species of life, yet it is common as dishwater. So when we open the water tap to wash up, he says, it helps to breathe a *gatha* like this one:

> *Water flows over these hands.*
> *May I use them skillfully*
> *To preserve the planet.*

Once you understand the shapes of flowing water, you can begin to see that the morphology of hands and fingers, with their Y junctions, that hands—like fins and wings—stroke through the fluid they are made of. We are truly connected to water in peculiar ways, but the work of hands in solvent water makes the difference.

Notes

1. Friederich Novalis, *Aphorisms*. Quoted by Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos,* 58. My essay is part of a book project about the balance and symmetries of animals moving in their environmental energy channels.
2. Vladimir Vernadsky founded the systematic study of the biosphere. Quoted by David Suzuki, *The Sacred Balance*, 59. Vaclav Smil introduces *Cycles of Life: Civilization and the Biosphere* with Vernadsky's work.
3. William Blake, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," in *The Poetry and Prose of William Blak*e, 36.
4. See David Gallo, quoted in "Drinking Problem," *Audubon* (July–August, 2009): 12.
5. *The Philosophy of Anarchism* (London: Freedom Press, 1940, 41. For Herbert Read's source see Sir Henry Maine's chapter. "Law of Nature and Equity," in his *Ancient Law*, amply quoted in Read's *English Prose Style* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), 92–93.
6. For a more complete and precise discussion of these percentages, see Smil, *The Earth's Biosphere: Evolution, Dynamics, and Change*, Chapter 5, "Water and Material Flows."
7. Harold Morowitz, *Energy Flow in Biology*; Stewart Brand, *The Last Whole Earth Catalog*, inside front cover.

8. See the chapter on "Fluids" in Phillip Ball, *The Self-Made Tapestry, Pattern Formation in Nature*.

9. For a similar analysis, that demonstrates these kinds of junctions in nature are a natural syntax, see my *Wave Forms: A Natural Syntax for Rhythmic Language*.

10. James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science*. For excellent summaries of recent work about fractal patterns in crystals, growing things, and river networks, also see Ball's chapters "Branches" and "Breakdowns" in *Self-Made Tapestry*.

11. In his chapter "Branches," Ball summarizes a number of twentieth-century scientificstudies of arterial networks and tree branches (*Self-Made Tapestry* 128–33).

12. Thich Nhat Hanh, "Look Deep and Smile: The Thoughts and Experiences of a Vietnamese Monk," collected in *Buddhism and Ecology*. Also see *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environmentalism*.

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Chapter 6

Sacrifice Mimesis, and the Theorizing of Victimhood
(A Speculative Essay)

Rey Chow

In his provocative study, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Giorgio Agamben brings attention to the notion of biopolitics as expounded by Michel Foucault in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* and elsewhere, to argue an originarily juridico-political basis for the relationship between sovereign power and naked human existence, what Agamben refers to as "bare life."[1] This basis, understood by Agamben as the near indistinguishability or irreducible connection between law and violence, is also described by him as "the single real content of law" (65). Few readers, I suspect, would detect in Agamben's book any substantial link to the subject of mimesis. In the context of the twentieth century, it would certainly seem more logical to explore such a link in more well-known classics on art, literature, representation, and cultural politics—as for instance Walter Benjamin's discussion of technical reproducibility, which destroys auratic distance and enables the replication of things on an unprecedented scale; Erich Auerbach's ruminations on the historically evolving relationship among fiction, temporality, and humanity; Foucault's description of the decline of language's capacity for corresponding to the world's plenitude; or Edward W. Said's criticism of the ideologically suspect, fantastical caricatures of the East by Western scribes, artists, and imperialists alike.[2] My own indebtedness to all these studies notwithstanding, what interests me about mimesis is a specific problem, namely, the manner in which mimesis has figured in certain kinds of theorizing about victimhood and what may be loosely termed subordinated or stig-

matized existence. Given the massive unresolvable conflicts that shape the contemporary world, this problem is likely to remain topical in the twenty-first century. In order to follow the conceptual paths around it, it is necessary, I have noticed, to push against the limits of what is accepted as commonsensical thinking (humanistic, moral, or ethical). This essay is, essentially, an attempt at such "following" and "pushing"—hence its speculative, rather than conclusive, nature.

Since he has not discussed mimesis per se, the relevance of Agamben's book is, as I will go on to show, surprising and convoluted: it lies dormant in a part of his argument that, with a kind of suggestiveness that can only result from the kinship of ideas, alerts me to what I'd like to argue as mimesis' conceptual double or conjoined twin—sacrifice.

Sacrifice as a Mythologeme; or, the Aesthetics/ Ethics of the Unrepresentable

Agamben's use of Foucault's work is intriguing in at least two respects. First, he sees sovereignty as residing in the relation of what he calls "ban": "He who has been banned is not, in fact, simply set outside the law and made indifferent to it but rather *abandoned* by it, that is, exposed and threatened on the threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, become indistinguishable *The originary relation of law to life is not application but Abandonment*. The matchless potentiality of the *nomos, its originary 'force of law,'* is that it holds life in its ban by abandoning it" (29). This emphasis on ban suggests that Agamben's understanding of power is, unlike Foucault's, essentially negative and prohibitive in orientation. Whereas Foucault's major intervention has been to shift this traditional understanding of power to the positive, indeed enabling and progressive, capacities in which power thrives in modernity, for Agamben power remains the power to taboo, exclude, withhold, and annihilate (despite his nuanced articulation of the paradox between exception and rule).[3] Hence his pronouncement, on a universal scale:

> Everywhere on earth men live today in the ban of a law and a tradition that are maintained solely as the "zero point" of their own content, and that include men within them in the form of a pure relation of abandonment. All societies and all cul-

> tures today (it does not matter whether they are democratic or totalitarian, conservative or progressive) have entered into a legitimation crisis in which law (we mean by this term the entire text of tradition in its regulative form, whether the Jewish Torah or the Islamic Shariah, Christian dogma or the profane *nomos*) is in force as the pure "Nothing of Revelation." But this is precisely the structure of the sovereign relation, and the nihilism in which we are living is, from this perspective, nothing other than the coming to light of this relation as such. (*Homo Sacer* 51)

By its definitive tone—"Everywhere on earth," "All societies and all cultures today"—this passage not only reinforces the negative and prohibitive notion of power but also asserts that such power applies in all societies and all cultures regardless of their actual systems of government (and, by implication, regardless of their histories of political evolution). As is the case throughout his book, Agamben names this power "law" (in a move that goes in the opposite direction from Foucault's explicit warning that law is an inadequate model with which to deal with questions of power).[4] Agamben holds that power-as-law is facing a legitimacy crisis because its basis is increasingly revealed to be "nothing." For him, however, this nothingness, which may be understood as the non-existence of any concrete justification/grounding for whatever happens to rule, is, precisely, the heart of the matter, the truth about politics based on law. Accordingly, the "nihilism" we are experiencing everywhere today is simply the "coming to light"—the deconstructing illumination, shall we say—of this fundamentally vacuous "structure of the sovereign relation."

Second, in keeping with his formulation of power as ban, Agamben's argument also seems to overlook—inevitably perhaps—the attempt Foucault made at historicizing. For Foucault, biopolitics, with its dedication to the proliferation of apparatuses for the management of bodies, took shape as the older notion of sovereignty premised on the power to kill evolved into more "lenient" and "gentle" forms of governance in the modern period. As in the case of his other studies of the processes of institutionalization and socialization of the modern subject, Foucault's overall intellectual interest in biopolitics was directed, to invoke his memorable phrase, at "the entry of life into history" (*History of Sexual-*

ity, I 141). Agamben's emphasis is quite different—and contrary: he is interested rather in articulating the meanings of a modern and contemporary Western world in which bare life, even when reduced to seemingly mere biological existence, is nonetheless entirely enmeshed in sovereign power—a world in which, in other words, biological survival itself must be recognized as always already political—political as defined in the aforementioned terms of a definitive nihilism. (He therefore holds that there is no outside to the law.) In order to argue this absolute—and thus timeless—relationship between sovereign power and bare life, Agamben must of necessity sidestep the historicity of the transition (from premodern to modern times) that Foucault clearly introduced into his argument. And, because sovereignty (power as ban) remains the only viable form of agency Agamben envisages, bare life itself, instead of being historicized, is implicitly *eroticized* by him in the form of an obscene spectacle, in which the subject that matters is not only one that has been totally crossed out (violated) but also one that has been crossed out (violated) by denudation.

Even if Foucault's mode of historicizing is considered questionable (a point that can certainly be made), it seems to me that Agamben's argument of a continuous biopolitics that runs, conceptually, from European antiquity to European modernity, culminating in the catastrophe of the Nazi concentration camps of the 1930s and 1940s, has still fundamentally neglected the critical dimension of Foucault's work that foregrounds the supremacy of *life* as the biopolitical imperative in the modern age. It is in this sense of a coercive imperative to live/stay alive that Foucault's work resonates most readily with the high tech, medical, and political manipulations of contemporary human existence, from the ostracism and incarceration of the insane and the criminal, to the surveillance of sexual practices, to the ever-generative forms of discipline and production of docile subjects in our civil institutions. In the twenty-first century, as such manipulations of human existence are brought to unprecedented levels of sophistication and efficiency through intersecting global networks of communications and trafficking, Foucault's point that biopolitics is a matter of governing the living, of regulating/normalizing how populations should live, remains incontrovertibly on the mark. For Agamben, on the other hand, the coercive imperative at stake is a mat-

ter of extermination: his transformation of Foucault's biopolitics into a thanatopolitics in this regard is justified by his primary example of the Nazi camps. In the finality of the slaughter of the Jews, the Gypsies, the communists, and the homosexuals, as well as the euthanasia imposed on those who were mentally deficient or physically handicapped, there is, he suggests, little leeway for considering life other than as "bare"—stripped of all supplemental attributes that would render it "more" human. His real point, however, is that even such bare, reduced life, life shorn of all human decency, needs to be returned and restored to its due human connection, a connection that he reiterates as fundamentally juridico-political, in the double sense of law-cum-violence and law-cum-nothingness.[5]

Being aware of the fact that his subject of study can easily—indeed has often been—approached through the notion of sacrifice, Agamben takes pains to distance his own argument from such sacrificial logic. Referring to the sacred as a "mythologeme" that originated from William Robertson Smith's *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (1889) and passed quickly into French sociology, Agamben rejects the sacrificial logic on account of its imputed ambivalence—that is, its capacity for holding together and making interchangeable two opposed categories, the holy and the profane. This is a capacity that fascinated thinkers from Sigmund Freud and Marcel Mauss to Émile Benveniste, Émile Durkheim, and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Precisely what these thinkers considered to be the attractive conceptual resilience of the sacred—its potential for a certain duplicity, for shuttling back and forth between the polarities of high and low, consecrated and filthy—becomes for Agamben a kind of "veil," an "aura" whose spell needs to be broken: "The wish to lend a *sacrificial aura* to the extermination of the Jews by means of the term 'Holocaust' was, from this perspective, an irresponsible historiographical blindness The truth—which is difficult for the victims to face, but which we must have the courage *not to cover with sacrificial veils*—is that the Jews were exterminated not in a mad and giant holocaust but exactly as Hitler had announced, 'as lice,' which is to say, as bare life" (114).

Its morally austere nature notwithstanding, this argument leaves open an important question: what if the notion of sacrifice is subscribed and adhered to by the victims and their community, as an inalienable part of their belief? In other words, what if sacrifice is part of an effort to (re)

imagine and (re)narrativize an otherwise lost, because inaccessible, past—a collective, retrospective striving for coherence? True, such striving often leads to the (problematic) monumentalization of catastrophes, but on the basis of what moral authority should such striving be invalidated and repudiated? Another well-known example from Judeo-Christian history may help clarify the problem at stake: to the Roman officials in occupied Judea, the execution of a political dissenter such as Jesus, too, probably meant little more than the routine extermination of "lice," but for the followers of Christianity, that execution (together with the its horrendous instrument, the cross) has carried a definitive symbolic significance of sacrifice over the centuries.[6] For these followers, it is the subject that bears the cross, rather than the subject that has been crossed out, that remains ever noteworthy.

Agamben's critique of the sacrificial logic can, of course, be seen as an eminently post-Enlightenment, secularist gesture. To this extent, his question "In what, then, does the sacredness of the sacred man consist?" is a rhetorical one (72). The answer is obvious: such sacredness consists not in any (residual) religious sense of the sacred but rather in the inextricable link between sovereign power and human existence. Just as this link manifests itself in bare life—the "life that may be killed but not sacrificed" (a phrase Agamben repeats numerous times in his book)—so too would sovereignty become groundless were it not for the existence of such bare life and its potential to be killed (114). At the same time, as more and more people get killed in our contemporary world without reason, justification, or representation—as the lives of the innocent pile up like wreckage against the precarious grounds of sovereignty—the sovereign relation itself is increasingly exposed for what it is: an arbitrary configuration of power that has immense potential for abuse and that has, indeed, been thoroughly abused.

The ambivalence of sacrifice is unacceptable in Agamben's analysis because for him, ultimately, there can be no room to imagine—to imagine, for instance, that the victims were sacrificed for some transcendent purpose or meaning. Nor is there room to imagine a kind of politics that would involve a struggle for hegemony in the form of a resistant or antagonistic confrontation with tyrannical dominance. All relations of substitution and exchange—and by implication all possibilities of redemption

understood in a broad sense—came to a halt with the acts of cruelty (and exercise of sovereign power) in the camps, rendering the ambivalence inherent to the sacrificial logic an illusion and a lie.

This said, there is a further dimension embedded in Agamben's rejection of sacrifice that is worth considering, perhaps less for the reasons he offers (on secularist moral grounds) than for the affinity that sacrifice shares with another order of thinking—mimesis. In this light, Agamben's emphasis on the absolute finality of the Nazis' thanatopolitics may be seen to have its precedents in a well-known (though debatable) *aesthetic/ethic* approach to the Holocaust, whereby, notwithstanding the representational materialities and mimetic effects involved, the artist or critic insists that the Holocaust is unrepresentable. One thinks, for instance, of documentary film classics such as Alain Resnais's "Nuit et Brouillard" ("Night and Fog") and Claude Lanzman's "Shoah," in which the historical weight of the catastrophe is "shown" or given to us through the muteness of the most ordinary of scenes, such as a lush green landscape or a decrepit empty building, even as the directors emphasize how difficult—or impossible—it is to represent the enormity of what happened. In this kind of aesthetic/ethical approach, the most natural or unadorned sight (much like Agamben's "bare life") is understood not only as that which has been divested of all cultural accoutrements but also as that which, in its so-called nothingness, reveals the basic, yet utterly ruthless and nihilistic, reality of a juridico-political relation.[7] It is in this connection—what may be termed an anti-mimetic aesthetics and ethics—that I believe Agamben's stringent critique of the notion of sacrifice with regard to the Holocaust should finally be grasped: recast in terms of mimesis-as-representation, this critique would seem akin to none other than the familiar assertion that the Holocaust is an unrepresentable—that is to say, inimitable and intransmissible—experience.[8]

Ironically, such a critique of sacrifice is, in the end, operating fully within the bounds of sacrificial logic, the logic that something must be forfeited or cast off. This sacrificial logic is, of course, also a version of the notion of ban that Agamben stresses as essential to the way juridical power functions. By prohibiting the sacrificial logic, therefore, Agamben has in effect taken on himself the capacity for banning (a particular form of ban), and put himself in the place of the (arbitrary?) sovereign, ruling

against the nobody who wants to hold on to the myth of sacrifice in his/her history.

What Follows (or Remains after) Sacrifice: Mimesis as Substitute

Appearing as it does in the context of contemporary political philosophy debates, Agamben's anti-sacrificial, anti-mimetic aesthetics/ethics resonates with certain strands of what may be schematically called poststructuralist theoretical thinking. For some time now, since the arrival of poststructuralism in the mid-twentieth century, mimesis has been viewed in some contemporary theoretical sectors with suspicion and disdain, as the legacy of a rigid and conservative representational politics with its demand for realism—that is, for the reproduction, in art or literature, of a replica of what supposedly exists beforehand. As Martin Jay writes: "For … theorists normally labeled, for better or worse, poststructuralist, a conventional aesthetic privileging of mimesis or what is taken to be its synonym, imitation, is an ideologically suspect recirculation of the ready-made, a false belief in the fixity of meaning and the possibility of achieving full presence, a language game that fails to see itself as such."[9] This anti-mimetic stance notwithstanding, one notices, on reflection, a curious paradox embedded in poststructuralist maneuvers in general: even as the mimetic is distrusted as an ideology of mechanical duplication, copying, and re-presentation (one that assumes the presence of some original determinant), poststructuralist theory nonetheless tends to depend for its deconstructive work on acts of substitution, alternation, and differentiation—acts that, in the terms of our present discussion, may in fact be seen as part and parcel of the entwined logics of sacrifice and mimesis.

This close kinship between sacrifice and mimesis informs the arguments of some of the authors who have had the strongest influences on poststructuralist writing. In his well-known theory of the gift, for instance, Marcel Mauss dispels the idea of the free, innocent gift by shifting attention to relations of exchange and reciprocity as the rationale behind gift-giving: understood precisely, the giving of a gift, as Mauss argues, always carries with it the significance of a gesture of retaliation—of a return of something. Similarly, by introducing the distinction between the penis and the phallus in his semiotic rewriting of Freud's discussions of ana-

tomical differences, Jacques Lacan clarifies the indispensable exchange principle that underpins Freud's argument about sociality: in order to be socially acceptable, an individual must learn to give up, to trade in as it were, his own solipsistic or narcissistic pleasures. Closer to our time, in her theory about the social origins of gender, Judith Butler, too, confirms the function of exchange in the construction of an intimate part of our identities—the way we go about picking our objects of desire. Butler argues that gendered identities, in particular for those who "are" or who think of themselves as heterosexual, are a matter of learning to relinquish the type of love object that is socially prohibited (as for instance a person of the same sex as oneself). Gender is haunted by melancholy because, whether or not one is conscious of it, it is a matter of negotiating and performing the effects of a pre-mandated and internalized loss.

I have brought up these few examples of influential frames of thought simply as a quick reminder of the indispensability in representational politics of the mutuality of loss and gain, and of surrender and redemption—a mutuality that, I would contend, may be reconceptualized as the twin logics of sacrifice and mimesis. To this extent, I'd like to speculate that mimesis has retained its relevance to this day less because of its persistence as imitative representation (which no doubt remains the case in many circles) than because of its potency as part of an inescapable structural relation—the relation of exchange and substitution, absence and presence, disappearance and appearance, and so forth, without which the acts of thinking and writing would simply be impossible. Understood in these terms (and not merely in terms of a secondary duplication of a primary event), the mimetic-as-representation, even when it takes the positivistic form of appearing as/like something else, should be described more precisely as the accessible portion of a certain foregone *transaction*, a transaction, moreover, during which something was for one reason or another lost, given up, or surrendered—in other words, sacrificed. Rather than being a static replication or re-presentation of a preexisting plenitude, mimesis, one may argue, is the sign that *remains*—in the form of a literal being-there, an externalization and an exhibition—in the aftermath of a process of sacrifice, whether or not the sacrifice has been witnessed or apprehended as such. Mimesis is the (visibly or sensorially

accessible) substitute that follows, that bears the effects of (an invisible or illegible) sacrifice.

Reformulated in this manner, sacrifice and mimesis would seem a double epistemic passage underlying all acts of signification, a passage that tends to become acute in contexts of dominance and subordination, in which loss and gain are existentially palpable phenomena impinging on individual and group identity formation. Is this perhaps the reason mimesis has figured so prominently in scenarios which carry the charge of victimization (and by implication, the charge of voluntary or involuntary sacrifice)? I am thinking, for instance, of the scenarios of patriarchy and colonialism, in which the status of those whose lives are compromised and demeaned has been explored, often, via the tropes of mimesis.

As I mentioned, biopolitics, as Foucault discusses it, is not necessarily or exclusively about the mandating of death but more often than not takes the coercive form of an imperative to stay alive. Would adhering to Foucault's conceptualization (with its emphasis on life) bring about an alternative understanding of the implications of Agamben's discussion, by allowing us to *localize* the latter as simply one possible method of theorizing victimhood—a method in which the anti-mimetic resistance to sacrifice (and with it, representation) amounts to a particular aesthetics/ethics, based implicitly on a specific way of (re)distributing the sensible?[10] Conversely, in other scenarios of violence—such as patriarchy and colonialism—in which the goal has not been extermination *tout court* but rather the multifaceted governance and subjection of live bodies, what would happen to the logic of sacrifice—discredited in no uncertain terms by Agamben—and with it the mimetic?

Mimesis as a Coping Mechanism and Survival Tactic

Luce Irigaray, for instance, has offered a well-known reappraisal of femininity by distinguishing between two forms of mimesis—the productive and the recuperative. Putting it in deliberately simple terms, she writes: "there is *mimesis* as production, which would lie more in the realm of music, and there is the *mimesis* that would be already caught up in a process of *imitation, specularization, adequation*, and *reproduction*" (131). Referring to the latter kind of mimesis as "masquerade," Irigaray allows for the

recognition of femininity as a type of social sacrifice, whereupon women must imitate or reproduce—at their own peril—the feminine norms that have been prescribed in advance by patriarchal mores:

> I think the masquerade has to be understood as what women do in order to recuperate some element of desire, to participate in men's desire, but at the price of renouncing their own. In the masquerade, they submit to the dominant economy of desire in an attempt to remain "on the market" in spite of everything. But they are there as objects for sexual enjoyment, not as those who enjoy.
>
> What do I mean by masquerade? In particular, what Freud calls "femininity." The belief, for example, that it is necessary to *become* a woman, a "normal" one at that, whereas a man is a man from the outset. (133–34)

At the same time, Irigaray asserts that the mimetic also contains the possibility of a different relation, one in which women, precisely because they understand what has been prescribed for them, may set out consciously to perform these prescriptions in such ways as to turn them into subversive acts. She calls this kind of mimesis "mimicry":

> …*mimicry*. One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it …
>
> To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit herself … to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make "visible," by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible … "to unveil" the fact that, if women are such good mimics, it is because they are not simply resorbed in this function. *They also remain elsewhere* (76)

This association of the mimetic with feminist cunning and, in particular, with a playful, self-conscious repetition, made to resemble and conjure the normative image of femininity yet simultaneously undermining

this image from within, is perhaps one of the most important instances in contemporary thought in which mimesis is attributed with the potential to exceed, rather than simply to compensate for, the sacrifice which precedes it. This potential enables mimesis to take on the value of a type of behavior—a camouflage conformism—which, even if it does not exactly set women free, allows them (to imagine) a utopian space/time of alterity from within the bounds of patriarchal subordination.

In the discussions of colonized existence, mimesis has likewise played a significant role in theorists' attempts to configure a breathing space for those who have been subjected to injustice. In the contexts in which cross-cultural encounters entail the imposition and enforcement of one group's (typically, Westerners') superiority over another (typically, the "natives" of African, Asian, American, Australian, and New Zealand cultures), mimesis is a routine rite of initiation: those from the so-called "inferior" group, the colonized or semi-colonized, are bound to want to imitate their "superior" aggressors as part of their strategy for social survival and advancement. Under these circumstances, the question is how agency can be assessed: must agency be understood to lie only with the so-called original (the "superior" group, the one being imitated), or can it also be understood to reside in the act of imitation—in those who imitate? What kind of agency?

As I have discussed in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, various levels of mimesis traverse this kind of situation. I will concentrate on two here. A first level, probably the most obvious, is a direct legacy of Western imperialism and colonialism of the past few hundred years—the mimesis with the white man as the original. The logistics involved are time-proven: the white colonizer, his language, and his culture stand as the model against which the colonized is judged; the colonized must try her best to become like her master even when knowing full well that her efforts at emulation will be deemed less than satisfactory. As I have noted, the values involved—"superior" and "inferior"—are hierarchically determined and tend to work in one direction only: the "original," so to speak, exists as the authentic standard by which the imitator is judged but not vice versa. The colonized subject, condemned to a permanent inferiority complex, must nonetheless try, in vain, to become that from which she has been excluded in an *a priori* manner. Try as she may, she will always

remain a poor copy; yet even as she continues to be debased, she has no choice but to continue to mimic.

At a second level, as theorists no longer feel comfortable dismissing the colonized as merely inadequate, mimesis takes on a more complex set of connotations. As exemplified by the work of scholars such as Homi Bhabha, who follow the rationale of Frantz Fanon's impassioned arguments about black subjectivity in works such as *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks,* one important feature of the colonized's subjectivity that was previously ignored—the ambivalent, contradictory emotions embedded in her identitarian plight—now assumes center stage. As Fanon writes, for the person of color (in his case, the black man) "there is only one destiny. And that is white." With insight and foresight, he also suggests that "only *a psychological interpretation* of the black problem can lay bare the anomalies of affect that are responsible for the structure of the complex" (*Black Skin, White Masks,* 10). Fanon's critical contributions to the dissection of colonized subjectivity are summarized by Bhabha in this manner: in Fanon's work, Bhabha tells us, "The ambivalent identification of the racist world … turns on the idea of man as his alienated image; not Self and Other but the otherness of the Self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity" (*Location of Culture* 40, 44).

In psychological terms, what Bhabha, taking the lead from Fanon, introduces to the colonial scenario is desire (and its irrational, often unconscious, modes of working). As in the case of Irigaray's endeavor to reclaim femininity for women, desire in this instance serves as the very grounds on which to reappraise the value of dominated subjecthood. Instead of being written off as the inferior partner in an asymmetrical historical encounter with the West, the colonized is now understood, with much more suppleness and sympathy, in terms of a desire to be white that exists concurrently with the shame and resentment accompanying the inferior position to which she has been socially, culturally, and racially consigned. Between the (positive) condition of wanting to imitate the white man and the (negative) condition of self-loathing and self-abatement, lies what may be seen as an entire range of epistemic and representational possibilities, possibilities that infinitely enrich the theorization of postcolonial subjectivities. Whereas at the first level of mimesis, relations between the colonizer and the colonized remain immobilized in a static

hierarchy, the introduction of desire transforms the entire question of mimesis into a fluid, because vacillating, structure, in which the entangled feelings of wanting at once to imitate the colonizer and to eliminate him become the basis for a new kind of analysis, with the tormented psychic interiority of the colonized as its center. Much like Irigaray's mimicry, the colonized's desire here makes way for a flexible, because mobile, framework for imagining alterity from within subordination.

By focusing on the colonized person as an indeterminate, internally divided subject, a subject that is not self-identical, Bhabha and the critics influenced by him thus enable what may be called a poststructuralist redemption of colonial victimhood that is thoroughly humanistic in implications: it is the failure, the incompleteness or incomplete-ability of the mimetic attempt (a point on which the second level of mimesis in fact concurs with the first) that makes the nonwhite subject theoretically interesting—indeed salvageable (one might say, in the aftermath of colonial sacrifice). Consciously or unbeknownst to herself, and oscillating between black and white, the subjectivity of the colonized is now dispersed, pluralized and multiplied across the many possible circuits of desire. No longer rigidly polarized/dichotomized against each other, black and white can now be considered as mutually constituted and mutually constituting. The question remains as to how this liberalist rendering of victimhood can ultimately distinguish itself from the productivity of colonial power. In both cases, it would seem, it is the ambivalences, the contradictions, and the fissures, always already inherent to the act of articulation, that are considered to contain the potential for opening things up, so to speak. How to draw the line in between? Or—to push Bhabha's reasoning to its limit—is that not so important?

Concomitant with the issue of mimesis in these gendered and racial scenarios of violence, then, reemerges in a different guise exactly the problematic of sacrifice at which Agamben has directed his skepticism. Recast in sacrificial terms, the paradigm shift that poststructuralist feminist and postcolonial criticism has brought about is none other than a suspension, and thus a revaluation, of the substantiality and non-negotiability of victimhood through behavioral and psychic buoyancy—playful mimicry and fluctuating desire—so that, even if it seems degrading and humiliating (involving the sacrificing of one's autonomy and dignity), the

very act of imitating one's victimizer may yet be an aperture to a different kind of future. Mimesis amounts in these cases to a creative repackaging and repurposing of the givens of dominated existence for survival—in a situation that is not about to improve any time soon.

On balance, much as this survival kit of mimetic tricks (with mimesis either as subversive performativity or as ambivalent desiring) has been greatly influential in contemporary cultural criticism, as a coping mechanism it still by and large leaves in place the inequities of the situation—one that remains governed by man or the white man as the original, with the important proviso that the playful imitation by women or the not-quite-right imitation by colonized subjects is now deemed, at least by some, to be equally deserving of critical attention. Insofar as it is a coping mechanism, moreover, mimesis seems to have retained the quality of a secondary phenomenon whose *raison d'être* is derived from something external to itself. Although what is at issue is no longer so-called art's imitation of life, the fact that mimetic behavior and psychology are construed as a response, a reaction to fraught ideological conditions suggests that mimesis continues to be accorded a subaltern and instrumentalist status. Obviously, this conclusion is not very satisfying.

