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editorial

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global conflicts: a special section

edited by Luca Guzzetti and Jussi Vähämäki

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In Times, in and as Global Conflict

ephemera collective

In this issue of *ephemera* we publish a range of papers that engage with theory and politics in the organisation of global conflicts. Across these works, time – the time of their objects, and the time of their objects’ having been thought as such – are rendered salient. Here, conflict – as itself a site of object and of subject – theory, episteme, practical life – is revealed, intimately, emergent *as the organisation* of these. To point to *the global* of conflict, then, harks as much to the schizoid and conflictual singularities of the present of historical thought thinking its own objects – its possibilities and its pasts – as it harks to singularities in the geographies and scalings of its present.

Some might ask: What has this issue of *ephemera* to do with organisation? What has the analysis of global conflicts as such to do with organisation theory? Surely, organisation theory is first of all concerned with what is going on with and inside organisations. While this might be true, we also think that today’s organisation theory cannot and should not restrict itself to a narrow and restricted conception of organisation as a functionalist and managerialist enterprise. For us, organisations are inevitably embedded in global, political processes of social organisation, which automatically connects organisation theory to a wide-ranging multi-disciplinary project of theorising that radically redraws the borders of what is conceived as ‘organisation’.

In fact, this project of calling the boundaries of organisation into question has been going on for some time within the realms of organisation theory. What, however, has sometimes been missing is the realisation that the questioning of boundaries and borders of organisation has astute and very real implications and applications in the world of global politics – meaning politics in the broad sense of being the process of articulating and organising the social in a particular sphere of power relations.

In the first, special guest section edited by Luca Guzzetti and Jussi Vähämäki, we present four papers from the *Conflitti Globali* editorial collective. Based in Genoa, Italy, *Conflitti Globali* seeks to fill a gap in contemporary socio-political sciences by publishing multi-disciplinary analyses of the different – social, political, cultural, ideological, military – aspects of the conflicts that are now involving a very large part of the world and that are synthesised in the on-going war in Iraq. Members of its editorial board believe that the ‘new conflicts’ cannot be comprehended on the basis of traditional conceptual schemes compartmented into specialised disciplines: international relations, strategic studies, sociology, anthropology, organisation studies, cultural

studies and so on. Furthermore, they think that the scientific and objectivistic approaches that, by and large, dominate the field of conflict studies have become an obstacle to understanding. *Conflitti Globali* seeks to explore and explain today's global conflicts through a lens of a radical multi-disciplinarity where traditional boundaries and borders of the sciences not only become questioned but transcended by way of a new ontological politics. This involves not only an analysis of global conflicts – the task is to overcome them, to show beyond them. Therefore, *Conflitti Globali* seeks to develop a position of radical opposition to the present organisation of world governance.

With the term 'conflicts' *Conflitti Globali* mean not only wars, although they definitely have a crucial role in the contemporary world; they also mean conceptual oppositions that are running across the global spaces and that are inevitably influenced by war: the opposition between freedom of movement and control on migrations, between freedom of action and all sorts of controls, between global economic policies and local resistances, etc. The editorial project of *Conflitti Globali* is therefore not politically neutral, although they seek space for as many different voices, analyses and contributions as possible.

The *ephemera* collective is committed to publishing new perspectives both on political processes of organising and on processes of theorising organisation. And in light of our appreciation of the variety of forms, instances and domains of organising practices, we gladly support the work of *Conflitti Globali*. We have been working to build connections – among our members, our editorial projects, and our shared political concerns. In the spirit of that collaboration, this special section on global conflicts brings to English speaking audiences four papers created by writers associated with the *Conflitti Globali* collective. We thank *Conflitti Globali* for this privilege, and hope that it will contribute to ongoing international efforts to build critical and political research and writing about organising practices in and of global conflict.

In supporting the translation and circulation these *Conflitti* papers, *ephemera* seeks to alter and expand views of organisation, to make new, partial and multiple connections, and to crack open new horizons that are not normally seen within organisation theory. In this vein, we offer alongside the *Conflitti* papers a collection of other works which, while reflecting alternative traditions of concern and conceptualization, contribute oblique and relevant crossings with respect to theory and politics in the organisation of global conflict.

Stefan Skrimshire's *Note* 'In Defence of Political Faith' contributes a timely reflection on the dynamics of religious violence that is associated with contemporary encounters between so-called Muslim extremists and their rational Muslim and non-Muslim interlocutors. In a manner reminiscent of Marx's¹ critical interrogation of socialists' conceptualisation of the emancipation of the Jews, Skrimshire notes "...if...liberal society is in shock at the resurfacing of 'political religion' this is perhaps due as much as anything to a naiveté towards the notion of religion...that it ceases to be a 'public'

1 Marx, K. (1844) 'On the Jewish Question', in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, ed. A. Ruge and K. Marx. Paris.

problem if it is simply banished to the private sphere.” A compelling connection stressed in this *Note* is that between the (Liberal/Christian) presumption of religion-as-private, and possibilities for orienting to the spectre of political struggle religiously conceived.

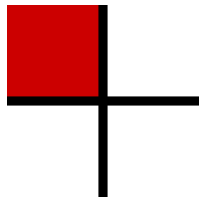
The following interview with Antonio Negri pursues this theme of connections between conceptualization and political struggle. The interview – whose explicit subject-matter is method and politics in the work of Michel Foucault – was conducted by the Fédération Syndicale Unitaire. It originally appeared in French in the journal *Nouveaux Regards* 26 (August 2004). *ephemera* is fortunate to be able to publish a superb, new English translation of this interview, which has been contributed by the sociologist Alberto Toscano. In this dialogue, Negri emphasises how crucial a consideration of Foucault’s method is to an understanding both of his thought and of the meaning of the forms of political practice with which it dealt. Poignantly, Negri suggests that “to assume a Foucauldian perspective is...to put a style of thought...in contact with a given historical situation.” The point provides an opening through which to clarify multiple considerations relevant for intellectual practice within the contemporary conjunctures of global conflict – not least of which are the historical meanings of the varieties of Marxian and bio-political struggles that confront us as possibilities today.

In this issue *ephemera* is also enthusiastic to publish three book reviews, which offer in their own right substantive contributions to questions of theory and politics in organisation. Scott Taylor’s *Review* of Jones and O’Doherty’s *Manifestos for the Business School of Tomorrow* focuses on what he finds to be the structuring suggestion of the collection – that intensified bureaucratisation and disciplinarity in higher education represent a crisis in contemporary business schools – business schools, which, implicitly, might otherwise become sites of critical inquiry and practical conflict. While Scott agrees with such a diagnosis, he questions the *Manifestos* implicit orientation to the cure. Is the political impotence of such intellectual formations as Critical Management Studies to be countered by the distancing of properly critical intellectuals and students from the bureaucratized business school by way of writerly finesse? At the site of the fully employed university business-school teacher, could such a strategy be seriously conceived as viable and non-contradictory? Bitterly, the present continues to pose difficult questions. Questions of the possibilities for democratic subjects – notwithstanding their imbrications in the business schools *of today* – to emerge.

The next review by Peter Scott draws our attention to a new book – *Participation and Democracy at Work: Essays in Honour of Harvie Ramsay* – whose topic is the legacy of a writer who devoted his career to understanding the multiple forms and meanings of working democratic practice. Of the many substantive contributions collected in *Participation*, Scott notes the clarity it offers overall with respect to distinctions between the meanings that categories like ‘participation’ and ‘democracy’ come to bear in different traditions of work-organisation practice and scholarship. Namely, the meanings of these terms in the hands of the industrial democracy movements of the 1970s differ significantly from their meanings in the hands of the American human resource management movement of the 1980s. Ramsay confronted head-on the substance and implications of these movements; we continue to learn from his work.

And we continue to learn from the event of witches. Indeed, the final, provocative review by Angela Mitropoulos explicates for us some difficult lessons...lessons about theory and politics in the organisation of the present phase of globalisation that might be gleaned from Silvia Federici's history *Caliban and the Witch*. According to Mitropoulos, Federici reveals the integral forces of the witch-hunts and anti-heresy campaigns in the transition to what Marx will have termed 'primitive accumulation' as the historical precondition of capitalism. In tandem with other, well-charted Rationalist practices, the witch-hunts might be understood as a process through which the female body was mechanised, consigned "into the hands of the state and the medical profession", and made amenable to patriarchal wage dynamics. The point asks to be remembered, particularly in our times – times in which manifestations of witchery mutate. Mitropoulos' treatment of Federici's frightening *Caliban* emphasises for us today the contingency of the violence and abstraction in and as capital(ised) subjects

Certainly, some will question whether the papers collected here *as connections* do not connect strictly enough to the tradition of organisation theory. But if we allow the gestalt of their differences and reciprocities to emerge as an event – an event that does not claim to reproduce the conventions and traditions of a field that has come to be known as organisation theory – then we might well be able to see and to make organisation – indeed life! – differently. While the talk of the day is that 'there is no outside', perhaps we must not abandon an idea of an 'outside' – an outside both of times and of spaces – and actively seek to connect to and inhabit it as such. Perhaps connection through the event in time will enable us to see beyond contemporary regimes, contemporary times, and contemporary territories of organisation.



Introduction^{*}

The editorial board of *Conflitti Globali*

War is the father of all and king of all and some he shows as gods, others as men; some he makes slaves, others free. (Heraclitus)

Conflict, movement and organisation are intimately connected both theoretically and historically. Movement creates conflicts and conflicts create movement: there would be no movement without conflict. And among the things that war generates, we find organisation and the problem of organising. It no longer makes any sense to write about political and social conflicts – in the widest sense of these terms – without considering them at a global level. They are immediately global and have a tendency to involve global communities. This is not to suggest that conflict be interpreted in a univocal sense – as it happens in the most popular theories: on the basis of strongly held ideological assumptions of both the right (‘clash of civilisations’) and the left (‘global civil war’). Rather, it is to suggest that we attempt to account for the networks of dynamics and implications to which contemporary conflicts are ultimately tied. In this sense, for instance, the control of the energetic resources in the Middle East must be considered as a network of stakes at multiple levels: US hegemony, the roles of Europe(s) (with its internal divisions and different spheres of influence), global economies, oil markets, crises of Arab nationalism, and variegated religious movements – to name but a few. Each of these is both local and global, and interconnected through lines of transformation that, in different periods, create various strategic scenarios.

To try to explain these scenarios on the basis of a single cause and a binary rationale (as, for instance, the conflict between the empire and the global resistance), or as the result of the simple mechanics of forces (geo-politics), is misleading. As Alessandro Dal Lago suggests in this special section of *ephemera/Conflitti Globali*, war and conflicts must be considered as social facts, and as such they should be studied in ways that respect their complexity.

* We thank very much the *ephemera* collective for hosting this special section edited by *Conflitti Globali*, and a special thanks to Katie Vann for her assistance. We hope that there will be further occasions for collaboration.

Lately it has become quite fashionable to explain conflicts in cultural terms; but in our opinion such a route cannot take us very far. The processes under scrutiny are much more complex and cannot be crystallised in a simple cognitive formula. This is very clear in the present Iraqi situation, where the anti-Western tactical alliance is formed by heterogeneous groups which refer us to various cultures and religious faiths. There are a-religious former Baath party members, nationalists, diverse Sunnite groups, pro-Iranian and independent Shiite groups, various Islamists, members of Bin Laden's international network etc. It therefore would be meaningless to offer a mono-causal explanation – religious or cultural – for the war that started in Iraq after Bush's astonishing declaration of 'mission accomplished'. This does not mean that we have to ignore the role of religions and cultures in the analysis of social and political conflicts. But what must be avoided is the idea that conflicts are between well defined and compact religious or cultural entities. We should instead consider the political nature of many supposedly religious or cultural conflicts.

An important aspect of the analytical style of the essays of *Conflitti Globali* presented here is an interest in the uncertain character of contemporary conflicts, following Clausewitz's suggestion that wars and conflicts are 'risky games'. To talk about uncertainty means to stress the fundamental unpredictability of the outcome of any 'battle', from the local battlefield to the global strategic level. Indeed, there exists no universal model of organising or resolving a conflict. The forces of which a conflict is an expression are unique in their composition, and it is short-sighted to reduce them to a single space or homogenous temporal dimension. Since contemporary conflicts are widespread and interconnected (in this sense, they are global), it must also be considered that there is a continuous acceleration, with 'political' processes changing at a much faster rate. Today's various conflicts must be compared to what happened during the Cold War, when the modern promise of a universal inclusion in the international system still seemed feasible (see Walker's 'The Double Outside of the Modern International' in this issue). Also, these processes have become faster and thus less predictable because of the role played by arms in the definition of conflicts. The ubiquity of war makes topical, as it were, political and social phenomena that we tend to think of as slow in their development and as long in duration. When the decision is to fight, a risk, by definition, is to lose. The simple fact of passing into an armed conflict brings with it unpredictable feed-backs, which no strategic analysis can ever forecast.

Of course, war always entails a resistance which is something different from the mere or apparent defeat on the battlefield of the weak – as the situation in Iraq clearly shows. The resistance tends to become a victory when the defeated refuse to fight in the particular manner which the strong desire. That is, resistance can consist in the imposition of change in the battlefield, changes of method and changes of armament. Napoleon had begun to lose his empire in Spain, where the Spaniards had refused to fight in open field and practice instead guerrilla warfare; so was it in Russia, where the adversaries beat a strategic retreat over border-less spaces. Americans lose wars that do not accept their strategic models (Vietnam, Iraq), and so do Russians (Afghanistan, Chechnya). Clearly enough, models do change. And since popular resistance à la Vietnamese is very costly for lives (one million and a half dead Vietnamese people, against 58,000 dead Americans), it is sensible to imagine – independently from any moral consideration – that 'terrorism' had come to be a normalized form to be assumed

by any resistance to hyper-technologically armed enemies. What we now call 'terrorism' has permitted the success of the clandestine Jewish groups against the British in Palestine, and the victory of the Algerian national liberation front against the French paratroopers...

This special section of *ephemera*, and the work of *Conflitti Globali* in general, must be far from a set of general military affairs publications. Rather: a collection of analyses of local-global conflicts that consider military interfaces in their social and political dimensions. Considering the practices adopted in Putin's Russia for the war on terrorism (massacres of both terrorists and hostages in Moscow and Beslan), Federico Rahola asks whether the friend/enemy distinction is still useful to understand the State management of citizenship rights. This is why, together with the ubiquity of war, important themes of analysis become questions: about the militarization of society at the time of terrorism, surveillance, urban conflicts and control; about the military management of migrations; about new modalities of imprisonment (from the detention camps for 'unlawful combatants' in Guantanamo, to the temporary camps for migrants built all over Europe); about the transformation of domestic and international law as a reaction to 'emergencies'; about the transformation of borders and peace-keeping. In few words, the essays presented in this special section of *ephemera/Conflitti Globali* propose analyses which seek to comprehend the bio-political and strategic dimension of conflicts in the era of globalisation. The reference to bio-politics shouldn't be understood as a strict adherence to Foucault's theories, but, importantly it should be noted that the method – a radical empiricism or happy 'positivism' – as elaborated by Foucault for nation-level analyses – appears extremely useful to be applied at the global level for several reasons some of which are the following:

- There is no such thing as a global Power or Empire, but rather a network of neo-colonial and regional imperial powers always redefining their mutual interference and exclusion areas. On the subject of borders in this sense see Cuttitta's essay. If from a strictly military point of view the US today is hegemonic at global level, it is important to note that the capacity of American intervention finds objective limits; the point is relevant also for how we construe the actual or potential politico-military forces of China, Russia and other countries.
- Power develops on several structural levels: political, military, financial, economic, technologic, mass-mediatic, cultural etc., and there is no a priori necessity of their solidarity – if in the long run the price of oil will grow too much, probably Bush will have to pay the price of his military and political adventurism – and what must be studied are their contingent coincidence, divergence or conflict.
- The temporary and stable constellations of powers provoke, because of their dynamicity and productivity, the birth of resistances; and resistances in their turn are not necessarily internally coherent and in agreement. There is therefore no Subject of the global resistance; there are only subjects in relations to powers, and powers in relations to subjects. To try to unify at least on a categorical level the 'resistants' may have millenaristic purposes, but it tends to ignore the empirical constellations of

powers/resistances. What is important to stress, as Dal Lago does in this special section, is the constituent role played by all conflicts and wars; we might say with Heraclitus that “conflict is the father of all things...”.

- There are no unified – nor deliberate and omniscient – strategies of the global powers. The imperial wars may manifest in some cases to spectacular victories (Gulf war 1991, Kosovo 1999). But they also manifest as sudden retreats (Somalia 1993) and as defeats or impasses (Iraq after 2003). This means that strategic plans are continuously reformulated in the terms of armed *politique politicienne* on a global level. Foucault’s language – strategies and tactics, alliances, advances and retreats etc – then appears especially useful to describe these empirical plots of powers.
- Internments, controls, borders, and internal and external barriers all evolve on the basis of management by the different powers of conflicts. Both Walker and Cuttitta, from different points of view, deal extensively with the changing role of borders in the study of global conflicts.
- Life in society cannot be accounted for without considering this context of global conflicts. Without imagining it unified, in the short or long run, we can still think that the world will become a global society of controls, where the individuality of existences, political choices of groups, the initiatives in defence of individual and collective freedoms, will be more and more conditioned.

the authors

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The Global State of War*

Alessandro Dal Lago

There is almost no human activity that is as intensely social as modern warfare[...] Every general staff in the world, since 1914, has known that bravery of individual soldiers is about as essential as whether they are handsome.¹

The Social Nature of War

The main thesis of this paper is that war is a social fact and therefore its changes tend to be reflected in the structure of society and on the essence of social life. This thesis brings to the fore the interaction of two dimensions which are usually considered opposites: ‘society’, meaning the whole of relationships that hold human beings together, and ‘war’, the extreme situation where humans oppose and kill one another.² I will attempt to demonstrate here that war and society are not incompatible. Actually, it is their implications – such as between the internal and external sides of Western society, between our apparently protected or normal existence and the conflict in the rest of the world – that show us that no solution of continuity exists. This much more is true as in the case of the processes of globalisation when conflicts in every part of the world tend to overlap, to be linked and have an influence over one another.³

It can be said that the connection between war and society is somewhat overshadowed within the social sciences. In the 20th century (the greatest period of development in sociology and anthropology), few notable writers were concerned with this matter; it

* The research on which this essay is based was supported by DG XII of the European Union (projects on ‘Liberty and Security in Europe’ denominated Elise and Challenge). Thanks also to the following for their support: Didier Bigo, Massimiliano Guareschi, Luca Guzzetti, Alain Joxe, Salvatore Palidda, Federico Rahola and Rob J. Walker, as well as friends and colleagues taking part in the seminar on ‘War as a way of thinking’ organised at the Department of Anthropological Studies at the University of Genoa.

1 Ballard (1996: 13).

2 While the definition of society is more or less clear, the one for war is controversial. For my discussion, war means any type of external conflict where, officially or otherwise, States or coalitions of States are involved. See the entry ‘War’ in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

3 Walker (2005).

was as if war were an exception, an anomaly to be ignored.⁴ There exists an important tradition of the sociology of occupations and of military organisations; but *war*, a nearly always unpredictable dynamic and element of change, finds a secondary position in the common education of society.⁵ There seems to be a blank, or rather a removal, which extends to other disciplines like political philosophy or political studies. It can be observed that, for centuries, history was a history of wars, if not of battles; but this changes little the outline of the reticence being alluded to. Only recently, historical discourse has faced up to the systematic description of war (or better still of combat) as a boundary of a social situation where human beings are involved.⁶

The definition of war as a social fact brings us back to two main views. The first is that war, just like all other human activities, such as science or art, is only comprehensible in the perspective of specific types of society. Each form of war reflects, broadly speaking, a type of social and political order. By keeping to modern history, anyone can understand the differences between the incessant dynastic wars of the 18th century, fought mainly by armies formed of mercenaries, and the total wars of the 20th century, when nation states, democracies or dictatorships amassed military forces, comprising millions of men, in order to force their enemies into powerlessness. The second view is less evident, as it concerns the *specifically* social nature of warfare. Even though sociological works rarely deal with war, this is a social fact *par excellence*. Not only because it puts to the test the cohesion of society, as in the case of mass deaths (and the consequences, mourning and devastation),⁷ but also because it is an amalgam of socially complex processes. Economic mobilization, scientific and technological innovation, the arming and training of enormous military forces, advanced intellectual works like the strategy and planning of military campaigns, elaborated management. The direction and

4 Apart from Comte and Spencer, commentaries on war by the fathers of social theory are few and far between (Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, Pareto etc.). This applies to the greatest of them all, see Weber (1988). Of the theorists of the following generation only Raymond Aron demonstrated an active interest for war (see Aron, 1962). An attempt to investigate the general social morphology of armed conflict was undertaken by the so-called polemology, after the 2nd World War; see Bouthoul (1951). It was a work met not with complete disinterest, but destined to be lost due to its pretentious claims.