Mimesis as Originary Force, and a Different Hypothesis about Victimhood

A useful, if controversial, interlocutor at this juncture is René Girard, whose work offers many remarkable insights into the bondage between sacrifice and mimesis. Given that Girard has explicitly referred to the double meanings of the Latin word *sacer*, which, as he points out, has been translated alternately as "sacred" and as "accursed," and that he, like Agamben, is clearly skeptical of the ambivalence of the sacred as disseminated by French sociology, the absence of any reference to Girard's work in Agamben's book is conspicuous.[11] Can this be because, as I have been suggesting, a rejection of sacrifice (as in Agamben's case) is not only a rejection of sacrifice but in essence amounts to a rejection also of mimesis, the very basis of Girard's theory?

Like many mid- to late twentieth-century thinkers, Girard too has been influenced by Freud, and the psychological vocabulary of desire is

eminently present in his readings. His understanding of desire is, however, quite unique. For Girard, desire is not some kind of original human nature which for historical or cultural reasons (such as patriarchy or colonialism) adapts itself into a desire *for* something (such as a desire to imitate). Instead, desire is always learned, and can be borrowed and transferred. Rather than the commonsensical question "*What* does *X* want?", then, Girard asks: how does *X* come to "want" this or that? As he has famously argued, the answer to this latter question is mimesis: to desire means not simply to desire an object but also to imitate a model's way of desiring. In this manner, the model one tries to imitate inevitably becomes a rival:

> Rivalry does not arise because of the fortuitous convergence of two desires on a single object; rather, *the subject desires the object because the rival desires it*. In desiring an object the rival alerts the subject to the desirability of the object. The rival, then, serves as a model for the subject, not only in regard to such secondary matters as style and opinions but also, and more essentially, in regard to desires. (145)

In his classic *Violence and the Sacred*, Girard illustrates his bold argument by providing readings of numerous texts, often from myths, classical Greek tragedies, psychoanalysis, and anthropological studies of tribal beliefs and practices, but his reading of Freud's Oedipus complex offers perhaps the most economical example of his logic. Girard traces the shadowy presence of a mimetic understanding in Freud's description of the little boy's desire for his mother. As Freud points out, this desire has something to do with the boy's special interest in his father, to grow like and be like him, and take his place everywhere. His cathexis to his mother, then, can be seen as an effect of a primarily mimetic impulse to identify with his father; only thus, Girard writes, does it make sense to see the father, who is the boy's model, become a rival, a hindrance, and a nuisance standing in the way of the boy's attainment of gratification. Notwithstanding his own intuition of the potential held open by mimetic desire, Freud, however, according to Girard, turned aside and erased the effects of mimetic desire from his construction of the Oedipus complex so as to preserve the complex's purity and validity:

> Although traces of the mimetic conception are scattered through Freud's work, this conception never assumes a dominant role. It runs counter to the Freudian insistence on a desire that is fundamentally directed toward an object; that is, sexual desire for the mother. When the tension between these opposing tendencies becomes too great, both Freud and his disciples seem to resolve it in favor of the object-desire. (169)

What sets Girard's conception of mimesis apart from many of his contemporaries', therefore, is the epistemic status he grants it: mimesis is an originary force rather than a secondary phenomenon whose rationale/justification comes from somewhere else.[12] This conception has the advantage of freeing us from the common tendency to fixate on a predetermined object as the source of desire (as is the case, arguably, of Fanon's and Bhabha's ruminations, in which whiteness exists as the object to which the black man becomes cathected in imitation). By making mimesis the first term, Girard shifts the emphasis away from the conventional assumption of desire as natural, autonomous, or originating: instead, desire itself is now understood as the outcome of human social interaction. Mimesis, in turn, is no longer simply a derivative or instrumental act in response to a situation in which those who are underprivileged, envious, or malcontent find themselves obligated to copy whatever preexists them as "normal" and "superior." With desire detached from all predetermined objects, the mimetic process is here allowed to stand as a power dynamic, one that fuels, to return to Foucault's term, the biopolitics of inter-subjective relations. Following Girard, one may go so far as to claim that mimesis is what activates the act of desiring; it is what gives desire its direction and trajectory as well as its objects.

This all-pervasive, mediating presence of mimesis means that to desire is, behaviorally speaking, to *compete* with a rival in a vicious circle of reciprocal violence, in which the antagonists become increasingly indistinguishable from each other—become what Girard calls "monstrous doubles." The only way in which the circle can be broken is through sacrifice—that is, through an artificial process in which someone who is, like everyone else, a member of the community becomes chosen as a scapegoat—and expelled as a surrogate victim. Herein lies the crucial aspect of Girard's theory: "Social coexistence," he writes, "would be impossible if

no surrogate victim existed, if violence persisted beyond a certain threshold and failed to be transmuted into culture. It is only at this point that the vicious circle of reciprocal violence, wholly destructive in nature, is replaced by the vicious circle of ritual violence, creative and protective in nature" (144).

This point, very much resonant with Freud's arguments about human group behavior in works such as *Totem and Taboo* and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (and to some extent *Moses and Monotheism*), is reiterated by Girard in a succinct recapitulation of mimetic desire:

> *Mimetic desire* is simply a term more comprehensive than *violence* for religious pollution. As the catalyst for the sacrificial crisis, it would eventually destroy the entire community if the surrogate victim were not at hand to halt the process and the ritualized mimesis were not at hand to keep the conflictual mimesis from beginning afresh By channeling its energies into ritual forms and activities sanctioned by ritual, the cultural order prevents multiple desires from converging on the same object. (148–49)

For Girard, the sacrifice that is collectively ordained and practiced is thus (the violence of) mimetic desire *ritualized*. Practices of culture such as art, literature, and religion are all instances of such "ritualized mimesis"—that is, a substitute violence—designed to enable human society to proceed against the blind destructiveness of the primal "conflictual mimesis." Girard speaks often of "a fundamental truth about violence": "if left unappeased, violence will accumulate until it overflows its confines and floods the surrounding area. The role of sacrifice is to stem this rising tide of indiscriminate substitutions and redirect violence into 'proper' channels" (10).

Girard's two-pronged formulation of mimesis—as both nature (constant, primal antagonism among human beings) and culture (collective, artificial ritual) and thus irreducible to either—whose violence must be understood dialectically, as both internal and external, both pernicious and beneficial, may be one reason his thesis has not exactly been taken up with enthusiasm in the more left-leaning varieties of contemporary cultural criticism. More specifically, Girard's assertion of mimesis as an ab-

solute/universal condition, an assertion that goes hand in hand with his refusal to account for violence by confining it within domains of cultural difference/particularism—such as religious fanaticism, nationalism, communism, patriarchy, Eurocentricity, U.S. imperialism, and so forth—would obviously disturb those who believe in adhering to the supposedly tolerant, neoliberalist, and multiculturalist habits of thought. And since Girard's frame of reference is literary, mythological, and religious rather than empirical or scientific, the validity held by his conception of mimesis in various disciplines, even those with obvious social and historical import, will likely have to remain a matter of conjecture and debate.[13]

Nevertheless, because it recognizes the unavoidability and universality of violence, Girard's hypothesis ironically implies a basic, incontrovertible evenness and equality among human beings that tends to be absent in other formulations. In the feminist and postcolonialist writings discussed above, for instance, in which it is typically the disparity between those with power and those deprived of it that provokes theorization, mimesis tends to be pursued, more or less, as just a means of addressing—that is, compensating, displacing, complexifying, and, it is hoped, transforming—such a disparity (and the sacrifices it has exacted). Girard's emphasis is decidedly different—and clearly un-Rousseauian and non-utopian at that. In his hands, mimesis (in the raw, primal form) involves rather the possibility, through an act of doubling, of *leveling with* the rival, in a world in which a "self" as such is never alone (or *sui generis*) but always defined socially and antagonistically in relation to others, in a generalized state of competition. Hence the key to this form of mimesis is reciprocity—the "gift" of an eye for the returned "gift" of an eye, ad infinitum—in a kind of undifferentiated repetition that may go on forever. If the violence thus generated is circular, it is also a violence that renders the antagonists structurally on a par with—indeed resembling and becoming indistinguishable from—one another. But this situation of equality, in which every person is literally like the other, is in fact a lethal situation to which human society cannot afford to return (or so it has convinced itself). Such equality, Girard implies, is the source of our greatest terror because anyone at any moment can find himself or herself the target of irrational violence and persecution.

Meanwhile, when mimesis is (re)enacted as cultural ritual, Girard, by highlighting the indispensable role played by the victim—be it the surrogate victim who is sacrificed on behalf (or in substitution) of the entire group or the ritual victim who is sacrificed in imitation (or in substitution) of the surrogate victim—also offers a distinctly divergent way of thinking about victimhood. To put it bluntly, for Girard victimhood is more a matter of structural and social necessity—for the purification of pollution, and the restoration of peace and order—than one of humanistic moral concern. The victim is the means with which a community interrupts the otherwise unstoppable circle of (mimetic) violence through a representative act of exclusion and expulsion. Often selected randomly, the victim is sacrificed not because he is weak or inferior (or strong and superior), but paradoxically because he is like us, because he resembles the community of those who would otherwise be engaged in an endless frenzy of retaliations. His (lone) alienation and expulsion are thus the substitute offered in exchange for the preservation of the group as a whole—a substitute that serves in effect as a protective shield against the threat of immolation posed by the group's own propensity toward mimetic contagion and annihilation.

Questions

In an age in which the phenomenon of *homo sacer,* of which Agamben has so solemnly reminded us, seems to multiply daily across the globe with the glaringly unconstrained proliferation of state violence and abuse of power, a consideration of sacrifice and mimesis—what I have been suggesting as a conjoined epistemic passage—would seem more than timely. The ramifications involved are immense and clearly beyond the scope of one essay. In lieu of a conclusion, let me offer a brief summary of the issues raised so far, in the form of questions.

Whereas Agamben (implicitly) argues victimhood in terms of bare life, which is the residue or remainder of an utterly inequitable juridico-political relation between sovereign power and those it kills (in an increasingly arbitrary fashion)—a relation that renders mimesis altogether irrelevant because there is no room for confrontation and resistance; and whereas Irigaray, Fanon, and Bhabha alert us to the depths of ambiguity, neurosis,

and perversion that define the mimetic acts of underprivileged victims, Girard challenges us instead to think of victims not simply as victims but rather as the bearers of a systemic function. And, rather than speaking against violence as the unfortunate moral outcome of human social interaction, Girard gives us a dialectics of violence, one that understands violence (or mimetic desire) both as a fundamental antagonism that defines every confrontation among human individuals, and as what constitutes cultural processes of reenactment that are aimed at warding off the original violence. As a result, he has also offered what might be called a dialectics of victimhood, wherein victimhood has no intrinsic quality to it but can be both horrendous and redemptive. Like sacrificial violence, sacrificial victims are surrogates, substitutes, or stand-ins whose destruction helps save others (like them) from some larger horror.

If, for the sake of speculative discussion, we were to disregard Agamben's dismissal of the sacrificial logic and rethink the Nazi camps in terms of Girard's interpretation of sacrifice and mimesis, two very hard—and for some undoubtedly scandalous—sets of questions would probably arise.

First: could the extremism of the Nazi state apparatus be understood as a form of originary violence, a primal mimetic desire that had somehow been allowed to run amok? (Did the Germans not, in a mimetic manner, consider the Jews their competitors—their rivals? Did they not, against their own denunciatory proclamations, actually want to become [like] the Jews—take the Jews' place everywhere—by appropriating all that the Jews possessed? Could their violence have been reciprocated?) Second: alternatively, could such extremism be seen as a cultural process of ritualized violence/mimesis wherein those who were reduced to bare life in the camps could be considered surrogate/ritual victims? To follow Girard's logic to its deeply unsettling conclusions, if the Jews, the Gypsies, and other exterminated groups were surrogate/ritual victims, does it mean that genocide, however reprehensible it is on ethical grounds, should nonetheless be understood as a sacrificial ritual, a cultural process—not unlike an extreme form of performance art, a theater of cruelty, or an obscene reality show—whose purpose is to forestall a worse form of disaster?

But what could possibly have been a worse form of disaster than the Nazis' willful murderous efforts, and what larger horror could they be preventing?—the disaster and horror of being victimized *themselves*, of being reduced to bare life, of having their own group unity disintegrate in the potentially unstoppable spread of mimetic violence: in other words, the disaster and horror of losing *their* monopoly on violence and with it their claim to (the Aryan) difference. *It would be unthinkable for "the Germans" to become like everyone else*. The status of the victim, structurally indispensable in Girard's formulations, must thus be further specified as the externalization—the *banishment* (to use a term that recalls Agamben's notion of ban) to the outside, in the form of a guilty adversary—of a group's capacity for self-destruction. As a crowd whose members imitate each other's behavior, the group derives an important benefit from the unanimous—that is, mimetically induced—hatred for the victim: this hatred unifies the members and creates the community. As "surrogate," therefore, the victim is simultaneously the symptom of a group's fundamental lack of cohesion—its fundamental non-identity with itself. As Girard writes in his study of *The Book of Job*: "In a world controlled by mimetic desire … the appetite for violence may grow and may be ultimately satisfied at that moment when the global tendency to uniformity focuses the mimetic substitutions and polarizations on some victim or other, or perhaps not so randomly but on a victim who is more vulnerable because of his visibility, one who is somehow predestined by the exceptional position he holds in the community—someone like Job."[14]

On the other hand, if, in light of the atrocities committed by the Nazis, any rationalization of victimhood as such must be deemed outrageous regardless of how sympathetic the critic might be with the victims—and this is certainly the point of Agamben's fundamental expulsion (sacrifice) of the sacrificial logic—does it mean that mimesis, whether imagined as nature, as culture, or as both, must also be thoroughly expunged—banned, banished, abandoned—as a concept because it is simply too perilous to think with, because it is bound to lead to conclusions that will be found without/outside moral compunctions? Yet what is the defense of moral compunction—to return again to Girard's logic—if not precisely a collectively ordained exercise of violence aimed at preserving *our* social order from crumbling—a ritualized mimesis, no less? Would not the ex-

punging of mimesis turn it precisely into a symptom about us as a community, in the aforementioned terms?

Interestingly, this is also the point at which Girard's seemingly amoral, religion-oriented argument of mimetic violence comes closest to Agamben's nihilistic, atheist understanding of law and power. As the fundamental vacuity of the sovereign relation is exposed by the increasingly arbitrary abuses by those in power, what is so-called law is revealing itself—and here is the logical transition from Agamben into Girard—to be nothing more than a collectively ordained exercise of violence, intended once upon a time to preserve the social equilibrium, perhaps, but now functioning as nothing more than a frenzied killing machine. Despite his adherence to the need for moral compunctions in his (anti-sacrificial and anti-mimetic) approach to the concentration camps, Agamben's bleak depictions of political-power-gone-berserk the world over suggest that his grasp of the unmitigated, and perhaps intractable, actuality of human violence (defined by Girard as mimetic) is, in the end, not that distant from Girard's.

One final question and speculation: insofar as any discussion of them seems ineluctably to arrive at these formidable—and terrifying—questions of freedom, violence, moral constraints, community, and boundaries-setting, are not sacrifice and mimesis perhaps the "surrogate victims" and "ritual victims" *par excellence* in the domain of representational politics today?

Notes

1. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. See in particular Part Two, Chapters 1–3. For Foucault's discussions of biopolitics, see his *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*; *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France 1976–77*; *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*; *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978–1979*.

2. See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations*; Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*; Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*.

3. Agamben's elaboration of this notion of power, which is closely linked to Heidegger's notions of concealment, withholding, and the open, can be philosophically provocative and suggestive. See, for instance, his sensitive discussion of Kafka's "Before the Law" (*Homo Sacer* 49–62); also, his discussion of the status of the human in Western thought in *The Open: Man and Animal*.

4. These remarks by Foucault sound like a point-by-point refutation of Agamben's project: "In order to make a concrete analysis of power relations, we must abandon the juridical model of sovereignty. That model in effect presupposes that the individual is a subject with natural rights or primitive powers; it sets itself the task of accounting for the ideal genesis of the State; and finally, it makes the law the basic manifestation of power " (*"Society Must Be Defended"* 265).

5. Numerous scholars have discussed the distinctions and tensions between Foucault's and Agamben's views on biopolitics and sovereignty. For a sampling of these lively debates, see, for instance, Mika Ojakangas, "Impossible Dialogue on Biopower: Agamben and Foucault;" Lee Medevoi, "Global Society Must Be Defended: Biopolitics without Boundaries;" Didier Fassin, "Humanitarianism as a Politics of Life;" Malcolm Bull, "Vectors of the Biopolitical."

6. For this interesting point, I am indebted to Yuan-horng Chu, "Dusk or Dawn: On Agamben Painted Exceptional Rule," 197–219; see in particular 211–12. I should add that I am aware of the fact that the historical circumstances surrounding Jesus' disappearance/death are a subject of great dispute among scholars; the point here is simply that being killed may hold very different—yet perhaps equally valid—meanings for the victims (and their community) from the intentions harbored by the perpetrators of killing. However, this possible difference does not seem to matter in Agamben's argument.

7. I should make clear that I do not at all find this aesthetic/ethical approach (which insists on the unrepresentability of the Holocaust) persuasive—especially when the medium in question is a visual one such as film. For reasons of space, a detailed discussion of this point will have to be deferred until another occasion. For related interest, see Naomi Mandel, *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America*.

8. Agamben's reflections on the testimonies about Auschwitz are similar: he holds that survivors bore witness to something to which it is impossible to bear witness. See *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*.

9. Martin Jay, *Cultural Semantics: Keywords of Our Time*, 120. For examples of French writings that elaborate the theatrical dimensions of mimesis in complex manners, see *Mimesis, Masochism, and Mime: The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary French Thought*.

10. I borrow the notion of the distribution of the sensible from Jacques Rancière; see *The Politics of Aesthetics: the Distribution of the Sensible*, 12–34. For Rancière's very different perspective on the politics of representability in the contemporary world (in contradistinction to those who hold that certain things are unrepresentable), see his essay "Are Some Things Unrepresentable?" in Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, 109–38.

11. See Girard on the word *sacer* in *Violence and the Sacred*, 257; see also his discussions on 263–65; 298. Regarding the ambivalence of the sacred, Girard puts it in this manner at the very beginning of his book: "Because the victim is sacred, it is criminal to kill him—but the victim is sacred only because he is to be killed. Here is a circular line of reasoning that at a somewhat later date would be dignified by the sonorous term *ambivalence*. Persuasive and authoritative as that term still appears, it has been so extraordinarily abused in our century that perhaps we may now recognize how little light it sheds on the subject of sacrifice. Certainly it provides no real explanation. When we speak of ambivalence, we are only pointing out a problem that remains to be solved" (*Violence and the Sacred* 1).

12. For this reason, Girard's thesis has been critiqued by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe as a type of foundationalist or essentialist thinking (that seeks to reveal the foundational or essential violence of sociality); see Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, 101–30. Unlike Girard, however, Lacoue-Labarthe does not simultaneously deal with sacrifice.

13. He puts it this way: "The apparition of the monstrous double cannot be verified empirically; nor for that matter can the body of phenomena that forms the basis for any primitive religion. Despite the texts cited above the monstrous double remains a hypothetical creation, as do the other phenomena associated with the mechanism that determines the choice of surrogate victim. The validity of the hypothesis is confirmed, however, by the vast number of mythological, ritualistic, philosophical, and literary motifs that it is able to explain, as well as by the quality of the explanations, by the coherence it imposes on phenomena that until now appeared isolated and obscure" (*Violence and the Sacred* 164).

14. Girard, *Job the Victim of His People*, 65. See also his essay "Job as Failed Scapegoat," in *The Voice from the Whirlwind: Interpreting The Book of Job*, 185–207. Girard's analysis of the problem of evil—the problem that has preoccupied generations of interpreters of *The Book of Job*—parallels his critique of the object-centered understanding of desire. In discussing the enigma—the "why"—of Job's unjust suffering, he shifts the emphasis from the canonical hermeneutics about divine providence to a reading of the mimetic contagion of collective human behavior. Because, rather than simply accepting his persecution by his community, Job fervently protests against the absurdity of such persecution, Girard sees his story as a text that consciously

reveals or demythologizes the scapegoat/victimage mechanism. He also suggests that Job is a prefiguration of Jesus.

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Chapter 7

Security

From "National" to "Homeland" … and Beyond

Samuel Weber

The establishment of a Department of Homeland Security in response to the attacks of September 2001 marked a sea-change not just in terminology but also in the political policy of the United States. In the period following the Second World War—the period of the Cold War between the liberal-democratic "West" and its Communist adversaries, above all the Soviet Union—"security," which has been probably the paramount consideration in modern politics, including its theories as well as its practices—had been defined essentially as the aim and attribute of the nation-state. Security, insofar as it was political, was first and foremost "national security." And where it transcended individual nations, it did so in the spirit of the Treaty of Westphalia, which established politics as a system of nation-states, relating to each other through codified procedures known in English as "international law," but designated in other languages quite differently: in German, for instance, as *Völkerrecht,* literally the "right of peoples," a translation of the Latin *ius gentium* from which (in the German-speaking world at least) the concept was held to derive. The supra-national entities founded in response to the two World Wars were both designed to serve as instruments of national security rather than providing an alternative to it, a fact that was clearly manifested in their names, whether the post-World War I League of Nations (once again quite different in German: *Völkerbund,* "alliance of peoples"), or the post-World War II United Nations. The basic and unchallenged unit of such international organizations remained the nation. Its adversary, at least in the post-World War II language of the "free world," was therefore

appropriately designated as the "International Communist Conspiracy," a term that implied that the "conspiracy" was directed against "national sovereignty" per se, through its emphasis on class struggle, which tended to challenge the supremacy of the nation-state. At the same time, however, anti-Communist discourse following 1945 redefined its adversary in national-state terms. The International Communist Conspiracy was presented as a thinly disguised instrument of the Soviet Union, which in turn was increasingly subordinated to the category of totalitarianism, as a perversion of the nation-state. The rise of the United States as global leader of the "free world" was accompanied by an anti-state rhetoric that tended to redefine the nation—and hence its security—as a function of liberal, non-state institutions: ultimately of autonomous individuals acting in concert but also in competition with one another, and thereby at antipodes from the kind of collectivism under which the "totalitarian regimes" of both left and right were increasingly subsumed. The individual consumer came to supplant the collective producer as the bulwark of national security.

The groundwork was thus laid for a political practice that was aptly summed up by President Reagan's famous assertion that "Government is part of the problem, never the solution." Of course, this did not directly challenge the one area in which government was still considered to be supreme: that of assuring a security still defined as "national security." But national security only made sense as a response to the challenge of the International Communist Conspiracy: it was intended to valorize the nation not as a collective entity per se, but rather as a necessary bulwark against the collectivisms of totalitarian nations that threatened the sacred foundations of liberal democracy, which in the United States, at least, was increasingly identified with heroic individuals whose autonomy was manifest in the effectiveness of their will to accumulate power, wealth, and success.

It is against the background of this development that the sea-change (or climate-change) from "national" to "homeland" security must be interpreted. Prior to 2001, the term "homeland" in connection with "security" was largely absent from political discourse in the United States. The term "homeland" had been used politically in two rather different, but perhaps related, ways. First, it was associated with the discourse of

Zionism, the political theory and program of a Jewish homeland. Second, and far more notorious, it was the term used by the South African regime to designate areas with limited powers of self-government, which were designed to serve the apartheid system by regrouping black South Africans in a contiguous and separate territory, thereby excluding them from citizenship in the Republic of South Africa.

What these two quite different uses of the term "homeland" have in common, and what contrasts with the traditional notion of nation-state, was already noted by Aristotle, who—as Giorgio Agamben in his recent *Il Regno et la Gloria* recalls—insisted on the distinction between the *oikia* and the *polis* and indeed, "criticized the Platonic conception of the *polis*" for assimilating the city too closely to the home:

> I am speaking of the premise from which the argument of Socrates proceeds, "that the greater the unity of the state (*polis*) the better." Is it not obvious that a state may at length attain such a degree of unity as to be no longer a state?—since the nature of a state is to be a plurality, and in tending to greater unity, from being a state it becomes a family (*oikia*), and from being a family, an individual; for the family may be said to be more than the state, and the individual than the family. So that we ought not to attain this greatest unity even if we could, for it would be the destruction of the state. Again, a state is not made up only of so many men, but of different kinds of men; for similars do not constitute a state. (1261a)

Although Jowett's translation of *oikia* here as "family" is somewhat misleading, since what is involved is rather a "household," the familial element does touch on what is at stake in his effort to distinguish the *oikia* from the *polis*: the nature of the appurtenance. And this, interestingly enough, is evaluated not in the abstract, since "the family may be said to be more than the state, and the individual than the family," but rather in terms of their ability to endure, what Aristotle, in Jowett's translation at least, calls their "self-sufficiency":

> This extreme unification of the state is clearly not good; for a family is more self-sufficing than an individual, and a city than

> a family If then self-sufficiency is to be desired, the lesser degree of unity is more desirable than the greater. (1261b)

In short, for Aristotle there is a tension between "unity"—which characterizes the family vis-à-vis the city, and the individual vis-à-vis the family—and "self-sufficiency," which is greater in larger, more diverse, less unified political groupings.

If, then, one can say that for Aristotle already a certain "security" informs politics, it is one that is radically divergent from the kind of security that in the modern period has increasingly come to be taken for granted. For both Aristotle and more modern thinkers, "security" is defined by the ability to endure. But from the passages just quoted, it is clear that the notion of endurance is vastly different in each case. For Aristotle, "unity" and endurance—unity and "self-sufficiency"—are at odds with one another. What endures is what is heteroclite, diverse, dissimilar. What endures is a *polis* conceived to have a radically different structure from both the "individual" and the "family" or "household." The latter are understood as essentially unitary organizations, although as Agamben points out, such unity is by no means that of the nuclear or even extended family, nor does it exclude a certain diversity (Agamben 31).

Aristotle, in this critique of the Platonic notion of "unity" based on the "household" as an ideal that the polis should strive to attain, touches on a problem that the recent terminological shift from "national" to "homeland security" has finally made explicit, although its genealogy goes back, as Agamben suggests, to the origins of Christianity. For the challenge posed by the emergence of what can be called Christian culture is that of reconciling the singularity of the divine—of the One God who is infinite—with the individuality of a creation that is finite and insofar as it is living, mortal. Security—etymologically, "without care," *se cura,* will henceforth and increasingly be linked to the task of resolving this antinomy: that of reconciling a life that is embodied in finite living beings with a Creator God who is both singular and infinite, and who therefore implies the possibility of a life that is "self-sufficient" in the sense of being constituted independently of "death"—of finitude. It is the problem of "eternal life," of that *zoe aionios* that Agamben discerns to be at the heart of the "evangelical message" and which, he asserts, "in the final analysis is informed by the paradigm of *oikos* and not by that of the *polis*" (15).

For Aristotle, political "security"—a word of course that to my knowledge has no close counterpart in attic Greek, and for reasons that are essential—was linked to the separation of *polis* from *oikos.* For Christian culture—which continues to inform its "secular" modern continuation in what is called the "West"—"security" tends to imply "salvation" insofar as it is now indissolubly linked to the fate of the individual living being, and its most immediate organizational context, the "family" and its "household."[1]

Perhaps this explains why there is no direct equivalent of the word "security" in Greek: for in that language there can be no question of *eliminating* "care" but only of *redistributing* it through diversification. The unified individual, or homogeneous "household" cannot become the locus of long-term survival and this is precisely what disqualifies the domestic "paradigm" politically. What survives can only be a certain disunity, a certain diversity and heterogeneity. To be "secure" then cannot be to stay the same over time. And yet, this is precisely what the Christian message seems to suggest. Mortality is the result of a human action, and through human action and the grace of God its overcoming can, and must, be envisaged. The key to "security" thus is envisaged on the model of salvation, and salvation in turn on the model of redemption: redemption from the guilt of "original sin."

Ultimate homeland security thus builds upon a long-standing tradition that enthrones the individual living being in view of a horizon that appears to span the distance that leads from guilt and mortality to redemption and salvation. In this perspective, it is not so certain that there is an unbridgeable gap separating *bios* from the notion of a *zoe aionios,* since the notion of a "bare" or "nude life"—*vita nuda*—that Agamben associates with *bios*—implies both a life stripped of everything external to it, a life that is both impoverished and also self-sufficient, a life that is intrinsically independent of death precisely by virtue of this immanence and self-containment. Such a life would necessitate a certain dis-individuation of the Living, insofar as the latter remain irreducibly limited, finite and mortal. But is not this what is implied by the apocalyptic character of the Last Judgment: the destruction of the (sinful) world so that it can be saved, and then endure without limit: *zoe aionios*? And does not this apocalyptic destruction of the world echo the sacrificial nature of the

"death of God" in the form of the Crucifixion and the Passion of Christ? Security can only be envisaged, following this "paradigm as a result of the sacrificial self-destruction of life in the singular, in order to make room for the advent of life in general," without limit and without end, individuated and yet now finally immortal.

The practice of such "security" can therefore only be polemical. It is the War Against Terror, the War Against Drugs, the War Against Poverty—but always the War Against that Other that is ultimately the Anti-Christ, in refusing the Good News of a Life that can be "redeemed," which is to say, saved from its own finitude. The act of killing—the active side of "war"—thus comes to be regarded as the harbinger of that ultimate act of Salvation that aims at killing nothing less than Death itself.

The care from which the politics of security—most recently, of "homeland security"—seeks to "free" its citizens is very much the care that Heidegger in *Being and Time* described as that of being ahead of oneself, indebted to a future that inevitably involves the disappearance of the Self qua individual, and of its "household."

It is only when "politics" learns to accommodate the "unhomely"—uncanny—nature of security—homeland, national, international—that the ecology of "renewable resources" will cease to be just another version of the *vita nuda* as *zoe aionios,* and instead will begin to make room for what Walter Benjamin called "the Living"—which is to say, for lives in the singular.

Notes

1. Needless to say, this is not the direction in which Agamben interprets the "paradigm" of *oikonomia*—"economic theology—in *Il Regno e la Gloria*.

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Chapter 8

Common Political Democracy

The *Marrano* Register

Alberto Moreiras

A Republican Passion of the Real

Could we offer a conceptual determination for a register of vanquished thought, of the thought and experience of the vanquished, in the name of common political democracy? Everything that has been historically significant in the political articulation of equality in European thought has been offered not by the victors, not by the holders of power, but rather by those who have suffered under constituted power, under violence, and have had to live their lives in defeat. The history of Europe is an uninterrupted contest between domination and the claim of freedom. Defeat has secularly forced the defeated into hegemonic submission, and it probably could not have been otherwise. But conversion to hegemony is never the last word. Common political democracy is the result, wherever it appears, of the forcing of that conversion to hegemonic submission into something else, which is not quite victory. I am going to use a particular name for it—that is, not for common political democracy but for the forcing of the way to it: *marranismo*, which has of course a particular validity for the history of modernity. *Marranismo* is also a register of power; it is not impotence, but the register of a power for freedom.

What is the *marrano* register? It is the short name of what we should properly call a *converso-marrano* register. *Converso* references the abandonment of what was previously one's own in order to embrace a social truth, a dominant state of the situation. And *marrano* is the state of return, or rather the melancholy state where the shadow of the lost object

falls upon the subject and splits it or destabilizes it. I am making obvious reference to Spanish and Portuguese Jewish history and its avatars, without question a point of torsion of a history of the practice of freedom that, as such, has never relented in its struggle against the logics of imperial domination.

That Spain has been the historical ground for a dramatic rendering of this conflict throughout modernity almost goes without saying. In *¿Qué imperio?* José Luis Villacañas touches upon the core of this struggle. With Charles as he lands in La Coruña in 1520 the patrimonial ideology of the Habsburg family finds itself in a predicament that seemed to make its political articulation possible. It must undergo Hispanization. His grandfather Maximilian had realized that, from a merely German perspective, the empire could not be consolidated: Germany was not France; there was no unity in Germany. When Charles inherits his patrimony the possibility emerges of using Spain as a basis for a politics of imperial consolidation. Power is finally at the Hapsburg's disposal. As Villacañas explains, "decisions were made about Spain, not from Spain, and they were a function of empire, not the opposite" (30). In the crucial year of 1521, through the "reduction of the Spanish cities" after the wars of Comunidades and Germanías, through the "organization of the Council of State under bishops such as Fonseca and Tavera, and the creation of a ruling elite of aristocratic military men and governors that will spread through Europe" (35), the destiny of Spain is sealed. It was imperial domination with a European projection against the freedom of the cities, which in Spain was mostly *converso* freedom. This process "is imposed because the empire needs it, and it is designed as an imitation of the French model in order to confront French potential expansion. Spain evolves following a European logic that is in reality mimetic to France" (35).

Villacañas shows that, at every step of the way, there was a different ideological and practical possibility. Spain offered an alternative general intellect that was systematically undermined and finally destroyed by the evolution of imperial ideology. As Villacañas puts it, "if there was a representative thought in Castile, it was very hostile to the imperial idea" (41). Villacañas's itinerary through the intellectual history of the Spanish sixteenth century moves from Alonso del Castrillo's republican anti-imperialism along the lines of a political Aristotelianism that is indebted

to the work that Pedro de Osma and Fernando de Roa had been doing in Salamanca, to the protodemocratic (in the sense that it was frontally opposed to aristocratic absolutism) politics of friendship of the Castilian cities, based on converso republican thought; from Juan Luis Vives, another converso, who offers "the most complete doctrine of Republican government produced by a Spaniard" in early modernity (105), to Miguel de Ulzurrum, whose secularizing notion of the administration of men evolves into an anti-papal position that Trento would reject; and about the Erasmian thought of Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón, who thought there was an opportunity for a true Christian, anti-racist, anti-inquisitorial society in Spain. But the Dominicans and the high Castilian nobility would win the battle for the general intellect. Villacañas calls it the victory of the Fernandine party against the party of Philippe of Burgundy, whose premature death thoroughly undid the possibility of a converso victory.

Around 1535 the situation is settled, and it is settled for centuries to come. Freedom in Spain has become a dream. The Dominican Inquisition, the clerical orders, and the high Castilian nobility would not abandon their social and political hegemony until the late eighteenth century. The persecution of the conversos by Inquisitors Deza and Tavera now evolves into the persecution of the Erasmians by Tavera, Valdés, and Loaysa. When Charles experiences defeat and retreats to Yuste Spain has already been closed, but a number of people are still alive in whom the residue of a free intellectuality was burning. The Inquisition will take care of them as it moves with few restraints. Constantino Ponce de la Fuente will die at the stake, accused of Lutheranism even though he was only an Erasmian, and Bartolomé de Carranza will languish in jail for many years. Jesuitism, which is emerging, will become the absolute limit of a Spanish spirituality that is no longer a spirituality of freedom, but rather a spirituality of domination caught between the extremes of command and obedience for the greater glory of God. A shadow of terror has fallen upon the lands of Spain.

The notion of a *marrano* register represents a turn of the screw or a quasi-dialectical twist in this story which is now a story of European dimensions that will quickly spread through the Americas as well. Literal *marranismo* applies only to *conversos* who, tired, bored, or desperate with

the strictures of the Spanish or Portuguese atmosphere, decided to return to the Jewish fold with larger or lesser possibilities of success. I need a freer use of the term. The *marrano* register is not primarily interested in a relapse into Judaism. It concerns, rather, the pulsional drive to find strength in the subjective deconstitution caused by the fall of the shadow. The *marrano* shadow ciphers the melancholy moment in the wake of which it becomes necessary to develop an affective position that would not simply be anti-melancholy. The game consists of embracing melancholy and its other. From its inception the *marrano* register is already a double register.

It is then a matter of establishing the conceptual possibility of a *marrano* register for thought. But in opposition to what? What is, in the history of thought, which is also the history of political action, the alternative register, that is, any register incapable of assuming the *marrano* name? Let me call it the identitarian register, so that the fact that this is the register of a multiplicity of registers is duly indicated. The *marrano* register is the abandonment of what was previously one's own and the embrace of the dominant state of the situation, and at the same time the abandonment of the state of the situation without the recovery of what was previously mine. Whatever was mine, if anything ever was, is blocked forever. The identitarian register, by contrast, is the embrace of what was previously mine insofar as I identify it in the state of the situation, and the militant abandonment of the alien as non-dominant. Whatever was mine stays mine and will always be mine. The *marrano* register is double because it takes off from a double exclusion: from your own and from the alien. But there is no exclusion without at least a double exclusion: the first gesture of exclusion is always inclusive—you are excluded, and the very fact of your exclusion creates the illusion of a "we"—we, the excluded—which is the potential ground of immunitary excess. It is only the second gesture that opens to exposure. You are excluded a second time, and the exclusion becomes infinite. The identitarian register is therefore a register of inclusion that excludes whatever is differential. But it only requires affirmative exclusion: it is thus not properly a register of exclusion, as it does not live on exclusion. It lives only on rejection.

The *marrano* register is always open to exposure, or rather: it requires exposure for its self-constitution. As to the identitarian one, we could talk

about the Nazis, or even about someone like Martin Heidegger as a Nazi philosopher and a philosopher of Nazism for an extended period of his life, as its paradigmatic embodiments for the twentieth century.

But let us choose a more difficult or less obvious example. Contemporary multiculturalism understands itself fundamentally as a mechanism for inclusion. It does not seek or want the pure or uncontaminated preservation of previous cultural formations. It rather seeks the reduction of the cultural drive to an identity procedure. Identity procedures give the notion of multiculturalism content, and not vice-versa, since multiculturalism does not express the temporal coexistence of unconnected monads but rather looks for the formation of a chain of equivalences between diverse cultural formations under the ideological link of identity, which as such remains empty, merely formal. Multicultural identity is the empty place that can only be filled relationally, through other supplementary or antagonistic identities. Hence its necessary but paradoxical structural hybridity. We are multicultural to the extent that we are hybrid, but we are hybrid insofar as our identity is constituted in a differential relation with every other identity. This differential relation is already the sign of hybridity. The hybrid register is openly anti-*marrano*. It is still the identitarian register. That it might in principle convoke subaltern segments of the population in their desperate need for recognition and integration is far from being a guarantee of its quality as political thought or of its potential contribution to common political democracy. It has just as good a possibility of finding itself working towards the very opposite. If and when the identitarian register refers to subaltern identity, which is far from being always the case, it marks an instance of hegemonic submission, and it fulfills a function similar to that of the *converso* moment in Spanish Jewish history. Far from instituting equality, it reproduces and internalizes mechanisms of dominance that it is the function of the *marrano* inversion to deconstitute.

If the *marrano* register inscribes the possibility of freedom, would the identitarian register be the register of domination? Would it be an imperial register? Even if in the form of an inverted imperial register? No doubt the identitarian register upheld by the Nazis, or the utterly depersonalized Stalinist demand for thorough communist subjectivation, were imperial. The challenge is to show that there are also imperial gestures

in the apparently bland allegiances to everyday identities, whether they come from the dominant or mimic it through its mere inversion. It is to show that every affirmation of identity, including the affirmation of hybrid identity, is always already an imperial gesture.

Let us call all political domination imperial. Is all freedom political freedom? Freedom is nothing but political—this might be controversial, but I remain too much of a Nietzschean Spinozist to claim otherwise. Imperial domination against political or republican freedom: if it is accepted that all domination is imperial and that all political freedom is republican, then the choice seems neat. Faced with that choice, who in her or his right mind would opt for imperial domination against political freedom? We promote political freedom in order to defend ourselves from imperial domination and we study imperial domination in order to promote the conditions for political freedom. There would seem to be no third choice, no third way: either freedom or domination. You cannot have a bit of freedom, you cannot have a bit of domination. If you have a bit of freedom and a bit of domination, you fall under domination. The history of third ways is the history of the attempts to establish a line of flight from the inconsistencies of a stark choice between two bad options, but when it comes to the choice between freedom and domination the choice that refuses the alternative has already sacrificed freedom and has therefore already given itself over to domination, no matter how partially. This third choice is thus not a third choice, but rather a choice for domination, even if confusedly, in the name of freedom. Or it is a choice for freedom but, confusedly, under an imperative for domination. The situation is similar, if in an inverted manner, to the situation undergone by someone who is confronted by a thief's demand: "your money or your life!" If you give up your life you give up your money as well. Here you cannot but refuse the choice. With "freedom or domination!" you can only choose freedom. Choosing domination is a contradiction in terms. Actually, freedom is the only choice. Which is the ultimate logical reason why there is no third choice, no third way. There isn't even an alternative, because not choosing is already choosing freedom, or exercising it. These might already be *marrano* thoughts, both melancholy and anti-melancholy.

In politics, you choose freedom, you always choose freedom, even when you are mistaken. Under concrete historical circumstances, howev-

er, and there is never anything else in politics, things get murkier. Let me bring up the case of Julián Besteiro, an important member of the Spanish Socialist Party up until the end of the Civil War. He was a professor of logic at the University of Madrid, and it came to happen to him that he had to confront, existentially, a logical dilemma. As he himself put it in a speech to the PSOE Executive Committee given in Barcelona on 15 November 1938:

> The war has been inspired, directed and fomented by the Communists. If they ceased to intervene, probably the possibilities of continuing the war would be small. The enemy, having other international support, would find itself in a situation of superiority. I recognize that this [the removal of the Communists] is a grave step at this stage. As you know, this would not affect me personally—other than as something that would have an impact on everyone—because I do not believe that I have had any responsibility for the fact that we have reached this point. I cannot offer you the solution. It is for you to mark out the boundaries and to consider what it is opportune to do at this moment. I see the situation as follows: if the war were to be won, Spain would be Communist. The rest of the democracies would be against us and we would have only Russia with us. And if we are defeated, the future will be terrible. (Quoted by Preston 183).

You can't win and you can't lose: or rather, both winning and losing are, from Besteiro's perspective, just about equally terrible. The intellectual choice is impossible, as one cannot choose domination. And freedom is not available. Yes, this is the *marrano* register, which must sometimes confront the impossible. We know what Besteiro did: he conspired for an internal coup that displaced the Communists and ended with the surrender of the Republican government to the National side. The surrender of the Republic to the Francoists was not a choice for freedom: Besteiro underwent trial, and was sentenced to death, although his sentence was commuted and he died in jail shortly afterwards. Others may have done the opposite—as Republicans, they stuck it out with the Communists. They also lost, and became subject to imperial domination. According to

Besteiro, they couldn't but lose, although they might have become subject to Communist domination. For Besteiro, there was only fascism or communism, and neither of them was freedom. But who is speaking? A professor of logic, an obscure subject who saw himself forced to confront an impossible alternative.

What if he had been a fascist, or a communist? If a fascist chooses fascism, he is choosing freedom; if a communist chooses communism, he is choosing freedom. They may be mistaken, but that is not the point. The point is that the choice is always for freedom, for the freedom of the one who chooses, even though that very affirmation of freedom may entail the domination of others. In fact, the choice for freedom may be the choice for domination. When the choice for freedom entails the domination of others, then we are not talking about *marrano* freedom, and we are certainly not talking about republican freedom. The choice for republican freedom is the uncanny choice for the freedom of all. Every other choice is the choice for imperial domination. And there is no third way, as Besteiro's choice pathetically testifies. Or is it the case that Besteiro's choice is always the choice in politics, and the choice of politics? Perhaps politics is always already the need to betray the *marrano* register into an impossible option, which would place the *marrano* register on the side of the impolitical.

Was Besteiro mistaken? What if communism were precisely the uncanny choice for the freedom of all? We can leave the behavior of the Spanish Communist Party under the watch of the Comintern aside, or the extraordinarily difficult circumstances under which every political actor had to move towards the end of the Spanish Civil War, and we can assume that Stalinism is not communism, or even that it is a direct betrayal of communism. The key question, it seems to me, is of a pronominal nature. The key question is whether the question of republican freedom is a question concerning a "we," or rather a question concerning a "they." If my freedom is the freedom of all, is "all" to be encompassed by a first person plural or by a third person plural? Is political freedom a question of community or is political freedom a question of the multitude? It seems to me that the future of common political democracy hinges on the possible answer to that question. Common political democracy always already knows that domination is about the "they," not the "we," about the

multitude, not about community. And common political democracy has to make a choice: is there freedom in community? Or not?

Let me take a second example from the Spanish Civil War. In this case I want to refer to the "Y" that members of the Sección Femenina, the women's Falangist organization, patched onto their blue shirts. I will follow Paul Preston again:

> The symbol of the Sección Femenina was the letter Y, and its principal decoration was a medal forged in the form of a Y, in gold, silver, or red enamel according to the degree of heroism or sacrifice being rewarded. The Y was the first letter of the name of Isabel of Castille, as written in the fifteenth century, and also the first letter of the word *yugo* (yoke) which was part of the Falangist emblem of the yoke and arrows. With specific connotations of a glorious imperial past and more generalized ones of servitude, as well as of unity, it was a significant choice of symbol. (Preston 129)

So you are a woman, but have subjectivized yourself in an affirmation of love to the Falange. Your choice for the Falange is your freedom, but that freedom is, first of all, imperial freedom, as it commits you to a path of domination of others, the non-Falangists; secondarily, it is also imperial freedom to the extent that you sign up for your own domination, for your own servitude. As a member of the *Sección Femenina*, it was your duty to serve the man, the men of the Fatherland, those fascists that you loved. Again the question is: Is Pilar Primo de Rivera and, with her, all the colleagues who thought up the Y symbol to sum up the free presence of Spanish women in the National Movement giving us the conditions of possibility of all political subjectivation?

When it comes to political subjectivation, is the choice between freedom and domination or is the choice between domination and domination? Domination: the yoke that turns the third person into a "we," the ground of community; or else the yoke that turns the non-we into slaves or enemies. The demand for political subjectivation is the thief's demand: "Your money or your life!" Community is always the Y on your shoulder. Republican freedom is the refusal of the Y. If republican free-

dom is the refusal of the Y, then republican freedom is the refusal of political subjectivation.

The uncanny choice for the freedom of all, for the freedom of the third person plural, is a choice always to be made outside political subjectivation. It is adrift, as it refuses every orientation beyond itself, beyond its own gesture. It embodies no calculation, no teleology, no program. It is rare—rarer than the emergence of the subject itself, which happens every time there is a free choice for community. It stands outside every moralism. This is the time to restitute republican freedom to the heart of the political. Everywhere we hear definitions of politics that presuppose political subjectivation as the goal. There is no doubt that political subjectivation is ongoing in every political process. But political subjectivation is in every case a function of the history of domination. Political subjectivation is the object of the identitarian register, but the history of freedom is something else: a history of gestures, a haptic history of decisions for the "they," a countercommunitarian history of the neuter, of the impersonal. The history of freedom is always the countercommunitarian enactment of the *marrano* register.

Spinoza's Worm in the Blood

It is possible to elaborate on the notion of the *marrano* register as the precondition of a conceptual renewal of the category of political democracy. Is this not what Baruch Spinoza himself tried to do, not only in his *Theological-Political Treatise* but even more resolutely in his unfinished *Political Treatise*? Even more, isn't Spinoza's *Ethics* the systematic attempt to offer a philosophical ground for the thinking of the political as being-in-common? Only antiteleological or, better, ateleological thought, against the kind of goal the identitarian register necessarily posits, can form the condition of possibility of a common democracy consistent with its own presuppositions.

First, the identitarian register in the history of thought is the very ground of the ontotheological tradition and of its corollary, political theology. Both of them are teleological orientations for thought, and both of them are ultimately founded, as Reiner Schurmann has argued, in the concept of final cause developed by Aristotle in the *Physics*. The Aristo-

telian final cause is the definitive model for metaphysics in the wake of an artisanal and productionist understanding of substance. Identity is the final cause of community under an equally productionist and substantialist directive. Second, the *marrano* register, which is given its first proper philosophical foundation by Spinoza, insists on a non-ontotheological and also non-teleological exposure. It is, precisely, the abandonment of the notion of final cause as much as it is the abandonment of a presumption of grounding as political procedure. And, third, our time, as Carlo Galli says, is the time of the explosion of the ontotheologicopolitical grounding concepts of modernity, the explosion of modern political teleologies, which means that, today, we find ourselves in a political world for which we have no concept. The task of a new conceptualization, for whose inscription I am obviously proposing the *marrano* register, must be carried out.

According to Galli, ontotheological history explodes in its political dimension with the social appearance of the category of total mobilization, effectively described by Ernst Junger, and applicable to fascist totalitarianism, to soviet totalitarianism, and to what Junger as well as Heidegger called technical Americanism. Galli's notion of a political architectonics finds a dialectical torsion in the complementary notion that the political spaces of the history of modernity have never been stable. From Hobbes on, and that means, from the time of the English Revolution, its internal tensions, its points of pressure, its lines of flight were only barely contained by structures of material force whose nihilistic background made them always already vulnerable. Political mediation throughout modernity has always subsisted precariously. If globalization is the explosion of modernity it is because, in globalization, the structures of political mediation have vanished towards unmediation. For Galli "immediate mediation" is the name of the new political game, but it is a game of which we ignore the rules. This unknowing gives political content to the culturalist concept of postmodernity.

Immediate mediation means, first of all, that our contemporaneity finds no restrainer, no *katechon* (Galli uses the Pauline notion of the *katechon* as appropriated by Carl Schmitt: the *katechon* was the mediating force protecting the world from the arrival of final disaster in the form of the Antichrist.) Our last *katechonta* were the welfare states that fol-

lowed in the wake of World War II. The containment of political evil is today overflown. Galli calls the present moment "global mobilization," and says of it that it constitutes the end, by explosion, of the epochal moment of more or less successful constraint or restraint of political evil that we call modernity. In global mobilization politics is war, and war is the unity of being.[1]

What does global mobilization mobilize? Global mobilization mobilizes first of all the identitarian principle. War is the practical corollary of an unleashed identity principle. If the *marrano* register could think of itself as offering the possibility of an exception to war, then the *marrano* register could still be prepared to offer a new articulation of political freedom. This is perhaps the challenge that Spinoza's thought still guards for us. Spinoza's thought is the guardian of the *marrano* register of thought. But this is perhaps a controversial view.

Marilena Chaui offers us a definition of the political implications, risks, and challenges of the *marrano* register. She says about Spinoza:

> The image of the "Rijnsbur hermit," of the solitary sage who enjoys exclusion, pays no justice to the work of Spinoza. The excluded one is not he who is outside the cultural, political, and social world, but he who was thrown out of a world that could not stand the risk of his presence. It is he who, on understanding the meaning of exclusion, retains the extraordinary possibility of making himself fully present, understanding the nature of powers that are unable to stand contradiction and difference, fabricating false harmonies and identities that remain indispensable to tyranny Spinoza does not speak from the same place as the power holders who, under the pretext of tolerance and of the uninterrupted search for consensus, feign to welcome liberty, proclaiming themselves their promoters, in the name of a good supposedly common to everyone. (41)

There is no question of enjoying exclusion: it is not something to be enjoyed or shunned, but rather a condition imposed on the *marrano* by a world that cannot take the chance of *marranismo*. The *marrano* registers inscribes in itself the meaning of its exclusion from identitarian parameters of practice. That there is tyranny in identitarianism is a function

of its need to fabricate false harmonies whose mission is not so much to erase as it is to kill contradiction and real difference. But this paradoxically gives the *marrano* register the ability, Chaui says, "to make itself fully present." How? Through its radical negation of the position of those power holders that, under the pretext of consensus, by which what is meant is unanimity, the terror of the One, *feign* freedom in the name of the common. There is another freedom, there is another understanding of the common. This is the "extraordinary possibility" of the *marrano* register.

The *marrano* register is anticonsensual, as it does not seek the articulation of hegemonic alliances. It dwells in the need to exist in the act, that is, to exist before or beyond the imaginary character of the type of existence fostered by the tyrannical articulation of power and non-knowledge. The full presence of the *marrano* register is accomplished in an act that, on producing itself, reveals in the identitarian act, as Chaui puts it, "the secret presence of a servile *cupiditas*, of an insatiable and superstitious desire to serve and obey that humans imagine as a source of strength when it is a sign of their individual and collective annihilation" (41). The *marrano* register, and its first full-blown articulation in Spinoza's thought, is a counterdiscourse "against that impotence imagined as force" (41). Chaui calls that power the "most terrible" in Spinoza's thought. The *marrano* register is a register in the terrible. It is little wonder that Spinoza's adversaries would then move towards the inscription of the work and the life of the *marrano* as "*pestilentissima*, *pestilentissimus* … as an irremediable and contagious disease, sudden and incontrollable, that spreads like a plague, through contact, killing and deforming forever. Criticism rises, thus, as the prophylaxis of the spiritual body of Christendom and of the 'people of the Nation,' the Judaic body" (25). Criticism is prophylactic against every possible proliferation of the *marrano* register, understood as auto-immunitary trouble, collapse of the body of the human, collapse of what the identitarian register understands by the common.

Chaui also understands the *marrano* register as a double register. "It is necessary to accept the weight of strangeness in Spinoza's thought … Spinoza innovates because he subverts, explaining his ideas in a simultaneous double register: in the discourse that names the new at the same time that it enacts itself as a counterdiscourse for the demolition of what has been inherited" (12). The double register in Spinoza's thought has an

instituting character as deconstruction and a deconstructive character as instituting. From its very definition, the *marrano* register, which is also always at the same time *converso-marrano*, must deconstruct that from which it comes, affirmatively, in virtue of its double exclusion. The production of the *marrano* register is already des-production of alternative options. What institutes always destroys. But is it most pestilent as instituting or as destructive? It is most pestilent in virtue of its double register, for essential reasons that are precisely the ones that led Spinoza to outline his own project, and to carry it out, along the double register.

The double register refers, according to Chaui, to a "double constitutive movement" in Spinoza's work based on imagination and intuitive science. On the one hand, Spinoza studies the existence of singular bodily things. On the other hand, he studies the implication of every singular bodily thing in the unique substance. Spinoza's thought is, for Chaui, an experience of thought "on the way that leads from the corporeal image of the singular existence to the idea of a singular essence" (46). Chaui finds in the Dutch new optics developed by Kepler and Huygens, already assimilated by Vermeer and Rembrandt's painting, the possibility of the Spinozian synthesis. "The eye of the spirit is deep inside the universe": this could be the motto of the new optics against the Italian perspectival canon. Spinoza will say: "like the worm in the blood." "It is from that interior place that he acquires the knowledge that he is part of a whole, that is, of a system of necessary relations constituted by laws of coherence between the parts and of concordance between the parts and the whole" (Chaui 52).

Like a worm in the blood: part of the blood and singularity or exception in the blood, a mode in the substance, a mode of the substance. For the *marrano* register "truth … lacks nothing extrinsecal to it to be known, because the true idea is the norm and the index of itself The human intellect … is an innate force for the true" (57). This is the constitutive thrust of the *marrano* register: it does not return to what melancholy yields but seeks its force in desubjectivation. In the *marrano* double exclusion the presence of itself to itself emerges through its own withdrawal. This is the extraordinary possibility: the totality of what withdraws returns in counterdiscourse, but returns alternatively, under *marrano* not identitarian register. True knowledge is the very deployment of the double con-

stitution of thought: an intensification of the immanence of everything to everything, of the singular in the whole and the whole in the singular, a radical intensification of the common. Happiness, freedom, and truth are the same, they are the human essence as the finite expression of the infinite, and reaching it is to accomplish the immanence of individual singularity in the eternal substance. This is at the same time instituting and deconstructive. For Chaui, "in the *Ethics* it is a question of demonstrating the necessity of immanence as the only intelligibility of the real, and the irrationality of every image of transcendence, from the permanent articulation of immanent efficiency and the critique of final causes" (Chaui 71). The *marrano* register does not posit a for-what; it only embraces its own necessity. "Finalism is not just ignorance of the true causes of actions, causes that are always efficient, but also withdrawal of the agent into the autonomy of its acting, which transforms it into a patient, since it subjects it to something external, throwing it into heteronomy, since either the ends of action were not posited by it, in the case of humans, or, if posited by the agent, have become separated from it, in the case of God" (83).

Immanent and anti-finalist causality establishes the coherence of Spinozian republicanism against every idea of providential history, whether Christian-ecclesiastic or Judeo-messianic, but also against the Helleno-Roman disenchantment in view of the decline of the state (83). Neither progress nor a fall. The explosion of ontotheology in Spinoza's thought establishes a new condition of empire—only democracy is *imperium absolutum* insofar as only democracy is in a position to affirm the saturation of the field of the real from the real itself, and not from its capture by the imaginary, which is the problem and the potential evil of every identitarian register. Spinoza is the first philosopher of common political democracy.