5 Marginal, of course, compared to handbook knowledge. If one leaves aside political history literature (about the role of violence and the modernity of revolutions), sociological interest seems to have especially addressed the sociology of the military profession and its rapport with civil society. Among the leading titles are: Huntington (1957); Janowitz (1960); Janowitz (1968); Segal and Sinaiko (1986); van Doorn (1968); Burk (1994); Moskos, Williams, and Segal (2000). Among Marxian attempts to investigate the relationship between capitalism and war, see Shaw (1984); Mann, (1988); Shaw (1988). Concerning the overall state of art in military sociology and war, see Caplow and Venneseon (1999).

6 See Keegan (1976). After the publication of this book it became popular in military history to view wars and battles from a 'lower perspective.' See, for example, Gilbert (1994), in which strategic and military reconstruction are integrated, in a mechanical way, by writings and letters of a large number of soldiers.

7 We could, realistically, regard war in the same way as social innovation as much as Durkheim viewed criminal phenomena; see Durkheim (1901).

control of considerable organisational structures which have, by definition, to face the prospect of being destroyed or disabled.⁸

The thesis of this essay is not just confined to bringing to light the social complexity of war. It is also to underline how war can *transform* society. The main reason for this capacity lies in the independent drive and innovative force of military systems. In 1914, the chiefs of staff of the major powers were about to come face to face on the battlefield. They had in mind short campaigns of but few months, as they were still influenced by open warfare and the typical manoeuvres of the 19th century.⁹ The German attack on the Western Front, based on a grandiose plan to surround the Anglo-French forces (the Schlieffen Plan), at first seemed to have obtained its objective. The conquest of Paris would have brought the conflict to an end.¹⁰ However, it ground to a halt. The Germans were unable to dominate such a vast battleground; the French resistance had been tenacious. The belligerent powers had not forecast that war, as a result of the mobilisation of millions of men and the development of even more powerful weapons, would not only put armed forces against each other but also entire societies. As a result, the European nations were involved in trench warfare for five years that radically altered the political balance on the Continent, laying the foundation for an even more devastating conflict. The memory of human butchery, interlaced with the Great Depression, conditioned the foreign policy of major and minor powers for decades to come. In Germany, Italy and Japan a sense of frustration and revenge welled up to stoke the fires of extremist nationalism, militarism and the rearmament of the 1930s. In England and France, there was a fall into social and political depression which impeded the precise evaluation of the Nazi and Fascist threats and Japanese aggressiveness.¹¹

Wars transform society in ways that extend beyond foreign policy. They deeply affect the patterns of lives. In some countries, and not only in those of the defeated, the First World War caused new forms of political conflict, which were transformed into revolutions hence leading to the rise of totalitarian regimes. In other countries, it was not unusual to see changes in industrial development, and the expansion of consumption in order to re-launch an impoverished economy. The boom in the car and civil aviation industries, since the 1920s, brought forth the early warning signs of social economics and authoritarian management systems, processes which would heavily influence the daily working and family life of millions of people.¹² In turn these profound changes

8 For a technical but illuminating analysis about the organisational complexity of the war machine in combat situations, see Crevelde (1985). However, the best definition of the social complexity of war remains du Picq (1880), which might be seen as the equivalent in the military sector to Durkheim's works on social solidarity. It could be interesting to compare du Picq and Durkheim in detail.

9 Keegan (1998).

10 The Schlieffen plan is a prime example of strategic utopianism. Schlieffen, the general chief of staff of the Reich's armed forces, shortly before the outbreak of the Great War, elaborated the plan starting from a complicated reflection on the pincer strategy, which was inspired by the unsurpassed model of the Battle of Canne, where Hannibal destroyed the Roman army. Schlieffen, in other words, believed that strategy was in some way free of historical and physical circumstances. See Von Schlieffen (1913).

11 Brendon (2002).

12 Ariès and Duby (1988).

would play a fundamental role in transforming military apparatus and the methods of war-making. During the stage of international underground combustion, which characterised the apparent peaceful interlude of *entre deux guerres* (1918-1939), military thought underwent a spectacular transformation. Obsessed by the stalemate of trench warfare, military chiefs elaborated strategies based on new armed mobility, armour and aviation, with the capacity to strike the enemy from a distance and on large open terrain.¹³ Consequently, war technology development received a new input. With the prospect of a second international conflict on the horizon; entire social groups of the major powers were asked to contribute to a previously unheard of great economic and industrial effort.¹⁴ From 1939, a more total form of war was to be realised.¹⁵ The use of strategic bombing, which aimed to destroy the enemy's economic and industrial resources, resulted in the massive involvement of the civilians in the countries at war and in claiming an infinite number of victims. Finally, with the launch of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, conventional war appeared to have reached a point of no return. Peace, the result of the fear of unimaginable destruction, seemed to be close at hand for the first time in history.

From Cosmic Terror to Daily War

Today, we know that it was nothing but an illusion. According to a rough but meaningful estimate, the number of victims due to armed conflict in the world, since 1945, is the equivalent of those who died in the First World War, more than twenty million.¹⁶ Even if we leave aside the uncountable local and regional conflicts in Africa,

13 Basically, the principle of strategic dynamism replaced static conflict. No longer was it the plan to destroy the enemy forces in a decisive battle, which was the cause of the stalemate in trench warfare, but to paralyse the adversary with mobile forces, even numerically inferior, with the task of cutting off the enemy and to hit the enemy's nerve centres (See Hart, 1970). Liddell Hart, who is seen as the father figure of mobile warfare, tends to underline the importance of the *Blitzkrieg*. As I will show later, we are dealing with a classic over-evaluation of strategic theory. Anyhow, the conventional way of warfare in the 1930s is still the bedrock of warfare today. It is based on the mobility of the forces, the integration of ground strikes (armoured divisions) and air and sea strikes; see Hart (1967). As far as strategic bombing is concerned, one of the greatest in this subject is the Italian Douhet (1932). The best overall essay on the evolution of warfare in the first half of the 20th century, in my opinion, is Crevald (1991).

14 The main work on this subject remains Various (1978).

15 Ludendorff (1936/1986) can be seen as the first attempt to draw together all the military innovations of the Great War. As I will demonstrate later, we are dealing with largely ideological contributions, understandable within the revanchist and nationalist context of Germany between the wars. On the other hand, the unsurpassed theoretical expression about these changes is in the works of E. Jünger. Even though he was influenced by trench warfare experiences, he knew how to single out the crossover of war and social life, peacetime and wartime economics, which were central themes during the period of all-out war, under a different guise in our terms, permanent war, both endemic and ubiquitous. See Jünger (1980); see also in Italian Jünger (1984) and the collection of essays in *Scritti politici e di guerra, 1919-1933*.

16 See Sivard (1996). In my opinion, the total is underestimated as the data, updated in 1995, and relates only to the main conflicts, (Korea, Vietnam, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan). It does not take into account national conflicts, some that have lasted for decades (Angola, Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Colombia) or others (such as, the Iraq-Iran war), for which there is no precise data. If all recent wars

death from war proliferated. War between Israel and the Arab nations; belated colonial wars in British in Kenya, French Indo-China and Algeria); conflicts between the American and Soviet Empires, or between capitalism and communism (Korea, Vietnam, the Horn of Africa, Angola, Afghanistan and so on) were anything but peaceful. Only Western Europe was sheltered during the Cold War from the effects of direct armed conflict, which has led those nations coming out of the Second World War to cast, with typical Euro-centric effect, their ideas of peace over the rest of the world.¹⁷ This illusion ended after 1989 with the latent disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation and the subsequent explosion of armed conflicts involving the whole of the Balkans. After this, various Western coalitions, led by the United States, intervened in different parts of the world in the name of 'international legality' (Kuwait, 1991), 'humanity' or 'human rights' (Somalia, 1993, Bosnia, 1995, Kosovo, 1999), 'enduring freedom' (Afghanistan, 2001), 'the fight against terrorism' or pure and simple hegemony (Iraq, 2003). After the attack of 11 September, large parts of Western society realised war had reappeared in everyday life.

At this point it is necessary to establish if and how permanent war is changing our lives. One problem is the question of the actual understanding of the *nature* of modern warfare. This is the point of major difficulty for social analysis. The majority of ongoing wars are far from the idea of the typical forms of 20th century warfare. Just one example is enough. In February 1991, when it became clear to all that the coalition, headed by George Bush senior, was going to intervene in order to expel the Iraqi forces from Kuwait, panic spread in some Italian towns and cities. News accounts show that many, above all women and the elderly, invaded supermarkets to buy up foodstuffs for hoarding. The prospect of war brought back wartime memories of over forty-five years before; the ghosts of rationing, air-raid alarms, air raids. After this, despite the increase in 'wars', this type of panic was never repeated. In the spring of 1999, despite some doubts that Serbia might have reacted by launching missiles against the Adriatic coastline, the Western coalition was able to conduct their wars without fearing direct retaliation. During such conflicts, daily Western life continued more or less unchanged. After 11th September 2001 in New York and 11th March 2004 in Madrid, it became clear that war is not restricted to the shadow of terrorism in our lives. It has given rise to a state of *emergency* which, far from establishing a state of exception, has *firmly* reoriented our habits. Some of these changes are obvious to all and can be considered in the form of *higher security*: the tightening of border and airport controls, the strengthening and ubiquity of intelligence, the general suspicion directed against foreigners – especially if they are of North African, Middle East, 'Arab' or 'Muslim' origin. The creation of prison camps for interns deprived of any form of status and hence of any security (Guantanamo, prison camps in Iraq and Afghanistan etc.).¹⁸

were to be included (the Gulf, the Balkans, Chechnya, the American intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq, Rwanda, Zaire etc.) the figure could come to 30 million out of a total of 120 since the beginning of the 20th century. The most relevant fact is probably the number of civilian casualties. It was just under 50% for the Great War, but rose to 80% for all the wars after 1945.

17 A trap even some respected observers fell into, if only for a short time; see Shaw (1991).

18 This discussion could also take into account the networks of electronic surveillance like the notorious Echelon system and all the agreements that were made concerning intelligence, prevention and controls, by the Western countries; see Campbell (2002).

Other changes, however, are less evident but likely to cause longer lasting effects. They can be listed in the formula of the primacy of *military decisions*. Since 1999, when the war against Serbia was conducted without the approval of the United Nations, the principle of Western military interference all over the world has been fully asserted. The justification or legitimisation of this global policing¹⁹ plays on the threat of terrorism and those who would support it (the so-called *rogue states*, to begin with); but it is, chiefly, self-referential. By assuming that the West practises law on national and international levels, and has the means to apply this, there then are the foundations for a global military force as legitimised by the circumstances.²⁰ Moreover, these circumstances are long-lasting, as any expected opposition to its exercise will be deemed as a form of terrorism. What is more, is the deep significance of the *enduring freedom* slogan or in other words Bush's declarations that the fight against terrorism could last for generations.²¹ The war against terrorism is therefore not founded on any conventional legitimacy, but rather on power and the capacity to intervene, which naturally may be justified by a call to the cultural superiority (economic, social and even military) of 'Western civilisation'.²² Basically, the power of intervention, or war, assumes a *constituent* role and hence is able to reshape world power relations.²³

By saying that war has today assumed a position of power or a constituent role would thereby mean that it is the source of new social and political relations. To start with, aside from the national and international instances, new sets of power have been developed and they are able to change tasks and spheres of intervention. Among these are 'ad hoc' alliances, which fought the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and which act as the armed side of 'international legality' with or without the United Nations' mandate; and the planned European Rapid Intervention Task Force, whose range of action is not limited only to Europe. We can also mention NATO, which in 1999 entered Kosovo. In both cases, these military structures, temporary or permanent though they may be, tend to promote or impose new political and economic organisations in the countries where they have intervened. It is worth just considering the military presence in Afghanistan, the NATO military protectorates in the southern Balkans (Bosnia, Kosovo and to a lesser extent, Macedonia and Albania) or the coalition which is occupying Iraq. The

19 Dal Lago (2003).

20 The notion of West, in the context, is quite conventional. Among these are the United States, Europe and all their allies all over the world. We will see, even by being variable, how the notion of West coincides with that of Western society, in the case of Huntington (1996).

21 The expression 'enduring freedom' is usually translated in Italian as *libertà duratura*. Yet the verb 'to endure' means also, 'to put up with'; so, we could have a slogan 'putting up with freedom'. In conclusion, the enduring war, in Bush's mind, is the price to pay for freedom.

22 According to classical social theory, the legitimisation of a code is the justification of its right to be put into effect. The legitimisation can rest its laurels on tradition, charisma and the legal system. In the case of constituent world power, legitimisation is based on military force, even if intellectuals and scholars see it in terms of civil superiority.

23 Over the last few years, the number of 'revanchist' books have reaffirmed the intrinsic superiority of the West in all types of culture, past or present. Emblematic, in this sense, is Hanson (2001), who confirms Western military supremacy due to rationalism, from Marathon to the Gulf War, and Lander (1999), for whom 'our' economic supremacy is generally a matter of the freedom of initiative. For a critique of this retrospective imperialism Said (1998) is indispensable. An analogous but less explicit sense is the position of Sen (2003).

latter is formed by the armed forces of two nation states that over-ran the Iraqi army in 2003 and by various military contingents from different European, Asian and South American countries, who are charged with the task of military policing. In reality these forces are nothing more than the avant-garde of an occupying organisation comprised of principally private security companies,²⁴ corporations (mostly American) commissioned to rebuild infrastructure and the economic system, and Western State or semi-State agencies (secret services, security advisors, NGOs, etc.) which run the civil machine, from education to the arts. This is a political, economic and administrative occupation that can be legitimised only by the military victory in 2003.

Clausewitz Overturned

This discourse regards war as a phenomenon that is able to transform society in mainly innovative directions. We could express the same concept by defining contemporary war as a 'social system of thought'. This expression is inspired by the work of Michel Foucault and points to a conceptual pattern that does not need to be organic, explicit or represented by the traditional disciplines. It nonetheless is able to orientate the theoretical and practical ways of thinking during a certain era. Foucault brought to the forefront many areas of thought such as the lesser scientific displays contemporary with the age of Enlightenment, the idea of insanity in the Classic Age, the jailor and the Modern Disciplines, the 'will for knowledge' in contemporary sex culture. Most of all, he singled out the essence of the modern military mindset in the 'racism of the state', even though Foucault considered war to still be limited to nation states and to each society, and had yet to extend to trans-national and trans-state dimensions which today come under the banner of the concept of globalisation.²⁵

Foucault insisted on the necessity to overturn Clausewitz's sense of the principle that "war is the continuation of politics by other means".²⁶ For Foucault – as it was also for Schmitt to a certain point – *politics is the continuation of war by other means*. According to Foucault, politics was the parody of a fundamental civil war among social classes, basically between the ruling class and a constitutionally unruly social body. In my opinion this is a position that misinterprets Clausewitz's letter of expression, who considered politics as *foreign policy*, being the relationships between sovereign states.²⁷

24 As we will see, the sell-off of support services to the private sector (logistics, supplies, security, policing, etc), extended also to combat, one of the most innovative aspects of modern warfare; see Schwartz (2003). According to Traynor (2003), the ratio of private soldiers to regular army soldiers in Iraq is about 1 to 10 (during the Gulf War of 1991 it was 1 to every 100). Singer (2003) confirmed the evaluation and estimates the turnover to be about 100 billion dollars a year in this sector. See also d'Eramo (2004).

25 Foucault (1997).

26 With great reluctance Clausewitz's affirmations are cited; see Von Clausewitz (2004: 38). It is symptomatic that the cognition of this important work, the only one that deserves the definition of a general theory of Western Warfare, stops at this point, and does not concern itself with the concept of war as a game, a gamble or non-linear strategy. This second point has caused wide debate that has resulted in even the wildest of theories; see Alberts and Czerwinski (1998); Beckerman (1999).

27 See Pandolfi (2002).

Indeed, today more than ever, it is impossible to assume a clear distinction between national and foreign policy. And this not because of the loss of the nation states' strength. Rather, it is due to the reorganisation of the nation states into constellations or coalitions, more or less variable, which intervene on the world scene for the purpose of supremacy. In other words, it is possible to re-translate Foucault's (free) version of Clausewitz's maxim with the following concept: *world politics is the continuation of global warfare by other means*. Fundamentally, the existence of a dimension of *continuum* can be established, even if it is clearly articulated, of war and world politics.²⁸

Foucault's method allows us to be free of the prejudice that warfare is an anomaly, the detour from humanity's straight and narrow walk, the emergence from an anti-progressive irrationality, the outbreak of obsolete drives and so on.²⁹ Naturally, there is something suggestive in these judgements – at least when placed at the individual level of combatant and the horrors he participates in. Yet things appear somewhat different when analysis includes military mechanisms and systems, and their relationship to politics and the global economy. In this case, war seems to be the *other face* of world politics, a system of options without alternatives, but complementary compared to the working of pacific governments. Since the end of the Cold War, military violence – as the imposition of political choice – has become a norm, a daily fact in the evolution of politics. Wars are therefore political in various measures, and aimed at heterogeneous objectives that are not always evident or completely clear within the apparent rationale which had to justify them. War for resources, war to solve the problem of local resistance, war to redefine the areas of influence. That some of these wars have not only not been declared, but also not considered such, simply implies that today the state of war is *omnipresent*.³⁰

And the point is that today the scale is planetary (in principle, each local war has an effect *on the whole world*), and has ripped asunder the Western ideology of marginalizing the role of war in asserting European-American culture. Liberal economic and democratic ideology, according to which the success of Western 'values' – economic wealth, political freedom, representative government, scientific and technological development – were the fruits of an intrinsically superior capacity, and not that of the result of wars over a couple of centuries, which had left millions of dead behind. The deletion of war and its normality from the Social Sciences, from Economic and Political theory, and from absolute Philosophy; the minimising of war in historic discussions as a change to diplomatic-political 'game'. It would be interesting to proceed, in the footsteps of Michel Foucault and Aby Warburg, to an archaeology or a genealogy *of the absence of war* in the self-construction of Western thought. For the occasional intuitions of a Machiavelli or a Schmitt, the tortuous pacifist plans of Kant, Nietzsche's thunderbolts – and even the splendid historic narrations by Foucault or

28 In Foucault's view, war is essentially *regulated*, which, strictly speaking, passes from government to governmentalism, at the point that war loses every sign of exceptionalism; see Foucault (2004a; 2004b).

29 This is mythology, which has been widely undersigned by psycho-analysis; see Pick (1993).

30 And in this way theories can be applied indifferently to complex factors, such as; the economy or natural disasters; see Buchanan (2001).

Deleuze – are not sufficient to absolve the tradition of philosophy from the suspicion of connivance, from a silent approval of war.³¹

The Wonders of Intelligence

By saying that war has assumed more than ever a greater *constituent* importance, would mean recognising not only that socio-political and military planning blend together perfectly, but also, at worst, that the latter influences the rhythm of the former. Here, the discussion is not limited to technology, which has become a part of our daily lives while being of military origin, such as the Internet. It should be enough to think of the victorious modern free-market based society, in which the role of the State is seen as scandalous, and which in the most extraordinary military welfare machine the world has ever known not only survives but even prospers. If Rome, with its thirty Legions at its peak,³² was deemed the most militarised empire in ancient times, and if Frederick II of Prussia, with his army of tens of thousands of men was a State cum military barracks, what can we say about the United States today? The Department of Defence has more than two million servicemen, without taking into account reservists, the National Guard and the many other millions of civilians working for the arms industry. And what about the various millions of gun-bearers for civil reasons like all forms of police or customs officers, who are now enlisted in the never-ending war against terrorism?

The military system, seemingly silent or frozen out in peace-time, and unfurled practically triumphantly in wartime, was taken as a necessary evil until 1989, when conventions, intellectuals, both political and legal, began to crumble, revealing one great battlefield to the world. A vastly changed military scenario, fully prepared for the direction taken by economics and science in the last few decades. To start with, in the 1990s, the technocrat's strategy dream was realised with the adoption of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). In order to understand its meaning, it is important to remember that Western military history is often marked by turning points known as 'revolutions'.³³ By only considering the modern age, these are seen as the widespread diffusion of firearms (16th and 17th centuries), the introduction of the conscript army (between the 18th and 19th centuries), and the adoption of armoured divisions and strategic aviation (the first half of the 20th century). RMA would highlight another turning point, the most radical of all. It not only uses the world as its field of application, but also realises, on paper, the gradual reduction, if not elimination, of the

31 See Dal Lago (2004).

32 At the apogee of the Roman Empire, towards the end of the First century after Christ, the total number of legionaries defending the borders of a territory which stretched from Scotland in the north to Persia in the south-east, was no higher than 180,000 men (Wells, 1992). As we know from Procopio, the Byzantine armies of Justinian, one of the most militaristic emperors, contained no more than 15-20,000 men (see Bréhier, 1949). Until the era of the Napoleonic armies, European forces rarely went above 30-40,000 units, which was considered the best size (Keegan, 1997.) It is true that an army's dimensions are immeasurable, however, after leaving aside the two World Wars, the 20th century saw an incredible expansion of the military machine. The 1991 anti-Iraq coalition was made up of almost 700,000 men, two thirds were support staff.