On its deconstructive side Chaui observes four main targets of Spinozianism. They are the demolition of the theologico-religious edifice where God and Nature are thought in their mutual analogy; of the very presupposition of analogy, which is the image of creation, of finality, of an omnipotent and unfathomable but visibly oriented divine will; of the theological-moral edifice based upon the identification of freedom and the will, in God, and of freedom and guilt in the human (with its chain

of consequences: predestination, election, final judgment, sin, remorse, salvation or damnation); and of the theologico-political edifice where a conception of God prevails without which politics cannot be thought (94; 96–97). This is *marrano* thought: God and Nature do not stand in an analogical relation; there is no analogical relation, and therefore no orientation of history; there is no abyss of guilt through which human freedom must be systematically coerced into obedient behavior; and there is no ontotheological subordination of the political, either to God the Master or to any of its surrogates, including the party of orthodoxy, whatever form it assumes. Those are all characteristics of the identitarian register. Would it be possible for us today, at the epochal moment of the end of ontotheological temporality, to give a concept to conditions of political constitution outside any debt to the analogical-transitive causality that determines the (Judeo-Roman) political history of the West? Is the *marrano* register, as originally systematized by Spinoza, not our best bet against the political theology of modernity at the end of modernity?

The Taskless Task

Giorgio Agamben has remarked on the courage with which Emmanuel Levinas, in his "Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism," identifies in Hitlerism a number of categories that he himself is trying to elaborate in his own philosophical thought (Agamben 335). The politico-theological or secularizing element in liberalism had retained from Christianity "one of its essential elements in the form of the sovereign freedom of reason" (Levinas 66): "In the world of liberalism, man is not weighed down by a History in choosing his destiny. He does not experience the possibilities open to him as a series of restless powers that seethe within him and already push him down a determined path. For him, they are only logical possibilities that present themselves to a dispassionate reason that makes choices while forever keeping its distance" (66).

Such is not the case for fascism. Marxism had already partially broken with the liberal view by endorsing the notion that being determines consciousness, but the break was not absolute: "Individual consciousness determined by being is not sufficiently impotent not to retain, at least in principle, the power to shake off the social bewitchment that then ap-

pears foreign to its essence" (67). For fascism, however, "the situation to which [man] was bound [is] not added to him but form[s] the very foundations of his being" (67). It is from this perspective that Levinas finds himself sharing a foundational point of departure with Nazism: "The body is not a happy or unhappy accident that relates us to the implacable world of matter. Its adherence to the Self is of value in itself. It is an adherence that one does not escape and that no metaphor can confuse with the presence of an external object; it is a union that does not in any way alter the tragic character of finality" (68). This is "the new conception of man": "the mysterious urgings of the blood, the appeals of heredity and the past for which the body serves as an enigmatic vehicle, lose the character of being problems that are subject to a solution put forward by a sovereignly free Self Man's essence no longer lies in freedom, but in a kind of bondage. To be truly oneself … means becoming aware of the ineluctable original chain that is unique to our bodies, and above all accepting this chaining" (69).

The fascist choice is now open. "Chained to his body, man sees himself refusing the power to escape from himself. Truth is no longer for him the contemplation of a foreign spectacle; instead it consists in a drama in which man is himself the actor. It is under the weight of his own existence, which includes facts on which there is no going back, that man will say his yes or his no" (70). And the fascist "yes" is the constitution of a political procedure of truth that, as such, must find its way towards universality. Levinas's elaboration of this problem is in my opinion his most important contribution, and one that, for us, marks the radical line of division between the *marrano* and the identitarian register. Levinas says: "How is universality compatible with racism? The answer—to be found in the logic of what first inspires racism—involves a basic modification of the very idea of universality. Universality must give way to the idea of expansion, for the expansion of a force presents a structure that is completely different from the propagation of an idea" (70).

Force expansion against idea propagation: the latter serves a process of equalization as it "becomes a common heritage" (70). But "force does not disappear among those who submit to it. It is attached to the personality or society exerting it, enlarging that person or society while subordinating the rest. Here the universal order is not established as a consequence

of ideological expansion; it is that very expansion that constitutes the unity of a world of masters and slaves" (70–71). There is no identitarian community to the very extent that a community of masters and slaves is not a community of the common. The identitarian community is always a community of subordination. Given this situation, Agamben wonders whether we still live, unawares, "in the margins of nazism" (337). That we are riven to our factical existence, that our universe is no longer the liberal universe of the sovereign freedom of reason, Agamben says, throws a wrench into the political (Christian-liberal) tradition of the West. Spinoza's worm in the blood knew well that it could find no exit, and decided to live its destiny in the intensifying affirmation of its predicament. But embracing naked life as it is was also the Nazi solution. The Nazi vocation to turn "natural genetic inheritance into the historical mission of the German people" (342) must be distinguished from the Spinozist "extraordinary possibility" of democracy as *imperium absolutum* and saturation of the field of the real. It is the antifinalism of Spinoza's project, the stubborn restraint of the *marrano* register to the common intransitiveness of a life without analogical masters that marks the minimal difference. Common political democracy is not a democracy of the people to the extent that the people is always counted as One, and always assigned a destiny. Agamben notes the contemporary insistence on recovering heritage as task, and against it he proposes the old Aristotelian notion of the taskless man, or people without a task, without an *ergon*, as the horizon of a new visitation of the political. "Politics is what corresponds to the essential de-tasking of men, to the radically work-less being of human communities" (343). This workless community is the undestined community of the vanquished: the free future of the common.

Notes

1. Galli develops these ideas in *Spazi politici* and in a short sequel called *La guerra globale*. The notion of "global war" that is the subject of the supplement to *Spazi politici* initiates the analysis of the possible consequences of the end of the restraining period. What the restrainer restrained was the very political tension of the architectonics of modernity. If the latter was primarily designed, negatively or nihilistically, to prevent conflict or rather to relegate it to an exteriority, today conflict has become generalized, to such an extent

that no categorical distinction can be made between politics and war. Globalization is war. And war is the (fracturing) unity of being for our time. If we could think of an exception to war, then we should, and it is an urgent task under which Galli posits the very possibility of a new freedom. No freedom, then, without a new conceptuality, even though it is also the case that a new conceptuality cannot by itself guarantee freedom. The stakes could not be higher. It is now no longer enough to change the world: one must first interpret it. That is, one must first develop an adequate vocabulary, given the collapse of our language(s).

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Chapter 9

Bare Life

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One of the most important new concepts introduced in contemporary theory is Georgio Agamben's notion of bare life. Agamben's crucial contribution allows us not only to revise the Foucauldian theory of biopower, but also to rethink the political contradictions of modernity. Despite its importance, Agamben's theory of bare life does not, however, sufficiently address two crucial questions: the problem of resistance and the negative differentiation of bare life with respect to racial and gender differences. Thanks to Agamben's revision of biopolitics, it becomes clear that resistance cannot be limited to the contestation of the law or power structures; in fact, one of the most pressing political questions raised by *Homo Sacer* is whether bare life itself can be mobilized by emancipatory movements. The second issue we need to reconsider is the way bare life is implicated in gendered, class, colonial and racist configurations of the political and, because of this implication, suffers different forms of violence.[1] The central paradox bare life presents for political analysis is not only the erasure of political distinctions but also the negative differentiation, or privation, such erasure produces with respect to differences that used to characterize a *form* of life that was destroyed.

To develop the paradoxes of bare life, let us begin with Agamben's definition of this concept. Reworking Aristotle's[2] and Hannah Arendt's[3] distinctions between biological existence (*zoe)* and the political life of speech and action *(bios*), between mere life and a good life, Agamben introduces in *Homo Sacer* his own interpretation and his own necessarily selective genealogy of "bare life" from antiquity to modernity. Stripped from political significance and exposed to murderous violence, bare life

is both the counterpart of the sovereign decision on the state of exception and the target of sovereign violence. To avoid misunderstanding, I would like to stress the point that is made sometimes only implicitly in Agamben's work and not always sufficiently stressed by his commentators: namely, the fact that bare life, wounded, expendable, and endangered, is not the same as biological *zoe*, but rather the remainder of the destroyed political *bios*. As Agamben puts it in his critique of Hobbes' state of nature, mere life "is not simply natural reproductive life, the *zoe* of the Greeks, nor *bios*" but rather "a zone of indistinction and continuous transition between man and beast" (1998, 109). More emphatically, the conclusion of *Homo Sacer* stresses the fact that "[e]very attempt to rethink the political space of the West must begin with the clear awareness that we no longer know anything of the classical distinction between *zoe* and *bios*" (187). To evoke Theodor Adorno, we could say that bare life, not only the referent but also the effect of sovereign violence, is damaged life, stripped of its political significance, of its specific form of life.

For Agamben, bare life constitutes the original but "concealed nucleus" of Western biopolitics in so far as its exclusion founds the political realm. Bare life is always already captured by the political in a double way: first, in the form of the exclusion from the *polis*—it is included in the political in the form of exclusion—and, second, in the form of the unlimited exposure to violation, which does not count as a crime. Thus, the most fundamental categories of Western politics are not the social contract, or the friend and the enemy, but bare life and sovereign power (7–8). As Agamben's broad outline of the political genealogy suggests, the position and the political function of bare life changes historically. This genealogy begins with the most distant memory and the first figuration of bare life expressed in ancient Roman law by the obscure notion of *homo sacer*—that is, the notion of the banned man who can be killed with impunity by all but is unworthy of either juridical punishment or religious sacrifice. Neither the condemned criminal nor the sacrificial scapegoat, and thus outside the human and divine law, *homo sacer* is the target of sovereign violence exceeding the force of law and yet anticipated and authorized by that law. Banished from collectivity, he is the referent of the sovereign decision on the state of exception, which both confirms and suspends the normal operation of the law. In Agamben's genealogy, the major shift in

the politicization of bare life occurs in modernity. With the mutation of sovereignty into biopower, bare life ceases to be the excluded outside of the political but in fact becomes its inner hidden norm: bare life "gradually begins to coincide with the political realm" (9). However, this inclusion and distribution of bare life *within* the political does not mean its integration with political existence; rather, it is a disjunctive inclusion of the inassimilable remnant, which still remains the target of sovereign violence. As Agamben argues, "Western politics has not succeeded in constructing the link between *zoe* and *bios*" (11).

In contrast to the ancient ban, or the inclusive *exclusion* from the political, a new form of disjunctive *inclusion* of bare life within the *polis* emerges with modern democracies. In democratic regimes this hidden incorporation of bare life both into the political realm and into the structure of citizenship manifests itself, according to Agamben, as the inscription of "birth" within human rights—an inscription that establishes a dangerous link between citizenship, nation, and biological kinship. As the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man proclaims, men do not become equal by virtue of their political association but are "born and remain" equal. Democratic citizens are thus bearers of both bare life and human rights, they are at the same time the targets of disciplinary power and free democratic subjects. In a political revision of Foucault's formulation of modern subjectivity as "empirico-transcendental" doublet,[4] Agamben argues that the modern citizen is "*a two-faced being, the bearer both of subjection to sovereign power and of individual liberties* (Agamben, 1998, 125). The democratic subject of rights is thus characterized by the aporia between political freedom and the subjection of mere life, without a clear distinction, mediation, or reconciliation between them.

Since bare life is included within Western democracies as their hidden inner ground and as such cannot mark their borders, modern politics is about the search for new racialized and gendered targets of exclusion, for the new living dead (130). In our own times, such targets multiply with astonishing speed and infiltrate bodies down to the cellular level: from refugees, illegal immigrants, inmates on death row subject to suicide watch, comatose patients on life support, to organ transplants and fetal stem cells. For Agamben, this inclusion of bare life within the bodies of each citizen becomes catastrophically apparent with the reversal of the

democratic state into totalitarian regimes at the beginning of the 20th century. As the disasters of fascism and soviet totalitarianism demonstrate, and as the continuous histories of genocide show, by suspending political forms of life, totalitarian regimes can reduce whole populations to disposable bare life that could be destroyed with impunity. This is what according to Agamben constitutes the unprecedented horror of Nazi concentration camps: the extreme destitution and degradation of human life to bare life subject to mass extermination: "Insofar as its inhabitants were stripped of every political status and wholly reduced to bare life, the camp was also the most absolute biopolitical space ever to have been realized, in which power confronts nothing but pure life, without any mediation" (171). If Agamben controversially claims that camps are not just the extreme aberration of modernity but its "fundamental biopolitical paradigm" (181), which shows the "thanatopolitical face"of power (142, 150), it is because concentration camps for the first time actualize the danger implicit in Western politics, namely, the total genocide made possible by the reversal of the exception signified by *homo sacer* into a new thanato-political norm. Such collapse of the distinction between exception and norm, such transformation of the temporal exception into material space, together with the "absolute" and unmediated subjection of life to death, constitutes the "supreme" political principle of genocide.

The most compelling force of Agamben's work is his diagnosis of the ways the aporia of the bare life/life opposition in Western politics gives rise to new forms of domination and to the reversal of democracy into fascism. Nonetheless, Agamben's analysis of this aporia from antiquity to modernity misses two crucial issues: the question of resistance and the negative differentiation of bare life along racial, ethic, and gender lines. First of all, as several commentators and critics, most notably Ernesto Laclau, argue, what is lacking in Agamben's work is a theory of the "emancipatory possibilities" of modernity.[5] Yet if we were to reconstruct such a theory in terms of Agamben's philosophy, then the task of conceptualizing resistance could not be limited to the contestation of the law or power structures; in fact, one of the most important political questions is whether bare life itself can be mobilized by oppositional movements. By focusing on the way bare life functions as the referent of the sovereign decision, Agamben, unfortunately, answers this question in the negative:

"The 'body' is always already a biopolitical body and bare life, and *nothing in it* … seems to allow us to find solid ground on which *to oppose the demands of sovereign power*" (187, emphasis added). The second problem Agamben ignores is the way bare life is implicated in the gendered, sexist, colonial and racist configurations of biopolitics. If we argue that bare life emerges as the after-effect of the destruction of the symbolic differences of gender, ethnicity, race or class—differences which constitute political forms of life—this means that bare life is still negatively determined by the destruction of *a historically specific* way of life. Thus another paradox of bare life is the simultaneous erasure of the political distinctions and the negative differentiation retrospectively produced by such erasure.

Let us consider these two issues—the differentiation of bare life and its role in emancipatory movements—in turn. Although Agamben's heterogenous examples of bare life—for instance, the father/ son relation in antiquity, Nazi euthanasia programs for the mentally ill, refugee camps, the ethnic rape camps in the former Yugoslavia, the comatose body on life support, and especially the most extreme case of the *Muselmann*—are always diversified according to racist, gendered, and ethnic and historical distinctions, his conceptual analysis does not follow the implications of such diversification. Consider for instance Agamben's brief comment about the difference between ethnic rape camps and Nazi camps: "If the Nazis never thought of effecting the Final Solution by making Jewish women pregnant, it is because the principle of birth that assured the inscription of life in the order of the nation-state was still—if in a profoundly transformed sense—in operation. This principle has now entered into a process of decay" (176). Needless to say, the sexually and racially marked difference between these two forms of sovereign violence—killing and rape—cannot be reduced to the principle of birth alone. Agamben refrains from any further explorations of rape as a sexual political violence because such an analysis would complicate his very concept of bare life, always defined as a life that can be killed, but not as life that can be raped or subjected to sexual violence.

To show the necessity of supplementing Agamben's conceptualization of bare life, I would like to consider briefly Aristotle's and Orlando Patterson's discussion of slavery, on the one hand, and the modern uses of the hunger strike, on the other. In terms of Agamben's genealogy of bare life,

slavery is an important case to consider because its ancient and modern, racialized forms represent instances of bare life co-extensive with both the Greek *polis* and modern democracy and yet irreducible to the category of either *homo sacer* or the camp. Let us begin the exploration of bare life and slavery with the text that is foundational to Agamben's political theory—with Aristotle's *Politics*. As soon as Aristotle introduces the crucial distinctions between *zoe* and *bios*, *oikos* (home) and *polis*, he is confronted with the localization and legitimation of enslaved life, which does not seem to fit easily into these distinctions. Thus, it is not only the case that, as Thomas Wall argues, in the Greek *polis* bare life "was abandoned to the home, the *oikos*" (39). There is also the more fundamental problem that Aristotle's defense of slavery creates a conceptual aporia undermining his definition of slavery as an "animate instrument" belonging to the household. Implicated in the network of differences fundamental to the differentiation of the public space of the city—such as the differences between the body and the soul, the male and the female, the human and the animal, passion and reason—enslaved life, defined by Aristotle as property, does not have a "proper" place. In his apologia, Aristotle writes the following: "The soul rules the body with the authority of a master: reason rules the appetite with the authority of the a statesman The same principle is true of the relation of man to other animals Again, the relation of male to female is naturally that of the superior to the inferior We may thus conclude that all men who differ from others as much as the body differs from the soul, or an animal from a man … are by nature slaves" (Aristotle, 1254b, 16). As these multiple analogies show, the political subjection and exclusion of femininity and slavery is "like" the subjection of the body to reason and animality to humanity. Perhaps bearing witness to the threat of enslavement in war, this analogy potentially makes the body of each Greek citizen "like" the enslaved or inhuman body. And conversely the enslaved body blurs the distinction between the human and the animal, the household and the city. Because of its in-between position on the "threshold" (to use Agamben's apt term), slavery in Aristotle's text begins to haunt the Greek *polis* from within and from without, making the Greek citizen, prior to its modern counterpart, already "*a two-faced being, the bearer of bodily*" enslavement to reason and a political being among equals.

Although subjected to the violence of the master rather than to sovereign banishment, enslaved life in Aristotle's *Politics*, like the obscure figure of "*homo sacer*" in Roman law, blurs the boundaries between the inside and the outside of the political. It is Orlando Patterson's influential study of slavery from antiquity to modernity that gives a full account of the liminality of the slave's paradoxical position in the social order. In his seminal work *Slavery and Social Death*, Patterson argues that the enigma of slavery exceeds both the juridical and the economic categories of law, production, exchange, or property. What all these categories fail to explicate is both the "total" domination of the enslaved life and the liminality of slaves' position. Like the indistinction, or the threshold, between the inside and outside marked by *homo sacer*, slave's liminality (Patterson 42, 44) collapses both the political and the ontological differences between the human and the inhuman, monstrosity and normality, anomaly and norm, life and death, cosmos and chaos, being and "nonbeing." In one of the most suggestive passages devoted to the interpretation of the Anglo-Saxon representation of slavery/servitude in *Beowulf*, Patterson writes: "It was precisely because he was marginal, neither human nor inhuman, neither man nor beast, neither dead nor alive, the enemy within who was neither member nor true alien, that the slave could lead Beowulf and his men across the deadly margin that separated the social order above from the terror and chaos of the underground" (48).

What is then the relation between these two different expressions of subjugation and liminality represented, on the one hand, by *homo sacer* and, on the other hand, by enslaved life? The key link between bare life/ sovereignty and the master/ slave dialectic is the substitutability of slavery for death: either for the death of the external enemy or the death of the internal "fallen" member of the community. According to Patterson, this substitution of enslavement for death is echoed in the "archetypal" meaning of slavery as social death (26). Such substitution of enslavement for death does not give pardon but, on the contrary, creates the anomaly of the socially dead but biologically alive and economically exploited being. Because the expropriation of the slave's life constitutes him or her as a non-person, or a socially dead person, it produces another instance of bare life, violently stripped of genealogy, cultural memory, social distinction, name and native language, that is, of all the elements of Aristotle's

bios. Akin to the "secular excommunication," slavery in all its different historical formations from antiquity to modernity was institutionalized as the extreme destruction of the socio-symbolic formation of subjectivity. This extreme mode of deracination and exclusion from symbolization, the *polis,* and kinship, reconstituted enslaved life as a nameless, invisible nonbeing—as *pro nullo* (40).

The notion of slavery a substitute for death complicates Agamben's central thesis that sovereign decision/bare life constitutes the foundational political paradigm in the West. Although the extreme delegitimation and the nullity of enslaved life makes it another instantiation of bare life, the very fact that such life undergoes substitutions of one form of destruction for another undermines from the start the centrality of *just one* paradigm of politics. In fact, as Hortense Spillers, Sadiya Hartman, and Alexander Weheliye in different ways argue, the institution of slavery as social death is not merely a historical phenomenon, but the continuous unfolding of suffering and dispossession that on the one hand, "engenders the black subject in the Americas" (Hartman 51) and on the other hand engenders a matrix of Western political modernity. According to Weheliye, "as opposed to being confined to a particular historical period, echoes of new world slavery rest in many contemporary spaces" (66). Second, slavery raises the question whether the destruction of the historically specific *form* of life is a 'condition' of exchangeability as such. As Patterson argues, the destruction of the political forms of life turned human beings into "the ideal human tool… perfectly flexible, unattached, and deracinated" (337). Because of its fungibility, such a "disposable," "ultimate human tool" (7) is also a perfect commodity; and indeed, Patterson notes instances where slavery functioned as money. We can argue, therefore, that the violent production of social death functions as a hidden ground not only of politics but also of commodity exchange. Consequently, the substitution of social death for biological death indicates a possible transformation of the sovereign ban into ownership and exchange.

The biopolitics of substitution inscribed in the power relations of slavery changes the character of both death and birth. Deprived of its finitude, the anomaly of social death denotes a spectral duration of nonbeing beyond the categories of absence and presence, potentiality and actuality. On the one hand, the spectrality of social death constitutes a

permanent threat of anomaly and aberration; on the other hand, it is continually put to work in order to produce profit, and as such is the lynchpin of biopolitics and economics. This spectral character of social death, which continues to endure in the form of nonbeing, also destroys the principle of natality, understood in the most broad terms, not only as the biological birth, but also as the claims of genealogy, the principle of a new beginning (Arendt 7–11).

What both slavery and *homo sacer* have in common is the production of bare life stripped of its historically specific form of life, yet what distinguishes them is the contrast between sovereign ban and the marginal inclusion of enslaved life. If the sovereign decision on the state of exception captures bare life in order to exclude it, the biopolitics of slavery is confronted with the profitable inclusion of the socially dead beings. Hence, Patterson argues that after the stage of violent depersonalization, the next stage of enslavement introduces "the slave into the community of his master, but it involves the paradox of introducing him as a nonbeing" (38). Since, unlike *homo sacer*, the socially dead being has to be included within and made profitable, this second stage of the biopolitics of slavery poses the dilemma of "liminal incorporation" (45). The paradox of liminal incorporation is the opposite of the sovereign ban, even though it creates similar effects of indistinction. In place of a sovereign decision on the state of exception, we have institutionalized containment within the law of a permanent anomaly, which confounds the differences between life and death, destruction and profit.

The difference between the sovereign will and the slaveholder's domination is most evident in the latter's destructive dependence on enslaved bare life. Patterson stresses the reversal of the slaveholder's absolute domination into parasitical dependence. In so doing, he rewrites the Hegelian master slave dialectic—which explains such dependence in terms of the desire for recognition—as "human parasitism." In fact "the parasitism of slavery" supplements both Agamben's and Hegel's philosophies: what it adds to Agamben's theory of sovereignty is the parasitical dependence of the absolute power; the novelty it introduces to the Hegelian struggle for recognition is the "biopolitics"of the body—the consumption of bare life by the exploiting parasitical master (Paterson 46, 336): "the dominator, in the process of dominating and making another individual dependent,

also makes himself (the dominator) dependent On this intersubjective level the slaveholder *fed* on the slave to gain the very direct satisfactions of power over another" (336–337). As the other side of absolute mastery, the parasitical dependence of power on bare life is precisely what escapes both Agamben's biopolitical paradigm of sovereign will and Hegel's paradigm of recognition. Like a reversed figure of the vampire sucking the blood of the living, the parasitical side of absolute power suggests that perhaps sovereignty is one of the most powerful political fantasies, masking power's dependence on bare life that is already dead and yet continues to threaten and provide satisfaction.

The reversal of domination into parasitical dependence has another crucial consequence that is downplayed in Agamben's theory of sovereignty: such dependence provides a new ground to theorize the possibility of resistance and emancipation. The emphasis on resistance, which negates a prior destruction of human forms of life and calls for the creation of new forms, culminates in Patterson's claim that the most important political discovery of enslaved peoples is that of freedom: "The first men and women to struggle for freedom, the first to think of themselves as free… were freedmen. And without slavery there would have been no freedmen" (342). Although Patterson is deeply troubled by making enslavement even a contingent condition of freedom, nonetheless his insistence on the ongoing struggle for liberation by the dominated peoples points to another legacy of modernity Agamben sidesteps in his analysis: the legacy of revolutionary and emancipatory movements.

Agamben is right that the praxis of liberation calls for an ontology of potentiality. Yet he never considers potentiality from the perspective of bare life—that is, from the perspective of the impossible—focusing instead on the often obliterated difference between potentiality and sovereign power. What makes it especially difficult for him to theorize emancipation in greater detail are the parallels he establishes all too quickly between potentiality, event, the excess of the constituting power and sovereign exception. Consider Agamben's characteristic response to Antonio Negri,[6] who defends the political possibility of resistance and creative praxis. In his polemic, Agamben claims that there are in fact no grounds to distinguish between revolutionary praxis and sovereign exception:

> The problem of the difference between constituting power and sovereign power is, certainly, essential. Yet the fact that constituting power neither derives from the constituted order nor limits itself to instituting it—being, rather free praxis—still says nothing as to constituting power's alterity with respect to sovereign power. (43)

Perhaps Agamben does not see any criterion by which to distinguish transformative praxis from sovereign violence because he is primarily concerned with the topological excess of sovereign violence vis-à-vis the political order. As he admits, "the question 'Where?' is the essential one once neither the constituting power nor the sovereign can be situated wholly inside or altogether outside the constituted order" (Agamben 42). However, if we switch the terms of the analysis from "where" to "how"—that is, from Agamben's topology to the most important Foucauldian lesson about techniques and modalities of power—then the difference between transformative praxis and sovereign violence becomes more apparent. Although both types of power exceed the constituted order, their mode of operation is different. The excess of sovereign power manifests itself as a suspension of the law, as the exclusion of bare life, as a state of exception that either confirms the norm, or, in extreme cases, collapses the distinction between the exception and the norm. The mode of operation of the transformative power, however, is not the decision on the exception but the negation of existing exclusions from the political followed by the unpredictable and open-ended process of creating new forms of collective life—a process that resembles in certain respects more an aesthetic experiment "without truth" (Agamben, 1999, 259) than an instrumental action.

As I have suggested, another reason Agamben does not consider the practice of liberation in greater depth is that his ontology of potentiality is developed to undermine sovereign will and not to transform bare life into a site of contestation and political possibility. To theorize the notion of bare life as a contested terrain I would like to turn now to a different, far more recent, political case—the case of the hunger strike, in particular, the British suffragettes' use of hunger strike in the struggle for women's voting rights at the beginning of the twentieth century. The hunger strike reveals once again three interrelated aspects of bare life: first, its

negative differentiation with respect to the politics of race and gender; second, its subjection to different forms of violence; and finally, its role in multiple emancipatory movements. Let me begin with the facts that tend to be all too easily taken for granted: at the turn of the 20th century, racialized and gendered subjectivities still occupied liminal positions in Western democracies, and as such were associated in the political imaginary with the inclusive exclusion of bare life. And yet these subjectivities were also the "bearers" and creators of a very different legacy of modernity—the legacy of multiple liberation movements. In this context, the hunger strike can be regarded as an invention of a new mode of political contestation, which mobilizes bare life for emancipatory struggle. Consequently, this case allows us to supplement Agamben's analysis in a crucial way: the hunger strike not only reveals the hidden aporia of democracy—the aporia between the politicization of bare life as the object of biopower and political freedom guaranteed by human rights—but also shows how this aporia can enable revolutionary transformation.

Although the history of the hunger strike is often obscure, it was practiced in ancient Rome, medieval Ireland, and India as means of protest, usually, to force a debtor to return his debt or to exert moral pressure.[7] After the Easter Rising of 1916 in Ireland, the hunger strike tactic was by adopted by the Irish struggle for independence (1917)[8] and, most famously, by Mohandas Ghandi (Sharp 637). Nonetheless, it was British militant suffragettes who in 1909 revived and redefined the hunger strike as the modern political weapon of an organized movement by linking it for the first time with the discourse of human rights.

Although one of the most dramatic episodes in the struggle for women's suffrage,[9] hunger striking and the political reprisals of forcible feeding are, like the hunger strike in general, still under-theorized means of democratic protest. In his study of nonviolent political action, Sharp classifies the hunger strike as a means of political intervention demanding a transformation of power relations and a redress for injustice (359). For Kyria Landzelius, the hunger strike is a "corporeal challenge" to "the discursive practices of power" (1999, 83). The hunger strike is both a protest and a demand for new freedoms, an appeal articulated through the double, sharply disjoined medium of publicly circulating letters and the starving body secluded in prison and barred from public appearance. The "vio-

lence" of hunger strike seems paradoxical: such violence, inflicted on the self as a substitute target for the political enemy, acts by refusing to act; it collapses clear distinctions between passivity and activity, actuality and potentiality, subjugation and resistance. On one hand, the hunger strike repeats, usurps and exposes in public the hidden irrational violence of the sovereign state against women's bodies. On the other hand, by usurping the state's power over bare life, "the non-act" of self-starvation negates women's exclusion and calls for the transformation of the law. By usurping sovereign power over bare life, hunger striking women occupy both of these positions—the sovereign and *homo sacer*—at the same time; and this is what distinguishes their status from comatose patients and the inmates of concentration camps, that is, from all those beings who, in extreme destitution, are reduced to bare life alone. What is thus performed in the hunger strike is the collapse of the distinctions between sovereignty and bare life, will and passivity, potentiality and actuality, the struggle for freedom and the risk of self-annihilation. Maud Ellmann rightly calls such a performance a "gamble with mortality" (21). And as the word "gamble" implies, at stake here is a transformation of the central opposition between the sovereign decision and bare life into radical contingency in political life. Although not analyzed by Agamben, the emphasis on the collective political struggle over bare life is an important element, which defines the hunger strike as a weapon against the political enemy.