33 For a summary of the problem, see Preston and Wise (1973); Hale (1987); Parker (1999).

element of the human combatant. The strategic nucleus of RMA is fundamentally based upon the application of new information technology (computers, communications, robotics) in military sectors where the human element has been of major relevance: data collection about the terrain and combat. The flesh-and-bones soldiers would be progressively replaced by automated data systems (*infowar*) and the major employment of aerial warfare to neutralise enemy forces.³⁴

The second Gulf War in 1991³⁵ therefore represents a transition from the 20th century warfare to the RMA. Although the communications networks and air defences (as well as the Iraqi land defences) were completely neutralised by the allies, the ground forces (armoured divisions and troops) were commanded to ‘finish the job’ and to ‘clean up’ Kuwait of Saddam Hussein’s troops. The incredible inequality in losses calculated (little less than 300 for the allies and tens of thousands for the Iraqis) gave rise to the illusion that the incomparable superiority of Western aviation, missile systems, and information technology would have put ground warfare on the sidelines. Even the last mentioned, based on the integration of armoured divisions and aviation strategy (flying gun-ships, combat helicopters), would have become a formality. Straight after the Gulf War the ideology was born of war with ‘zero losses’ (Western), alongside the propaganda of intelligent missiles that would cause few victims (‘collateral damage’) among the civilian population (war with ‘zero human cost’). The height of RMA (a mix of utopia and propaganda) came during the war in Kosovo in 1999, where for the first time ever in the history of a NATO attack there was no loss of personnel and only a few hundred (in reality, some thousands) civilian casualties, among the Serb-Yugoslavs.

At the same time the concept of ‘asymmetric’ warfare was born. Among the greater visionary theorists in America, there began to circulate the idea of the abandonment of conventional or traditional warfare by the enemy. The asymmetric response would consist of networked warfare (*netwar*), where small terrorist cells, independent and without a central command, search to strike nerve centres of the West or the United States, according to the well-known rule of *swarming*, by moving separately to hit together.³⁶ Undoubtedly the American strategists had Al Qaeda in mind from the beginning, as they knew it well, having been directly or indirectly involved in its creation. The basic principle is to fight terrorist warfare with counter-guerrilla warfare *based on the same strategic tactics*.³⁷ The first response to the 11th September, which

34 See De Landa (1996).

35 Conventionally, the first Gulf War is seen as the one between Iraq and Iran (1979-1988).

36 See Arquilla and Ronfeldt (2000); Edwards (2000). It is worth noting the hyper-theoretical nature and even utopian character of these theories in that ‘swarming’ is seen as a somewhat timeless tactic and so consequently classic strategic ideas, even ancient ones, are used in the modern hyper-context. On the other hand, this is a further example of the self-referring character of strategic discourse. No matter, it is still true that alongside the theories of ‘great strategy’ there is even in the more distant tradition, a remarkable amount of ‘small wars’, border wars, anti-insurrection wars etc, which began in Byzantine times, who had to face unusual and unconventional fighters like the Turks, the Arabs etc. See: the *Strategikon* of Emperor Maurice and the *Taktika* by Emperor Leo VI the Wise. Large swathes of these works have come back into fashion in the USA, and can be found in Chaliand (1990). Other examples are in Albin and Maltese (2004).

37 Literature on this matter is ample. For a recent review, see Berkowitz (2003). The thought that war evolves in this way is quite controversial. For a traditional point of view, see Gray (1999).

had been widely predicted by USA analysts even though they were not able to pinpoint that attack, was the 2002 war in Afghanistan, where RMA seemed to have found its complete application: strategic bombardment of Taliban and Al Qaeda sanctuaries, delegating to the Northern Alliance the dirty work (the destruction of the Taliban on open terrain), the use of tiny swarming units of counter-guerrilla warfare (CIA and British agents, the Rangers, Delta Force, British experts etc.) against Al Qaeda in the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The American and British decision in March 2003 to invade Iraq with a relatively 'light' force was due not only to the hurry and mistaken military evaluations (nobody was able to foresee the Iraqi's decision to hold back its troops from direct combat in light of the known outcome and to wait to fight after the 'victory'), but also the overenthusiastic belief in the new way of fighting a war. Convinced that the 1991 victory and successive embargo would have wiped out any possible resistance, plus the customary and devastating air attack, the Americans and British set out on a task that revealed itself to be ultimately more difficult.³⁸ It is then necessary to measure the gap between theoretical strategy and practical application. The divergence depends on the clashes between both the civilian advisors (fundamental in the American decision-making system) and the military hierarchy, and between the opposing strategic schools as in the case of the latter. As a tendency, the military hierarchy is much more cautious in espousing futuristic tactical stratagems and more tied to a traditional military culture. There are signs of two revealing conflicts. The first, at the time of the aerial war in Kosovo, caused the removal of General Wesley Clark,³⁹ who strongly upheld the need for a ground operation in Kosovo; the second, between the American Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defence, Rumsfeld. The military believed, reasonably, that the invasion of Iraq had been prepared in a rush and that the almost three hundred thousand who took part (a third of whom were the combat force) would not be sufficient to maintain order after the capture of Baghdad.⁴⁰ All this shows that RMA is only a theoretical horizon, and quite controversial, from which we must not draw any conclusions over the long term evolution of modern warfare.⁴¹

The actual method of making war appears to be open to a range of mainly political options, often contradictory and widely fortuitous. But this does not mean having to admit that there is no solution to the radical continuity between the choice of war and peace in the hegemonic American system. The failed stratagem in Iraq largely

38 It is surprising that a famous respected historian like John Keegan (2004) not only supported the war in Iraq, but also claimed that it was well-planned victorious.

39 See Clark (2004); Daalder and O'Hanlon (2000).

40 Just before the beginning of the war in Iraq, a drastic confrontation of the Bush-Rumsfeld doctrine was published on the US Army War College review, the most prestigious academic institution of the American army (see Record, 2003a). Later on, the same author sternly criticized the war management in Iraq (see Record, 2003b). This essay, published by a military institution, had a great impact on the American press and contributed to dismantling the myth of 'mission accomplished'.

41 We are under the impression that RMA is evaluated from the 'visions' of its theorists more than from an analysis of its actual impact. Exemplary in this case is the sensationalist diffusion in Italy by Rapetto and Nunzio (2001). An analogous case is the Chinese lifting of RMA's secrets. Some years ago the media reported the USA military's concern, due to a publication of a paper by two Chinese air-force officers (see Liang and Xiangsui, 2001).

conditioned the elections in November 2004 (which was not a referendum for peace but the *optimal* way to conduct the war), so the selection of Bush will bring about new military options. These, in turn, are not to be excluded but co-exist in a scenario where the military machine is always ready to act as the armed part of the ruling party.

The Civilisation of War

That war plays an important role has an even wider sense, as it influences global structures of culture. Let's consider the sphere of the mass media. Even though it seems pluralist at a world level, as it is spread through uncountable local and domestic spheres, global media is actually influenced by a relatively limited number of sources and television or press agencies, which are in Western hands, principally American ones. In times of international crisis, even television companies that enjoy a reputation for impartiality (as in the case of CNN and Fox TV) depend on the majors who are very close to the American political-military establishment. Furthermore, the 11th September 2001, caused the alignment of almost all Western media companies to the American government's position, in the name of patriotism or in the defence of our civilisation. On the other hand, since information became an essential part of military strategy, the media have actually signed up in the West's armed forces, which makes independent coverage of wars impossible.⁴² In 1991, the Chief of Staff of the Coalition banned the free movement of correspondents in the theatre of operations. In 2003, journalists were *embedded*, as such put in uniform and seconded to units far from the lines. Alternative or independent information was discouraged by brisk and anyhow military means. In 1999, at the time of Kosovo, Serbian television was destroyed by a rocket attack, while in Iraq several media troupes from Arab media, like Al Jazeera and the television of Abu Dhabi, were repeatedly targeted by the Americans during the capture of Baghdad.⁴³

The militarization of information does not necessarily contradict the apparent pluralism in the media adapted to a global market society. It responds intermittently to the phases of mobilisation and to the climax of wars. Furthermore, this is extended to the ordinary processes that leak out the news, giving them a worldwide importance or reducing them or making them disappear to the bottom of the media pile. Even with the lack of *Diktat* by the military or politicians, news that contradicts the official *political* truth will vanish, simply for the reason that no news agency will be interested in taking them up.⁴⁴

42 The manipulation of information as a weapon of global warfare is theorised by Arquilla and Ronfeldt (1997). The Gulf War is probably the most sensational example of military *fabrication* before the question of Saddam's 'weapons of mass destruction' were the reason for *casus belli* in 2003. From the invention of the crimes committed by the Iraqis in Kuwait up to the censorship of military operations, all information on the war was manipulated by the main coalition State (see MacArthur, 1992).

43 An excellent and very well documented discussion about propaganda and communication strategies of the modern warfare is by Rampton and Stauber (2003).

44 See Lydersen (2003). The following are examined: for example, the data on the casualties, civil and military, of the war in Iraq. After a year and a half of war, the dead for the coalition are over 1.200, of whom 1.000 after the 'victory' in 2003. This is an official figure (Pentagon) which does not include the deceased after the evacuation from Iraq and mercenaries or the 'security personnel' estimated at about 10% of the operative forces. It is reasonable to admit that the number of dead of the fighting

Given the amount of information theoretically available, news is only news when it is *politically* supported, or in other words when it is made, filmed or corroborated by the recognised authorities on the world scene. The American government has made the world believe the Iraqis were able to hit the West with weapons of mass destruction, only because after 11th September they recognized themselves as having some sort of claim or right to the truth.⁴⁵

The influence of war on culture is demonstrated on a wider scale by the simple imposition of an agenda between the media and politics. If Western leaders (apart from the most amateurish, like Berlusconi) can demonstrate caution in establishing the equivalent relation terrorism-Arab world or world subversion-Islam, this does not take place among their various advisors, the more influential intellectuals or columnists whose purpose it is to stir the waters in order to sell papers or books. Huntington's essay on the 'clash of civilisations', which was aimed at an educated public, or the obscurantist pamphlets by Fallaci, which were aimed at the general public, confirm the opinion that there is an ongoing war between cultures and religions, or even a general terrorist attack against the West. It makes not the slightest difference that this is not a wide-held opinion, as is suggested in the polls of international research organisations such as Euro barometer. Diffusion by the pop media is enough to build the foundation for governments to justify, explicitly or implicitly, their strategies.

The militarization of culture can be expressed in different ways of thinking that do not always need explicit expression. In any form of war, the enemy loses every specific connotation in order to become the exclusive target to be aimed at.⁴⁶ Nowadays, the generalisation of hostility apparent in contemporary wars – the terrorist refers to the Arab or the Muslim, the rogue State to all of its population, etc. – means that a significant portion of humanity is a potential target and hence dehumanised. Here arises the notable indifference towards the destiny of those populations involved in contemporary wars, when oneself is or feels to be at war. Few voices are raised to denounce the harm of the UN embargo on Iraq after 1991, which caused, directly or not,

forces in the alliance is more than 1,500. This would be a figure, *if it became news*, that would attract the world's attention (and especially the American nation's) regarding the mismanagement of the occupation after the easy victory, or pseudo-war, in the spring of 2003. For much less, meaning the loss of about twenty rangers in Mogadishu during the failed attempt to capture two right-hand men of Aidid, Bill Clinton withdrew the USA forces from Somalia (see Bowden, 2002; Rizzoli, 2002 and Halberstam, 2001). But this data is not newsworthy, simply because the world media *does not make it news*. It is difficult that the data, easily obtainable from sites belonging to peace organisations or independent research groups will come out of the Net, where it is viewable to thousands of surfers. Internet, in any case, is not a stage for world information, even if at times (like the mobilisation against the G8 or for pacifism) it aids the global spread of information. The Net, basically, can move important sectors, even those minor, of world public opinion, but cannot impose certain news onto the political-media agenda which remains dominated by information weapons like the television or the huge press groups.

45 Even after the story of the arms of Saddam was proven to be unfounded, the media close to the American establishment tend to absolve Bush, or rather the government, blaming it all on the lower ranks or on bad advisors (see Hosenball, Isikoff and Thomas, 2003).

46 It is quite easy to show that this perspective based on fear makes fragile the system supporting it, implying that today the United States has to permanently have its finger on the trigger; see Joxe (2004).

death from malnutrition and the lack of cure for a million and a half people. Likewise, few people cared much for the civilian victims of Western military action in Somalia, Kosovo, Serbia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Slaughter, torture, concentration camps and civil suffering are solely brought to light when the West is not involved.⁴⁷ As observed by Derrida, actual political-military terminology reduces enemies to targets making them either enemies of humanity (terrorists, rogues, bandits, criminals, when playing an active role) or inert material, animals or things, especially when taking into consideration 'other' populations involved in our wars.⁴⁸

The demotion of the enemy holds varying notions. It starts with the 'ad hoc' creation of categories. The 'enemy combatant', defined the 'terrorists' who were captured in Afghanistan or elsewhere and then imprisoned at the American base of Guantanamo.⁴⁹ There has been no war since 1991 where the winners have even bothered to evaluate civilian casualties. The use of the expression 'collateral damage' in order to indicate civilian casualties of bombing perfectly highlights the equalling of 'other' human beings to simple things fatally drawn into the war. This policy is completely in line with the present military practice of 'indiscriminate response', which purely and simply establishes a linguistic extension. When a Western fighting unit is attacked, the reaction is to burn all around. As long as the enemy is and always will be a terrorist, then the aim will be to destroy his habitat and therefore to hit not only 'anything that moves' but also the population amongst which he could be hiding. The tactics of urban warfare in Mogadishu (1993), in Palestine, Chechnya and today in Iraq are basically the same.⁵⁰ Regular armed forces have the tendency of hitting civilian targets, by bombing the sanctuaries of terrorists or guerrillas⁵¹ located in urban dwellings, and so looking to 'wipe out' any form of support, actual or otherwise, for the enemy. In this way, Western tactics are substantially a *mirror image* of those of the terrorists, whose aim it is to involve the civilians in order to mobilise them against the West.

As has already been shown, we are dealing with a clear case of *asymmetric* war, which can be defined as a conflict where the well-equipped part of an overwhelming force tries to destroy an infinitely weaker enemy fighting in an unconventional and 'incorrect' way.⁵² However, the asymmetry has significance beyond the military aspect. In general, when the West fights it could be considered an *anthropological* asymmetry. The military definition of the enemy as a barbarian or criminal overrides any recognition of

47 This is short-sightedness, more cultural than moral, which seems to be prevalent in all the different literature about the forms of genocide, as if the 'democracies' were naturally immune to these practices. See, for example, Power (2002), where the United States is given the right to intervene in any part of the world in order to punish or prevent genocide. The direct or indirect involvement of the West in genocides in the 20th century is clear in Ternon (1997).

48 Derrida (2003).

49 Bonini (2004).

50 Desh (2001) deals with the insurmountable difficulties of urban fighting for a conventional army, even if equipped with the most sophisticated weapons.

51 The fact that the fighting enemies are rarely defined as 'guerrilla fighters' gives an idea of the depreciation of the opponent. This turns out into a weakening of the anti-guerrilla tactics, because it denies a real understanding of the motivations, way of thinking and thus of fighting the enemy. In relation to this see Beckett (1991).

52 For this definition, see Metz (1997).

his status as a combatant. Accordingly, he is seen as a mere *technical* problem, comparing him to a disaster or a natural plague, like an epidemic.⁵³ On the surface it seems to be the racist model of the colonial wars and in the conquests, as in extreme examples like the act of aggression by Italy in Ethiopia in 1936 and the Nazi invasion of the USSR in 1942. However, unlike the 1930s and 1940s, no theory concerning the inferiority of races is necessary to justify the use of asymmetric warfare today. As long as it is believed that our culture is the only (legitimate) one, the others will always be regarded as lacking in culture or as bearers of abnormal cultures, cultural monsters (as in the case of fundamentalism). *Therefore, asymmetric warfare is not fought against various men but against non-men.* In this way, the treatment of the enemy is racist in a hyperbolic sense, as it does not assume racial inferiority but his complete elimination from humankind beforehand.

It is necessary to read between the lines of their words to realise that the advisors of the American prince are well aware of the racist characteristic of contemporary conflicts. The 'right to make war' today is proclaimed on the basis of *absolute* cultural superiority. The 'barbarisation' of the enemy has enabled a wide consensus in the Western world – consensus for permanent conflict, consensus without reference to justice, to conventions or to the binding force of international rights. In this field, the only formality present is in *justifying* for higher means (the defence of our civilisation), which is measured by the interment of enemy prisoners in camps devoid of any form of controls, the systematic use of torture and the use of weapons of mass destruction.

If this is the reality, then it will be necessary to start with the assumption that we do not have sufficient theoretical tools in order to picture the developments and even worse the ability to prefigure the ways out. A political thought based on the central idea of warfare as part of the present world system is in its infancy. On the one hand, there is no full awareness of the role war played or is playing in the rise of Western hegemony around the globe. On the other hand, it is empirically simple to identify the military display of Western supremacy and its expansion, where obscurity or confusion reigns concerning *opposition to such supremacy*. According to Carl Schmitt (who took to the extreme the Weberian definition of the State as holder of the monopoly of violence), the state of exception is the criteria which a State can structurally take on to eliminate a situation of civil war on the *inside*. It is difficult to comprehend how such concept can be extended to a planetary level, since *never* has it been wholly governed by a legitimate or an illegitimate monopolistic force. *Violence and war are not the derivation of a legitimate order, but the conditions of the use of power on the international scene.* This is what today we are observing as a new type of *normality*. We are not dealing with the mere matter of terminology, but quite simply of the close connection between war and political economy in our globalised world.

Until the world economy is based upon what Weber described as the economic struggle for existence, atrocious and without compassion, which the bourgeoisie define as 'the peaceful work of civilisation', war, in any form – traditional or otherwise – will be the interface of global social life. For us, who live within the safe confines of the empire, we are dealing mainly with the embedding of paranoia in culture and the echoes of

53 Tucker (1999).

distant rumbles. For everybody else, real or virtual enemies, only the concrete possibility of destruction and death. Let's not pretend that a global movement against war, able to neutralise the militaristic nature of the Imperial powers, is little more than Utopia. It is up to us, the unruly people of the empire, through our political and theoretical duties, to start dismantling the global racism that has been built up and which is ever more being characterised in the plan.

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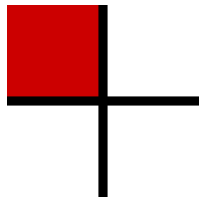
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Points and Lines: A Topography of Borders in the Global Space

Paolo Cuttitta

Introduction: Borders of Sovereignty

The terms ‘border’ and ‘frontier’ immediately evoke images of guards and barbed wire, of rigid territorial boundaries, of globes on which each country has a different colour and black lines separate each state from the others. As a matter of fact, political maps represent current sovereignties on our planet exactly like this: as areas delimited by tangible and continuous, still and uninterrupted lines.

This idea of the border corresponds to the conception of the modern state as it emerges after the Westphalia peace treaty of 1648: a sovereign state exercising the exclusive political, military and jurisdictional control over a specified territory – outlined by clearly defined borders – and over the population there residing. Next to this conception we then find the idea of nation-state, which implies the existence of a national people with a unitary identity, consisting in common history, language and religion, and with deep roots in a specific territory. So identity and territory come to be considered as natural and immutable attributes of each other, and at the same time as basic and constitutive elements of the nation.

The model of political organisation fit to this conception of nation-state spreads from Europe (where it had been born) outwards, and was exported all over the world by the European powers during the centuries of geographical discoveries and colonial expansion. However, while the idea of identity univocity is adopted with more flexibility, permitting the creation of multinational states (with different languages, ethnic groups or religions living next to each other), the principle of territoriality remains untouched, with its necessary attribution to each state of a territory of its own exclusive pertinence, surrounded by rigid and linear borders.

After the two world wars, in the attempt to make order in the international set-up, first the League of Nations then the UN took state sovereignty as the basic criterion for the attribution of international subjectivity. Together with the state sovereignty it is also the concept of delimited territory – with rigid linear borders – that becomes a basic

parameter for the categorisation of the world, since the control over a specific territory is now considered to be a necessary condition for the existence of a state. The rigid border lines do resist even in the extra-European continents, where they have been introduced for the first time by the western colonisers: de-colonisation actually implies the acceptance by the colonised peoples of those models – completely unknown in their pre-colonial traditions – which have been imposed on them by colonisation.

The twentieth century seems thus to witness the universal triumph of territoriality, when the sovereign state – which recognises it as an essential and necessary condition for its own existence – affirms itself as the first and only model of political organisation in history which succeeds in covering the whole surface of the planet. In the post-colonial world order there is no strip of land above sea level that is not subject to the exclusive sovereignty of a state, nor is there any sovereign state whose borders are not clearly defined on the ground. At the same time, however, the great economic and technological developments give more solid bases for the multiplication of international subjectivities and of their interdependencies, as well as for the de-territorialization of power relations and for the end of the international nation-state-based order. The crisis of such an order, based on nation-states and on territoriality, becomes evident only in the last part of the century, in the years after the end of the Cold War, but it actually started long before, and its end is not visible yet.¹

The astonishing development of industrial production, telecommunications and transports radically reduces the distances separating different countries, peoples, cultures and markets. The international mobility of goods, persons, services and especially of capitals and information has grown to levels unthinkable in the past. Now the world can no longer be contained within the opposition of land and sea proposed by Schmitt. It was Schmitt himself, on the other hand, who signalled the obsolescence of the dichotomy when he noted that new and immaterial dimensions had to be added to the traditional and material ones, thanks to the technological development, among other things, of air connections and radio broadcasting.² If in the past it was possible to indicate territorial conquest and sea control as the two opposite keys that permitted control over the planet, now this order seems to become unstable, pressed by the urgency of new events. Following Schmitt once again, it is possible to affirm that space now only represents the field of forces where human activities and energies act, meet, collide and produce their effects. This crisis of territoriality, this de-territorialization of power relations (both economical and political) and of any other kind of human relation (cultural, religious, emotional) raises problems with regard to the traditional role of the nation-state, which is necessarily connected to the direct and exclusive control over a territory. With the crisis of the state, also state borders have to face new problems. The very idea of a fixed and linear border, typical of the modern sovereign state, is now put into question.

1 Carl Schmitt even suggests that the decline of the Westphalia system begins in the Eighties of the 19th century. Carlo Galli points out that the Cold War allowed “a new space development of politics, which has at least postponed the historical and institutional collapse of its geometries”

2 In 1944, when the first edition of the book was published, Schmitt suggested the aerial dimension as a possible third one, while today we might add the electronic-information dimension.

However, what is a border – a state border, especially – but a way to express, affirm, materialize and contain the idea of sovereignty? And what then are the other instruments that power utilizes in order to express itself, besides those which are incarnated in the state and find the limits of their effectiveness in the still and material border lines? Which other borders, which other limits and barriers are establishing or re-establishing themselves today, infiltrating into the fissures of the nation-state, replacing or overlapping the traditional state borders? And what other powers – if any, beyond the state – do these new borders favour? Is it possible to consider different (and maybe new) borders as points of view from which to watch and interpret the dynamics of power – of the different powers – in the era of post-colonial and post-bipolar globalisation? Can we suggest a new cartography showing us in a clearer way the signs of the sovereign power, helping us to distinguish the visible signs from the invisible ones, the material borders from the immaterial ones, the borders marked on the territories from those impressed on persons, on lives, on the choices and destinies of all human beings? Perhaps such a map would help us to understand how the very features of the different kinds of border are now becoming more and more difficult to distinguish, and how materiality and immateriality, flexibility and rigidity, territoriality and a-territoriality tend to trespass their limits and turn into one another, and how each one uses each other to its own advantage.³

First of all, we should ask ourselves what borders human beings have so far created as expressions of sovereignty, of power relations; which forms – which features and properties – have assumed the different types of borders that history has seen coming and going through time and space, starting from the assumption that all anthropic borders are but the result of human relations, and therefore the result – and the visible expression – of power relations between different subjects, different authorities, different individual and collective sovereignties.

Territorial and Non-Territorial Borders

State borders – separating territories on the basis of political jurisdictions – represent, together with the borders of private real estate properties (the walls of a house, the fence around a plot of land, a garden or an industrial area), the totality of the territorial borders. Such borders are linear and material ones, and this means that they can be marked and physically reproduced on the earth surface.

There are other borders that don't have this property, since they signal differences between immaterial entities. This category includes the borders between social classes, between ethnic groups, between cultures, between linguistic groups, between modes of production or economic interests, between groups of individuals which are different from a juridical point of view. In the partition proposed by David Miller and Sohail H.

3 I will not try here to answer these questions, but I will just try to propose a few conceptual instruments that I hope will be useful to face the questions at hand. I presented a few tentative answers in Cuttitta (2003).

Hashmi, such borders are defined as ‘social borders’, in opposition to territorial ones.⁴ But such a distinction may be misleading if it is interpreted as suggesting that territorial borders aren’t socially produced, while it’s clear that the borders of a state or those of a private ground are the results of social relations just as the others are: actually, they are created, they die and they are transformed only on the base of decisions taken (consensually or not) by human beings. Therefore, it may be better to abandon Miller and Hashmi’s partition, and to simply distinguish between territorial and non-territorial borders, considering these two categories as the exhaustive basic repartition of the more general category of social or anthropic borders.⁵

The diverse – cultural, economic or of any other kind – connections developing on the two sides of a non-territorial border are what actually creates such a border. Such connections are independent from a territory, since they don’t necessarily imply the spatial contiguity of the subjects involved. It’s the actions, choices, sentiments of the individuals that determine the links, and not the fact that the social actors live and act within a specified geographical area, defined by visible, tangible, and concrete borders – as visible, tangible, and concrete as the territory they concern. After all it’s the choices taken by the subjects that prevail over the territorial constraints; it’s the dynamic, direct and immediate relations which prevail over the static, indirect, mediate ones, by creating borders which are spatially flexible and mobile rather than rigid and immobile. “Cultural borders are by nature very fuzzy”, as Friedrich Ratzel says, “because no people can prevent all elements of its culture to trespass the national borders”.⁶ Of course, this doesn’t mean that a non-territorial border cannot be in itself – as a mean of separation – rigid, impermeable and static; it simply means that the existence of such a border and the degree of its rigidity and impermeability, as well as its static nature, are not necessarily based on a direct relation with a specific territory surrounded by defined borders. In some cases, non-territorial borders may be extremely rigid and though they may not have any territorial character. The borders between the castes in the Indian society, or the borders between Jews and non-Jews, are classical examples of super-spatial, though traditionally rigid communitarian borders.

The entities (social groups, cultures, etc.) inscribed within non-territorial borders do not have the feature that is typical of territorial space, which Simmel defines in terms of ‘exclusivity’ (*Ausschliesslichkeit des Raumes*), the state being its perfect example: “The

4 Miller and Hasmi (2001).

5 Besides this general category there is only the one of ‘natural’ borders. Here are a few examples of natural borders: the borders between the earth regions where the sun reaches the zenith and the ones where it does not (Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn); the borders between geologically different areas; the borders between land and sea or between lands and rivers or lakes, etc. In such cases, it’s a question of borders that men have not created, but just recognised as matters of fact given by nature. This is true as long as we just consider them in their essence and in their meanings as not transformable by the material or cultural intervention of human beings. The same lines, the same areas and the same dots constituting natural borders may on the other hand turn into anthropic or social borders, as soon as they are given a social function (for example, a river or a mountain chain may be chosen as the border of a state). Even in this case, the difference between the natural border and the social one still remains, since the latter is only superimposed on the former without cancelling it.

6 Ratzel (1899: 271).

type of relation between the individuals that the state creates, or of which the state is the result, is so strictly linked to territory that it is impossible to think of the co-existence of another state on the same territory”.⁷ The entities characterised by non-territorial borders are called by Simmel ‘super-spatial entities’ (*überraumliche Gebilde*). Unlike the state, they have not the property of spatial exclusivity, and their presence on any territorial space does not imply the exclusion of another entity of the same type. A perfect example of super-spatial entity is the church, interpreted as the community of the persons and institutions connected to a religious faith.

So there are two categories of anthropic borders: the first one includes those which may be marked, that is physically reproduced, on the earth’s surface (we will call them territorial borders); the second category includes the borders which do not have this property (we will call them non-territorial borders). But we have already seen that the first of these two categories – the one of territorial borders – also includes two sub-categories: the one of private estate property borders, and the one of sovereign state borders. Since we know that the borders we are dealing with (social or anthropic borders) are the product of social relations between human beings, we shall now investigate the nature of the relations producing each one of these two sub-categories. We will find out that in both cases the type of relation at hand doesn’t necessarily require the mediation of any territorial element.

The relations producing the borders of private real estate property represent a sub-category of the relations which produce the borders of private property *at large* or which result from such borders. Such relations develop between several persons (owners and non-owners) and the objects, which can be movable or not. In the case of movable property, the borders are represented by the physical contour of the object, and they have no relation with the territory. In the case of real estate property, the borders are instead those of the territory which is itself the object of the property right (a plot of land) or those of the territory on which the object of the property right (a building) is located. Therefore, it’s only in this last case – the one of real estate property – that the typical relations of private property require a territorial mediation.

In the same way, the relations producing the borders of sovereign states must be interpreted as a sub-category of the relations producing, expressing and characterising sovereignty *at large*. It’s a matter of relations developing between the sovereign power and the individuals – relations which basically involve human beings (those who are in power and those who are not) – where the presence of the territorial element hasn’t any character of necessity. Also in the case of the sovereign power *at large*, as well as in the case of the private property *at large*, the territorial element is only a possible appendix. It may intervene and establish itself as a further pole in the relation but it is not a necessary feature. Only in the event that the territorial element intervenes, private property becomes *real estate*, and sovereign power becomes *territorial*.

7 Simmel (1983: 223).

Aterritorial Sovereignties

The modern sovereign state represents a historical form of sovereignty, which has replaced all other forms of sovereignty and has thus universally imposed the mediation of territoriality. In other contexts, places and times, before the establishment of the modern sovereign state, such mediation has not been necessary. In feudal Europe – in the very context where the phenomenon of the nation-state would soon develop – the political-hierarchical system permitted the co-existence of different levels of obedience and personal loyalty on the very same territory. Multiple loyalty relations crisscrossed each other and were interconnected in a regime characterised by a softened, fragmentary and residual sovereignty. A state was nothing more than the sum of a variable number of minor sovereignties, which had the form of juridical entities rather than of territories.⁸ Again, it was in medieval Europe where towns developed as typical forms of fragmented territoriality, which were destined to slow down and hamper the process of national unification of territorial base in the regions (like Italy and Germany) where their role became more and more important.⁹

Outside of Europe, just a few centuries ago – in the pre-colonial era – many civilisations still ignored not only the state as a juridical institution, but even the very idea of territorial sovereignty. Hierarchical and authoritative relations, based on loyalty and obedience between individuals, families and clans, did not necessarily require a transcendental superior authority, nor a stable and definite territorial foundation, since they took place and strengthened through an autonomous praxis of exchange of goods, cattle, marriages and, generally speaking, of solidarities. In a word, there was no territorial mediation between the power and the individuals. In Africa, the function of social and political control – which in the western world was territorially-bound – was mostly exercised by exchange networks. In the Arabic peninsula, the power balance was based on group solidarities, and it was put into question every time the group in power tried to create an authority transcending the relations of inter-tribal integration.¹⁰ In northern America, whole Sioux tribes used to migrate following the movement of buffalos, the borders of their political community were consequently mobile, just as the borders of many nomadic peoples on this side of the Ocean.¹¹

In the course of history there have thus been borders which were more human than territorial, more subjective than objective. All the same, they also reflected relations of power, subordination and sovereignty. Even today, in the areas of the world where forms of nomadic life survive, the relations between individuals or clans still tend to develop in a more direct and elastic way (more horizontally than vertically, more dynamically than statically, in a more immediate than mediate way), on the basis of a mobility that the principle of territoriality imposed by colonial borders curbs every time – a ground's surface becomes the foundation for a superior authority, thus turning into a territory. In the steppe of the nomadic populations and in the Bedouins' desert, the

8 Febvre (1962).

9 Badie (1995).

10 *Ibid.*

11 Ratzel (1899: 166).

borders of the community move together with the individuals, coming and going, moving back and forth with them. The borders are mobile, they are 'portable borders', and they can be taken down like the tents of the camps and are insubstantial like the desert's sand.¹² Though, even in steppes and deserts there are now static, visible and often insurmountable state borders, which contradict traditional mobile borders and stress their radical otherness.

We can then state that territoriality is simply the peculiar and specific configuration of modernity, and therefore that such an organisational form of power, rooted in the space defined by its borders, is not unique, inevitable and necessary.¹³ In history, the role played by the territory in decision-making processes – and thus in the mechanisms of definition and manifestation of sovereignty – appears variable. In the disperse and fragmented sovereignty of the European Middle Age and of a large part of extra-European history, autonomy, elasticity and dynamism of the decisional sphere seem to prevail, whereas in the unitary state sovereignty of modern western world it's the static conditionings of territoriality and of its borders which prevail.¹⁴ Little wonder the most important systems of values in the pre-modern world mainly ignored the questions related to territorial borders.¹⁵ Such systems of values had to give ethical foundations to political and social regimes which didn't necessarily have linear and rigid borders. This is the reason why there are so many problems in trying to interpret present complex dynamics of border transformations on the basis of different ethical traditions.¹⁶

This results in a relativization of the concept of territoriality, which thus loses importance: territorial mediation is not necessary; it is just possible. Together with the concept of territoriality, also the concept of territorial border necessarily is becoming less crucial. The two concepts in fact are inevitably tied to each other. However, this necessary correspondence between territoriality and territorial border does not imply the existence of a single and unique type of territorial border. A state-centred point of view would lead us to interpret territorial borders as only static lines, as uninterrupted series of dots marked once and for all on the ground, as signs characterised not only by tangibility and immobility, but also by linearity and by the absence of any spatial development in depth. As a matter of fact, such are the properties of the borders state territoriality is based on. Though, even if a territorial mediation establishes itself in the relations between the sovereign power and the individuals, such a sovereignty may appear under different forms, not necessarily identical to the modern nation-state, and may have borders different from linear ones.

12 Zanini (1997).

13 Bonanate (1996: 76-77).

14 Pangalangan (2001: 164).

15 Chan (2001: 90).

16 On this subject, see the essays in Miller and Hashmi (2001).

Zonal Borders

As Lucien Febvre writes, “ancient limits were never, so to speak, linear: mostly they were zones”. The French historian explains that “according to an ancient custom that we find among all peoples at a certain stage of their development, the forests extended in between them as fringe areas, as neutral territories”, which in some cases even constituted “proper territorial units with their own specific names”.¹⁷ As a matter of fact, before linear borders covered the whole world surface during the twentieth century, there were still several examples of frontier zones, that is of what Prescott simply calls *frontiers* – which are fuzzy and do vary in widths – as opposed to *boundaries* which are simple and clear-cut lines.¹⁸

Between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, Ratzel points out that the linear border is a feature which is characteristic only of most advanced civilisations, and that we can see its nearly perfect expression only in Europe, where during the nineteenth century, thanks to the developments of geodesy and cartography, political borders have turned everywhere into geometrical abstractions, while in other regions of the world we can find diametrically opposed conceptions of frontiers.¹⁹ Outside of Europe, the ‘scienceless peoples’ (*wissenschaftslose Völker*) do not draw lines in order to delimit their territories: they rather surround themselves with uninhabited or scarcely inhabited areas, which are not subject to any exclusive and direct form of sovereignty, since in the end they belong to neither of the two neighbouring political-territorial entities, or else they belong to both of them. Such strips of land stand as buffer zones, as neutral areas between the two territories. Sometimes they are left abandoned and unused, sometimes they become a den of bandits and outlaws, sometimes they are used on a more or less regular basis – for example as hunting grounds – by both neighbouring peoples. The function of such liminal areas, of such frontiers with bi-dimensional extension (developing not only in length but also in depth), is to prevent conflicts without making exchange and commercial activities impossible (such activities become less simple and immediate, and therefore easier to control).²⁰ Ratzel calls this form of frontier *Grenzsäum* (border-edge) in opposition to the *Grenzlinie* (border-line).

Starting from the presumption that frontiers and political communities evolve concomitantly, influencing and determining one another, we might say that the zonal frontier has also the function to protect the community and to permit the development of its identity. Thanks to the protective action of the frontier – and only after having established its own identity, and therefore after having become conscious of it and having re-enforced it – the political community may venture out into the open and show itself openly to its neighbours, to its potential opponents, to those who are ‘others’ exactly because they find themselves beyond a border. And only at this moment may the border be reduced to a line, to a signal, to an abstraction which has the function of

17 Febvre (1949).

18 Prescott (1987: 1).

19 Ratzel (1899: 267).

20 Ratzel (1923: 392-397).

showing the differences, since now identities do not need a protective filter anymore, as they feel strong enough to resist to any immediate, direct, close-range confrontation.

In Ratzel's opinion, it is the scientific and economic progress of civilisations which causes the evolution of the frontier from the zonal to the linear form. The determining factors of such evolution are, more precisely, the following: the increased ability to exploit the soil, the higher interest in the direct control over the possibly largest portion of land, the augmented skills in measuring and representing – and, therefore, in controlling and ruling – the territory itself.²¹ In a word, frontiers are created, dismantled and transformed by human beings on the basis of their interests and as a consequence of their power relations. This is Febvre's opinion as well. It's no more a matter of finding at any cost a set of lines, a frame which is able to define in one way or the other a territory: It is not the frame which has primordial features; on the contrary, it is what is inscribed within it and, so to speak, constitutes its expressive and vital focus. "In other words, the question of frontiers should never be dealt with from the exterior, but always from the interior".²² Indeed, Febvre goes one step beyond Ratzel when he points out that "it's not from the frontier that we have to start, in order to study the frontier, but from the state", explicitly stressing the importance of the political form that characterises the community which is creating the frontiers, and thus – in the case of the evolution from the zonal frontier to the linear border – stressing the importance of the modern sovereign state. Only from the specific point of view of a given political form is it then possible to appreciate a specific frontier-form. In our particular case, the route that leads to the establishment of the nation state is the same that leads to the linear border.²³

Punctual Borders

The concept of zonal frontier or border zone (*Grenzsaum*) is crucial in Ratzel's discourse. Although progress has imposed the passage from the zonal to the linear border in the most advanced societies, the border zone is still reality, while the border line only represents its abstraction.²⁴ In the end, the zonal frontier is important not only and not so much as a stage in an evolutionary process, but also and mainly as the real dimension of the phenomenon, regardless of the apparent form that the phenomenon itself takes each time. Ratzel seems to have no doubts: irrespective of its ways of representation and codification according to different politico-juridical conventions, every border is a zone. But what are these zones made of? As we have seen, in the case of 'scienceless peoples', they may consist of spaces which are not necessarily empty. Such spaces can be shared spaces; they can be mixed areas, not so much isolation zones as buffer zones, created in order to damp conflicts; they can be areas that allow the coexistence of interests and identities; they can be *terrains vagues* where individuals who belong to different politico-territorial entities may go hunting. In such a case it is possible to say that the border of the sovereignty is the very point where the hunter *is* in

21 Ratzel (1899: 267-270).

22 Febvre (1949).

23 Febvre (1962: 11-24).

24 Ratzel (1923: 385).

any particular moment. Thus, the hunter displaces the border of his political community inside the *Grenzsaum*. On the other hand, we can say that the border of sovereignty takes the shape of a dot, since it assumes the same physical extension of the individual embodying it. Such a dot is also a mobile one, as mobile as the ‘portable’ borders of nomadic communities. The difference is that nomads do not know fixed and stable borders, they do not know closed territorialities – statically continuous and homogeneous territories. By contrast, they are sedentary communities creating a *Grenzsaum* that have both a closed and an open territoriality; they know both the univocity and separation of the former, and the ambiguity and mixture of the latter.

The closed territoriality represents an area of homogeneity, where there is just one fixed, immobile and continuous border, and no other borders within it. The open territoriality, on the contrary, is a space which enables the coexistence of a plurality of borders: ephemeral borders (which do not persist in time), mobile borders (which are able to move), omni-present borders (which may appear anywhere). This means, in the end, that in the open territoriality, in the ambiguous mix-up of the *Grenzsaum*, space and territory may be marked by as many border-dots as the emergences of sovereignty of the different subjects close the frontier zone. Such emergences of sovereignty are but the movements and actions of the individuals. This means that in the *Grenzsaum*, the borders of sovereignty take the shape of mobile and potentially ubiquitous dots.

Ratzel himself points out that we often don’t immediately realize having passed the border of a country, since nothing in what we see gives us the impression of having passed a border, and it is difficult to notice clear-cut differences at once. After a little while, though, we start to distinguish those signals or evidence of the border which Ratzel calls ‘scattered emergences’ of the border (*vereinzelte Erscheinungen*): we see more and more foreign faces, we hear people speaking and we see signs written in a foreign language, and we notice that dresses have a different cut... It’s like this that the clear-cut and univocal line of the political border becomes a fuzzy and ambiguous space, especially if – as in the example of the Austro-Italian border used by Ratzel – many cultural elements, like language and folkways, are the same, or do present very strong similarities, or are widely intermixed on both sides of the political border.²⁵

Although Ratzel never uses this definition, such occasional manifestations of the border might well be called ‘punctual borders’, insofar as they are scattered and isolated, and as they do not have the continuity and uniformity which are peculiar features of linear borders. It is in this sense that Ratzel considers the linear border as a mere abstraction, and the frontier zone – the *Grenzsaum* – as the reality. And a frontier zone consists exactly of the sum of such isolated manifestations of the border, of such scattered signals affirming their diversity from other signals, of *enclaves*, outposts and offshoots (*Ausläufer*) of a given territory A inside a given neighbouring territory B, and vice versa. While Ratzel refers to the cultural, linguistic and religious borders between peoples, we may apply the same interpretative key to the borders of sovereignty. Just as habits, folkways, languages and other cultural features distinguishing peoples and communities, also political power may act in a point-like way, outside of its own territory. Sovereignty may show itself, in a more or less isolated way, beyond the

25 Ratzel (1923: 384).

usually or officially recognised border line, and there it may affirm its presence, its influence and its role.