Hunger strikers' usurpation of the sovereign decision over mere life in the struggle for political rights negates their exclusion and suspends the current law, at least on the symbolic level. Yet this act does not constitute a state of exception, which, through the act of exclusion, establishes the normal frame of reference or, as in the case of fascism, turns exception into a new norm. Rather, suffrage militancy represents a revolutionary call for a new law yet to come. As Kyria Landzelius argues, the hunger strike stages a political trial of the existing law and political authority. In this "meta-juridical trial" (220), the private act of starvation reverses the guilty verdict imposed on the militant suffragettes into a public condemnation of the government. Thus, the hunger strike "perverts" juridical punishment into the means of interrogation of the law itself and the contestation of the Government's authority. By reversing the roles of the defendants and the accusers, the drama of the hunger strike publicly

condemns the government, delegitimates the authority of the existing law, and calls for its transformation. The hunger strike performs, therefore, a double chiasmatic transfer between bare life and the law, between the present and the future: On the one hand, it transforms the private act of starvation into a collective contestation of the existing law; on the other hand, it summons the as yet non-existent authority of the new law by risking the physical life of the body. In a catachrestic movement, this gamble with mortality anticipates what is unpredictable and beyond anticipation: a new law and a new form of life of female bodies. In so doing, it transforms impossibility into the "potentiality" of transformation. It is thus a very different passage from the one Agamben analyzes—not the passage from potentiality to actuality, but from impossibility to possibility.

As a counter to the sovereign decision, hunger strikers "seize hold" of their bare life, wrestle it away from sovereign decision, and transform it into the site of the constitution of a new form of life yet to come. Suffragettes' public redefinition of the female body so that it no longer bears the repressed signification of bare life and acquires instead a political form not only challenges the sovereign decision over bare life, but in so doing calls for a new mediation of life and form outside the parameters of that decision. At stake here is a new type of link between bare life and political form that would be generated from below, as it were, rather than imposed by a sovereign decision. As Thomas Wall argues, it is the absence of the relation between bare life and its politically qualified ways of life that calls for sovereign decision: "Bare life is nonrelational and thus invites decision. It is the very space of decision … and, as such, is perpetually *au hasard*" (39). By contesting sovereign decision on bare life, the new link between bare life and forms of living cannot be confused either with a dialectical reconciliation or a celebration of prepolitical life. At the end of *Homo Sacer*, Agamben only hints at what this new form of "mediation" supplanting sovereign decision might look like:

> This biopolitical body that is bare life must itself instead be transformed into the site for the constitution and installation of a form of life that is wholly exhausted in bare life and a *bios* that is only its own *zoe* … we give the name form-of-life to

> this being that is only its own bare existence and to this life that, being its own form, remains inseparable from it. (188)

In this difficult passage Agamben only hints at what this new form of "mediation" supplanting sovereign decision might look like. It seems to me that a key point here is the interconnection and yet nonidentity between form and life, human and inhuman,[10] which makes their separation and unification equally impossible. Such a politicization, or the conflicting creation of form for bare life, takes us beyond the usual three alternatives that govern the discussion of the body in politics: the paradigm of biopolitics, the nostalgic return to the remains of the natural body, or the equally naive social construction of a new technological body.

I hope that this essay makes abundantly clear that the notion of "bare life" can open new possibilities of interpretation of the biopolitics of race and gender for contemporary political philosophy, feminist thought, and critical race studies. Yet, as my discussion also shows, such reconsideration of "bare life" in the context of racial and sexual politics calls for some fundamental revisions of that concept. First of all, as we have seen, bare life cannot be regarded in a complete separation from all cultural/political characteristics. If bare life emerges as the remnant of a destroyed human form of life, then, according to Agamben's own emphasis on its *inclusive exclusion* in the political, its formulation has to refer, in a negative way, to the racial/sexual/ethnic/class differences that used to characterize its *form* of life. In other words, bare life has to be defined as the remnant of a specific form of life that it not yet, or no longer, is. Furthermore, bare life cannot be always be considered as the exclusive referent of the sovereign decision, but has to be reconceptualized as a more complex, contested terrain where new forms of domination, dependence, and emancipatory struggle can emerge. By analyzing bare life as the target of sovereign violence, Agamben allows us to diagnose new forms of domination and political dangers in modernity. Although any praxis of freedom is dependent on such a diagnosis, such praxis at the same time exceeds the constituted forms of power and requires reflection on the often occluded role of bare life in another paradigm of democratic modernity—that of the revolutionary tradition. In the context of the revolutionary paradigm, the excess of bare life over the constituted forms of life not only does not authorize the sovereign decision on the state of exception but in fact marks

openness to what is yet to come—a possibility of political transformation, a creation of new forms of life, an arrival of a more expansive conception of freedom and justice. In so doing, it transforms impossibility into contingency in political life.

Notes

1. Catherine Mills is one of the very few Agamben interpreters to raise the question of sexuality and sexual embodiment, but in the context of Agamben's theory of testimony rather than his theory of bare life (215–218). For the most extensive discussion of sexuality and bare life in the context of slavery, see Alexander Weheliye (65–81) and Ziarek (2008, 89–105) Diane Enns' careful analysis of the ambiguities of the revolt of occupied bodies reduced to bare life is another crucial extension of Agamben's work in colonial contexts. See also Andrew Benjamin, "Particularity and Exception: On Jews and Animals," 71–88.

2. In *Politics,* Aristotle makes a famous distinction between mere life and a good life to define the function of *polis*: "while it comes into existence for the sake of mere life, it exists for the sake of a good life" (1252 b 27, 10)

3. Arendt follows the Aristotelian distinction between *zoe* and *bios* in a number of her texts, most notably in *The Human Condition*, where she identifies the political life not only with speech and action but most importantly with the condition of human plurality (7).

4. See Foucault's discussion of "the empirical and the transcendental" in *Order of Things*, (318–321).

5. According to Laclau, the absence of the theory of resistance is intertwined with the lack of the theory of hegemony. Laclau argues that Agamben fails to distinguish between totalitarian and the democratic sovereignty emerging from the hegemony of democratic movements (9). For a different critique of the lack of attention to resistance in the context of the body and the contingency of political struggles, see Kalyvas, 112–113.

6. In response, Negri claims that "there are in fact two Agambens." The first one undermines the creative ontology of potentiality that the second espouses (1–2). I am grateful to Diane Enns for this reference.

7. For a brief discussion of the history of the hunger strike, see Sharp (363–367).

8. Maud Ellmann argues that the Irish nationalists might have been inspired by suffrage, yet in order to conceal this debt, appealed to the medieval practice of fasting against debtors to compel them to repay a debt (11–12).

9. According to Jane Marcus, it is "perhaps the primary image in the public imagination regarding the 'meaning' of the suffrage movement" (2).

10. In the context of his discussion of the survivors' testimonies in *Remnants of Auschwitz*, Agamben defines such a link between the damaged life and the human as the aporetic task of witnessing to the inhuman. The ethics of such witnessing neither abandons nor assimilates it to the human. For my further discussion of the ethical structure of the survivors' testimony in Agamben's *Remnants of Auschwitz*, see Ziarek (2003, 201–203).

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Chapter 10

Sustainability

Haun Saussy

A restaurant menu stuffed into my mailbox the other day offers "1/2 Pound Burger from Authentic, Artisan, Sustainable Cattle Topped with Sustainable Bacon, local Abby Cheese, local Arugula" ($14). For a lexicographer, no evidence is too humble. The hamburger from "Sustainable Cattle Topped with Sustainable Bacon" tells of a word that has vastly expanded its field of reference in recent years.

What the chef means is not hard to explain. "Sustainable cattle" are presumably animals fed on grass, not grain, and raised without the hormones that speed other cattle from birth to a profitable size for slaughter. Pigs do not eat grass, but there must be a similar rationale for "sustainability" in producing bacon. If the beef and bacon do not have to be trucked in from thousands of miles away, the restaurant and the diner accomplish another gain for the environment, reducing the costs of transport, packaging, and refrigeration. But whether eating beef and bacon is a "sustainable" practice at all is another question. It might be sustainable if it were restricted to a small aristocracy, as in the Homeric poems. I am not sure how many acres of pasturage beef cattle require per head, but it is not likely that Connecticut contains enough acres to sustain many "sustainable cattle," or enough to sustain the state's population. A food culture that includes regular doses of beef would not be sustainable under the grass-fed definition of sustainable cattle farming. And when the farmer's accountant looks at the costs of leasing pasturage, or the opportunity costs of holding land in pasture as opposed to selling it for housing developments and shopping malls, the conclusion may be that sustainable farming is not economically sustainable, or not for long. In short, the word applies so

generally, and to the objects of so many contradictory interests, as to give us reason to doubt that there is such a thing as "sustainability."

Another example: the sourcebook *State of the World 2010: Transforming Culture from Consumerism to Sustainability*, published by the Worldwatch Institute, is full of apt critiques of consumerism but nowhere defines "sustainability." The term has become a vague designator for a broad set of behaviors undertaken in order to avoid the destruction of natural resources, behaviors that may be mutually undermining but that have the common characteristic of breaking with the model of ever-increasing growth through increased consumption. And as in my menu example, the trade-off between consumerism and sustainability may be no trade-off at all, once sustainability becomes yet another consumer desirable (no less desirable for all that; I have not yet tried the sustainable bacon burger, but I'm sure it tastes better than its mass-produced rival).

What practices are sustainable? If a timber company scrupulously plants one seedling for every tree felled, and a few more to make up for failures to thrive, the operation is sustainable, assuming that the soil quality is not degraded over time. Every unit taken out of the ecosystem is replaced by a unit of input. With solar or wind energy, presumably the ecological cost of extracting the materials to make photoelectric panels and rotors is amortized, at least by human calculations, by the hydrocarbon-based energy generation they replace. With the pumping of oil, the quarrying of Carrara marble or the depletion of soil by centuries of agriculture, the return of the extracted unit is hard to envisage: most human activities are not environmentally neutral, and by that standard, are not "sustainable" for an indefinite future; they gain the showy label "sustainable" by being less brutally extractive than some other existing practice.

The equivalent term in some other languages, "durable," makes a less exorbitant claim. Why have English-speakers elected to use "sustainable," and to use it in so many contexts?

"Sustainable" became the obligatory word for the concept through the publication of "Our Common Future," the 1987 report of the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development (chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland). The Commission declared: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

But where did the Commission get its choice of word? The answer lies in one of Buckminster Fuller's deflections of the vocabulary of science and engineering, one of his attempts to shift the energies devoted to "weaponry" toward the purposes of "livingry." In his free-verse manifesto *And It Came to Pass—Not to Stay* (1976) Fuller described his life activities thus:

> *For I am intent*
> *Exclusively through artifact inventions*
> *To accomplish prototyped capabilities*
> *Of providing ever more performance*
> *With ever less resources…*
> *All of which chain reactions will trend*
> *To ever higher performance attainments*
> *Of the ever improving artifact instrumented services…*
> *And I purpose…*
> *To accomplish universal economic success*
> *Well being and freedom of humans*
> *Together with a sustained abundance*
> *For all foreseeable generations of humans to come…*
> *And with such design-science-attained*
>
> *Sustainable abundance for all*
> *Proven to be feasible*
> *And attainable for all humanity by 1985*
> *Will also come obsolescence*
> *Of all the political powers'*
> *Historically demonstrated*
> *Ultimate recourse*
> *To hot official*
> *And cold guerilla warfaring … (211–13)*

The passage also encodes the proximate cause of the association between the word "sustainable" and the idea of an energy process that does not deplete its underlying resources, but returns as much in output as was put into it: namely the nuclear chain reaction. Enrico Fermi and Leo

Szilard's atomic pile, built in an abandoned University of Chicago squash court in 1942, appeared to reverse the usual relation between energetic inputs and outputs with its self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction.[1] The new world economy opened by atomic energy would operate on a different economic basis from the world of carbon-based fuels, Fuller reasoned. Something else happened: atomic bombs, superpower rivalry, consumption-led development. "Sustainable," with all its ambiguities and vague aspirations, is the inherited mark of that moment of postwar optimism. It is the unread symbol of the reversal of economic laws that might be achieved if only human nature could be amended.

Notes

1. The plaque on the Stagg Field site today reads: "On December 2, 1942, man achieved here the first self-sustaining chain reaction and thereby initiated the controlled release of nuclear energy."

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Chapter 11

The Global Unworld

A Meditative Manifesto

Krzysztof Ziarek

Contemporary economic, political, and cultural debates tend to revolve around both the planetary scope of issues molding today's reality and the globally interconnected character of the problems facing us: from global economic crisis and worldwide security threats to global climate change or global systems theory. Globalization has not simply become the convenient watchword for mass media as well as academic discussions but has in fact come to shape the standard for reflecting and critically measuring the planetary scope and the globally interfaced nature of reality today. In short, despite—or perhaps because of—a veritable flood of publications, it seems to have become a largely uninterrogated "global" consensus that the world now functions and is experienced as a global or planetary phenomenon. One could argue over which of the terms, "global" or "planetary," is better suited to help us think through the issues critically. The adjective "global" underscores the globe-wide and globe-complex nature of the various phenomena affecting and effecting our daily experience. It literally rounds off and gives a self-contained, spherical shape to our insights and formulations, furnishing an unarticulated linguistic illusion that when we invoke, for instance, global trade or global climate change, no concern and no corner of the globe are left out or remain unaccounted for. Through its optically all-inclusive embrace and geometrical undertones of perfection, the term "global" maintains an unambiguously totalizing perspective and effects an assuredly possible complete grasp of the matter. On the one hand, the global scope of this designation disquiets with the visions of the totalizing and all-affecting span of the prob-

lems, which allows for no points of escape, while, on the other hand, it silently reassures with the power of containment and effectiveness on the globe-wide scale.

If the category of the global seems to operate as though outward, centrifugally radiating from the point of our location toward a spherical embrace of earthly reality, the label "planetary" suggests a centripetally moving view, anchored in a broader, "universal" perspective; that is, it refers literally to the frame of the universe, or at least the solar system, as a moving network of interrelated and mutually affecting planetary bodies. One could argue that the notion of the planetary is, therefore, broader, perhaps already intimating a possible displacement of the planet earth from the unvoiced position of centrality still implied in the name "global." In this approach, "global" would still mark a decidedly earth-centric and, therefore, implicitly anthropocentric mode of thinking, while "planetary" would open thought to a perspective as if "from above" or "from out there," making our planet a focal point but not necessarily the center of thought's gravity. On second thought, though, the perspective of the planetary, universe-wide eye-view (if such a perspective were possible to begin with) turns out to be very much an earth-bound, or globe-dependent, if you will, projection, expanded outward only to be turned back telescopically onto itself. The centripetal force of the planetary conceals, thus, the initially centrifugal momentum of the global. Both perspectives are in the very momentum of their unfolding, the same; not identical but intrinsically entwined, coming into being together through their reciprocal countering. The global en-counters the planetary and vice versa. Each has its advantages, perhaps: the global underscoring the planet-wide scope and the degree of its complexity, the planetary emphasizing the embeddedness of the globe in an even larger system of factors.

Yet what seems to me to be of more interest and perhaps critical significance is the reflection on how these notions of the global and the planetary always already texture and shape reality and modes of experiencing it. I propose here a brief essay into such a critical mode by way of several pointers from Heidegger's reflection on planetary power (*Macht*) and its manipulative operations (*Machenschaft*). The reason is not simply that Heidegger provides one of the earliest philosophical reflections, dating from mid 1930s, on the planetary, or more precisely on modern

technology, power, and capital in their planetary phase, but that the very momentum of Heidegger's critique comes from keeping the tension and the countering between the planetary or the global, on the one hand, and the worldly, on the other. To put it succinctly, I am interested in exploring what happens to the world in the epoch of planetary power and global capital, how the experience of the world becomes foreshortened into the planetary, and whether the world can still come to pass in the age of globalization.

Heidegger's meditations on the character, scope, and operations of power (*Macht*) in the 1938–39 book *Besinnung*, published only in 1997 and translated into English as *Mindfulness* as recently as 2006,[1] strike me as still very much current—in fact, perhaps even easier to register today in their complex critical impetus. In remarks that can now be seen as a forerunner to many of today's debates, Heidegger initially characterizes power through five aspects. First, power is dynamic, which "means propulsiveness of power that is launched and let loose and overflows itself." In short, power tends to increase or trans-power itself. Second, power is total, as it "can tolerate nothing outside its arena of effectiveness which could still be addressed as 'actual.'" Heidegger points out here the intrinsic connection in German between effectiveness and actuality (*Wirklichkeit*): the actual is only what has been effected and what can be grasped in terms of having been effected. Third, power is imperial, exercising its command through missions and insertions, actualized in the manner not dissimilar from the recent reflections provided by Hardt and Negri in *Empire*. Power is also rational "and strikes upon that calculating character in everything of the nature of command as it surrounds the closed circle of the distribution and the steering of forces" (14). The steering in this quotation presages the cybernetic and informational character of power, whose effectiveness we witness today in its micro-genetic and macro-financial operations. Finally, and most relevant for us, power is planetary, which "wants to say that each instance of the empowering of power is always 'total' in itself (in relation to a country, a people), but also that each sets its limits only at the boundaries of the inhabited globe and its domain of disposability (the atmosphere and the stratosphere) which says right away that the planet as a whole is 'used' as a product of power and that therefore detecting a planetary opponent becomes unavoidable"

(14). While I want to acknowledge here that Heidegger seems to have been a good forty or fifty years ahead in diagnosing the terms of power's operation which have by now become the standard currency of critical discourse, notwithstanding the modifications brought about by information revolution, biopolitics, or global warming, I am less interested in pointing to a historical precedent than in pursuing further Heidegger's reflection on what happens to world and the experience of "worlding" in the epoch of the culmination of modernity in the planetary reach and transpowering (*Übermächtigung*) of power, whether by means of informational technology, economic operations of capital, or military force.

The remarks cited above prepare the way for Heidegger's later reflection on the essence of technology, or *technicity*, as the *Ge-stell*, which indicates the multiply gathered ways (the prefix *Ge-*) in which what is actual comes to be as such through being posited (*Darstellen*), emplaced (*Stellen*), produced (*Herstellen*), represented (*Vorstellen*), ordered (*Bestellen*), disfigured (*Verstellen*), etc. To say that the *Ge-stell* is the modus operandi of reality today is to point to how all unfolds into a standing-reserve (*Bestand*) of resources, always already at hand, intrinsically available and disposable. The availability to be accessed, processed, manipulated, or engineered constitutes the very being of what comes to exist today. In other words, to be means to be in essence, in how something comes to be, available. This availability explains itself in(to) the terms of power, which means that being available stands for availability to and for power; not only for power to colonize, conquer, or empower, but also to spread and increase in complexity and magnitude. In short, availability means the intrinsic capacity of power to transpower itself. The key characteristic of the technicist operations of modern power is its tendency to increasingly challenge and provoke (*Herausfordern*), force, and enforce being into unfolding as ever more intensely and thoroughly available. What we seem to be witnessing almost daily is the intensification of the degree of availability, in which anything and everything comes to be as already suffused with power and open to further over-powering. Whether we think of the rapidly advancing genetic technologies, the increasingly pervasive susceptibility to and flow of information, or the crises precipitated by electronic operations of financial capital, they all testify to the availabil-

ity to and for power in its flexible operations of producing, empowering, dominating, coding, decoding, etc.

One of the key vectors of this "planetary" availability which Heidegger diagnoses, running always in parallel to the availability of the planet as a total reserve standing at the ready, is availability for consumption, that is, availability to be capitalized for production, reproduction, commodification, and consumption. In his timely *L'indemne: Heidegger et la destruction du monde*, Frédéric Neyrat proposes to think of Heidegger's explanation of the generalized—global or planetary—consumability on the ontological level, which suggests precisely that to be in modernity comes to mean to be consumable: not just provided for consumption but in essence open to being consumed and, as such, replacable: whether as resource, product, commodity, service, etc. In order to be consumable, a good needs to be constituted as replaceable in its essence. The narrower sense of consumption associated with the consumption of commodities in capitalism and consumerist culture becomes possible by way of this ontological consumability and illustrates the degree to which capital today is adept at increasingly capitalizing and exploiting this constitutional consumability of being. It is this conception of availability to consumption that, as Neyrat indicates, can provide an interesting avenue for a philosophical critique of capital beyond socio-economic explanations and yet integrating and contextualizing them within the planetary operations of power sketched out by Heidegger and increasingly discussed in today's approaches: from Foucault and Deleuze to Negri, Agamben, or Esposito.

In "Overcoming Metaphysics," a collection of fragments gathered over several years and published in 1955 (*Heidegger Controversy* 67–90), Heidegger makes his reflection on the possibility of the experience of the world pivot precisely on the question of consummability, thought in tandem with the notion of availability. I would differ on this point from Neyrat and point out that for Heidegger it is availability that allows for and explains consumability and not the other way round. It is because beings come to be as intrinsically dispose-able, that is, both "at the disposal" of power, available to it and open to its manipulative thrust, and also disposable, replaceable and consumable through the processes of power. Dispose-able: being at the disposal and therefore as easily disposable as available. The standing reserve (*Bestand*) indicates a seamless extension

of availability into replacability, of consumption into disposing of and reproduction. Writing about consumption in the context of armament and war, Heidegger remarks:

> The consumption of beings is such and in its course determined by armament in the metaphysical sense, through which man makes himself the 'master' of what is 'elemental.' The consumption [*Verbrauch*] includes the ordered use [*Gebrauch*] of beings which become the opportunity and the material for feats and their escalation The world wars are the antecedent form of the removal of the difference between war and peace. This removal is necessary since the 'world' has become an unworld [*Unwelt*] as a consequence of the abandonment of beings by Being's truth In the age of the exclusive power of power, that is, of the unconditional pressing of beings toward being used up in consumption, the world has become an unworld in that Being does presence [*west*], but without really reigning [*ohne eigenes Walten*, without properly holding sway]. Beings are really [effectively] as the real [*Das Seiende ist wirklich as das Wirkliche.*] There is effecting [*Wirkung*] everywhere, and nowhere is there a worlding of the world and yet, although forgotten, there is still Being. Beyond war and peace, there is the mere erring of the consumption of beings in the plan's self-guaranteeing in terms of the vacuum of the abandonment of Being. (84, modified)

What is necessary for the world to globalize and become available to the planetary coursing of power is the technicist revealing of beings as driving toward their being used up in consumption; in short, what marks the age of world power (whether as peace or as war) is the global availability of beings to consumption. Yet this revealing into being consumable marks also the turn of the world into an unworld. Since the world discloses itself as unworld, and thus discloses itself by veiling itself as world, only in the epoch of planetary power and *Machenschaft*, the unworld is necessarily only as a global unworld. Put simply, Heidegger's point is that the world no longer worlds, that there is no worlding of the world, when beings manifest as a global standing reserve of resources,

available as in essence dispose-able and thus ready to be consumed. We see all as dispose-able resources, that is, precisely in terms of everything being available, consumable, and replaceable, rather than letting what exists be as what it is. In fact, we do not simply see or disclose beings into their availability but increasingly force them to disclose themselves as dispose-able: let's say, the "forcing" open of the human genome, or other gene sequences, as available to manipulation, engineering, and reproduction. We could ask, in a Heideggerian fashion, what is a human being when it is disclosed as a potentially and intrinsically manipulable sequence of genes. Is humanity first and foremost a gene pool, and is the dominance of this technicist way of revealing what being human means predetermining the question of being along the progressively calculative scale of technicist power and manipulation?

Such questions run parallel to the problem of the global unworld. But we could still ask why this turning of the world into a planetary unworld should be an issue at all: do we need the world, in the sense in which Heidegger thinks worlding, or can we just make do with the globe or the planet, assuming that we still might have a possibility of choice in the matter? And what kind of issue is this when we might be facing the global extinction of the human race or significant portions of it, or perhaps even most, if not all, forms of life on earth? While the question of the (un) world is not practical in any immediate sense, it is, I would argue, precisely the question of *praxis* in the elemental sense of who, as humans, we are and might be in the world, if the world is to world at all. Let's remember that for Heidegger the question of our age is the question of being—not of humanity or animality, ecology or climate, though all these issues are implied and in fact critically implicated, that is, held open into deciding, in the kind of praxis that is at issue in Heidegger's critique of power and technicity. Heidegger insists, and I am inclined to follow him in this respect, on the need and urgency of displacing the human from the position of centrality in our thinking and our discussions. What this means in terms of how one might think or at least begin to think in the context of the global unworld today is by thinking the complex relationality, which Heidegger calls *das Ereignis* or event (of propriation), a relationality which gives to be by way of a spatio-temporal play of beings in multiple relations between "earth" and "sky." It means beginning from the

always already finite event of the play of time-space rather than from the all temporal, albeit historical, pan-technicist view of experience as planetary, globally circumscribed, and interlinked, and dispose-able. For Heidegger, it means trying to let things or beings unfold in the while (*Weile*) and expanse (*Weite*) of their time-space rather than rushing to calculate and consume them in their technically disclosed availability.

Heidegger's questions are obviously not those of an economist or a market analyst, a politician or even a political theorist, of a climate scientist, a physicist, a genetic engineer, of a business or science ethicist. In what is certainly a deliberately provocative gesture, Heidegger asks if we can still think what it would mean if humanity survived the threatening catastrophes and continued as living beings but, in the process, allowed a forgetting of what being means and how humans are given to be as mortals. Commenting on the remarks which the American chemist Stanley made in 1955 in Lindau: "The hour is near when life will be placed in the hands of the chemist who will be able to synthesize, split, and change living substance at will," Heidegger observes: "We marvel at the daring scientific research, without thinking about it. We do not stop to consider that an attack with the technological means is being prepared upon the life and essence [*Wesen*] of man compared with which the explosion of the hydrogen bomb means little. For precisely if the hydrogen bombs do *not* explode and human life on earth is preserved, an uncanny change in the world moves upon us" (*Discourses* 42). Over fifty years later we seem to be much nearer or maybe already at the point predicted by Stanley, with additional economic, military, and climactic complications attending the situation, and in this context Heidegger's question sounds perhaps even more poignant. Certainly the questions Heidegger intimated in 1955 are being raised around us, but what is decisive, at least from the Heideggerian perspective, is precisely the perspective in which such questions are being raised and are allowed to resonate.

Is the perspective for the accelerating discussions of globalization and planetary power essentially and exclusively technicist, in Heidegger's sense, and, in practical terms, dominated by techno-science? We seem to be engaged, certainly when it comes to politics, economics, and science, in frantically trying to find a technicist solution to a technicist dilemma: whether that means global climate change or increasingly sharper crises

of global capital. When we approach the issue of critical climate change in the perspective of what needs to change in the way we think/critique in order to reflect on the climate change, or in other words, what the critical climate change makes it possible or necessary for us to change in the praxis of our thinking and modes of our being, are we still pursuing possible answers within a rush of what Heidegger would call calculative thinking, no doubt critical but still essentially calculative thinking, looking for a better or a new grasp of the situation, advocating for a new/better solution, looking for new means to effect a change in our lives and possibly produce a change in the changing climate? To quote Heidegger once again: "Calculative thinking never stops, never collects itself. Calculative thinking is no meditative thinking (*keine besinnliches Denken*) which thinks after and/or according to the meaning (*Sinn*) which reigns in everything that is" (*Discourse* 46). The difference which Heidegger underscores is between, on the one hand, a mode of being or experiencing that attends to, keeps itself open to, and moves by way of, the finite play of time-space in which this very thinking originates and takes place and, on the other, the continuously accelerating calculative thinking, speedily searching for newer answers, theories, and means. The German terms deployed by Heidegger, *besinnliches Denken* or, more frequently, *Besinnung*, suggest that in question here is not disembodied philosophical speculation or theoretical thinking as opposed to praxis, but instead a way of being not divided into the sensible and the intelligible, body and mind, since *Besinnung* indicates a thoughtful comportment or being-in-the-world which participates in and co-shapes the very manifestation of what exists *as* world. Once could say perhaps that *Besinnung* is an originative way of being/acting/thinking in the sense that it takes part in the unfolding of world at the very same time that it thinks this world and experiences its own being in it.