Let's think about the *Grenzsaum* itself, about the neutral frontier zone between pre-state communities, where the hunters of one or the other community constitute single mobile border dots, affirming their right to carry out that very activity, in that very place and in that very moment. Let's also think about the *Grenzsaum* as the only genuine dimension of the border, or even – taking Ratzel's thought to its extreme consequences – as the only possible territorial reality. Even inside the full and exclusive space of sovereign states, in the very centre of their closed territoriality, there are – and there have always been – external presences. The most classical example of such presences are embassies, which for centuries have been actually representing, according to the international law, strips of the territory of a given state, and they have been subject to the sovereignty of such state, even if they have been located inside the territory of another state.

The World as *Grenzsaum*

The idea of a punctual border, which is able to show itself other than in the compact and uniform entity of the closed territoriality of a political community, and the idea of the *Grenzsaum* as the only and true territorial dimension, consisting of a plurality of punctual borders. These are the two Ratzelian ideas which may help us to imagine a new global cartography. For today sovereignty does not consist anymore – or at least not only – in the mere control of territorial areas. But it more and more depends on the control over the different flows running inside and through territories. If we consider that states are no longer the only – and often not even the main – actors which can take decisions regarding such flows, we can say that sovereignty reveals itself in the very modalities through which such decisions are taken and implemented. Therefore, the old system of space representation – a system based on fixed, rigid and linear borders, useful to a kind of power management which is typical of modern nation-state sovereignty – does not seem able anymore to understand the reality of the present world. In fact, such a representation avoids the problem of the actual ownership, identity and nature of a sovereignty which can no longer be recognized only in the light of state borders. Because it hides its multiple and fuzzy identities behind the entangled network of relations and flows which run across the planet, showing itself in the most different ways, times and places, while it multiplies and diversifies its 'supply' of borders in order to face a 'demand' of control which is growing more and more complex, subtle and variegated.

On the one hand, the tangle of interdependences – of reciprocal influences and mutual conditionings resulting from the multiplication of international actors and from the crisis of the closed territoriality – makes the linear, rigid and univocal concept of border lose much of its clear-cut nature and makes it mingle with the more plural than univocal)concept of frontier. A frontier has a wider and unclear nature, and therefore can be more easily trespassed. It is more similar to a neutral and free zone, where any mixing is possible, than to a clear-cut separation; it is also similar to the concept of threshold as an impartial and discreet 'signal of an elsewhere', more symbolic than

selective.²⁶ This process may seem to go towards a de-materialisation, flexibilization and permeabilization of borders, following the general trend towards openness, exchange and promiscuity, in line with the need to guarantee the free circulation of international flows. On the other hand, this apparent flexibilization (or even disappearance) of borders and barriers hides a more complex reality, which is indeed much more selective insofar as it is no longer easy to understand at a glance. What is really happening is that borders have increased their versatility, becoming able to modulate their interventions with regard to different situations, needs and urges. What at first sight looked like a process of transformation of the borders into frontier zones or thresholds, under the banner of a general opening and mixing up, now turns out to be the beginning of a process of creating new and different borders, a way to offer to all kinds of borders wider spaces, more freedom to act and more chances to show themselves in different forms.

So if the world can no longer be cartographed only on the basis of the principle of territoriality – or at least not only on the basis of the principle of *closed* territoriality – then where do the new frontiers place emerge? Maybe they are now located as barriers at the access points of the network.²⁷ So the new borders would no longer be lines which have been marked on the ground; they would rather be the elements (even immaterial ones) that permit, hinder or prevent the access to the network flows. As a consequence, the fuzzy frontier zone in which the idea of border seems to blur can be seen as the equivalent on a global scale of the Ratzelian *Grenzsraum*. Again we can see the scattered emergences of the border – that is the point-like or punctual borders, which are fundamentally mobile and virtually ubiquitous.

The whole world, in the end, would now be but a single large *Grenzsraum*, a single large frontier zone, a unitary space characterised by the coexistence of different realities, furrowed by several lines, and dotted with a multiplicity of points. In such a space, the co-existent realities are different from each other; the rigid and continuous lines represent routes and flows rather than barriers and borders, and the points constitute strategically fragmented forms of the border. If this is the case, the crisis of territoriality certainly did not cause the disappearance of the borders. On the contrary, it caused their disengagement from the rules of state territoriality. This means that the borders are no longer forced to immobility, since they can move, and that their form is no longer necessarily linear, since it can also be punctual. Their presence (and their influence) is no longer limited in space, since it has virtually become ubiquitous. Rather than the crisis of territoriality as such, what we see is a process through which the closed territoriality of the states is being replaced by the new open territoriality of the global *Grenzsraum*.

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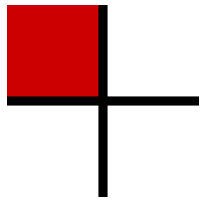
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On the Victim's Side: A Note on Humanitarianism in the Time of Wars of Interference

Federico Rahola

Introduction

Between astonishment and horror: with these feelings we are forced to live, rather impotently, in the time of preventive war – a time marked by the daily barbarism of never-ending conflicts, ravaged by suicide bombings as well as by places like Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo. Astonishment and horror, for example, affected international reactions to the slaughter in Moscow's theatre in October 2002, before re-imposing themselves, two years later, upon all those who witnessed the tragic kidnapping of the Beslan school children. There, among those corpses, political theorists should have discerned a rather definitive picture of the crisis the very idea of State had fallen into, as a subject no longer able to distinguish between friends and enemies, between innocent civilians and 'terrorists'. The Chechen conflict, anyhow, can be ordinarily placed within the context of *permanent war*, where the sequences of astonishment and horror have exceeded any political limit leaving no space for remembrance. Thus, the bodies of terrorists 'gassed' by a cocktail of vasodilatives and sarin, those ones hidden in body-bags of the civilians 'who did not make it', as well as the over-exposed and unlookable children laid out in a line along the walls of their school in Dagestan, were quickly neutralised and forgotten, just as much for the investigations that should have taken place to discover the causes and reasons for those deaths, foreseen or not, wanted or not. The message was rather clear: we were dealing with the umpteenth front of an endless 'conflict' where borders are no longer recognised.

In the name of security, and of preventive war, even the distinction between civilians and terrorists (a real *finis terrae* in the rhetoric of post 11th September, 2001) ends up with assuming an absolute uncertainty. Naturally, it was Putin's own idea of security, whose elements of 'breakdown' were actually the paradoxical direction and the total dimension he has conferred to it. Yet, if the target is 'new' (as it could be new something that brings Russia backwards, annulling time), the sense is not at all, by reproducing within the borders of national territory, what has been nowadays extended

on a worldwide level by the doctrine of preventive war. The difference between the sacrifice of a few civilians to hit 'terrorists' and the striking of whole populations through bombings and a crossfire which is always enemy, in order to punish the 'terrorist' states to which the 'terrorists' belong, is a thin red line, actually non-existent. It alludes, on the one hand, to life's formal status being overturned, and, on the other, where it never really existed. And from nothing comes to light a figure, in the form of a shallow continuum that accompanies 'actual wars', floating between an often redundant mass media picture and an absolute inconsistent political recognition of the victim.

My intention in these notes is to question the condition, as immediate as undepicted and withheld, of victims. Today 'victim' is a category encountered anywhere and everywhere: from the extreme of genocides (often exaggerated, risking trivialising in comparisons not only the word but also the persons involved) to mass deportation, from the chronic situation of starved people, to the banality of the evil of abuse and oppression, to passive smoking. But behind all the apparent self-evidence, behind a self-explanatory definition, what is at stake when we speak of victims? The impression is that in such a wide semantic field there is a deception, or better still a trap. We deal with a category, at the best juridical, but highly moral, and as such essentially unpolitical, or rather meta-political, if we followed *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* by Adam Smith.

Does the word 'victim' adequately characterize subjects whose condition is nearly always political, but whose status remains as such undiscovered? Might we inquire another category, of *excess*, which, however placed at the extremes of every moral category, is, in any case, immediate? Might we begin with a completely political distinction, which concerns the abstract capacity of 'voice'? Here, there are victims who speak, who define themselves as such (and therefore 'act', thus realising a process of victimisation), there, there are victims who have no voice and are defined as such by others. Victims there, those inclusively registered as victims, would be subjects who, as Gayatri Spivak suggests, are nearly always 'geopolitically located'. From the masses barely escaping wars and hunger, to the lifeless corpses of civilians sacrificed by Putin. From the Afghan, Kosovar, Serb or Palestinian civilians, accidentally hit, or having themselves mistaken a fragment bomb for humanitarian aid, to the migrants, shipwrecked in the Mediterranean, dead in the Southern California sun. Subjects definitively placed outside the borders of nation states, subjects beyond the citizen, whose life and death, irrelevant, are not counted and do not count, subjects whose death, when impending, is an unavoidable accident, technically, listed in the obscene lexicon of *warfare management* as 'collateral damage'.

The euphemistic formula 'collateral damage', an incurable inference to the same *inexorable* victims of all modern wars, is a symptom betraying the actual 'idea of humanity', which also has acted as a constant and implicit condition of armed intervention running, in recent years, from Somalia and the Kosovo 'saved' by a humanitarian intervention, to Afghanistan and Iraq, 'shocked and awed'. The impression of a line, a continuity settled by contextualizing the present, setting itself as a hypothetical threshold in relation to times that passed before – times when wars seemed to have been reduced to progressive figures of humanitarian intervention operations, when all seemed to point to *openness*, towards *enlargement*, providing the best conditions for market *operativity*.

If we free ourselves of the interpretation of preventive wars as exclusively legitimised by terrorist threat, we discover the plot of an 'order' (here the inverted commas are obligatory) which has been constitutively crossed by conflicts, at least since 1991, the year of the first Iraqi crusade.¹ An 'order', which has given war back the fulcrum that bipolar stagnation seemed to have subdued – but actually only having placed it away, far from the West² – making it act, far from any exceptionalist literature, as an authentic condition of possibility. If not the main regulator of a completely globalised capitalism, which, in order to maintain the imbalances it reproduces, can resort only to force.³ This, among other things, allows the turning of every attempt to represent the present of war as an absolute contextual moment, a temporary obstacle in the linear process of the constitution of a global area which could be crossed and potentially smoothed, lacking any attrition and external appearance.

On the contrary, I believe that only by assuming the central, constituent role played by war does it become possible to understand the form of *exteriority*, sidereal and absolute, that this 'order' continuously produces and demands as an inflexible and constant residual – its own excess. Behind a presence which seems to overthrow time and the very idea of space which came immediately before it, it is possible to discover a rather continuous line that damages any form of linear and direct reading of the process of 'imperial' constitution – as well as permanent war which seems to have thrown the plot into confusion. A line that can act either horizontally (operating, as suggested by Alain Joxe, from law and order and zero-tolerance policies to the theological clash of civilisation⁴), or vertically (on the escalation links up the first Gulf war to the last), finding in the politics of security its actual point of no return. In the following pages I will try to re-discover the meaning of such a continuity, focusing on a seemingly secondary passage, retraceable in the outcomes of the interference wars of the last ten years, and easily deduced from the general *indifference* towards social, political and material effects on the populations affected. It is obvious, immediately evident, that such an attitude cannot be blamed on only present wars. The proportions reached today, however, tend to grant them a certain *symptomatic* characteristic, directly verifiable in the way wars are conducted (the concentrated use of aviation, accidental casualties because 'indistinguishable', humanitarian aid confused with bombs), in the immediate consequences provoked on the areas affected (forced displacement, environmental destruction), in the ways civil populations are governed (the militarization of aid programmes, the mass-identification of civilians), and furthermore, in the non-stop creation of refugees and internally displaced, in a state of war which is prolonged well beyond the end of military operations, and of a daily, normal, 'natural' death.

1 For a synthetic picture, see Dal Lago (2003).

2 Trying to enquire into the accountability of conflicts and victims during the Cold War, it was discovered how such stagnation was the objective effect of endemic instability and conflict and only slightly 'visible'. For an analysis of the 'Post-colonial wars' in the Cold War, see Mazower (1998).

3 Anyway, the very outcome of the recent Cancun conference, where Europe and the USA have imposed free trade on whole areas of the planet, yet demanding recognition for protection zones in commercial trade where they are directly affected, openly demonstrates how this 'equilibrium' can only be maintained by a permanent state of war.

4 See Joxe (2003).

Humanity, Excess

Well, it is actually from these passages, retraceable as a *continuum* in every point of war, that stems a humanity which wars simultaneously over expose and constrain. A side product of recent interventionist wars, 'humanity' emerges in its fullest political meaning as their 'excess'. It is for this reason that such wars can be seen even as devices, *dispositifs* of *control* on a (sub)humanity that humanity proper will have presupposed. We are dealing with a hypothesis further strengthened by the type of 'order' that follows the *aftermath* of military operations: an order located in the form of 'protectorates' via the deployment of numerous international troops, which, in turn, close the borders and intern whole populations, blocking any access to other countries for possible exile⁵; a purely ethnic order, constantly under fire from 'low intensity' conflicts. From the Somalia left to itself after the failure of the 'Restore Hope' operation, to the mono-ethnic Kosovo still populated by persecuted minorities (whose presence 'justifies' the imposition of international protectorate under resolution 1244 of the United Nations), to the Afghanistan torn apart in post-war, not to mention Iraq, where 'post-war' (here a rather absurd term) causes more victims than the war itself: in all these cases the first impression is of something incomparable to the most meagre notion of order.

The question to pose is therefore quite direct: how to compare such a structure of excess with the concept of security, a key-word of present day wars? The points shown above would demonstrate, instead, an image that is miles away from the proclamations of *law and order* which followed the bombs over Belgrade, Kabul and Baghdad. On this subject, many voices have denounced the 'superficiality' of the American *establishment* in its management of military operations, especially in the post-war in Afghanistan and Iraq: the complete ignorance of the actual political, social, cultural and 'human' situations of these countries, from which it would be possible to ascertain a certain racist attitude.⁶ Similar 'errors' could be charged to the military and political management of the humanitarian war in Kosovo – errors well-evident in the 'serial' accidents of casualties, as well as in the escalation of the refugee emergency during the bombings and in the actual conditions of the minorities. All the mentioned instances (and Somalia should act as a paramount example, in this case), are evidence of a pure racism: the colonial or rather 'orientalist' racism characterising the unilateral American or Western hegemony, built upon coarse, stylised, all-encompassing categories (the 'Arabs', 'Islam', the 'West'), thus producing a polarised and dichotomous map, *à la* Huntington. But there is more. Insofar as racism, from colonialism onwards, is unthinkable as a 'simple' cultural fact, and is rather a geo-political rapport which itself produces a geography and supports itself on the weft of irrefutable borders. In other words, I do not believe we can look at the contradictory outcomes and mistakes that run through three conflicts, linked though they are by the generic principle of inter(sovra)national interference, as simple accidents, or what Weber would have defined as instances of a generic 'heterogenesis of means'. On the contrary: in order to

5 It is on the basis of an international *in loco* presence that it is possible to refuse or not permit refugees from other countries, avoiding the principle of *non refoulement* stipulated by the International Statute for refugees 1951. Please refer to Cohen and Deng (1998).

6 See, for example, Said (2003); Dal Lago (2003).

discover a systematic nature in the production of victims and disorder, which is found in the unwillingness and indifference of a politics of security, we would have to bring them back to the specific dimension of the border to which they respond.

This brings to the fore the reasons of the politics of security, whose concept, as a central theme of modern politics, can be traced back to the Hobbesian construction of the State. Today, talking about security means being able to measure oneself with the unrelenting turnover the term has undergone in the last four decades, shifting from a declension looking inwards, formed to give assurances and a material sense to the word 'inclusion', towards a projection looking outwards, as a set of devices of *law enforcement*, an ever growing control of exclusive borders.⁷ It is this action 'on frontiers' that implies a renewed 'bio-political' meaning of the notion of security, insisting on the threatened and increasingly indistinct line separating those areas where people's lives are governed and 'left to live', from an outside at which they are abandoned to themselves and 'left to die'.⁸

The idea of border and the decisive role security plays in it, was a topic addressed by Michel Foucault at the *Collège de France* in 1978. Dedicated to *Sécurité, territoire, population*, long unpublished, apart from the famous lecture on the concept of 'governmentality'.⁹ Its main issue was the gradual political investment in security, which marked the transition to modernity. Foucault traced such a process to the interlacing and progressive rotation of a disciplinary power with an absolute science of government, and to the innovations introduced in 18th Century France by the physiocrats. It is at this point that the concept of security really enters into the world of politics. Yet, as opposed to the discipline, which actually works on an idea of time and space regularly (pre)constituted, (a calendar, an *institution totale*), security is statistics, indicating optimum possibilities, virtual curves, and probabilities. If discipline acts through a constant surveillance and a hidden punishment, security, even forecasting specific phenomena and possible uprisings, nonetheless does not avoid and actually tends to favour them, in order ultimately to control the consequences and to ensure their possible effects. Twenty years before the works of Ulrich Beck on the risk society, and before the works of James Rosenau on the turbulence in international relations, Foucault pointed out the 'management of disorder' as the explosive nature of breakdown introduced by liberal politics of security: in short, where discipline imposes an order, security enables the control of disorder.

But how? Neither by eliminating, nor by reducing it, security moves and keeps control of the chaos it produces by managing its outcomes from a distance. And it is this distancing, the keeping of at a distance, while managing/governing it preventively and directly on site, which brings to light the specificity of *a border*, a point to which the bare lives of civilians could be led back, where the bodies of the victims of the 'new wars' belong. It is an effectively political border, which appears somewhat more definite and determinant than that which emerges in the alleged clashes of civilisation as

7 See Dillon (1996).

8 See Foucault (2000).

9 See Foucault (2004).

predicted by Samuel Huntington. A border that current wars exacerbate *under the sign of prevention*.

The hypothesis that needs developing, then, is that, of a space 'inhabited' by the victims, a space beyond this border (which transversally cuts slums, cities, nations, 'cultures'). A space inhabited by *surnuméraires*, who are represented only in the abstract term of an excess, whose life and death become irrelevant. The irrelevant Somali civilians tortured by the Italian 'humanitarian' troops. The irrelevant Serbs and Kosovars accidentally struck during the 'sky war' in Kosovo; the 'dark number' of victims in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the interned of Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo Bay. Elsewhere I have tried to show how this space ends up by falling into a (non)place, thus materializing the border beyond which humanity's excess should be returned, to the internment camps crowding in various forms (refugee camps, temporary camps, camps for *asylum seekers* and illegal migrants) contemporary world.¹⁰ Here I will try to introduce some reflections about the subjects forced to live in such an uncertain space, about their impossible representation, and about the logic of confinement which rules over their existence.

On the Victim's Side

In *La souffrance à distance*, Luc Boltanski directly approached the political predicament concerning the status of victims, with the aim of providing a solid theoretical and political basis for the principle of right to interfere.¹¹ For Boltanski, this meant proving the intrinsic politics of a moral – the humanitarian one – necessarily located in a meta-political space, which does not yield to any partisan claim and should proclaim itself *super partes*, authentically universal. Actually, that book felt the effects of a debate (about global democracy and the primacy of human rights) and a subject (the predictive idea of a 'global civil society') which seems to be quite distant nowadays, overcome as they are by the unilateral logic of preventive war. The superficial character of such a breakdown has already been hinted at, in the points of continuity which do not allow the easy erasure of the *devoir d'ingérence* as an exclusive expression of the Indian summer of 'global social democracy'.

Anyhow, today's wars are represented in a specific continuity with the principle of intervention, even humanitarian, although in a rather farcical way: the liberation of Afghan women from the burkha, that one of Iraq from the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein... Yet, above all, Boltanski's point appears to be still decisive in its attempt to avoid and possibly overcome the border upon which the politics of security are built, directly intervening in the chaotic space, in the 'state of nature' inhabited by the victims.

The increasingly marked presence of non-institutional and NGO players on the international stage is undoubtedly an immediate and distinctive feature of the 'global' present: trans-national subjects active in aiding victims of 'humanitarian' disasters, in

10 See Rahola (2003).

11 See Boltanski (1994).

reconstructing areas devastated by conflicts, or co-operating internationally. Trans-national subjects who often declare their desire not to accept the 'pincers of inequality and injustice of the modern world', and, by doing so – according to Boltanski – make a decisive move to action, transforming aporetic positions into an absolute form of *agency*. Trans-national subjects whose actions are often based on superimposed attitudes, deriving from heterogeneous and generally incompatible assumptions, which Boltanski refers to as 'topic of accusation', of 'sentiment' and an 'aesthetic topic'. Long-distance support, voluntary agency and direct action *in loco* would allow covering the 'hiatus of experience', would enable the impotence of those watching the 'spectacle of pain' from distance. It would also answer in a pragmatic and prompt way to the need to act without delegating or limiting one's own action to a written accusation, to an indefinite pity or a simple narcissistic statement – all experiences that would either fall on the subject itself or be easily instrumentalized.