The apparent urgency of the situation appears to preempt any such thinking/being that I have proposed to weave out of Heidegger's critique of technicity. We appear to have no time to waste on idle philosophical speculation or non-technicist and in-effective action, on collecting our thoughts in a meditative thinking, as we need to produce and possibly effect a solution to a crisis which it may be already too late to avert anyway. The urgency of the crisis seems to nullify in advance any possibility of de-

ciding between calculative thinking and meditative thinking the way Heidegger outlines it in, among other places, the already quoted *Discourse on Thinking*. We cannot afford to attend to this possible, if elusive, difference. What we need to find, that is, to calculate, is a better way of calculatively grasping our situation, predicting various possible outcomes, and effecting or producing a result which would minimize the negative effects of the multiple threats attending humankind's existence in the age of globalization. In short, we need to increase the power, scope, and grasp of calculative (techno-scientific) thinking and do it as fast as possible. In Heidegger's terms, the only available possibilities which unfold in the planetary operations of power (*Machenschaft*) serve to trans-power power, to increase its scope and efficiency. Any other ways of thinking are inefficient (to say the least), idle, escapist, unreal, and, given the situation, perhaps even dangerously trivial.

And yet this is precisely the context in which I would insist we need to heed Heidegger's provocation, namely that we do not yet think precisely in the sense that calculative thinking which pervades, shapes, and animates our reality is not thinking that is attentive to being and to our mortal way of being. As Heidegger remarks in a seminar following his 1962 lecture "Time and Being," technicity is Janus-faced (53). It is the frantic acceleration of its calculatively effective power that opens the space and possibility for a potential turn in technicity, an attendant flip in the way that technicity allows and disallows us to face existence. It is when we are confronted with nuclear annihilation or extinction due to global climate change, that we might have an opportunity not just to increase our capacity to calculate, predict, and effect solutions, but also to attend to the question of what it means to be as mortals on this earth, in a finite, each time singular and each time always one time, event of being. We could think about it perhaps as technicity reaching a point of letting itself be called into question and thus possibly initiating an opening onto a transformation. This is what Heidegger is letting thinking prepare for: for the possibility that might open itself up within the frantically technicist acceleration of being's availability, availability perhaps to the point of self-destruction, at least of humans.

Heidegger's position is that we need to let being, its singular and one-time happening, take center stage, and thus to redirect our questioning

of all beings: humans, animals, things, climate, capital, economy, etc., through this perspective of the finite play of time-space. It is precisely this heightened situation of threat and danger, danger which in Heidegger's time manifested itself as the devastating aftermath of World War II and the threat of nuclear conflict, and which today speaks to us perhaps more in the language of global climate change, world-wide economic instability, and genetic and informational possibilities and threats. If Heidegger is right, then this is precisely the opportunity to open thinking to a questioning otherwise foreclosed to it, downplayed if not banished by the proliferating effectiveness and effects of calculative thinking we associate most easily with techno-science, but whose effectiveness, Heidegger suggests, reaches further into the very way in which being unfolds into reality, disallowing the worlding of the world. To recall an earlier quote, there is only effecting and no worlding of the world. The age of globalization tends to perpetuate and intensify precisely the global or planetary unworlding, and to such an extent that the very issue of world is no longer experienced as an issue or a question. What obscures and covers it over is the urgency of calculative and calculated acting, whose importance only an unthinking, that is, calculatively unthinking, human being could question. And yet, this is precisely what Heidegger dared to question, and for which, largely misunderstood and/or unread, he has been repeatedly rebuked by the Frankfurt School and many others.

What I am suggesting is that today, even more so than fifty or so years ago, this question needs perhaps to be dared again. It is not I or us, that is, whatever individuals or communities we propose to invoke in the name of our discourses, that need this question. At issue is what Heidegger ventures to rethink through the meaning of being, namely, the indispose-ability of its event, which each time has always already given the play of time-space in its singular unfolding. But if being in its indispose-ability is at issue, so is *Da-sein* as the way for mortals to be attentive to their finite and singular, each time given to me, way of being. When reality transpires, that is, folds out into a global unworld, humans come to be the undead—or, more precisely, the undying, no longer open to or capable of being towards death. They flee mortality not simply into religions or atheism, into moral stringency or relativism, into asceticism or pleasure, but also into the technicist visions of undying existence by way of perpet-

uated electronic downloads of consciousness and informational undeath. They forget that it is only from within being towards death, through mortality, that humans come to exist and thus have the possibility of letting the world world and of letting themselves inhabit the world. The Janus-face of technicity could then be a modern memento mori, but a highly ambiguous one, a memento mori in crisis, opening to deciding what dying means. Not just facing the possibility of death on a historically unprecedented scale, a techno-climactically enforced mass disappearance of population. For this specter of planetary death all too easily closes us to mortality, renders us undead or, to be precise, undying, forgetful of the opportunity of being mortal and of the possibilities unfolding in being towards death. A Janus-faced memento mori: undead death or mortality.

At issue, as I suggested earlier, is where to begin, and keep beginning, so that the world would be allowed to world and not just unfold globally into an unworld. This possibility of beginning is perhaps best marked in the French term "mondialisation," which, unlike the other possible term, "globalisation," preserves in in-decision the play of globalizing and worlding. There *mondialisation* could still be either global unworlding or worlding. Heidegger suggests a step back, which would be primarily a step back from calculative thought and into meditative thinking. This step back should not be misunderstood as abandoning calculation, denigrating technology, or the actualizable possibilities it provides. Rather, in question is the capacity of thinking to step back from its own, increasingly effective modes of calculative thinking into meditative thinking: "It would be foolish to attack technology blindly. It would be shortsighted to condemn it as the work of the devil. We depend on technical devices; they even challenge us to ever greater advances. But suddenly and unaware we find ourselves so firmly shackled to these technical devices that we fall into bondage to them. Still we can act otherwise" (*Discourse* 53–54).

Otherwise would mean other than calculatively or technicistically, attentive to the technicist revealing, unfolding with it and yet thinking otherwise. What matters is precisely keeping this otherwise in play, without neglecting the progression of calculative thought. The crisis we are facing needs to be brought into the open as a crisis: not only of our technological civilization but as a crisis in technicity itself—in short, as the crisis intimated in the Janus-face, marking the twofoldness of technicity. Crisis

does not mean simply, according to its ordinary connotation, a problem or a threat but, if we attend to the word itself, an opportunity for a decision. And it should not be just a decision for this or that calculated solution, but rather a crisis in which what would be put into question and thus opened to deciding would be precisely calculative thinking itself. The either/or, if that is how this situation demands to be thought, is not between various solutions but between the implications of calculative thinking in its time-space for decision in relation to meditative thinking. In other words, what would be brought into question and up for a decision would not be particular courses of action but rather the orientation or the space in which acting or not acting become possible to begin with. What is called for—in the specific sense in which Heidegger considers the issue of "what calls (for) thinking?" (*Was heisst Denken*?)—is, therefore, not simply a change *within* the climate of technicity, that is, a shift or intensification of the way in which modern thinking operates technically, but a change to the very climate *of* technicity. What is called for by the operations of power in the age of globalization is the transformation in the essence (*Wesen*) of technology, an opening up of the possibility of an otherwise to technicity.

That is why this call for a transformation of thinking is so difficult and brings with it no assurances or guarantees that thinking will undergo a transformation. This is the case because such a transformation cannot be produced (made in the sense of *machen*), enforced (by power, *Macht*), or effected (in the sense of *Wirkung*). Such a transformation cannot be actualized or realized because effecting is precisely what has been setting the tone for modernity, and doing so quite literally, as the *Stimmung*, that is, as the tonality of the technicist power relations. Effecting a change would therefore not only not change the operation of power but, on the contrary, would reinforce and intensify the very modality of power's working as power, namely, its force of effecting, producing, or empowering. To put it differently, rather than putting power into question, effecting a change in thinking would amount to a trans-powering.

The crisis our planet appears to be in can be understood and treated simply in technicist terms, that is, as a crisis within technicity, a crisis which calls for a technical decision, a decision between various technical means that could potentially resolve the crisis, whether by minimiz-

ing its global effects or finding an escape route, one which would extend the lease on the life of the planet, and thus offer further assurances that technicity and its operations of power can be effectively managed on its own terms. Or we could face, confront, encounter, and thus potentially counter, or even just inaugurate the possibility of countering, technicity; in short, we could face the fact that technicity, if Heidegger's assessement holds, is Janus-faced. The crisis, then, would not be seen as a crisis in technicity but a crisis confronting technicity's Janus-face. The crisis is not simply a critically dangerous situation. In fact, one could say that seeing "crisis" as just a particularly heightened threat or danger, say, global endangerment of life, is already a merely technicist and foreshortened conception of crisis. It is an understanding of crisis technically telescoped onto a problem and thus anticipating simply a better, that is, a more technically advanced, solution. In its etymological resonance, crisis evokes precisely the possibility of deciding, of bringing into the open the very fact that there is something to decide to begin with, which in this case would signal the initial discernment that technicity is Janus-faced, and thus seeing this Janus-face character as a possibility for a crisis, that is, a possibility for deciding. This possibility for deciding would be critical precisely in the sense that it would confront the two-faced character of technicity, that it would face at the same time both directions or perspectives of technicity.

Perhaps we need a step back from this technicist understanding of crisis to be able to confront—which means facing more than just one, technicist, front of the issue—whether and how the world worlds today. This could translate into bringing up the very notion of crisis into crisis and thus reopening it to its etymological resonance of a possibility for decision. The crisis is thus not only danger or threat but also an opportunity, and in this context, an opportunity to con-front and face the two-faced workings of technicity; an opportunity to step back from calculative thinking and face its otherwise, which Heidegger calls meditative thinking. The crisis thus becomes an opportunity for opening the space for decision and thus broadening the space and the play of thinking. Not just deciding, or deciding quickly for this or that solution, but holding open to the very play of deciding, staying open to the crisis and what it might render possible for thinking. In short, this understanding of crisis might

open us to seeing another face of what confronts us and not simply foreclose the space of the critical to the technicist (mis)understanding of decision. Though one face of technicity tends to suggest to us that at issue is deciding what to do, its other, as yet not quite seen, face calls this very way of thinking into question, "critiques" it in the sense of inaugurating a possibility of holding open what seems already completely decided: the dominance of technicity itself. Technical decisions have always already been decided as to their essence or nature: they will be technical in intent, modus operandi, and execution. They will treat technicity with an intensification of technical doing, and thus will not bring technicity into a crisis. Beyond the critical change of climate, we need to try and open "critique" to its own crisis, to a change of critical climate. Crisis would then mean bringing into question the very operations of technicity and its modern workings of power and holding them *in* crisis. Not escaping into ready-made technical solutions to our thinking, assuredly better and more sophisticated ones, but with-standing the crisis, that is, standing with the crisis and in its space of play, maintaining the tension of deciding, holding open the possibilities energized by the very opening of the play of the crisis, of its critical time-space.

For a post-Heideggerian thought this would mean holding in play and weighing calculative and meditative paths of thinking, and thus holding open the crisis and, within it, the possibilities of thinking itself. In short, it would mean de-cision in the sense of *Ent-scheidung*, both making the differentiating cut but also intensifying the play, the decidable undecidability, between calculative thought and meditative thinking. It would critically hold open the global unworld to the possibility of worlding. The fact that planet Earth is in crisis should not mean forgetting that we exist in a global unworld. Perhaps the crisis in reality needs to become open into the crisis of reality, that is, of *Wirklichkeit*: of the paradigmatic status of effecting, making, producing, causing, enacting, etc. The calculative procedures en-countered by the "incalculable" of meditative thinking. A meditative fold in the essence of technology, a wrinkle in the play of its time-space. Technicity revealing its unsuspected face, and this ambiguous two-face en-countered as the opportunity of crisis, of holding open for deciding. The crisis of (un)worlding.

Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, *Besinnung*. Trans. as *Mindfulness*.

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Chapter 12

Bailout

Randy Martin

The financial meltdown that struck in 2007 hit the world with all the force and surprise of a natural disaster. The pristine sands of transaction were quickly littered with the debris of deals gone south (alas, the global direction from which turbulence invariably seems to emanate). Alan Greenspan, whose stint at the helm of the Federal Reserve concluded shortly before the rains came, referred to the meltdown that halved the value of the stock market, unemployed millions and sent millions more into foreclosure, as a "once-in-a-century credit tsunami." One impulse in stemming the crisis seemed to be the apportionment of blame, as often as not a displacement of natural disaster onto human nature—no small irony this for a calamity whose artifice was fully on display. Excessive greed meant expunging those who had taken advantage of the system. And what of those who had crafted the system? When the waters receded, would the conceptual landscape remain unmarred? In a moment of weakness, or perhaps reflection, Greenspan, in an appearance before the House Oversight Committee, acknowledged under questioning that he had made a "mistake" in believing that banks, operating in their own self-interest, would do what was necessary to protect their shareholders and institutions. Greenspan called that "a flaw in the model … that defines how the world works" (Associated Press). Conceptually speaking, forecasting and cycles are part of the lattice-work that joins meteorologists and economists. While the former have been quick to sound the alarm of what devastation awaits, economists have been less forthcoming about what models they see correcting their errant prognostications. The ma-

chinery had come undone by which the future with all its portents of uncertainty appears to be a friendly presence, imminently manageable.

Confessionals aside, four years into the debacle it is far from clear whether the old ideas are simply waiting out the storm, or whether the climate for thought may have come due for a change. The sudden possibility of bailout, rescue, intervention where no assistance was needed, recalls an antediluvian edenic state for which water removed leaves the vessel intact. Robert Shiller, an economist, had warned of investors' mimetic herd behavior that blunted market signals, which he termed irrational exuberance. Shiller notes that bailout was probably first used to describe a pilot's self-ejection from a plummeting plane, and only in the 1950s did it begin to get associated with economic policy interventions. This genealogy suggests a slyness by which economists would survive the crashing economy that had moments before flown to such heights. There is also the prospect that the massive application of social resources that attach to the bailout may generate its own counter-currents and leave the coastline fundamentally altered. Under the sign of restoration, bailout would seemingly seek to put the old egg on the same wall, hence the importance of the familiar entourage of Tim Geithner and Lawrence Summers who, as Treasury Secretaries past and present, had done important masonry work on the now crumbled facade of financial support.

Yet the insistence on assistance, even as so many institutions complained that the help was unwanted or burdensome to the point of returning the tainted public funds—hints at the very untoward necessity of regulation where freedom was to reign. Even a cursory examination of government involvement in market matters would disclose that the advance of financial capital has required ever more elaborate regulatory scaffolding; that the profusion of leveraged products like swaptions, collateralized debt obligations, and mortgage-backed securities generates conflicts that require more rules—and that the rules fail to resolve those conflicts and continue to proliferate (MacKenzie).The recent crisis has added common-sense understanding to the efforts to denaturalize the economy and open the black box of the market—implicating economists' performativity of theoretical modeling in the price-making activity of the former, and pluralizing the latter as a materialized network of human and machinic agency (MacKenzie; Callon). The mixing of biology

and psychology into what is called behavioral finance seeks to counter the cognitive and affective biases that keep humans from their utilitarian best (Shefrin). On the longer view, however, various economic models have had both persistent conceptual disparities and continuously unreliable effects, leading to the observation that "the neoclassical school has nonetheless maintained its appearance of monolithic continuity and placid confidence not due to anything particularly conceptual that the economists have said or done; it is rather more directly attributable to more durable structures like the nation-state, the corporation, and the military" (Mirowski and Nik-Khah 216). Under such circumstances, the sudden disclosure of dysfunction in the theory and practice of markets that the bailout would seem to force into general view does not itself depart from the internal and technical history of these practices.

Bailout poses not so much the question of whether there should be regulation or a resumption of the old wild ways (which were always already replete with statutes of all sorts) but what wealth is being regulated for. The politics of bailout discloses the double morality by which the perquisites of capital are detached from the entitlements of labor. The worry over handing money to business is called "moral hazard"—a judgment most commonly made after the fact that giving money to failed investment approaches will only encourage bad behavior in the future by allowing the abusers to believe that they can take excessive risk with impunity. The belated concern speaks not simply to the government's claim that despite the mixed message they had to act or things would have been much worse, that making the world safe for Business meant saving businesses, but also to the inability to discern what risks were excessive and what investments parasitically speculative until after the fact.

In contrast, the anxiety aroused by labor is invariably pre-emptive. Direct assistance to the millions of homeowners variously labeled "blemished," "irresponsible," and "speculators" (in the case of subprime mortgage holders, disproportionately people of color, and the newest citizens of the ownership society) would spread a contagion of uncontainable and unmeetable expectation—a malady better known as moral panic (Martin). Ironically, job loss, stock-market implosion, and home-price collapse (leaving owners "underwater," or owing more on their homes than they are worth) were the mechanisms of contagion, for by the middle of

2009, most of the new foreclosures—the tsunami's "third wave"—were happening to those with "good credit" and fixed mortgages (Brush). If capital's needs come as always already met, labor's want is posed as ultimately preventable.

Before the meltdown, fiscal policy focused on control of the money supply through continual modulation of the prime interest rate (an interventionist tool honed while Greenspan was chairman of the Federal Reserve). The idea was to stop inflation before it started, and this meant countering the threat of increased wages when unemployment began to fall. The pre-emptive logic was undergirded by a larger invitation for labor to think of itself from the subject position of the investor, one who shed dependence on government entitlement altogether and became financially self-sufficient through management of its own portfolio—which would include pensions, college funds for the children, and the multiply-mortgaged home as a personal bank. While the security of corporations must be guaranteed for the good of the republic, guaranteeing security for the citizenry weakens their moral fiber, which needs to be woven from personal responsibility. While success conceals its means and ends, failure to manage the future's risks through present investment decisions constitutes a population at risk. In other terms, removal of the conditions of security from a population posits them as being a menace, a potential enemy, an object of war.

The logic of warfare inhabited the space where social entitlements once resided. The 1983 report, "A Nation At Risk" positioned grade-school kids' low test scores as a threat to national security. The war on drugs militarized what was once local police work on a national scale. Culture wars attacked identities held at odds with a national sensibility. The pre-emptive logic of these domestic wars itself anticipated the war on terror, with its forward deterrence to stop the contagion of those who could not abide the imperium's hazardous morality. The at-risk could free themselves from war's devastation by hurling themselves into the arms of the risk capable. Terrorists and those who posed risks to security would see their homelands reconstructed in ways that would allow them no place to reside. The injunction by George W. Bush after the September 11 attacks not to be intimidated, but to go out and shop, presumably on credit, was, in this regard, its own kind of veiled threat. The global war without end

was to share a futurity, with the endless supply of credit, the never-falling home price, and the ever-expanding pool of newly mortgage-eligible.

Greenspan's tsunami struck amidst this state of terror, this inurement to risk that fueled flights of construction and riots of production. Only a crash would make it seem necessary to segregate what was real and what fictitious in this economy, when it had been the insinuation of finance more deeply into the realm of manufacture that had created such a storm of volatility. Far from visiting a baleful ideology on docile bodies, the entanglement of continually evaluative price-making circulation in the expanded field of production demands a corporal hyperactivity, a body that (like the hazardous Citibank itself), never sleeps, but that spins information into action, that treats the home as an office, that does not await the future to retire into a fading sunset but stands proudly on the prow and screams, "bring it on." To all this, bailout would seem to shout, "stop." On closer inspection, it asks for a restart—but on lines whose ties to reconstruction and renovation, restoration and reinvention, continuity and disruption do not so readily sort themselves out. Part of the challenge in even delimiting the parameters of the bailout is the enormous slippage around what it is, what can be placed on its books, and what promises a return and what a loss.

When lists are compiled that include loans and credits to individual firms—from A.I.G's $85 billion and JPMorgan Chase's $87 billion in repayments, to the $200 billion to renationalize Fannie and Freddie Mac, to the $25 billion for GM and Chrysler's bankruptcies, to the $700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program, to the $300 billion stimulus package, to the loan guarantees of some $2 trillion to bank debt and deposits—the total for the bailout leers toward $15 trillion (Talbott). Yet such aggregations of funds also invite comparison to what comparably massive sums have underwritten in the past. One such mash-up includes: Marshall Plan: Cost: $12.7 billion, Inflation Adjusted Cost: $115.3 billion; Louisiana Purchase: Cost: $15 million, Inflation Adjusted Cost: $217 billion; Race to the Moon: Cost: $36.4 billion, Inflation Adjusted Cost: $237 billion; S&L Crisis: Cost: $153 billion, Inflation Adjusted Cost: $256 billion; Korean War: Cost: $54 billion, Inflation Adjusted Cost: $454 billion; The New Deal: Cost: $32 billion (est.), Inflation Adjusted Cost: $500 billion (est.); Invasion of Iraq: Cost: $55 1billion, Inflation

Adjusted Cost: $597 billion; Vietnam War: Cost: $111 billion, Inflation Adjusted Cost: $698 billion; NASA: Cost: $416.7 billion, Inflation Adjusted Cost: $851.2 billion (Ritholz).

The possibility of such large-scale historical comparison of what a social surplus can deliver suggests the possibility of shifting the frame by which policy is thought from one of personal responsibility to one of collective deliberation. But even these exercises accept a zero-sum trade-off between the dull weight of "is" and the unbearable lightness of "ought." The fixable futurity of finance becomes fungible; the bubble burst emits the scents of altered routes. Oft-forgotten in these numbers games are the forgone revenues of the tax cuts enacted with the help of bipartisan congressional support in Bush's first term, which by then were already nearing $2 trillion with trillions more to come (Orszag). Admittedly, these pale compared to the 95% top marginal rate of the fifties, labor's diminishing wage share of increased productivity, concentrations of capital gains through dividend-taking stock ownership, and the like. The point is that there is always another calculus available that can turn naturalized scarcity into commonly constructed abundance. The magic of the bailout has been to focus attention on the necessity of where money must go without consideration of the contingency of where it comes from. But the sense that action must be taken opens the prospect that the mantra, "there Is no alternative" would yield to "anything is possible," a perhaps ungovernable promise that drove in a new government, now associated with the desire to make all things right.

Hence, bailout prompts a haunting, a return of a spectral post-scarcity socialism even while the referents of public ownership, nationalization, and expanded entitlement hint at a sea change in the name of a trope meant to ease anxieties and stay the course. It should be unsurprising that a new Obama administration would be marked by this moniker against its own very conventional financial positions (Leibovich). The recognition of a need for activist government discloses as much about what society has been like as it predicts what it will be. For the climate change afoot may not foretell an absolute beginning or end, but a refiguring of the social imaginary—in this case that of nothing less than neo-liberalism itself. It would seem to make all the difference in the world to present understanding if, rather than believing that we are being delivered to a new era,

we come to notice that whatever winds prevail, the countercurrents were likely there all along. This would mean that if bailout were to force even the most stalwart kingmakers to admit a flaw in the model of how the world works, we would not expect them to be the source of an alternative model or metric. Rather, we might want to know about the complicity of more critical vocabularies in naturalizing this now-ruined conception by which faith in markets is renewed. That conception goes by the shorthand of neo-liberalism, and it may now be time to worry whether its critics contributed to neo-liberalism's appearance of invulnerability as much as its acolytes did. To grasp this dilemma and imagine bailout as a departure from the investment in the very ideology it critiques, it is worth dwelling on perhaps the most exemplary account of this beastly complex, Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine*. At issue is whether bailout brings shock to a close or is a continuation of the doctrine through other means. Equally salient here is what the figure of shock, which treats the human body and the nation state as sharing the same neural pathways, does to the whole question of anthropocentric agency.

The Never-Ending Story

From its start in the laboratories of Dr. Ewen Cameron during the 1950s to the application of Milton Friedman's "laissez-faire laboratory" in the developing nations of Chile and Argentina twenty years later, shock travels from the body of the behaviorally challenged subject to that of the developmentally disobedient nation, and from the newly born cognitive science to the newly borne dismal science. In a manner reminiscent of modern art's signature, the shock of the new, the term references both cause and effect, an obligatory forward motion that is meant to make manifest capitalism's drive for innovation. Accordingly, crisis becomes an opportunity. As Friedman put it, "only a crisis—actual or imagined—produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable" (7). The economics department as sleeper cell. Klein is keen to demonstrate how shock travels opportunistically from the personal trauma of

natural or human-induced catastrophe (whether tsunamis, hurricanes, bombings, or electro-shock); to the political suspension of democratic rights and participation, through coups, invasions, or massacres; to economic restructuring that removes social supports, ravishes infrastructure, maldistributes wealth, and exacerbates poverty. Those who resist, refuse, oppose, or might be associated with such obstacles to the progress of neo-liberal reason are subject to the most barbarous forms of unreason: torture, isolation, disappearance, extraordinary rendition. When shock is the cure, the aberrant body comes already tortured, its savaging by the agents of state taken as a property of illness in need of treatment—a constitutive contradiction that Michael Taussig observed for the operations of colonialism more broadly, namely that the civilizer savages the native other in a denial of the expropriator's own barbarity.

If shock provides a kind of contagion economy that offers itself as treatment, it presents a specter of spread not only from deviant body to population, but from country to country. Klein also tracks the global march of shock in a relentless reckoning of how the world has been remade: "For economic shock therapy to be applied without restraint—as it was in Chile in the seventies, China in the late eighties, Russia in the nineties, and the U.S. after September 11, 2001—some sort of additional major collective trauma has always been required, one that either temporarily suspended democratic practices or blocked them entirely" (13). Hence, the post-9/11 world was not simply blowback, chickens coming home to roost, the revenge of the repressed, or other consequences of imperial reach returning to bite, but the very homegrown idea of market emancipation finally having its day arrive at the moment when the democratic body politic lay stunned, its political will stunted. The shock world tour is a gripping horror story that travels across Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, England, China, Poland, Russia, Bolivia, Sri Lanka, Iraq, and even back to New Orleans.

But if this metaphor of shock seems arrestingly complete, it can also make us worry over what might follow. As a trope of mastery, apparently immutable and irresistible, shock is everywhere, but just as suddenly as it came, locust-like, it "wears off." Hence, while shock would here seem to banish human agency, it enacts a kind of dystopian enlightenment subject that always knows what it wants and how to get it, a psycho-physio-

logic that returns an ur-subject to what might suffer its absolute absence. In simpler terms, the key to the effectiveness of shock doctrine as history and as argument lies in the analogy between physiology and economy. Clearly the latter would aspire to the scientificity of the former, and both would hold that science itself exists in an ideationally absolute netherworld, what Philip Mirowski calls an "effortless economy." Klein creates a homology between the individual body and society through an ideological identification between the two aforementioned academics, McGill psychiatrist Ewen Cameron and Chicago economist Milton Friedman, both of whom claim for their applied research, even when it is funded by the results-oriented CIA, the protective cloak of disinterested science. Far from being dispassionate researchers, both men were focused on making-over the world:

> Friedman's mission, like Cameron's, rested on a dream of reaching back to a state of "natural" health, when all was in balance, before human interferences created distorting patterns. Where Cameron dreamed of returning the human mind to that pristine state, Friedman dreamed of depatterning societies, of returning them to a state of pure capitalism, cleansed of all interruptions—government regulations, trade barriers, and entrenched interests. Also like Cameron, Friedman believed that when the economy is highly distorted, the only way to reach that prelapsarian state was to deliberately inflict painful shocks: only "bitter medicine" could clear those distortions and bad patterns out of the way. Cameron used electricity to inflict his shocks; Friedman's tool of choice was policy—the shock treatment approach he urged on bold politicians for countries in distress. Unlike Cameron, however, who was able to instantly apply his pet theories on his unwitting patients, Friedman would need two decades and several twists and turns of history before he too got the chance to put his dreams of radical erasure and creation into action in the real world. (Klein 60)

If depatterning body and economy, self and society operate metaphorically, the diabolical shock doctors act metonymically, the evil idea stand-

ing for entire systems of control. While shock itself is certainly a pattern of directed violence, it is animated by an ideological drive that comes close to serving as an understanding of capitalism as such. For all the attention to freeing markets and restructuring economies, there is little attention to the vast and complex social organization by which bodies are assembled by and through labor toward what are considered productive ends, of how wealth is amassed but by dint of greed, and of the massive cooperation that capital itself depends upon if it is to persist. Klein is never shy about naming capitalism, but her persistent pursuit of following its disastrous methods can leave one wondering how to think of it beyond the sum of greed and ideology by which shock assumes its doctrinal subjectivity. This can appear precisely when she is trying to point beyond the personal to something endemic, as evident in this passage on the war against Iraq:

> Iraq's current state of disaster cannot be reduced either to the incompetence and cronyism of the Bush White House or to the sectarianism or tribalism of Iraqis. It is a very capitalist disaster, a nightmare of unfettered greed unleashed in the wake of war. The "fiasco" of Iraq is one created by a careful and faithful application of unrestrained Chicago School ideology. What follows is an initial (and not exhaustive) account of the links between the "civil war" and the corporatist project at the heart of the invasion. It is a process of ideology boomeranging on the people who unleashed it—ideological blowback. (444)

The move from "incompetence and cronyism" to "unfettered greed," meant to signal something like capitalism's structural moment, does not open up an especially wide space. Accumulation will be understood more as motive than as means, hence Iraq is a case study in social strip mining through the "de-Bathification" that eliminated government personnel, free trade policies that undermined local light industry, and disbursements of cash meant to usurp public distribution of necessities and keep insurgents at bay. The insurgency was directed against the "reconstruction" that was not only treating the country as a scene of extraction, but destroying the social economy that had made Iraq a political target in

the first place. Klein, whose work as a journalist in Iraq made her keenly aware that the resistance "filled the vacuum" and provided a "shadow reconstruction" nonetheless is wary about drawing the link between the Mahdi Army's political support and its capacity to sustain a population through a war economy. Here is an anti-imperialist movement in which the Western left typically finds no ready solidarity. In addition, we may detect a limit to treating war and capitalism as but ideological drives that destroy lives and not also means by which interdependencies and collective demands are formed. In this tragic formulation, violence begets more violence, but it is difficult to read how demands on behalf of what Michael E. Brown (1985, 2008) calls, after Marx, "the society of producers" might be the internal and unwanted consequences of capital's maelstrom.

The metaphorization of war leaves it strangely ungoverned, uncontainable, and uncontestable (Deer). Ideas, motives, and ideologies all matter, but how they delimit effects, what they fail to cover, what contrary mobilizations take place in their midst may prove the more consequential politically. Klein herself pinpoints the ways in which disaster capitalism generates surplus populations that might display contrary tendencies, but wants to keep us focused on the destruction:

> Everywhere the Chicago School crusade has triumphed, it has created a permanent underclass of between 25 and 60 percent of the population. It is always a form of war. But when that warlike economic model of mass evictions and discarded cultures is imposed in a country that is already ravaged by disaster and scarred by ethnic conflict, the dangers are far greater. There are, as Keynes argued all those years ago, political consequences to this kind of punitive peace—including the outcome of even bloodier wars. (512)

It might seem foolish or pedantic to argue with the negative effects of shock, to worry over how to think about a population-for-itself, seemingly disjoined from what is treated as economically productive. If the motive of depatterning is a return to a primordial condition of docile bodies before social demands became institutionalized, we learn in Klein's final chapter that "shock, by its very nature, is a temporary state" and that with time, "the effects of terror receded" (564). Klein confesses that while liv-

ing in Argentina during the 2001 protests against "IMF prescribed austerity measures" she couldn't understand the "jubilation" in the streets. "Now I think I do: the state of shock had finally worn off" (565). As it turns out: "The dirty secret of the neoliberal era is that these ideas were never defeated in a great battle of ideas, nor were they voted down in elections. They were shocked out of the way at key political junctures" (569). If, after Friedman, crisis provides opportunity, so, too, does its demise offer the prospect to keep alive alternatives "until the politically impossible becomes politically inevitable." A turning of tides.

Her claim might be that shock gets refamiliarized, that once normalized by its spread around the world it no longer shocks, and turns the strangeness of the body's altered state back upon the world. She understands that memory absorbs and thereby resists shock (586), and that a potent story is the best protection and antidote for the vulnerabilities faced in the aftermath of September 11. "As soon as we have a new narrative that offers a perspective on the shocking events, we become reoriented and the world begins to make sense again." This confidence in the power of getting the story right, her own universalism, is met by a steady particularism; namely, that legions of local, community-based "repair people" (589) can compensate for what has been systematically destroyed by reassembling the broken shards into a machinery of their own advancement. Her faith in an expansive political and cultural difference resides in grassroots movements, who emerge from shock to engage in a kind of developmental bricolage:

> The task of the region's new left, therefore, has become a matter of taking the detritus of globalization and putting it back to work. In Brazil, the phenomenon is best seen in the million and a half farmers of the Landless Peoples Movement (MST) who have formed hundreds of cooperatives to reclaim unused land. In Argentina, it is clearest in the movement of "recovered companies," two hundred bankrupt businesses that have been resuscitated by their workers, who have turned them into democratically run cooperatives. For the cooperatives, there is no fear of facing an economic shock of investors leaving, because the investors have already left. In a way, the reclamation experiments are a new kind of post-disaster re-

> construction—reconstruction from the slow motion disaster of neoliberalism. In sharp contrast to the model offered by the disaster capitalism complex in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Gulf Coast, the leaders of Latin America's rebuilding efforts are the people most affected by the devastation. And unsurprisingly, their spontaneous solutions look very much like the real third way that had been so effectively shocked out of the way by the Chicago School campaign around the world—democracy in daily life. (575)

The idea that what we need to reconstruct our world is already at hand is one with enormous appeal. Revolution is immanent and not a still larger bang awaiting detonation. Periodizing such a response is no doubt complicated. The MST did arise from the scarred earth of the Brazilian dictatorship, but in the mid-1980s when neo-liberalism presumably was in full swing elsewhere in the world. Doubtless the same could be said for shock doctrine and disaster capitalism themselves. David Harvey has effectively enjoined neoliberalism with the violence of which Klein speaks, but it is certainly hard to find a moment of capitalist development free from the decimation of populations, something acutely observed by Michael Perelman to lie at the start of the primitivizing accumulation process. Names for the present conjuncture can only be spelled in shorthand. Of necessity, neoliberalism will leave much out. But the term has suffered from a temptation to overconsolidate the ideological coherence of the state-capital nexus whose fracture from varieties of neoconservative constituency was on display in the 2008 U.S. election.

The paradox of neo-liberalism is that, far from stripping away the inert body of the state so as to free the economy to pursue its true expression, what was called de-regulation, regulatory activities of government became hyperactive. Michel Foucault's prescient observations during his 1978 lectures at the Collège de France on this then-emergent phenomenon make this abundantly clear: "The problem of liberal policy was precisely to develop in fact the concrete and real space in which the formal structure of competition could function. So, it is a matter of a market economy without laissez-faire, that is to say, an active policy without state control. Neo-liberalism should not therefore be identified with laissez-faire, but rather with permanent vigilance, activity, and interven-

tion" (132). For Foucault, this interventionist disposition is by no means exceptional, but suggests the kind of ongoing labor of regulation that the state and economy will require of themselves and demand of others. This work of the political suggests that even shock may ask more of us than to lay still on the table, and that hyperactivity is a pervasive and readily observable consequence. Accordingly, shock would describe the queasy condition of navigating between subject and object, of intervening without guarantee, of rippling waves of consequence ungoverned by intentionality. When this futurity is borne in the present, the simple juxtaposition of utopian and dystopian moments cannot settle the matter of what to do with the politics of knowledge, of what interventions will yield, of what returns on mobilization we can expect. Bodies are not simply made docile but set in frenzied motion. Neoliberalism has meant more work from those pressed to labor.

Bail-In

The longer history of a tense union between interventionist and minimalist state has wracked the republic since its origins (Smith). The gains of an elegant formulation of power can be offset by maximizing its hold on the imagination and minimizing the myriad counter-histories and expansions of the political that have also been part of the recent and more distant pasts. The peril of historicism is the seduction that we all belong to the same time and that opportunity comes and goes with the smooth swing of a pendulum, erasing the ongoing accomplishment of precisely the alternatives we seek. The explanatory challenges posed by shock's totalizing reach suggest a phantasmatic economy of violence that does not readily intersect with the vast assemblage of labor and productive capacity that has wielded such excess. Indeed, to the narrative that violence is something epiphenomenal to the actual grist of life, we might insert the current account common across various ideological dispositions of financial shock, meltdown, and bailout. The current reign of finance is, of course, another great experiment hatched from the labs of economics departments. In this case finance is reduced, like shock, to ideology and greed—the emancipation from which will return us to the authenticity of hard work and use value. But finance cannot be reduced to speculative

activity; its expansion has abetted the massive rift between productive capacity and means of consumption. The rise and spread of finance has fueled industrial production around the world. The former has not become a false surrogate of the latter. The moralistic dismissal of finance does no more to foster an ethical production of goods than does the attribution of capital's violence toward labor to excessive greed and bad ideology free us from the coercions of the wage relation.

A reconsideration of the political spaces opened by the current reign of finance needs to begin by asking what forms or sociality or mutual indebtedness are being produced—before and after the storm. Key to the management, risk, and production of volatility has been the growth in derivatives markets, traded publicly (credit markets) and privately (over the counter), whose notional value exceeds one quadrillion dollars (Bank of International Settlements). The rate of increase of these contracts to buy or sell variable attributes of commodities (such as interest or currency exchange rates) and the skyrocketing multiplication of global Gross Domestic Product (measured in trillions of dollars), often act as a kind of cognitive anesthetic rather than a pathway for thought. Prosaically, derivatives incorporate a range of operations that make the circulation of capital possible. First, they trade risk by serving as a kind of insurance. A premium is paid to buy or sell a bundle of goods, services, currency, mortgages, or other credit or debt at a particular time for a particular price, thereby hedging against an unexpected modulation in a market. This bundle also becomes a tradeable commodity in its own right that makes markets and increases price volatility. Any commodity comes to have a multiplying array of tags or profiles that index its value but also set it in motion. The ability to set prices in anticipation of the completion of a production cycle points to a second feature of derivatives, one that allows them to serve as a global equilibration of price the way that gold once did. But rather than relying on fixed exchange rates and set temporalities of production, derivatives bring the future into the present. Finally, derivatives commensurate the value of different forms of capital, taking common attributes of very different kinds of commodities, such as their currency exchange rates, and associating them on a global scale. Each of these operations intensifies labor and presses on productivity by importing global market conditions to local instances of activity.

Within companies, excellence is pegged to the best performers, said to outperform the average by a fivefold factor. Within academia, stars are said to be the measure by which fields are made and others adjudged mere contributors. All attention runs to the best and the rest are left deficient and disposable.

Australian political economists Dick Bryan and Mike Rafferty have examined the socializing effects of derivatives and have called for what they term labor's finance: "The reproduction of labour power becomes the site where neutral, stable money is defined in the sphere of working class finance, and all other monetary and asset forms, in the sphere of capital, benchmark themselves to that labour anchor" (Bryan, Rafferty, and MacWilliam). This inversion of who gets pegged to what and where resources are most deservedly applied points to finance beyond itself as a new axis for political reorientation and remediation. Such priorities would certainly set the bailout on a different course: one that reverses the double morality of hazard and debt to valorize the productive excess that expanded debt can draw upon. As Melinda Cooper and Angela Mitropoulos put it, "we are interested in pushing the exercise in excess even further, in praise of a usurious economy from below that would begin with the most intimate of acts while breaking beyond their normative sexual and racial boundaries. Briefly put, how is it possible to live on borrowed time, to extend credit to oneself and others, while defaulting on the contractual arrangements one might have with the creditor?" (Cooper and Mitropoulos).

Instruments of finance, like securities and derivatives, can be treated merely as weapons of mass destruction, their spectral existence and magnitude trotted out as a kind of shock and awe—but they also have had the practical effect of creating interdependencies and mutual indebtedness of populations to one another. The politics of this socialization of financial labor are not readily captured by a return to the local. The financial meltdown points to the availability of massive amounts of wealth without clear ideological or functional ends—witness the difficulty that the architects of the bailout had in explaining what had happened and why the hundreds of billions of dollars were needed, as well as the banks' ability to account for what they were actually doing with the money. In the words of one of the banks to survive state-led monopolization, "We've

lent some of it. We've not lent some of it. We've not given any accounting of 'Here's how we're doing it'," said Thomas Kelly, a spokesman for JPMorgan Chase, which received $25 billion in emergency bailout money. "We have not disclosed that to the public. We're declining to" (MSNBC). It is possible that this lack of transparency might be corrected by better regulation, but the wider absence of understanding makes such correction unlikely. Rather, the disclosure that trillions of dollars of public funds are available in the first place seems to have encouraged recognition that social wealth in the aggregate can be applied to attend to more general human needs.

Making good on this promise entails more than marshaling the quotidian pockets of democratic will, but rather reconnecting what labor makes available, whether in shock or in awe, for a more general reconstruction of society. If the blame game is meant to be self-erasing, the greater consequence is to elide consideration of the financial crisis's effects rather than its causes. The wobbly state of knowledge disclosed to underpin economic thinking may well be tied to a larger conundrum of expertise more broadly. Lyotard's now-reliable formulation of generalized doubt toward grand narratives can be extended to the specialized discourses of expertise, the vertiginous state that ensues when all are experts and no expertise can be considered reliable enough. It seems unlikely that the failure to produce facts adequate to the management of their own ramifications is a predicament that can be isolated to the intellectual labor of financial manufacture. The skepticism toward expertise is a more general feature of its proliferation, as more claim the mantle of the professional managerial class and more assert a capacity for knowledge effects beyond their own specialization.

When this phenomenon hit humanities departments two decades ago it was referred to as the culture wars. Many more wars have subsequently ensued, still with this logic of the minor discourse, the specialized technique (of which terror is, like finance but one more) wreaking havoc on generalized understanding of how the world should be. The false premises of the invasion of Iraq may now seem as irrelevant to what it has wrought as are the billions of dollars deployed to shock and awe financial institutions into normal functionality. In neither case was normalcy restored, but the question of what inventions might be salutary given the

evident surplus capacity to marshal expenditure without ends. This too is a condition of knowledge production. Now we may be seeing a more generalized decomposition of professional autonomy while demands for the social efficacy for what is known is only on the rise. Rather than bemoan this state as one of cognitive impotency, we might be wiser to take firmer stock of what we place our learning in the service of. The parting of the mists should also allow us to see that this socialization of capital and of labor, whether named by finance, globalization, neoliberalism, or capitalism itself, was also likely there all along. The bailout would come to stand as a critical juncture—not the origin of a new world, but a re-enchantment with those attentions to wealth whose returns are mutually enriching. The change of course would allow us to consider what of our mutuality we want to take on board and what ballast we can readily let go. The place for these ruminations is already upon us. The map remains for us to draw.

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Chapter 13

Auto-Immunity

Henry Sussman

The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. The storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky.[1]

It might well seem, under the aura of Walter Benjamin, that history is doomed to fall a step behind the manipulations to the operating systems of technology, might, social organization, and commerce impacting directly on people's lives; that an inevitable time-lag creeps between the exercise of power and where it can be picked up, on the street or superhighway, by critique's fish-eye lens. Benjamin's Angel of History has been summoned to his last-ditch mercy mission both by the collector, who looked longingly at childhood and its unaffected faculties and discernments, and by the avatar of shock, who knew that there was no turning back once people existed under the regimes of automation, unbridled extraction and acceleration, and clueless power and technology. Abject in his very orientation, the Angel of History must be pushed forward into the future over the mounting heaps of debris that accumulation and cultural striving emit as byproducts. He has been interned both ahead of his moment and behind it. There is a familiar pathos to this predicament of angelic (or messianic) exile: a similar wild-goose chase on the part of K. in Kafka's *The Castle* looms, for instance, in the background of this image.

If history is, ultimately, a tragedy for Benjamin, more precisely a Baroque stage-set strewn with the paraphernalia of death, its most prominent feature is the blind spot occasioned by an unavoidable time-lag between the acquiescence to power and new modifications to its delivery systems, whether at the level of bureaucracy, technology, or policing and military might, planned and implemented in the hub of strategic operations. History's angels and other victims are fated either to overshoot their moment or watch hopelessly as it passes them by.

If social observers and critics could only catch up with the nexus of interconnected financial, military, and techno-administrative manipulations directly impacting on culturally diverse ways of Life, in the 'hood, on the land, in the *favela*, and in the *hutong*, so runs the *Trauerspiel*, the outrages of ideological reaction, runaway extraction and accumulation, psychotic greed, and social injustice without redress or remediation, could be met preemptively. The delayed mission of mercy and redemption on the part of the Angel of History becomes, in the end, a brilliant figurative resignation to critique's inbred inability to capture in timely fashion the new wrinkles in power's delivery, undercover updates to the Prevailing Operating System (what we once might have called *Weltanschauung*, ideology, hegemony, metaphysics, or *épistème*).

Although its disclosures are invariably somber and unsettling, Naomi Klein's recent journalism brings the long tradition of bewailing the inactivity occasioned by the constitutional delay between exploitation, apprehension, and articulation to an abrupt end. I say this in full respect to the inspiration and near-bewildering insight so many of us have drawn from the critical investigations of Walter Benjamin and allied historians of culture. Herself drawing on informational and communicative technologies of near-instantaneous velocity, Klein has morphed the Angel of History into a wide receiver, hurtling toward the end-zone, the game, miraculously, still up for grabs. A second or two remains on the time-clock, not much more. Irreplaceable casualties have in any event transpired; the toll of past negligence is irreversible. Under the aegis of a luminous master-narrative of global economic development and political domination over the past five decades, somehow assembled under her own drive and momentum, Klein legitimately claims the authority to analyze the categorical, fundamentalist outrages even while they happen.

A flow-monitor out of the pages of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* diptych, Klein is more than capable of the jarring, revelatory flashes fueling the critical community's long run on Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida. Benjamin, for example, particularly in "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," is no stranger to the shock-effect that she most ingeniously gleans from the impact of unconstrained free-market economic policies on a global palette of economic systems that were once operative, albeit in fits and starts, bubbles and busts, on the basis of local histories, climates, monitoring devices, and correctives. The shock that Benjamin observed and tracked as it unrolled from the nineteenth century was above all an unassimilated energetic surge. "Baudelaire speaks of a man who plunges into the crowd as into a reservoir of electric energy. Circumscribing the experience of the shock, he calls this man 'a *kaleidoscope* equipped with consciousness.'"[2]

It is out of this unprecedented and overwhelming resource of unbridled energy that Benjamin, in the essay on Baudelaire situated at the extreme of his inscriptive density and intensity, can pursue the nineteenth century's characteristic mood and gesture: from the spasm that lights matches and clicks cameras to the robot-like movements of the assembly line to the playful "escape" from this regime through automatic gambling machines and dodgem cars.

The shock that by Klein's account has been a strategic factor in subjugating a vast range of national jurisdictions and cultures to corporate thinking and practice has been a far more sordid matter. Strategic shock becomes the primary delivery-system for an old time economic religion, reduced to a few unwavering tenets, crystallized by Milton Friedman and his Chicago School:

> The three trademark demands—privatization, government deregulation, and deep cuts to social spending—tended to be extremely unpopular with citizens, but when the agreements were signed there was still at least the pretext of mutual consent between the governments doing the negotiating, as well as a consensus among the supposed experts. Now the same ideological program was being imposed via the most baldly coercive means possible: under foreign military occupation after an invasion, or immediately following a cataclysmic nat-

> ural disaster. September 11 appeared to have provided Washington with the green light to stop asking countries if they wanted the U.S. version of "free trade and democracy" and to start imposing it with Shock and Awe military force The idea of exploiting crisis and disaster has been the modus operandi of Milton Friedman's movement from the very beginning—this fundamentalist form of capitalism has always needed disasters to advance. (*Shock Doctrine* 9)
>
> The clearest example was the shock of September 11, which, for millions of people, exploded "the world that is familiar" and opened up a period of deep disorientation and regression that the Bush administration expertly exploited. Suddenly we found ourselves in a Year Zero Never strong in or knowledge of history, North Americans had become a blank slate—"a clean sheet of paper" on which "the newest and most beautiful words can be written," as Mao said of his people.
>
> That is how the shock doctrine works: the original disaster—the coup, the terrorist attack, the market meltdown, the war, the tsunami, the hurricane—puts the entire population into a state of collective shock. The falling bombs, the bursts of terror, the pounding winds serve to soften up whole societies much as the blaring music and blows in the torture cells soften up prisoners. Like the terrorized prisoner who gives up the names of comrades and renounces his faith, shocked societies often give up things they would fiercely protect. Jamar Perry and his fellow evacuees at the Baton Rouge evacuation were supposed to give up their housing projects and public schools. (16–17)

Klein's scenario is of the ideological preparation, akin to seismic shock and the concomitant erosion of a given society's social buttressing, for states of exception, referring the severe measures back to some identifiable catastrophe. The states of exception initiated under the shock regime, above all the widespread overt use of torture and the activation of a vast mercenary apparatus ("military subcontractors") not fully account-

able under military code or federal regulation, have become the stocks-in-trade of U.S. and Allied military, economic, and diplomatic policy.

Characteristic of Klein's analysis in the introductory passages from *The Shock Doctrine* cited immediately above is the clean follow-through from ideological manipulation, propaganda, and theatricality to very specific technologies of military and social control. Not only can the minor, but telling revisions to the ideological sub-text be tracked from one scene of adventure to the next, almost on a monthly basis; the ideology is itself modular. Its three basic tenets, each with but very little wiggle-room for variation, amount to the litanies in a fundamentalist religion even starker and more unwavering than the culture prevailing in the hotbeds of terrorist aggression. Not unlike Freud's schematic for the arrangement of mnemonic material at the end of *Studies on Hysteria*,[3] Klein inventively mobilizes concentric strata and epochs of U.S. cultural invention as backgrounds to the military and economic artifacts, above all of the George W. Bush presidency. The immediate pretext for the fire-and-brimstone rhetoric for Shock and Awe may well be the increasing prevalence in U.S. society of fundamentalist evangelists and their political sidemen and ideological operatives. But this is subtended in her analysis by the growth and prominence of such agencies as the World Bank and IMF over the past forty years and by an even deeper underpinning of imaginary terror extending back to the very stirrings of the Cold War, the scenario of the brainwashing and deployment of human drones in such a film as "The Manchurian Candidate," as well as the culture of forced electric shock-therapy, the psychiatric practice on which the fantasy of brain-programming is based.

Klein narrates a sequential tale beginning substantially with the U.S.-engineered overthrow of Salvador Allende on 9/11/1973, and refusing to relinquish its detailed testimony until having pursued a filigree strand of structurally parallel destabilizations, in succession, in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Poland, China, South Africa, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, Israel, and, most tellingly, on two separate grim occasions, Iraq. Klein orchestrates the global iteration of a regime that, while capable of making accommodations to certain differences in geography, economic activity, and culture, adheres rigidly to such core-tenets as were cited above, prac-

tices whose purism packs the deepest-seated political consequences, demanding decades to repair.

It can come as scarce surprise to members of the critical network, that Klein, in unmasking and articulating the programmatic subtext to a systematic strategy of unbridled exploitation and political repression under the banner of economic purism positions herself along the pathway of certain of Jacques Derrida's most memorable destabilizations in the name of free inquiry and expression. Not only has Klein brought critique to the moment where it can, and is all the more so *compelled* to address eventualities unfolding in the moment—the core postulate of the IC^3 project, if it admits of one. Klein's narrative and her analysis furnish tangible proof, one certainly not limited to Derrida's most overtly "political" works, say *Specters of Marx* or *Rogues*, that the battery of textual-environment based rhetorical gestures and reading strategies known as "deconstruction," are, in the age of information-politics, as indispensable a contrapuntal political strategy and systematic release-valve as exists. Klein appeals, for example, to Keynesian economics as a mixed palette of interests and counterforces in which it was possible to arrive at subtle compromises and balances suitable to specific environments.

> For this reason, Chicagoans did not see Marxism as their true enemy. The real source of the trouble was to be found in the ideas of the Keyneseans in the United States, the social democrats in Europe, and the developmentalists in what was called the Third World. These were believers not in a utopia but a mixed economy, to Chicago eyes an ugly hodgepodge of capitalism for the manufacture and distribution of consumer products, socialism in education, state ownership in essentials like water services, and all kinds of laws designed to temper the extremes of capitalism. Like the religious fundamentalist who has a grudging respect for fundamentalists of different faiths and for avowed atheists but disdains the casual believer, the Chicagoans declared war on these mix-and-match economists. What they wanted was not a revolution exactly but a capitalist Reformation: a return to uncontaminated capitalism. (53)

In Klein's parlance, viable economic practice is a rich tapestry of strategies variegated in their orientations and in the interests they are primed to serve. The economy is an ever-changing spectrum of investments, stopgap measures, and imaginary long-term strategies. To reduce all economies to one economy, to subjugate this one economy to the slogans of a complacent, unwavering economic theology, founded on the attribution of divine benevolence and equilibrium to the Market, is tantamount to the destruction of the environmental diversity whose immanent loss Gregory Bateson bemoaned at the very outset of the current ecological and climatic catastrophes. Bateson visualized this fatal simplification both as an anthropocentric drive to urbanize the human habitat in its entirety and as a fatal reduction of the biosphere:

> Man, the outstanding modifier of environment, similarly achieves single-species ecosystems in his cities, but he goes one step further, establishing special environments for his symbionts. These, likewise, become single-species ecosystems: fields of corn, cultures of bacteria, batteries of fowls, colonies of laboratory rats, and the like. (Bateson 451)

> There is an ecology of bad ideas, just as there is an ecology of weeds When you narrow down your epistemology and act on the premise, "What interests me is me, or my organization, or my species," you chop off consideration of other loops of the loop structure. You decide that you want to get rid of the by-products of human life and that Lake Erie will be a good place to put them. You forget that the wider eco-mental system called Lake Erie is part of *your* wider eco-mental system—and that if Lake Erie is driven insane, its insanity is incorporated into the wider system of *your* thought and experience. (492)

Bateson's rich insight here, that ecologies and systems can be driven as insane as the men who appropriate their output and specialize their elements and processes with monomaniacal zeal, sets the stage for Klein's constitutional repugnance to the procrustean colonizing of free-market economic principles, implemented by such organizations as the World Bank and IMF. Bateson's Lake Erie, in keeping with this volume's overall drift, is a sink, a catchment area that, until saturated, performs invaluable

ecosystematic service: such as by metabolizing and otherwise channeling waste and byproducts.[4] As the curtain rose on the present moment of ecological disaster and economic implosion, Bateson discerned the feedback loop circulating the madness as well as the pollution back and forth between humans and the environment. It's not only the case that Lake Erie's insanity precipitates our own. It's a two-way street; our productivist preoccupation with resource shortages (*resource* as in raw material) leads to the foreclosure of recognizing that natural waste management facilities ("sinks") are resources in their own right. This thought-occlusion is tantamount to a deficit in long-term attention. It precipitates Lake Erie's insanity in the form of chemical saturation, which then, in a demented feedback loop, makes our inattention and flawed policy even crazier.

Lake Erie has attained a level of madness that even Bateson could not have foreseen. Bioinvasions by species such as the Asian carp have attacked biodiversity and weakened bio-resilience to previously unimaginable degrees. During the floods of the 1980's, the Asian carp escaped fish-farms in Mississippi to colonize the entire Mississippi River basin and to slowly penetrate the Great Lakes habitat. This voracious fish devours a disproportionate amount of the plants and animals at the base of the Great Lake food chain. In this way, it decimates native fish populations, and will eventually outnumber all native species. This is merely one further shock to an already depatterned eco-mental system. Premonitions of the Asian carp have already prompted a number of electric barriers—purportedly non-lethal—along the Chicago Ship and Barrier Canal. Electrified steel cables now line the canal floor at strategic points, creating a deterrent electrical field. Such measures tangibly complicate the lines otherwise drawn between a Foucauldian biopolitics and an Agambenesque thanato-politics. The compulsive imperative to maintain the economic and economic "health" of the Great Lakes has resulted in, among other stopgaps, dumping tons of poison into the canal and an ensuing fish-kill of over 200,000 tons. Similar crossover between bio- and thanato-politics has taken place in Tanzania's Lake Victoria, where the introduced species, the Nile perch, in similar fashion "occupied" the lake, sharply reducing its biodiversity. In this instance, conflict fought out at the ecological level prompted human conflict and economic disarray. The Nile perch was exploited as an "export crop." As the documentary,

"Darwin's Nightmare" demonstrates, the airplanes delivering the Tanzanian perch to their European markets returned with the munitions that prolonging the military theater of regional strife aggravated by dire economic shortage.