I don't want to directly contest the immediate effects and the generally undeferrable need of the role played by different humanitarian agencies. Rather, my point concerns the opportunity to assert an alleged (impolitical or apolitical) *super partes* position as the basic assumption for every humanitarian issue. Boltanski's response, articulated in the final pages of the book, does not appear to leave any doubts: against all 'political' criticism of humanitarianism, the logic of direct intervention represents a real universal principle; and as far as it is concerned, such a universal dimension can superimpose any kind of political instances and accusations, by the fact of eluding any partisan, 'communitarian and Jacobin' logic. An unchallengeable universality is, as such, based upon a specific *super partes* position which Boltanski deduces in a simple gesture from two of the top theorists of *devoir d'ingérence*: that of 'being on the victims' side'.¹² As 'ontologically universal' and immediately recognisable figures, the victims as such thus legitimise the universality of humanitarian logic.

Now, it is evident to Boltanski that such universality cannot be assumed as an absolute, in that it actually depends deeply on media intervention: it cannot suggest itself, but it must be constructed.¹³ From this starting point, it is possible to formulate two objections to Boltanski's point, alongside with a more general one, which challenges the position and particularly the subject/object relation over which he reconstructs a phenomenology of the humanitarian moral. The first objection concerns the particular '*super partes*' position that is assumed to be decisive for claims about the universal right to intervention; the second objection involves the particular universality of the victims, or rather some of the political effects that their depoliticised representation as such might provoke.

By affirming the absolute impartiality and therefore non-political attitude of the interventions of many NGOs, apart from belittling the political demands of the same NGOs, Boltanski seems to underestimate (and implicitly absolve) the plot of the complex superimposition in which the new 'global' players work. In particular, he seems to avoid the progressive symbiosis that highlights the relationship between NGOs

12 See Bettati and Koucher (1987).

13 Rather than defining such universality as *a priori*, it seems more correct to accept it as a process, as 'universalisation'. On this point see Žižek (1999: 228).

and political institutions, reciprocally implied for humanitarian-political and especially civilian-military aid operations. Michael Dillon and Julian Reid call this symbiosis the “contemporary politicisation/militarization of the humanitarian and the humanisation of the military”.¹⁴ Nowadays, several NGOs appear to act in a sort of mimesis of the politician (behaving like institutional players, members speaking like official spokesmen, managed and directed by ex-politicians and diplomats). It is a symptom of a real empowerment, whose paradigmatic evidence can be found in a figure like Bernard Kouchner, former president of *Medecins sans Frontières* and then director of the United Nations’.¹⁵ According to Dillon and Reid, “nowadays many humanitarian organisations and NGOs have been recluded into those structures and centres of power, an essentially political project, against which they have been founded and politically defined.”¹⁶

Likewise evident is the parallel process of the ‘humanitarianisation’ of the military. In place of the myth of the good soldier has come the do-good soldier. All recruiting campaigns for national forces trust in advertisements showing soldiers rescuing victims, handing out clothing and aid, holding children. Ethicality is transformed into colourless formulae (*peace-keeping*, *peace-enforcing*, intervention force and international mediation) or into abstruse logos – ‘Peace Support Operations’ (PSO), ‘Operations other than War’ (OOTW). This obfuscates the latest sense of this deferment, which is the constant use of armies for the ‘humanitarian’ management of civilian populations – a deferment whose *escalation* began with the Blue Helmets of the United Nations, moved on to the NATO troops, and to the American, British, Italian and Polish contingents stationed in Iraq. We can recognize the instance of Kosovo, where the humanitarian emergency ‘resulting’ from the war which provoked the flight of over eight thousand refugees into enormous camps in Macedonia and Albania, was passed from the UN to NATO. But the following wars, which can be considered even as ‘simple’ military occupations, by far exceed that specific situation. Their consequences seem far more complex than those foreseen by the enlightening introduction of international rules about interaction between the military and civilians.¹⁷ They essentially concern the role of military power, the undefined range of its action, the ambivalent and therefore almost unlimited domain conferred to it by security policies.¹⁸

The ‘perverse’ effects of this symbiosis, anyway, tend to be quite paradoxical: there is a frequent use of private security companies, who are subcontracted to execute the specific ‘humanitarian’ tasks. An example of this is the case of an NGO in Sierra Leone which recruits local militia for the distribution of aid in the refugee camps.¹⁹ Moreover,

14 Dillon and Reid (2000).

15 Such political objection, there is a more prosaic or material sum, linked to the fact that today many NGOs spend more resources on mass media awareness campaigns and *fund raising* than on direct aid programmes. For this see the special edition of *Que choisir* on ‘Aide humanitaire’, 46, 2000.

16 Dillon and Reid (2000: 121).

17 There is a fair amount of literature which attempts to ‘humanitarianly’ define and optimise the interaction military and civilian powers and especially between military forces and civilian populations in the areas of ‘humanitarian’ intervention. See, for example, Weiss (1999).

18 Apart from Dal Lago (2003), see also Bigo (2000).

19 See on this matter the essay by Hendri (1997), who offers a critique which is far from the scenario made by Boltanski, highlighting not only the frequent collusion between military and civilian players, politicians and humanitarians, national and international, but also the contradictions and

such a close relationship collapses under the utter uncertainty of international *networks* – a context in which any distinction between military and civilian, political and humanitarian, public and private, becomes impossible. Public and private security (military) who at the same time sell arms and ‘security means’ in order to demilitarise political crisis; financial analysts and consultants of cooperation aid specialised in security and *warfare techniques*.²⁰ The list could go on, and would inevitably lead us to Iraq today, where alleged *bodyguards*, soldiers and humanitarian operators work side by side, often carrying out the same duties and tasks.

This, among other things, helps to restore a decidedly unclear picture of humanitarianism, which is light years away from the claims of impartiality and universalism referred to by Boltanski, and quite close in its immediate output to the logic of security and control. The logics of such an overlapping are rather explicit, if not institutionalised: I have already mentioned how it is possible to refuse asylum to individuals in flight, even from situations of persecution and actual risk, if there is already an existing humanitarian aid programme located in their country of origin. It occurs today in Kosovo (where the presence of *UNHCR* and numerous NGOs prevents the recognition of potential refugees among the non-Albanian minorities), and in south Afghanistan (due to the ‘humanitarian corridors’ set up along the border with Pakistan, which definitively constrains the people to that zone). It also happened in Srebrenica, at the height of the war that tore asunder the (ex-)Yugoslavia, and in North Iraq, with the ‘Safe Havens’ set by a UN resolution in 1991 that are still in force today.

Privatisation of aid operations, collusion between military and humanitarian organisations, direct control and coercive territorialisation: all this seems to be the distopical materialisation of the ‘globalist’ dream of a *super partes* supranational subject. Whether institutional or inscribed in an indefinite global civil society, a *super partes* today appears more realistically to be a carte-blanche proxy that given to NGOs and private groups by the UN and *UNHCR*. In this perspective, humanitarianism betrays a die-hard, to a certain extent ‘structural’, implication in the *political* situations where it intervenes, demonstrating a ‘redemptive’ presence, which is rarely opposing and is nearly always linear to the moral legitimisation of quite often illegitimate armed interventions. The ‘missionary’ logic it reproduces responds more to that logic which undergrids wars of intervention. In both cases there is a clear shift from a political realm into a moral one, where the enemy is no longer recognised as such, and any political consideration is ethically reformulated in terms of the Good (the do-good soldier and the brave volunteers) against the Evil (the ‘enemies of humanity’ and the suffering that can be soothed but never eradicated). In other words, from a political axis based on the contradictions equality/differences or friend/enemy, the issue has progressively shifted into a moral one of right and wrong, into the spectacle of good against evil, thus reproducing *in toto* the theological climate of preventive war.

Boltanski’s idea seems to avoid these objections, or, rather, he gives the impression of being aware of them, but looking elsewhere. His point is that it is always possible to

embarrassment many humanitarian subjects feel when direct or indirect claims on made on behalf of the victims.

²⁰ See Duffield (1998: 66).

represent the reasons and the moral 'duty' to intervene as authentically *super partes*, by precisely returning to the universal figure of the victim. For him, the right of intervention indeed originates in the undeferrable need to 'intervene' on behalf of the supposedly universal figure of the victim. The right of intervention thus is based upon an ethics of principles that consist in abandoning all political considerations and any thought of *laissez faire*, and instead placing oneself 'universally' on the side of the (universal) victim. This in turn implies a shift that assumes an absolute superior 'indifference' towards the victims and conversationally legitimises itself in these terms: "In front of pain, we cannot remain indifferent, or split hairs, and we choose to act by standing by those who suffer and by those under bombings".²¹

To such an apparently unchallengeable assumption, it is possible to oppose the Weberian incongruence with an ethic of principles and convictions which is focused on the field of responsibility, an ethic of principles which begins with the analysis of the immediate and practical effects that the 'right to intervene' may produce.

My objection concerns the a-priori universalism such a reasoning provides to the victims, whose figure of neutrality-naturalness appears anything but immediate and returns us inevitably to the question of mediated forms of social construction and discursive production. Particularly in the case of 'faraway' suffering, is the specific productivity/performativity of media language salient. Actually, it is only through ongoing media reproduction that it is possible to provide 'global' consistency and meaning to the 'local' figure of the victim, and to mobilise subjects who are not directly involved in the experience of suffering.

Let's be clear, this does not mean that every time victims are represented they are 'fake' and manipulated. Yet, to analyse the different ways their visibility can be constructed is important. The procedures according to which victims can be strategically presented or over-represented, and the oscillations and the specific frames used for defining and making them 'readable', actually affirm how and how much their 'universality' is a social construct. A clear-cut example of such a construction is the over-representation of the victims during the so-called 'slaughter of Timisoara'. It was a decisive step in the Romanian 'revolution' of December 1989, where local television and international *networks* had edited the same footage and added archive material in order to exaggerate the extent of the repression under Ceaucescu's dictatorship, as well as the strength of the revolt against his regime. On the other hand, as an opposed evidence, it is the absolute lack of images of the Iraqi casualties and victims during the first Gulf war, which works as a functional concealment of both the head of the Western Alliance and

21 It is substantially this basis of behaviour, according to Boltanski, that makes it possible to overcome the contradiction of the long-distance passive spectator, by using humanitarian moral (or rather a word which in any case is action) redeems the bias and the aporetic supported by what Boltanski identifies as the three 'blunders' which lead back to the portrayal of the suffering: the 'Jacobin' accusation, the 'Christian' sentiment and the aesthetic sentiment, basically a Nietzschean derivation (see Boltanski, 2000).

the Hussein regime, which sustains international consensus for the war and obscures the course and effects of war.²²

Examples like these, though not directly involving humanitarian players, eloquently and substantially bring us back to the basic ambiguity and easy manipulation of a figure that is presumed to be 'natural', automatically comprehensible and thereby universal. Particularly, they bring us back to the intrinsic problem of a figure, a picture that exists 'for us'. Susan Sontag reminds us of how fragile the ethical content of a picture is, and of how it therefore must be filled and strengthened by words that make it readable.²³ If the universality of victims seems often to be a direct cause of the strategies by which they are represented, an effect of the 'legends' which pass over their pictures, then their universality (as a reason for taking an interventionist position and as a reason for affirming the right to do so) ought not to be taken for granted. The assertion might sound problematic insofar as it seems to link extreme situations, where suffering is out of the question, only with specific strategies of representation. However, at the very heart of claims to the right to intervention, the universality of victims seems rather to concern their 'ontological' condition, their being innocent subjects whose unreasonable and intolerable sacrifice is often counterbalanced by the impunity of those 'truly responsible'. This universality, arguably, at least for those intending to 'do something', *goes well beyond and against any form of representation*.

An example from the Kosovo war helps us to grasp a deep ambiguity that in similar situations ends up taking absolute and universal proclamations for granted. Many of us will remember the tragic images of the enormous numbers of Kosovar refugees fleeing from the Serb ethnic cleansing. They were undoubtedly and definitely victims. And it was on the basis of those images that international actions of solidarity suddenly emerged: a 'call of solidarity' was upheld by appeals and non-stop media coverage, and the main international humanitarian agencies converged on the territory. It culminated in the paradoxical delegation to NATO forces and all the aid and assistance operations. And all this took place while NATO's bombs had played a decisive role in stoking this flight, provoking the terrible reprisal by the Serbian malice and what became known as a 'humanitarian disaster' of appalling proportions. Cases like this, though apparently extraordinary, are actually more frequent than stated by supporters and theorists of the *devoir d'ingérence*. The effects of such a coincidence create a real heterogenesis, as in the case of the refugee camps on the south-west borders of Rwanda, where the militia of the 'Hutu power', directly responsible for the Tutsi genocide, ended up with being the collectors of UN humanitarian aid.²⁴

22 For a reconstruction of the various strategies of concealing victims and the effects of the conflict, the Gulf War, see Wolton (1991). For a supporting analysis, used to underline the practices of cognitive neutralisation and removal in an internal political case, see also the work of Wagner (1994). A more general reference, about the effectiveness of concealment and the removal of the dead from the semantic field and the effects of censorship induced by military strategic language, is highlighted in work by Scarry (1989) concerning the portrayal and the political importance of grief.

23 Sontag (1992).

24 See Prunier (1994).

Critically theorizing such situations does not mean asserting that in these cases humanitarian aid was not absolutely necessary. Of course it was. But it does mean that the 'universal' figures of victims 'represented' the contingent product of a specific moment, a moment that was above all *politically determined*. It also means that we recognize that the acceptance of such representations meant accepting the conditions that defined/provoked that situation and that dimension of victims, which would then be employed universally, beyond any historical or political context. In cases like these the quite neutral statement, 'being on the victims' side', reveals all its inadequacies, bias and ambiguity. Better, it means that we recognize the impossibility of maintaining a 'partisan' position that is motivated by universal assumptions and that is, as such, apolitical. In Kosovo, and in Rwanda, is the seriousness of the simple statement 'being on the victims' side' really possible?

Subjects/Objects

The objections and the questions put forward help to spoil the background on which Boltanski tries to legitimise the *devoir d'ingérence*, but they do not entirely eliminate the basic assumption of his political operation, nor do they tarnish its decisive assumption: the universal dimension of the victim as the means of justifying humanitarian action. Boltanski's main argument can be accepted without hesitation: in the utter indecision that characterises an ethical category, the victim is ontologically universal, no matter if he/she is innocent or not: 'Nobody touches Cain'. Yet more difficult, though not impossible (considering the high level of abstraction to which his reasoning forces us), is to pass over the French sociologist's elusions (the collusion between humanitarian, military and political, the role of humanitarianism in the new wars, in the politics of security, in the control of the 'excess'), as well as the deep contradictions humanitarian ethics meets on the ground of concrete effects, the aporias that claims of apolitical universalism unavoidably reproduce.

Conceding all this to Boltanski seems to concede more than what is theoretically legitimate. Yet, there is still a central question that his work avoids: which concept of the subject sustains the representation of the victims? It is a question that has to be split, first by asking what is the meaning of the victim whose universality is assumed? And, second, by asking whether is it still correct to talk about a subject as such? The 'universal' representation of the victims assumes an absolute *impoliticalness*, by this meaning the total absence of *voice* and *agency*. An alleged naturalised condition, where any element of identification, any causal reason is suspended. It is only in this way that it is possible to create a 'universal' figure in order to sanction a *super partes* operation.

Slavoj Žižek, though within a not altogether convincing address, offers us a clear example of this 'natural' condition, quoting a reportage of the *New York Times*, concerning the war in Kosovo, meaningfully entitled: 'In One Kosovo Woman, an Emblem of Suffering'. The article is centred upon a Kosovar woman, witness of the ethnic persecution and therefore involved in the tragic destiny of *displacement* that the majority of Albanian-Kosovars endured. Her testimony states solidarity with all the victims of the bombings, without making any political distinction and claim (such as an

Albanian future for Kosovo) and only affirming the will to see the end of all that she had seen and was seeing: at any price, only 'wishing' a future of peace where everyone could 'keep living'.²⁵

It is this kind of unspecified figure (whose suffering is universal and therefore accessible but impossible to geographically and politically locate) that Boltanski's universality is based upon, even when it is motivated by the need to take position. A figure which has been obsessively over-represented by international media in a completely *depoliticised* way, a figure who holds no position if not that of resignation, who holds an attitude of absolute delegation, without any claim to rights, just to live, to live where no right to have rights is recognised, just an unavoidable right to survive.

The point is that it was precisely the representation of such a 'passive' figure that the legitimisation of the 'humanitarian' intervention in Kosovo came about, and it was exactly this kind of figure that the humanitarian war has reproduced in the name of human rights: "We find here the ideological construction of the ideal victim, to whose defence NATO has intervened: it is not a political subject with a clear position, but a defenceless and suffering subject, who sympathises with all those involved in the conflict, entrapped in the madness of a local struggle which can only be laid to rest by a charitable foreign force: a subject whose deepest wish is reduced to that of an animal instinct, 'to feel good again'".²⁶

Such 'ideal' victims – who, in order to be recognised as such must lose any content, renounce any claims, and be 'cleaned up' – continuously addresses and 'interpellates' us today. Figures who may even express the most personal feelings, are nonetheless completely depersonalised. Images freeze on faces, names, and stories, highlighting the victims as much as dequalifying them. In so doing, every face becomes interchangeable, serial, collocating itself in a sort of void, without substance, depth and memory; in a time evacuated by history – or where history becomes something natural, and the biographical becomes biological (as in the case of the *National Geographic* cover drawing together two pictures of the same Afghan woman discovered by a photographer twenty years later).

Yet, the Kosovar victim is more than a simple image: she has a voice, she is a witness. But which voice, and which form of witness? The witness is a problematic figure, involving constant updating work, a temporal short-circuit, and a process of subjectivisation. By taking into consideration the critical dimension of the witness which emerges from Primo Levi's *I sommersi e i salvati*, we discover that the over-represented victims, the omnipresent ones in all the petitions made by humanitarian agencies, almost overturn the image of the witness. In the witness accounts of the survivors of the Holocaust, for example, and at the cost of a present tied to the past and

25 See Žižek (2001). Žižek's analysis is excessive, in my opinion, when opposing the depoliticised figure, and so 'functional' to the 'universal' need for humanitarian intervention, the one that portrays the subversive victim for political instances and is on one side, reaching a paradoxical re-evaluation of the radicalism of the Uck, the paramilitary force in Kosovo, privileged interlocutors of the Western Alliance before the war.

26 *Ibid.*, 142.

a past that is not freed by the present, at risk is the chance of recuperating the singularity of an experience from an event and a context whose aim was precisely to reduce every individual to a body, a number, an indistinct mass. To 'represent' the dimension of the victim led by the media, on the contrary, it is necessary to lose any trace of individuality or memory, to make the figure 'believable', universally accessible, infinitely replaceable. This is why all victims appear today to be the same as each other. And here lies their 'universality'.

This identified and yet completely decontextualised subject (a few inarticulate phrases, a face, a profile, a body) seems to conform *in toto* to the unaccountable figure of the victim, from whom it is possible to affirm the universality of the right of intervention, le *devoir d'ingérence*. This brings to light the intrinsic contradiction of humanitarian logic, which claims to be 'on the victim's side', and which builds itself upon a depoliticised figure upon that which is pure icon, at once hyper-realistic, versatile, easy to handle, and at worst 'pop' (as shown by Oliviero Toscani's pictures). This in turn provides to that specific secular religion which humanitarianism is, a rather paradoxical dimension. Its political claim of self-identification with the figure of a universal victim that is ultimately and *completely depoliticised*.

In other words, the impotence, the total lack of an *agency* and the vagueness of the victim mentioned by Žižek appears to define the 'quality' of the subject Boltanski assumes as the measure of universality of the *devoir d'ingérence*. The question, the last one, then, is therefore: can we really talk about a subject as such? Let us oppose the 'point blank' humanitarian subject that specific, undiscussed but implicit subject (i.e. white, Western, male, Cartesian), on which Boltanski outlines a real phenomenology. That specific subject which, as universalized, loses any intersubjective dimension, insofar as the other does not exist except only as a mere object or an abstract 'eidetic' image. An 'other' towards which it is possible to have sympathy, but which is likewise impossible, out of the question.

We rediscover here, after a long and winding route, the political dimension of the border to which victims are led back, the humanity in excess which is produced continuously by a politics of security and present day wars. A border which appears to be tangible in the abstract opposition between a clearly located subject and undifferentiated masses, between those who watch 'the show of suffering' from a distance and can decide to intervene, and those who experience the sense of the place simply as a condemnation, with no alternatives, no elsewhere. A border which separates those who are still *subjects of rights* from those who, in the best of cases, are *objects of aid*. The fact is that this border continuously shifts, overlapping other boundaries, penetrating 'cities' and concerning many citizens whose belonging seems more and more to become a formal fact. Such a border appears quite real, making it unnecessary to characterize the work of Putin as 'science fiction'. In the overall crisis of citizenship, which encompasses all dimensions of belonging, the excess is everywhere. Russia is near.