Bateson's rallying cry for eco-diversity in its broadest sense also antedates Derrida's isolation of *différence* itself, perhaps the preeminent subunit of articulation and information in a text-centered complex of cultural production underscoring the arbitrariness, contingency, and tenuousness of systematic arrangements, whether legal, socio-political, or economic. In Bateson's terms, the system installed in the Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile, and Brazil) by "the Chicago Boys and their professors" (102) in the 1970's was an inert ecology devoid of the flex and diversity necessary for productive adaptation,

> based entirely on a belief in "balance" and "order" and the need to be free of interferences and "distortions" in order to succeed. Because of these traits, a regime committed to the faithful application of this ideal cannot accept the presence of competing or tempering worldviews. In order for the ideal to be achieved, it requires a monopoly on ideology; otherwise … the economic signals become distorted and the entire system is thrown out of balance. (203)

In contrast to what she observed while tracking the epic trajectory of a narrow-minded, self-serving economic theology, and in spite of her own reflex empathy toward the receiving end of the Shock Doctrine, wherever its operations happen to be mobilized, Klein is herself hardly an economic purist or naïve holdout for rigid Marxian economics:

> I am not arguing that all forms of market systems are inherently violent. It is eminently possible to have a market-based economy that requires no such brutality and demands no such ideological purity. A free market in consumer products can coexist with free public health care, with public schools, with a large segment of the economy It's equally possible to require corporations to pay decent wages, to respect the right of workers to form unions, and for governments to tax and re-

> distribute wealth so that the sharp discrepancies that mark the corporatist state are reduced. (20)

Klein betrays herself here: she is as avowed a partisan of complexity in the field of economic arrangements as is Derrida on the always tenuous interface between the systems of exploitation and extraction and the conceptual embroideries, suturing public opinion to signifiers, both legitimating and implementing the Prevailing Operating System. Any ethics toward which the Derridean gloss on a bewildering multiplicity of cultural artifacts gravitates is an exhortation to complexity in the service of wiring release-mechanisms within the otherwise closed circuitry of philosophical solipsism, imperialist adventure, unconstrained economic development, and politico-administrative fundamentalism. Deconstruction's deep-wired ethical slant places it in productive differential solidarity with the best of post-colonial and gender critique, with the systemic dismantling and rewiring undertaken, in different ways by Lacan, Deleuze and Guattari, and now two distinct generations of systems theorists.[5] Certainly as well with the dynamic, wide-angle panorama brought under acute analysis and critique by a committed journalist of Naomi Klein's caliber.

The particular coordinate at which the present entry to an inherently multi-perspectival omnibus is situated pivots on the interface at which two seemingly antithetical discourses meet up only to discover substantial accord on specific points as well as analytical orientations. Derrida's text is clearly philosophically concept-driven while constitutively literary in grain and weave. Klein's is unabashedly in the service of the facts, the data emerging both from meticulous investigative archival work and unremitting tracking of trends. Derrida's prose is by design stylistically elliptical and opaque; Klein's lucid and sequential according to media convention and "the law of genre."[6] I've argued in *The Task of the Critic* that disagreements in discourse are never substantive or "philosophical." They are invariably matters of discourse design, the parameters of the screen or display on which they've been arrayed. Given the sharp discrepancies between the respective prose media that Klein and Derrida synthesize, their substantive mutual affirmation is all the more striking. It is no doubt grounded in nothing more overbearing than an ethics of the rigorous pursuit and adumbration of complexity to the full range of its implica-

tions. Indeed, to an increasing degree the only parameter in whose terms substantial disagreement on the issues, from foreign policy to healthcare and economic policy, becomes explicit is the palpable tension between complex and stripped-bare approaches.

On a substantive or thematic level, the deconstructive philosopher and the journalistic flow-monitor of exploitative and accumulative trends agree on a remarkable spectrum of recent phenomena, from the World Bank and IMF to the precipitous expansion of military forces serving corporate interests rather than those determined by sovereign entities.

> The beast is not simply an animal but the very incarnation of evil, of the satanic, the diabolical, the demonic—a beast of the Apocalypse. Before Iraq, Libya had been considered by the Reagan administration to be a rogue state, although I don't believe that the word itself was ever used. Libya, Iraq, and Sudan were bombed for being rogue states, and, in the last two instances, with a violence and cruelty that fall nowise short of those associated with what is called "September 11." But the list is endless (Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea, Iran, and so on). For reasons that would be interesting to study, India and Pakistan, despite their reckless postures with regard to nuclear disarmament, particularly in 1998, have never figured among the rogue states (although India did everything it could at the United Nations to have Pakistan condemned as a rogue state). (*Rogues* 97)

Derrida here performs an extrapolative read-out of the apocalyptic beast or monster associated with those states and other political entities accorded "rogue" status (more on which below). As we've seen, Klein needs to take embedded politico-theological zeal as seriously as Derrida does throughout his ingenious exposes of Abrahamic rhetoric, imagery, metaphysics and eschatology. The global panorama through which he pursues the attribution of this status, an appellation making sense only within the sacrosanct closure of political fundamentalism, is in scale on a par with Klein's documentary pursuit of the Shock Doctrine around the globe back to its sources in the U.S. economy. Her discourse, fact-driven as it is, relies on her ability to discern the imagistic continuity between

the ideological pronouncements and rationalizations driving the global extractive adventure and the empirical trends, whether on the street or in the prison cell: "The shock doctrine mimics this process precisely ["softening up" populations to accept new eventualities], attempting to achieve on a mass scale what torture does one on one in an interrogation cell" (16). The teasing-out of key images, whether of wheels, torture, or loose cannons, is as indispensable to the wiring of journalistic focus and compression as it is to theoretical excursis.

Agree as Klein and Derrida substantially do on the drift, scale, rationale, and impact of shock capitalism, the wiring of their respective purviews on global politics becomes a shared (or shorted) circuit on this far more intriguing and profound register, in the engine-room of figuration and rhetoric. For Klein, the ultimate consummation of the universal Shock Doctrine is a far-cry from the "end of history" declared by Francis Fukuyama.[7] It is, rather, the attack on the U.S. domestic economy by the very draconian measures by which it, in collusion with the World Bank, IMF, and, at least in Derrida's account, the U.N., have subjugated and depleted a bewildering array of the world's local ecologies. The plot of a fundamentalist spirit of economic severity coming home to haunt the overheated system that launched it, a vengeful and repressive trajectory, torques and structures Klein's presentation in far-reaching ways. It is no accident that the section of *The Shock Doctrine* devoted to Iraq, in many ways a consummate one, is titled "Iraq Full Circle: Overshock." Or that a pivotal section of the definitive first chapter is called "Shock Therapy Comes Home." This sub-section begins with an uncannily prescient epitaph to the current economic meltdown—one revealing a shocking dearth of economic and labor diversity, an irreversible displacement of production and opportunity *hors système*. "Friedman's Chicago School Movement has been conquering territory around the world since the seventies, but until recently its vision had never been applied in its country of origin" (11). The elements of the economic system set into motion when the evangelical fundaments of the Shock Doctrine entrenched themselves at home comprise a terse summation of the current status quo, one that will not be rectified by emergency infusions of TARP capital alone:

> To kick-start the disaster capitalism complex, the Bush administration outsourced, with no public debate, many of the

> most sensitive and core functions of government—from providing health care to soldiers, to interrogating prisoners, to gathering and "data mining" information on all of us. The role of the government in this unending war is not that of an administrator managing a network of contractors but of a deep-pocketed venture capitalism. (12)
>
> And that's just the home front of the War on terror; the real money is in fighting wars abroad. Beyond the weapons contractors, who have seen their profits soar thanks to the war in Iraq, maintaining the U.S. military is now one of the fastest-growing service economies in the world. (12)
>
> Then there is humanitarian relief and reconstruction. Pioneered in Iraq, for-profit relief and reconstruction has already become the global paradigm The primary economic role of wars, however, was as a means to open new markets that had been sealed off and to generate postwar peacetime booms. Now wars and disaster responses are so fully privatized that they are themselves the new market; there is no need to wait until after the war for the boom—the medium is the message. (12)
>
> Amid the weapons trade, the private soldiers, for-profit reconstruction and the homeland-security industry, which has emerged as a result of the Bush administration's particular brand of post-September 11 shock therapy is a fully articulated new economy. It was built in the Bush era, but it now exists quite apart from any one administration and will remain entrenched until the supremacist ideology that underpins it is identified, isolated, and challenged. (13)

Drawing on a very different archive of resources, Derrida can still hone in on the self-destructive consequences of solipsism (itself trapped in its "ipseity"), self-aggrandizing strategy, and logic when they circulate back to the Homeland. Throughout *Rogues*, Derrida's talisman for this casuistry is the wolf's irrefutable circular reasoning in La Fontaine's "The Wolf and the Lamb." He deploys this logic, for example, in explaining the exception made in the Charter of the United Nations empowering its two

primary powers at the time, the U.S. and U.S.S.R., to defend themselves against an armed attack, "until the Security Council has taken the necessary measures to assure peace and security" (99).

> The reason of the strongest not only determines the actual policy of that international institution but, well before that, already determined the conceptual architecture of the charter itself, the law that governs, in its fundamental principles, and in its practical rules, the development of this institution. (100)

In Derrida's parlance—with a glance backward to the foundations of philosophical solipsism and to the dynamic of auto-affection that he isolated early on, in the Husserlian phenomenology, an intense philosopheme encapsulating the decisiveness of linguistic contingency to modernist aesthetics and discourse[8]—the end result of the battery of violent, invasive, and exploitative economic measures condensed and put forward with such lucidity by Klein is a systematic immune-reaction. Embroidering on nothing more formidable or high-tech than a movement, turning, and the geometrical figure of the wheel, *roue*, predicated by it, Derrida accounts for a disastrous feedback loop within a system that cannot always be just, but that might, under optimal conditions, be ameliorated by diversity and critique, out of respect for the complexity both of its intrinsic workings and of the lives implicated by it. The wheel turns. Within its etymological compass, the roué is profiled as an outcast, to be punished on the wheel. His scapegoating, with the impunity elaborated by Giorgio Agamben with such lucidity in *Homo Sacer*,[9] becomes the basis for the rogue status conferred on states purportedly behaving as loose cannons. The suffering inflicted as the wheel rotates becomes a figural as well as etymological basis for tor*ture*.

> There never was, in the 1980's or 1990's, as has sometimes been claimed, a *political turn* or *ethical turn* in "deconstruction," at least not as I experience it. The thinking of the political has always been a thinking of difference and the thinking of difference always a thinking *of* the political, of the contour and limits of the political, especially around the enigma or the autoimmune double bind What happens [between 1965 and 1990] remains without relation or resemblance to what

> the figure that I continue to privilege here might lead one to imagine, that is the figure of a "turn," of a *Kehre* or turning. If a "turning" turns by "veering" round a curve or by forcing one, like the wind in one's sails, to veer or change tack, then the trope of turning turns poorly or turns bad, turns into the wrong image. For it diverts thought or turns it away from what remains to be thought; it ignores or runs counter to the thought of the very thing that remains to be thought. If every send-off is differential, and if the trace is a synonym for this send-off [*renvoi*], then there is always some trace of democracy; indeed every trace is a trace of democracy. (39)

Even while disavowing wholesale shifts in direction or "turns" that have been attributed to deconstruction, in this passage Derrida encapsulates the by no means intuitive follow-through that could link democracy, not as the module for specific governments but as the deliberative field of open-ended possibility (much akin to "the experience of the impossible")[10] to writing as the inscription or scoring of diversity, the incommensurable, as *différance* itself. The trace is the merest instance, the "trace-element," of writing, or in Agamben's terms, "bare writing." By means of turnings and veerings, the operational possibilities of "the democracy to come," never a specific instance in its name, are tied to the practice, persistence, registration, and critical reception and embellishment of writing. Any politics of deconstruction, Derrida gestures here above all figuratively, will be enunciated by writing in the *political traces*, turns, and variants that it assumes: the mark of the scapegoat or undesirable, the spasmodic and elliptical twists attributed to the rogue or *voyou*, the undecidable duplicity of autoimmunity, making it impossible to determine whether an act of aggression strikes the designated enemy or the power mobilized to lash out, the torture meted out by the circular machine of punishment and humiliation.

In keeping with the succinct solidarity between any possible democracy and writing in its deeper philosophical sense that he underscores in the citation immediately above, Derrida pursues the circular reasoning and autoimmune implications of contemporary shock capitalism both in their philosophical roots and over the vast spectrum of national and regional cultures that Klein has "covered" in multiple senses of the word:

> Before any sovereignty of the state, of the nation-state, of the monarch, or, in democracy, of the people, ipseity names a principle of legitimate sovereignty, the accredited or recognized supremacy of a power or force, a *kratos* or a *cracy*. This is what is implied, posed, presupposed, but also imposed in the very first position, in the very self- or autopositioning, of *ipseity itself*, everywhere there is some oneself, the first, ultimate, and supreme source of "reason of the strongest" as the right [*droit*] granted to force or to the force granted to law [*droit*]. (12)

Derrida's work on ipseity here, with the seal or closure that it applies to entities and agencies, whether of the singular or collective variety, plumbs to the deep roots of will, selfhood, self-centeredness, high-handedness, one is tempted to add narcissism (for those who might tolerate this rhetoric), whether in the singular or plural, in philosophy's very engine-room, the *khōra* where its most basic parts throb and murmur. Sealed by unilateral momentum, volition, assertion, the entity is primed, at the most basic level, for the "reason of the strongest." In the Lacanian universe, narcissism is the isolation allowing individuals to think, behave, and express themselves like planets (no doubt, also to *feel* like them).[11] Derrida's take on blind or completely cynical self-assertion is both more physical (as in grounded in physics) and more etymologically vibrant than what is ultimately a Romantic figure of "sublime isolation." To his quest both backward and downward in philosophy's history and architecture to ipseity, arising among the elementary forms of *kratos* and *cracy*, Derrida adds one of his most fanciful and productive etymological fugues, one in which the physics of turning morphs wildly, implicating the turrets of absolutist feudal power as well as the wheels plied by potters and executioners. Yet there is a philosophical gist to the open-ended drift of words related to turning: the figure of the unmoved mover at the heart of Western approaches to politics and power as well of theology.

> We are at the same time around and at the center of the circle or the sphere where the values of ipseity are gathered together, the values of the together [*ensemble*], of the ensemble and the semblable, of simultaneity and gathering together, but also of

> the simulacrum, simulation. For let us not forget that, like the circle and the sphere, the turn (all turns [*tours*], and all turrets, all towers [*tours*], including the turret of a chateau or the turning surface of a potter's wheel [*tour*]) requires surfaces, a surface area, lines that turn back to or toward themselves according to a certain motivation, a certain mover, and a possible rotational movement, but always, simultaneously, around a center, a pivot or axle, which, even if it too ends up turning, does not change place and remains quasi immobile. (12)

> Now, sovereignty would be precisely this, a force (*kratos*), a force in the form of a sovereign authority This sovereignty is a circularity, indeed a sphericity. Indeed, sovereignty is round, it is a rounding off. The circular or spherical rotation, the turn of the re-turn on the self, can take either the alternating form of the *by turns*, the *in turn*, the *each in turn* (we will see this in Plato and Aristotle in a moment) or else the form of an identity between the origin and the conclusion, the cause and the end or aim, the driving [*motrice*] cause and the final cause. (13)

The grounding of Klein's reportage in the day-by-day accretion of information, in actuality in the full senses of the term, might not allow her a tour de force of linguistic steeping and associative virtuosity such as the one demonstrated in the two extracts immediately above. How absolutely astonishing and even hopeful, then, that in a very different way, Derrida's exposition could be as resolutely dedicated to disclosing the violence, oversimplification, and self-serving rapacity and greed in shock capitalism as she is. Furthermore, as suggested above, that her account, a bravura performance in its own right, could rely in pivotal instances as much on imagistic suggestion and shorthand as Derrida's. Derrida can buttress the Western fundament of ipseity as the "deep structure" of self-assertion and repetition over time by invoking formats of alternation culled from Plato and Aristotle. Klein is left with an appeal to the World Court of decency and common sense, as they have evolved within the current configuration of politics and information.

Yet where both Klein and Derrida end up, whether in tracking the Shock Doctrine across the globe or in accessing the very philosophical roots of obtuse and self-serving power, is a profound repugnance toward, and irresistible compulsion to expose and debunk torture, yet another turn in the figuration and performance of ipseity:

> The torture of the wheel belongs to a long juridical and political history. It sets in motion not only the turning apparatus of a wheel but the quartering of the alleged criminal When I speak of a double question whose torture returns, and when I say that this question was at the same time and/or by turns historical and conceptual or semantic, I am describing a torturing and quartering on the wheel. (12)

Be assured, the torture that Derrida laments here, even having derived it from a tropolgy set deep within the battery of philosophy and its languages, is every bit as tangible and destructive, delivered with increasing impunity in sites all over the world, as the one tracked and monitored by Klein, "a system designed to force them [prisoners] to betray the principle most integral to their sense of self" (112). Torture is surely the most concrete, in the Lacanian idiom, Real turn of the wheel whose most complex articulation is the reversals and intangibles of the autoimmune system. Like the wheel in its full nuance of complexity, autoimmunity is an absolutely capital scenario for Derrida to have extracted and derived, in a development-project of signification far more salutary than shock capitalism. It achieves such soaring pertinence, in a deconstructive meditation that has always acknowledged the lack of any clear demarcation between the "insides" and "outsides" of systems, because of the fluidity and volatility with which stimulus morphs into allergen, ally into enemy and vice versa, and, as we have seen, aggression against the enemy mutates into an insidious intrinsic system-virus.

Derrida goes to some lengths to demonstrate that the subtly in-turning or autotropic figure of autoimmunity is not isolated, either as a dynamic or a figure, in the battery of virtual conceptual and exegetical turnings that deconstruction has perforce accessed and harnessed. Indeed, in the citation immediately below, the cloud-chamber of autoimmunity is sutured to no less than two long traditions of conceptual and interpretative in-

determinacy: the Kantian antinomy, whose constitutional double-vision is, indeed, also reproduced at certain moments when Hegelian dialectics stops dead in its tracks, "crashes," shorts itself out. But to the extent that the autoimmune system (or non-system) can issue forth, at any moment, in the mutually counteracting messages of a double bind, Derrida places it also in the wake of the seminal thinking performed by the first generation of avowed systems and communications analysts, above all Gregory Bateson and Anthony Wilden. Autoimmunity, to invoke Derrida's own favored word for this logical and communicative meltdown, is an aporia with wide-ranging political (among other) implications.

> The formalization of this autoimmunity was there [Derrida's "Faith and Knowledge"][12] carried out around the *community* as *auto-co-immunity* (the common of community having in common the same duty or charge [*munus*] as the immune, as well as the auto-co-immunity of humanity—and particularly the autoimmine humanitarian. I could thus … inscribe the category of the autoimmune into the series of both older and more recent discourses on the *double bind* and the aporia. Although *aporia*, *double bind*, and *autoimmune process* are not exactly synonyms, what they have in common, what they are all, precisely, charged with, is, more than an internal contradiction an indecidability, that is, an internal-external, nondialectizable antinomy that risks paralyzing and thus calls for the event of the interruptive decision. (112)

> Sovereignty neither gives nor gives itself the time; it does not take time. Here is where the cruel autoimmunity with which sovereignty is affected begins, the autoimmunity with which sovereignty at once sovereignly affects and cruelly infects itself. Autoimmunity is always, in the same time without duration, cruelty itself, the autoinfection of all autoinfection. It is not some particular thing that is affected in autoimmunity but the self, the *ipse*, the *autos* that finds itself infected. As soon as it needs heteronomy, the event, time, and the other. (109)

Once again, in two juxtaposed citations from *Rogues*, we are party to the incredibly smooth and powerful follow-through between the dynam-

ics of autoimmunity as a figural and exegetical phenomenon and its tangible, often tragic repercussions in the sphere of global as well as local politics. If autoimmunity encapsulates the full craziness initiated in the multiple conditions of ipseity and the circular reasoning and self-interest extending from it, it is a counterpart to the insanities of giving, receiving, obligation, constraint, and reciprocity embedded in the conventions and practices of hospitality.[13] As Derrida reminds us, the step from formal-logical indeterminacy to blunt and irreversible acts of sovereignty on the world-stage is an incredibly brief one.

The allegorical figure in whom the aporias of autoimmunity are embedded and concentrated is, of course, the rogue himself (*voyou*). By a logic of the scapegoat going back in Derrida's exposition all the way to "Plato's Pharmacy,"[14] the rogue is the volition or agency that the socio-political system has *turned out*, in Agamben's rhetoric, banned.[15] In another display of balletic etymological and conceptual virtuosity akin to his work on the *tour*, one just preceeding the citation immediately below, Derrida derives the figure of the voyou from a series of usages and puns all having to do with the thoroughfare or way (*voie*).

> The word *voyou* has an essential relation with the *voie*, the way, with the urban roadways [*voirie*], the roadways of the city or polis, and thus with the street [*rue*] the waywardness [*dévoiement*] of the voyou consisting of making ill use of the street, or corrupting the street or loitering in the streets, in "roaming the streets," as we say in a strangely transitive formulation. This transitivity is in fact never far from the one that leads to "walking the streets." (65)

The voyou is a composite figure of deviation from the way. In a turn of stunning inventiveness even for himself, Derrida extrapolates the parameters of the *system of deviance*, the *voyoucracy* emerging from the culture of street-deviance. Ever the systems theorist, though his links to this particular discursive subspecialty are rarely rendered explicit, Derrida points out the momentum by which even resistance or "counterpower" can be placed under bureaucratic administration.

> The voyou is at once unoccupied, if not unemployed, and actively occupied with occupying the streets, either by "roam-

> ing the streets," doing nothing, loitering, or doing what is not supposed to be done, that is, according to established norms, laws, and the police. The voyou does what is not supposed to be done in the streets and on all the other byways, which the voyoucracy actually has the power to make less viable or trustworthy. Voyoucracy is a principle of disorder, to be sure, a threat against public order; but as a *crasy* it represents something more than a collection of individual or individualistic voyous. It is the principle of disorder as a sort of substitute order (a bit like a secret society, a religious order, a sect or brotherhood, a kind of Freemasonry). The *voyoucracy* already constitutes, even institutes, a sort of counterpower or countercitizenship. It is what is called a *milieu*. This *milieu*, this environment, this world unto itself, gathers into a network all the people of the crime world or underworld, all the singular voyous, all individuals of questionable morals and dubious character whom decent, law-abiding people would like to combat and exclude. (65–66)

The environment, milieu, catchment area, or natural habitat of belligerent deviance, whether the scattered acts of voyous or the regime of voyoucracy, is invariably the street, the thoroughfare. We do not know in what continent, city, or backwater the street that Derrida conjures forth in the above extract happens to be located. But it is virtual, tangible, Real: as much so as the capitals and sites of violence assembled so adroitly by Klein into the shock narrative. The virtual place where Klein and Derrida eventuate is a shared one, defined by its commitment to resistance and disclosure. If Klein and Derrida share in a certain constructive belligerence, it persists in the face of otherwise crippling and neutralizing auto-immunity and double bind. There are no winners in the "battle of proper names"[16] devolving on the appellation of singular or collective rogues. No one could put this impasse as eloquently as Derrida:

> There are thus no longer anything but rogue states, and there are no longer any rogue states. The concept will have reached its limit and the end—more terrifying than ever—of its epoch. This end was always close, indeed, already from the be-

> ginning. To all the more or less conceptual indications I have mentioned, we must add the following, which represents a symptom of another order. The very officials who, under Clinton, most accelerated and intensified this rhetorical strategy, who most abused or exploited the demonizing expression "rogue state," are the very ones who, in the end, on June 19, 2000, publicly declared their decision to give up at least the term. (106)

In the face of this zero-sum and zero-outcome game, engulfed and punctuated in violence as it may be, it remains incumbent on those of us with the capacity to persist in the acts of inscription, registration, and critique, regardless of how shocking or anomalous the new catastrophes, with whose "breaking" we've managed to catch up, happen to be. As Derrida beautifully orchestrates in the virtual street-scene that he summons forth as the homeland of the voyous, the quickly breaking argot of the actual, of what transpires today, remains dynamically anchored in the *langue* of long-standing cultural articulation, categorization, classification, figuration, logic, and taxonomy. That Klein and Derrida find themselves on so many of the same pages gives us an indication of how varied, in script, medium, acceleration, style, and impact the current tablets and display-screens of cultural notation happen to be.

The diverse qualities, dimensionalities, stylistics, timeframes, and spatializations of the media in which we participate, far from being leisure pursuits or interactions with techno gimmicks or appliances, are in fact the conditions of our knowledge, the very possibility of our expression and political enfranchisement. Our selection and familiarization with those media and inscriptive tools allowing our fullest responsiveness to the unfolding catastrophe of events are acts bearing the most tangible political as well as aesthetic implications. As draconian as the measures that shock capitalism currently implements may be, as unimpeded the incursions of corporate armies and shadow-corporations, the picture will not improve if the investigative and critical "noise of the system" is silenced. Klein and Derrida open up a spectrum of writing media, displays, styles, temporalities, shelf-lives, audiences, and impacts of definitive significance to our own possibilities of expression and participation in whatever democracy remains yet to come.

Notes

1. Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," in *Selected Writings*, IV, 392.

2. Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Selected Writings*, IV, 328.

3. Sigmund Freud, "Psychotherapy of Hysteria," in *The Standard Edition,* II, 288–95.

4. The linkage between Bateson's prescient sense of Lake Erie's madness and the contemporary spate of bio-disasters in this paragraph and in the immediately one following was not only *inspired* by Jason Groves of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at Yale University. It was written by him, as a secondary benefit to a very welcome updating, in terms of actualities in the ecological news, that he most kindly provided for my initial draft of the Introduction. His exemplary social activism gives a sense of freshness and urgency even to those of his writings with a primarily academic thrust.

5. For a magisterial, polyphonic overview of what the editors see as a palpable changing of the guard in systems theory, between "first-order" and "second-order" levels of cybernetics and autopoiesis, see Bruce Clarke and Mark B. N. Hansen, eds., *Emergence and Embodiment: New Essays in Second-Order Systems Theory*.

6. This is of course the title of an essay that Derrida devoted to Maurice Blanchot. To my mind, even though this work this may be counted among Derrida's most exuberant celebrations of literary thinking and textual synthesis, its rigorous philosophical critiques of a priori categorical thinking, of "profiling" in any possible sense, also qualify it as one of the most powerful and effective instances of political theory in the massive Derridean output. "The Law of Genre" is precisely an exceptional case that might at least temper the claims of "turns" to politics and religion in his work, or of a distinctive "later" phase, even where such categories are drawn, for example in *Rogues*, by Derrida himself. For "The Law of Genre," see *Acts of Literature*, 221–52.

7. Derrida, as he meticulously invokes Marx as a revenant whose perspective and critical bearings will be decisive to any efforts at salvaging democracy as of the current entrenched and voracious moment of late-Capitalism, encounters, in his *Specters of Marx,* the writings of Francis Fukuyama, both as a symptom and ideological rationalization of what Klein then goes on to name the Shock Doctrine. Fukuyama appears on Klein's screens independently: "There was now a twin consensus about how society should be run: political leaders should be elected and economies should be run according to Friedman's rules. It was, as Francis Fukuyama said, 'the end of history'" (*Shock Doctrine* 18). For Derrida's *Auseinandersetzung* with Fukuyama, see *Specters of Marx,* 14–16, 56–70, 74, 100.

8. See, for example, Derrida's remarks on auto-affection in *Speech and Phenomena*, 78–80, 83–85.

9. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, 82–83, 102, 106.

10. The "experience of the impossible" is a term that Derrida invokes both to designate the entrenched openness of democracy, its resolutely provisional character, and the radical contingency animating deconstructive bearings. See *Specters of Marx*, 35, 89.

11. See Lacan, *Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, I, 118–27; II, 235–47.

12. In Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, 87–88.

13. Derrida, "Hospitality," 356–420. In its arabesque circumlocutions along the endlessly reversible feedback circuit looping hospitality and the mores of altruism on which it is based into hostility and the taking of hostages, this resplendent essay joins the passages in *Rogues* on turning, wheels, and rogues as writerly *tours de force*. Alone, it acquits itself brilliantly as a condensed "deconstructive sociology," for those interested in crossing paths with this particular animal—even though Derrida's writing chronicles many other collisions/encounters between thinking/writing and such social conventions as mercy, pardon, thanks, vows, monogamy, and literature (or any entrenched art-form) as an *institution*.

14. Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," 128–42, 148–55.

15. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 17–19, 28–29, 49–50, 71–74, 81–83, 110–11, 166–80.

16. A key point in Derrida's debunking a Rousseau-inspired high-handedness with respect to indigenous Amazonians evident in Claude Lévi-Strauss's anthropological reminiscences. See *Of Grammatology*, 107–40.

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The materials in *Impasses of the Post-Global* take as their starting point an interrelated, if seemingly endless, sequence of current ecological, demographic, socio-political, economic, and informational disasters. These have impacted on the stakes and tenor of criticism as much as they have on tangible relations in the contemporary world. The contributors to the *Impasses* struggle with a rapidly unfolding set of new discursive and communicative preconditions, as they do with an open-ended chain of current insults and injuries to the ecological, socio-political, and cultural surrounds. These in turn demand attentiveness on the part of culturally and politically engaged readers.

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>
> – *Suzanne Gauch, Temple University*

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