What is sure is that only by breaking down this border will the humanitarian (that is, broadly speaking, the discourse on victims) be able to free itself from the suspicion of being simply a device to control humanity's excess. To do this, however, it should firstly have to recognise a subject able to express political instances of equality rather

than provoking moral condemnation of absolute and unredeemable evils.²⁷ A subject whose material conditions act as the only guarantees of concrete universality – probably the opposite of the abstract universality of the victim.

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27 For a political critique of humanitarianism insisting on the effects of cancelling every egalitarian tension, see Mesnard (2004).

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The Double Outside of the Modern International*

R.B.J. Walker

We live amidst competing claims about change and transformation, especially claims about globalisms, localisms, regionalisms and multiple challenges to the authority of the modern state. These challenges are intricately entwined with claims about new engagements with, and legitimations of, mass violence.

Perhaps the most disconcerting of these claims suggests that political life does not always occur where the traditions of the modern sovereign state tell us it *must* occur. This is ultimately what is at stake, for example, in claims that accounts of ‘the global’ or ‘the imperial’ provide a better ground on which to think about politics than do either the sovereign state or even the *polis*: the two models of a spatially bounded community within which we have come to assume that political possibility might head in the right direction, towards justice, towards enlightenment, towards emancipation, despite all setbacks, all corruptions, all disasters. Violence persists, but not in the forms in which we have come to expect it, and not, especially, in the supposedly obsolete forms enacted as wars between sovereign states.

Consequently, we suspect that what we call politics must be becoming something other than what we expect it to be as an expression of the necessities and possibilities of the sovereign state. If the location of political life is unclear, the character and perhaps the very possibility of political life is unclear also. This suggests, not least, that we are no longer who we have come to think we are: no longer simply the citizens of states that give us our primary political identity; no longer simply members of cultures or communities whose contours are sharply defined by the territorial borders of modern states; no longer political subjects with some expectation that our citizenships within such statist communities might enable us to be properly modern human beings despite the degree to which a modern statist politics expresses such profound antagonisms between claims to citizenship and claims to humanity.

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Almost all the hard questions of our time therefore converge on the status of borders: of boundaries, distinctions, discriminations, inclusions, exclusions, beginnings, endings, limitations and exceptions, and on their authorization by subjects who are always susceptible to inclusion or exclusion by the borders they are persuaded to authorize. We may know that borders are always complex places. We may know that the borders of any modern state are always more complicated than the clean lines of cartographic representation tend to suggest. Many sociological, economic, or cultural analyses can tell us this. The image of clean lines nevertheless prevails as a regulative ambition of modern political life. We belong here. You belong there. They belong elsewhere. We may let you in. They will be sent home. Everyone must know their place, not just in the hierarchies of status, class and social order, but literally in horizontal or territorial space.

That the established boundaries of modern political life are in trouble is an increasingly familiar cliché. Discussions of boundaries are especially shaped by clichéd claims about continuing presence or impending absence, by competing claims that the boundaries of the modern territorial state are likely to be with us for the imaginable future or are already disappearing as a consequence of movements and globalizations that make boundaries functionally redundant. Yet while many established boundaries may be less significant than they were, it is not at all obvious that boundaries are becoming any less significant in our political lives. Clichés of presence and absence only detract from our capacity to make sense of the increasing complexity, the spatiotemporal disarticulation and rearticulation, of borders, limits, practices of inclusion and exclusion and declaration of exceptions. We need to pay greater attention to the transformation of borders, and to be more sensitive to the relatively limited vocabulary and conceptual resources through which we try to make sense of our contemporary limitations.

Despite the clichés, we can be fairly certain that our futures will not be played out in ways enabled and governed by the convergence of the boundaries and limits of political life upon the territorial boundaries of the modern state, nor by any simple disappearance of such boundaries and limits in the white heat of some linear globalization. Indeed, we can be fairly sure that the boundaries and limits of modern political life will neither remain where, and as, they are assumed to have been, nor fade away. Nevertheless, we can also be fairly sure that the assumed convergence between boundaries in territorial space and boundaries in law – boundaries that together affirm the limits of political life within and between modern states – will come under increasing challenge. If this is the case, however, the changing relationship between politics and boundaries will require a lot more critical engagement, a lot more analysis of what boundaries and limits do, and a lot more analysis of what happens at those sites in space and in time where the modern political imagination has come to believe that hardly anything happens at all.

Some come to this material empirically. I come to it with explicitly theoretical intentions; with a sense, that is, that if it is the case that statist forms of political life are being put into suspicion by the multiple dynamics that have made claims about the global and the imperial so plausible in some contexts, as at least markers of processes that remain vague and indeterminate, the statist categories to which contemporary political analysis remains so deeply indebted must be put into suspicion also. I also come to it through a specific cultural orientation, one concerned with accounts of boundaries and limits privileged by specifically modern traditions of political possibility

and necessity. This is not because of any insensitivity to the dangers of ethnocentrism when speaking about any form of political analysis that lays claim to be able to speak about the world, or the global, or the international – all much more difficult terms than they often made to seem. It is because of the importance of understanding how hegemonic discourses of modernity so easily seduce us into thinking that we can engage with others across the border only to leave us reproducing thoroughly modern accounts of what those others *must* be. While I am aware that modernity has come to be understood in relation to claims about the achievement of specific forms of subjectivity, it seems to me to be at least, and perhaps more, important to emphasise instead the way certain practices of distinction, discrimination, or ‘drawing the line’ have been authorized so as to produce what is on either side of the borders that modern political life has come to take for granted. Modern political analysis has become reasonably proficient in its accounts of what happens on either side of modern borders, but has preferred to take those borders for granted as the condition under which it might be reasonably proficient in its accounts of what happens on either side of them.

It is in this context that I want to make four broad points. First, I want to draw attention to the always doubled outsides that are at work in what we have come to call the international. This theme will be familiar to anyone who has examined the historical production of modern accounts of individual subjectivity, a subjectivity that produces its own exteriority as object but only on the condition that this subject capable of objectivity is first distinguished from any more general world outside of its subjective and objective self. The world of modern subjectivity and objectivity, or interiority and exteriority, already assumes its own distinction from some world outside of itself. There is consequently always an assumed outside to the production of modern subjectivities capable of objectivity, an outside that must be excluded so as to permit the modern self to know itself in relation to its own understanding of what objectivity, indeed the world as such, must be. This is a theme that really needs to be taken up in relation to the way modernity came to be constituted as a world apart from all other worlds, from all other ways of being and all other forms of authorization, in space and in time. Here, a few brief comments will have to suffice.¹

Second, while this doubled outside is most familiar in relation to the construction of specifically modern accounts of subjectivity and, in more explicitly political terms, to the framing of friends and enemies inside and outside the modern state, it also works in relation to what might be called the outside of the international. On the face of it, this is a phrase that makes little sense. Surely, it might be said, there can be nothing outside the international because the international encompasses everything that is within the modern world. International relations, in this view, is just a synonym for world politics. This is indeed a regulative assumption of modern political life. It expresses a claim that the world has now been brought within the world of modernity, that modernization, as a linear and teleological history, has turned everyone into modern subjectivities each subject to authorities enacted within the modern international. Nevertheless, even if we were to accept this reading of history as History, there must remain a nagging question about what, and whom, has been left outside of this process of internationalization as internalization.

1 For one recent engagement with this large theme, see Fasolt (2004).

Third, some of the most troubling questions about modern political life over the past century or so have been posed in relation to ways in which the doubled outside of the modern state generate logics of exceptionalism; that is, logics of politics at the limit of what is taken to be normal or legal. This is where questions about boundaries shift from simple geographical or administrative description, or philosophical elucidation, to questions about political authority, about sovereign capacities to authorize discriminations and to make judgements about the legitimacy of making an exception. Yet it is important to keep in mind that the limits of modern political life are articulated not only at the territorial boundaries of the modern state, as almost all modern critical political analysis has tended to assume, but at the boundaries of the modern international, even though it is far from clear where, or when, these boundaries are supposed to be.

Fourth, if, as everyone knows, the boundaries of modern political life are in trouble, then the relations between the limits of modern subjectivity, the modern state and the modern international must be undergoing rather profound spatiotemporal rearticulation. This is not a rearticulation that will be captured very easily by the kinds of linear and teleological accounts of modernization that find expression in most accounts of 'globalization' or 'empire.' Those accounts are precisely correlated with the production of an array of subjectivities that have been brought within the modern international, laid flat upon a spherical planet that has nevertheless been left outside the world of modern political life.

The easiest way of thinking about relations between the commonalities and differences among people and peoples is to allow one's imagination to be guided by the equation of the claim to culture with the claim to nation, then by the equation of the claim to nation with the claim to the sovereign state, and then by the equation of state sovereignty with all forms of sovereignty. There are other starting points. We could start from various other claims about histories, ethnicities, traditions and ways of life, especially those involving the concept of 'civilization'; or with the way culture might be understood as a process rather than as an achieved condition, as a verb rather than a noun, as hybridization rather than pure form, as contingency rather than necessity, as a matter of cultivations rather than of naturally given essences. Nevertheless, the purchase of the claims of the modern nation state on all claims about culture and authorization have been overwhelming, and in many respects remain so.

They remain overwhelming even though it is not difficult to conclude that any pure form of nation state is difficult to find anywhere except, crucially, as the regulative ambition for a specifically modern form of political community. The empirical world is always untidy, messy, always in excess of what it is supposed to be. Still, claims about what it is supposed to be can never be underestimated, and the regulative ideal of the modern nation state certainly exerts considerable force upon all claims about what it means to speak about both culture and cultures, and the possibilities of cultivating

relations among them. Various things can be said about this model of modern cultural life.

It is, to begin with, the official position of states everywhere, the assumption that permits the state to give voice to its claims to subjectivity and authority, its claims to be able to speak on behalf of a particular people. It is, in effect, a possibility condition for any state to be able to participate in the modern system of states. At a minimum, states need to be recognised as states, as having an effective sovereignty (thus 'failed states' are not allowed), though the minimum is subject to fairly expansive interpretation (so that, say, only 'properly democratic' are states allowed). Different states may articulate the claim in different ways. Some speak as federal institutions, allowing differences in culture to be expressed through distinctions in territorial space. Some speak on behalf of culturally identified majorities while making special provision for ethnically identified minorities or peoples of aboriginal status. Some worry about the status of immigrants or the dangers of religious differentiation. Some could care less about questions of culture, or identity, as long as the claim to nation works as an efficient mechanism of state building and population control.

As the official position of states everywhere, this model gives expression to the most basic philosophical concepts and contradictions of modernity as a specific cultural form, in three primary respects. It expresses a specific framing of an opposition between matter and consciousness, and especially a framing of the state as an expression of 'power' that nevertheless gives rise to the expression of 'values,' the national values of a specific people or culture, in the singular. It thereby expresses a specific framing of all relations of universality and particularity, especially through the modern states system understood as the embodiment both of a universally conceived, or at least universalizing, expression of humanity, in the singular, and of the sovereign nation state as the pluralistic expression of particular peoples and cultures. It is in this sense, for example, that the Charter of the United Nations identifies us as "We the peoples of the United Nations," as the (potentially) one people, understood as humanity, encompassing many peoples/nations enabling their citizens to become properly human. Finally, it also expresses a specific spatiotemporality within which it is possible to imagine the framing of all relations of universality and particularity within a horizontal, territorialized array of sovereign nation-states within a system of states. Crucially, this framing of the spatiotemporality of modern political life involves a specific framing of the relationship between specifically modern ways of life and all its supposed others, whether this relationship is written as an historical break with the premodern, or as a geographical break with those others, the colonized or other civilizations, who must be brought in – and I emphasise this notion of bringing in, of subjectivization – to the authoritative structures of modern authorization. I say all this quickly while recognising that it is to say a lot; to say many things that need to be unpacked, and to demand an unpacking that would take some considerable time and expertise to unpack, not least in relation to Michel Foucault's distinction between 'classical' and 'biopolitical' forms of sovereignty, for example. However, my present purposes are quite limited, and this simpler formulation must suffice.

Putting these observations together – the notion that it is the state/nation that is the obvious expression of culture and that this notion expresses the philosophical and

political phenomenon we call modernity suggests – leads to a third set of claims. Namely that despite the heavily statist character of most accounts of modernity, this is a form of existence that has to be understood in relation to the claims of the modern international: as one modern world/many cultures, even though some of these cultures/states might be characterised as somehow ‘premodern’ or even ‘postmodern.’ While I would certainly admit, and even insist, that such a claim is much too simple, and that it overrides too many historical and geographical complexities, the modern international effectively expresses the prevailing ideology of our time.

To say this is also to say a lot. Not least is it to offer an indictment of most of the academic disciplines that have worked so hard either to exclude questions about the international or, perhaps worse, to assume that they can deal with the international simply by thinking of the international as something like a state but on a bigger scale, with the literature on globalization offering many prominent examples. To make matters worse, while there is a discipline or sub-discipline that deals explicitly with the international, this has largely been pre-occupied with the specific concerns of American foreign policy as well as extremist forms of positivistic epistemology and utilitarian axiology. Indeed it is worth reflecting on the ways in which modern academic disciplines express claims about the international, so that the disciplines of the inside, especially political theory and sociology, seem to be radically disconnected from the disciplines of the outside, from international relations as the discipline of externality and alterity in space and anthropology as the discipline of externality and alterity in time. Such distinctions seem increasingly archaic as we begin to come to terms with uncertainties about where is in and where is out.

The modern international offers four fairly obvious ways in which to think about relations among cultures and peoples. First, it suggests that the primary form taken by differences in culture is the friend/enemy relation that is said to characterise relations between states: the existentialist or essentialist assertion of self and its negation that we might find theorised in, say, Max Weber’s account of a nationalist power-state, Carl Schmitt’s account of sovereignty as a capacity to decide exceptions, or Edward Said’s account of the production of orientalisms. Difference is understood as a dialectical relation between reason and unreason, norm and exception or affirmation and negation, a relation that can be driven to the limit condition at which lines are drawn and violence is deemed necessary. Second, as a response to the dangers of such moves, relations between cultures can be understood as a site of diplomatic mediation between friends and enemies, a mediation involving recognition, dialogue, hermeneutics, negotiation and accommodation, though one that is always open to a form of exceptionalism that declares certain forms of cultural life to be beyond the bounds of acceptability. Cultures, like states, we might say, have to be of a certain form in order to have status within the community of diplomats. Third, there must be no reduction of (legitimate) differences in order to attain universality, for otherwise we arrive not at a states system, an international, but at an empire, whether understood as ‘humanity’ or ‘imperium.’ The point of the modern international, crucially, is to allow for diversity within unity, not

the erasure of diversity so as to attain unity. In this sense, the modern international is part of the construction of the modern subject, the subject that is supposedly free because it is subject to the authority that makes its supposed freedom possible, to the state that is sovereign because it is subject to the necessities of systemic behaviour that make state sovereignty possible. Finally, it affirms that the regulative ambition for attaining self-determination, for attaining freedom in the Kantian sense, must be achieved through History as a universalizing teleology; or through resistance to such a universalizing teleology. The key theorist of the modern international in this sense is not Hobbes, the usual culprit, but Kant, the Kant who offers a vision of autonomy, of the possibility of thinking and therefore being for oneself, on the condition that universal reason is internalized within the modern subject, and that everyone comes into the world of modernity, becomes the mature creatures capable of recognizing and realizing the universal within themselves.

Kant is often seen as the nice guy, the apostle of a possible peace among nations. Kant, I would rather say, is an uncertain and ambivalent figure but in some of his guises represents not a hope for the future but precisely the problem expressed by claims about the modern international. One crucial reason for this is that Kant expresses the highest hopes of modern reason, and especially for a particular conception of human freedom. But unlike some of the most influential claimants to a Kantian heritage, Kant is at least upfront about the conditions under which this freedom might be achieved. Condition one, we might say, is the necessity for conflict between potentially free sovereign jurisdictions (so that war is understood to be a force driving modern subjectivities towards a perpetual peace). Condition two is the double necessity of bringing the universal into the particular within the modern and the bringing into the modern of all other peoples/people who can then come to maturity, to a modern subjecthood of universality within particularity, in History. This is the famous linear history that brings us modernization, the teleology that might eventually lead to the modern international as an expression of peace rather than of war – the condition not of diplomacy so much as of the parallel universes of similarity in difference, of autonomous subjectivities, that is the regulative narrative of the modern international.

I am putting the matter this way in the hope that it will convey a sense that there is a rather large conceptual problem here. It is a problem that is both obvious and yet difficult to take seriously. The general problem is that claims about the international work as if they are claims about the world as such, or at least about the totality of humanity that is to be found all over the world. This problem finds two primary expressions, both involving quite profound contradictions, and adding up to the way international relations cannot in fact be a synonym for world politics.

First, the international cannot be considered to be an expression of any totality of humanity in any political sense in that what we understand politics to be is famously statist, nationalist, a matter of the *polis*, the specific political community. One might talk about Plato and Aristotle in this respect, or try to find much about anything other

than the state in the writings of the canonical political theorists from Machiavelli to Weber, or even to Foucault. Less obviously, one might try to come to terms with the struggle between the competing claims of state sovereignty as the most principled modern expression of this canonical understanding of where and what politics must be, on the one hand, and the claims of systemic necessity expressed in international law, on the other; a necessity that finds contemporary expression in claims about humanitarian intervention and so on, as well as in the more sinister claims about the necessity of empire that have emerged from the current US administration.

At the heart of modern politics is a classical *aporia*, an undecidability, and thus a negotiation about how precisely the competing claims of state sovereignty and systemic necessity are to be resolved, with many of the key articles of the UN Charter offering the standard account of what this resolution must look like. The details become complex here, and probably need to be understood in relation both to sixteenth and seventeenth century accounts of the contradictory relations between claims to human and claims to humanity and to the reworking of these contradictions found in the contrasting positions expressed by Schmitt and Hans Kelsen in the 1920s and 1930s.² It is at the very least necessary to understand that what we have with the modern international is not an easy identification of the international with all the people's of the world, an easy synonym of international relations and world politics, but a massive contestation over whether it is the international (international law as law, in Kelsen's terms) that has authority over sovereign states or sovereign states that are to be seen as the highest authority within their own territory (as having the capacity to decide the exception within the particularity of statist law, in Schmittean terms). Any analysis of modern politics that is concerned with only one side of this aporetic relationship must fail to understand the dynamics of modern politics, and will consequently either pose a dualistic choice between particularity and universality or tell us stories about the way we are already embarked on a journey from particularity to universality, or to cosmopolis, or to globalization, or to empire.

Given the aporetic relation between state sovereignty and the demands of the states system that makes any claim to state sovereignty possible, such a journey is impossible. International relations cannot be read simply as a structure of particularities that might eventually be transformed into a universalizing world politics. If the international is under challenge, as I certainly think it is, it is because the relationship between universality and particularity that it expresses is under challenge, and it is this relationship – and the boundaries through which its contradictory form is negotiated – that must be in question. The standard stories about an historical shift from the particularities of state sovereignty to the universality of some sort of world or global politics simply play out a metaphysics centred on the presence or absence of the state and ignore the existence of the international entirely.

Second, while much of what we so easily call the world has been brought into the modern international, this has only been achieved through powerful processes of exclusion. We talk easily about 'the expansion of international society,' much as we

2 I am thinking here especially of formulations expressed in Schmitt (1922) and Kelsen (1974; 1992).

still talk easily about 'development' in³ much the same way that Cold War ideologues once spoke about 'the stages of economic growth.'⁴

In this context, it is worth recalling the way Thomas Hobbes constructed his famous account of the contractual constitution of the modern sovereign state, the constitution that so many have taken to be the paradigmatic expression of what it means to engage with the world of international relations. It is worth recalling because it is so firmly rooted in an account of the here and now, in accounts of what it means to speak of the free and equal modern man whose troubles Hobbes nevertheless projects to some other time and place in order to construct both a myth of origins and a narrative about how humanity might be turned into properly modern subjects, brought back into the world of the modern sovereign state in another form.⁵

Starting with a radical account of the present, Hobbes projects back in space and time. Yet this projection never reaches quite as far as infinity, never quite as far as an absolute origin or an absolute alterity. In this way, he leaves an outside to the space and time that is projected out as the limit of the modern world. This story is then run backwards, though apparently forwards, from back then and out there on to the here and now of the modern sovereign state. Serious logical puzzles beset this curious yet rhetorically elegant move. If it is possible to imagine contractual agreement among modern men who are in the impossible condition in which he portrays them, then the initial condition could not possibly be as impossible as he claims. Conversely, if the initial condition really was as impossible as he suggests, then contractual agreement seems equally impossible, unless some quite extraordinary conditionality is imposed, some mixture of reason and fear applied in the mere moment in time when impossibility turns to possibility, and modern history as a leap from anarchy to order is affirmed as a story of origins that enables the sovereign authorization of all origins, all limits and everything that must come in between.

The consequence of Hobbes' narrative is not only one of the key legitimization stories of the modern state but a story that both produces and rests upon a double outside. There is the world that is constructed as the spatiotemporal other of the here and now, the world that Hobbes imagines as a negation of the prototypical modern (liberal) man; and the world that always lies outside this specific construction of man and its constitutive negations. Hobbes, like most accounts of international relations, seems to affirm a highly spatialized and structuralist account of the modern world, but in the first instance they both affirm a theory of history, a process of bringing the world into the modern while only tacitly acknowledging some world beyond from which the world might be envisaged within the world of the modern. The international is precisely modern in the sense that it reproduces the doubled outsides of all modern subjectivities. It is a pattern we might recognise from the ways in which 'nature' has been excluded (been disenchanted, in Weberian terms) and then constructed as a category within modern cultures of (scientific) understanding, or from the force of Kant's sceptical stance

3 Bull and Watson (1984)

4 Rostow (1960).

5 Hobbes (1991); especially chapters 11, 13 and 1.

towards the world of phenomena that can be known only through the imposition of subjectivity, whether transcendently guaranteed or not.

Thus in the most abstract terms, the modern international works through the authorization of three sites of authorized discrimination: at the boundary of the modern individual subject, at the boundary of the modern sovereign state, and at the boundary of the modern system of sovereign states. Contemporary critical analysis is quite familiar with the boundaries of the subject and the state. Yet there are also times, places and subjectivities that, theories of modernization insist, must be brought back in from their exclusions from a modernity expressed in the sovereign state and system of sovereign states, even though that state and system work only because modern sovereignty affirms the necessity of exclusion. As with Hobbes' narrative about spatiotemporal origins constructed from an assumed present, or Kant's aspiration for a perpetual peace enabled by a distinction between the mature and the immature, claims about state sovereignty and the system of sovereign states only work because they affirm an absence that guarantees their assumed presence.⁶

It is easy enough to conclude that this is scarcely of any contemporary relevance. Surely modernization and globalization have proceeded apace. Surely we now are all one humanity. Surely we have all come in. Surely there is no longer an outside to modernity, and its internal outside has become coextensive with the world as such. Surely it is no longer legitimate for colonial states to intervene in their colonies just because the colonies are not yet mature enough to determine their own fate. Surely the gap between the finite and the infinite expressed in modern thinkers like Hobbes and Kant could only be of distinctly esoteric theoretical interest. Such assumptions are no doubt entirely persuasive as long as linear accounts of history and the self-affirmation of modernity as distinct from all its others are taken for granted. This is, after all, the official story, one that entire literatures of critical analysis are quite happy to endorse. Nevertheless, such assumptions are, I think, a matter for considerable concern. They are of concern in conceptual, empirical and ethical terms, and now perhaps especially in terms of uncertainties about where the boundaries of the modern world are to be located, and how those boundaries now work.

6 One of the key achievements of Hobbes' story about a shift from a state of nature to a political society is to enable a conflation of the two modes of alterity framed as civilization/barbarism, on the one hand, and friend/enemy on the other. A related conflation is effected by the primary tropes of modern nationalism, as Weber's account of the play of reason and ungrounded decision, and neo-Weberian accounts of 'the invention of tradition', suggest very persuasively. In effect, a logic of colonization, of the relations between those societies that are modern enough to be included within a modern system of states and those which are not, is superimposed on the logic of the modern states system itself. Paradoxically, resistance to colonization has largely involved various appeals to a statist nationalism, which Partha Chatterjee has rightly identified as a 'coopted discourse' involving, in Ashis Nandy's terms, 'intimate enemies.' See Chatterjee (1986); and Nandy (1983).

It is significant conceptually because while claims about the problems and possibilities inherent in what we now call the international are usually understood in terms of a spatially defined pattern of conflict or anarchy, they must be understood first in terms of a specific temporality, a theory of history as a process of internalization, of subjectivization, as the process of bringing the world into the world of the modern while excluding all other worlds. Attempts to think about 'change' in this context invariably deploy claims about temporality against claims about a dominant spatiality, whereas the international already expresses an account of a temporality that enables claims about a spatiality. To try to think about what it might mean to envisage change is presumably to challenge a specific articulation of spatiotemporal relations, and not least the account of a linear and internalizing history that is at work in the modern international. There are thus serious conceptual problems involved in trying to find a way 'outside' of a modern politics that has been constituted through an ambition to bring the world 'inside' while largely refusing to acknowledge the logical impossibility of a pure theory of internalization.

It is significant in more empirical terms because so much of humanity is in some sense outside the modern inside/outside of the international. The story of modern politics is a story of a pattern of inclusion and exclusion within a modern system of states, within the international. We are all the same, as humanity, but all different, as members of different national cultures: We are the ambivalent people/peoples of the United Nations. But this story of inclusion and exclusion enabling a story about universality and particularity has been possible only as a consequence of differentiating the modern from the non-modern, and authorizing that differentiation through an appeal to a teleology of a universalizing history. Some people, we know all too well, are not treated as properly modern, even as not properly human. In this context, we might think about, say, those indigenous peoples who are driven to seek sovereignty over territory but are encouraged to seek the kind of sovereignty expressed by the modern state that works precisely as a demand for inclusion in a specifically modern system of inclusions/exclusions; or about cultural, ethnic and other sorts of⁷ communities that are encouraged either to emulate the nation state as the only serious political expression of cultural politicization or to find some subordinate status within an acceptable pattern of statist nationalisms; or about those who are effectively marginalized as mere objects of state power rather than as citizens of states by virtue of their poverty and irrelevance to modern capitalist forms of production, distribution and exchange; or about those who are effectively marginalized as negations of the officially sanctioned ideal of the modern citizen understood as the universally rational man.

Add up the populations that are claimed to live within the jurisdictions of the modern international and the claim that the international gives expression to the whole of humanity has some plausibility. Engage in any more sophisticated calculation of who precisely gets to participate in the world of the modern international and the picture is anything but clear-cut. Of course, the usual story is that we will all get there eventually, that all will be included, all made properly modern citizens: that modernity will eventually trickle down in economic terms even if Kantian aspirations for a world of morally autonomous subjectivities is assumed to be a bit too ambitious unless good

7 Shaw (2002); Inayatullah and Blaney (2004); Fabian (1983).

modern liberals use force to ensure that everyone enjoys a freedom to be modern. This is the promise of modernization as universal history. Yet any story of inclusion implies a story of exclusion, both stories hinging on the authorization of discriminations, of decisions about who should be in and who should be out, and under what conditions. The official stories all tell tales of inclusion. But official stories about the inclusions of the sovereign state and system of sovereign states systematically erase the complex patterns of exclusion that have enabled official stories of inclusion. Perhaps one would not expect them to do anything else, but then we might say that scholarly analyses of political life hardly count as scholarly if they simply take the official stories at their word.

It is significant in more ethical terms precisely because historical forms of and assumptions about exclusion work so as to constitute specific forms of inclusion. The constitution of modern subjects who aspire to a Kantian form of autonomy as a regulative ideal may well express the most inspiring ambition of modern political life, but it is an aspiration that works not only within the limits of states within a system of ostensibly free and equal states but also as a claim to historical and moral superiority over those who have been excluded. At the statist limits of Kantian ambition we meet Schmitt. Legal provisions may be derogated or suspended within the rule of law, but the rule of law may itself be suspended through a decision of the sovereign power that acts both within and without the law. At the systemic limits of Kantian ambition we meet all the residual – and constitutive – discriminations marking modernity as a self-affirming but necessarily parochial way of being in but not of being coextensive with the world.

Perhaps it is most significant in contemporary circumstances, however, in that it is no longer quite so easy to keep apart the spatial framing of a politics of friend-enemy relations between sovereign states within a system of states and a temporal framing of a politics of modernity and its others at the edge of the modern international. Indeed, the spatial and the temporal framings of modern politics have become increasingly blurred. In this respect, the so called Global War on Terror has been characterized by a distinctively sovereign capacity to declare exceptions, but the singularity expressed in the terms global, war and terror obscures the multiplicities and complexities of conflicts in which spatial and temporal tropes are deployed in ever more disconcerting ways.⁸

It matters, this is to say, because we seem to be in the midst of some rearticulation of the international. By this I am not referring to ‘globalization,’ a term that I take to be less than helpful as a way of understanding contemporary trajectories, but to a serious destabilization of the assumption that the international does indeed enclose the world of humanity, and that the teleology of modernization expresses a legitimate story about the way that enclosure has been enacted and sustained.

It is rather striking that to the extent that critical analysis of the relationship between territorial boundaries and the limits that are expressed as a capacity to decide exceptions has been broached in the recent critical literature, it has done so in a way that falls back on an entirely statist account of modern politics. Symptomatically, for example, both Giorgio Agamben and Hardt and Negri, have managed to reconstitute an opposition

8 Walker (2003).

between a Schmittean account of the specific exception enacted with the law of a particular sovereign state and an account of a generalized exceptionalism predicated on a more or less apocalyptic vision of contemporary spatiotemporalities of the kind once expressed by Walter Benjamin, among many others. The revival of a concern with practices of exceptionalism does seem to me to be very important, especially as a way of thinking about what is happening to contemporary boundaries and claims about the limits of modern liberal aspiration. But the specific forms taken by this sort of revival misses two very large points.

First, in posing a simple opposition between the particular and the general, it continues to fetishize the claims of the modern state while ignoring the systemic conditions under which those claims are possible. The consequent debate is thus drawn into a familiar ritual of presence and absence. Both the state and its boundaries are either here today or gone tomorrow. Liberal traditions have been busy with this sort of story for a long time, in a way that betrays many liberal hopes for the abolition of politics and its replacement with some sort of ethics or some sort of market governmentality. Quite why analysis of a capacity to decide exceptions should imitate this sort of story is not entirely clear, but the repudiation of politics it implies strikes me as similarly dangerous.

Second, both the modern sovereign state and the modern system of states, with all their antagonisms and contrapuntal exceptionalisms, presuppose a prior exceptionalism at the border of the states system, at the border of modernity. The modern game of war and peace among states, and the framing of otherness as a matter of friends and enemies in a states system is enabled by an exceptionalism at the edge of the states system; hence the continuing significance of Kant's treatment of rationality as norm and immaturity as exception, and Hobbes account of the present as norm and the spatiotemporally distant as the exception that must be overcome by a return to the eternal yet perfectible present.

Modern political life has been expressed through two tropes working in tandem but in two different contexts. There has been the trope of friend and enemy *within* the international: the trope of war and peace among those sovereign states that are mature enough to engage in such things. And there has been the trope of civilized and barbarian that can be applied to colonial or developing states who ought to be coming into the international. At the height of the Cold War, remember, the reigning categories appealed to an East and West conceived as Schmittean friends and enemies, on the one hand, and to North and South conceived as a progressivist continuum, and journey, from the developing to the developed societies. These two tropes can still be distinguished, but they have increasingly become fused, and deployable anywhere. This does not suggest, for example, that the so called war of terror can be understood as a shift to a condition of a generalized exceptionalism, though nor does it affirm the Schmittean account of a specific exceptionalism enacted with singular sovereign states. Indeed, the analysis of contemporary political boundaries and limits needs to be rescued from the analytical boundaries that have been erected between particular and generalized forms of exceptionalism understood as expressions of the limits of modern political possibility and impossibility.

The discourses of presence and absence that express modern statist accounts of the origins and limits of modern political life are extraordinarily adept at affirming that

boundaries are both simple, and are either where they are supposed to be or are becoming dangerously absent. Borders are not this simple, nor should we expect to find them where they are supposed to be. Still less should we expect to be able to understand contemporary borders, and the political possibilities and impossibilities they imply, where the discourses of either the sovereign state or the system of sovereign states insist they must or must not be. The spatial tropes of friend and enemy and the temporal tropes of civilized and barbarian will become increasingly interchangeable. The capacity to declare exceptions will become more difficult to map using the cartographies of territorial spaces and spatialized territorialities. Without some such mapping, however, statist discourses of presence and absence will continue to bemuse anyone who suspects, I think correctly, that boundaries, exceptionalisms and sovereignties will continue to enable and delimit our political possibilities, though not in ways ordained by the idealization of the limits of the sovereign state acting within a system of sovereign states.

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In Defence of 'Political Faith'

Stefan Skrimshire

The terrorist bombings in London and the general heightened state of panic it has caused has produced a knee-jerk reaction from those who have most at stake in putting the biggest distance between them and the ideas of its perpetrators. This predictably has come down to forcing the Muslim community into a new phase of justifying itself: denouncing the 'extremists' amongst its ranks, declaiming their 'false theologies', and displaying incredulity that such barbarism could be done in the name of Islam. All of which may be true, but it raises the question that much of the media dare not ask: do they *have* to go through that? Is that really what will show resolve against future acts of terrorism? The climate of hysteria surrounding the subject of 'religious violence' guarantees that the ability for Muslims or anybody else knowledgeable on the subject to even attempt to *explain* the political context and conditions for it is completely circumscribed by the accusations cast on such people as 'apologists' of terror. Tony Blair, in order to show national 'resolve', may well want to show that he is "pull(ing) up this evil ideology by its roots".¹ But his method so far has been to sort out once and for all which of his subjects are teaching 'good' Islam and which are teaching 'bad Islam', and, crucially, to get some other Muslims to endorse his judgments. In the mean time this translates into the justification for a roving trigger-happy anti-terror squad and new anti-terror laws being sought not only for the incitement to hatred but the right to deport foreigners who have "alarmed the police and security services".² A wise choice of words, given how easily it is to be 'alarmed', or to 'alarm', these days.

How should one approach the problem of religious violence without alienating those affected by its stereotypes? Underlying this question is a fundamental debate to be had simply about the categorization of 'religion'. More than keeping religious studies scholars in work, this question should be informing our often hasty judgments about religious extremism, fundamentalism, and violence. In particular, as Russell T. McCutcheon argues in a recent book called *Religion and the Domestication of Dissent*, we need to do away with the notion that religions occupy one of two mutually exclusive positions: either private, peaceful and tolerant, or extremist, dangerous, and politically

1 *The Guardian*, 14 July 2005.

2 *ibid.*

motivated.³ For if our secular, liberal society is in shock at the resurfacing of 'political religion' this is perhaps due as much as anything to a naiveté towards the notion of religion such that it ceases to be a 'public' problem if it is simply banished to the private sphere. The paradox at the heart of liberal society is that we want to invite tolerance towards a diversity of faiths and beliefs on the condition that those beliefs become suddenly ostracized and defined as something altogether different and intolerable as soon as they begin to deviate from the non-threatening, universally acceptable version. This imagination of religion as something that is acceptable as long as it does not threaten to 'go public' springs from a desire to avoid messiness in our society, the refusal to live in "less than perfect" societies.⁴ But its consequences for policy-making decisions are even more serious, informing as it does the reduction of a complex problem to the picture of mad, irrational religious beliefs that simply shouldn't exist in an 'enlightened' society. Ever since the birth of 'war on terror' rhetoric, the truth underlying both Bush and Blair's insistence that 'this is not a war on Islam' has been that, on the contrary, 'Islam' has simply become a term suited to reduce complex social grievances under the definition of 'radical Islam' or 'political Islam'. To presuppose that there is such a thing as good, tamed, universally acceptable Islam such that the bad alternative – fundamentalist, violent Islam, can be universally and uncontroversially rejected has been a powerful effective form for the focus of a new global offensive. But it has taken hold of quite ordinary, everyday prejudices because it makes dealing with the problem of religious violence a powerfully simple one: religious extremism is a madness which those from a secular liberal persuasion will simply never understand. Thus, Polly Toynbee can write that religious terrorism is "not about poverty, deprivation, or cultural dislocation" but only about "religious delusion".⁵

Whilst Polly Toynbee's delusions about religious violence come from the staunch secularist rejection of religious 'reasons' in social life in any form, the widespread success of such delusions have, on the contrary, been due to a feigned attempt to 'understand' Islam and so separate the truth from the hype. The last few years have seen the emergence of self-appointed experts on religious violence, extremism, and fundamentalism, reacting in part to the production of low-intensity paranoia and suspicion about the beliefs and practices of these 'other' people. In the months that followed September 11 book shops stocked up on a new wave of 'introductions' to Islam and experienced a huge increase in sales of the Koran. The search for greater understanding may well come from commendable motives. The controversy lies, however, in the fact that most of these publications simply feed the desire to see Islam, and religious belief generally, as something harmless insofar as it is kept private, or 'spiritual'. As a bestselling post-September 11 book, *Islam: A Short Introduction* by Karen Armstrong puts it, "(Islam's) power struggles are not what religion is really all about, but an unworthy distraction from the *life of the spirit*, which is conducted far from the madding crowd, unseen, silent, and unobstructive."⁶ Or again, from Salman

3 See McCutcheon, R.T. (2005) *Religion and the Domestication of Dissent*. London: Equinox, 13. Much of the arguments in this article I owe to this book.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Toynbee, P. (2005) 'In the Name of God', *The Guardian*, 22 July.

6 quoted in McCutcheon, *op.cit.*, 63.

Rushdie: "The restoration of religion to the sphere of the personal, its depoliticization...is the nettle that all Muslim societies must grasp in order to become modern".⁷ McCutcheon argues that these attempts to 'understand' and stand in solidarity with 'true' Islam fell into a fundamental illusion that religions deposit a unifying, enduring truth over time that we can all grasp through a guided reading of its central tenets and appreciate on the 'spiritual' level. Fundamentalist terrorism therefore represents the nightmare that is triggered when religion breaks out of its private realm and defames its "timeless principles" with "sadly degraded forms of subsequent *practice*".⁸ The notion of 'political Islam', which to quote Slavoj Žižek, comes down to imagining that people "dare to *take their beliefs seriously*",⁹ has thus become synonymous with fanaticism or the tendency for *any* religious belief to turn violent given its incursion into public life.

Is it fair to assume religion as something that *can* ever be either private or public, or is it something which eludes such dualism? We have, in this assumption, perhaps transformed the literal meaning of *religio* as a 'binding' of something to oneself, to the notion that we can bind the undesirable elements of a group identity out of harm's way. And this problem of classification is, of course, not confined to religious prejudice but the tendency in our society to isolate and individualize *any* discourse that falls outside of normal, authorized, civil society and thus to strip dissent *in general* of its power and influence. An assumption has been etched into the social imagination, worsened by the naïve secularist views of thinkers like Toynbee, that 'religious reasons' for social engagement are always distinct from political ones and cannot therefore be positive, creative, and alternative contributions to it. But this assumption can only worsen the very attempts made explicit by those who want religious groups to be more 'public' in their contribution to the good of (British) society and the exclusion of those who threaten destruction. On the one hand, the Muslim community felt compelled to print a full-spread announcement under the 'Muslims for Britain Campaign' in the Guardian, saying that "We dedicate ourselves to work harder to serve the common good of British society".¹⁰ And on the other, we want categorically to deny (or ignore) that our mode of 'being public' might come from religious reasons. Put simply, we cannot exclude 'political Islam' as a catch-all term to describe the incursion of private spirituality into the public domain without also circumscribing the ability for Islam, or any other faith, to make a positive, dynamic contribution to civil society, which essentially includes dissent and the application of moral values to political opposition. To want to understand a little of the complex matrix of political, religious, and cultural beliefs that underlie the recourse to religious violence is not to endorse it, nor even to engage with it. It is to recognise that religious beliefs can no more be expected to be confined to the private realm than any other political motivation to protest or disagree with the state. For that which we normally understand as 'religious reasons' are inextricable from political ones when we imagine the diversity of sources of belief to which people

7 quoted in McCutcheon, *op.cit.*, 59.

8 McCutcheon, *op.cit.*, 37.

9 quoted in McCutcheon, *op.cit.*, 64.

10 *The Guardian*, 14 July 2005.

normally refer when considering such issues as, for instance, opposition to war, the notion of equality, or human rights.

I began by questioning the amount of pressure that is put on the Muslim community to justify itself and explain the substance of its own faith as unified, easily digestible, and private. But in the context of the war on terror, the same is of course true of anyone whose belief and social practice stand in opposition to that of the state. And it is no surprise, given these simplifications of what it means to be and act religiously, that the attempt to disarm religious practices, particularly in the light of the effects of the 'war on terror', becomes tied up with the erosion of civil liberties in western democracies. In both cases there is at play a very powerful manufacture of political 'authenticity' and 'normal' citizenship in social discourse. As McCutcheon puts it: "Whether in academia, the courts, or on street corners, the discourse on faith, principles, authenticity, and belief act as but one cog in virtually any wheel, making a particular world possible only by allowing marginal groups to gain some sort of acceptance if only they idealize and privatize themselves, thereby simultaneously reproducing and putting up the conditions of their own marginality."¹¹ The increasing attitude in our societies is that it is OK to dissent as long as that dissent doesn't take itself too seriously or try to undermine the status quo. For instance, when protests against the Iraq war got millions of citizens onto the streets in February 2003, described as a triumph for participatory democracy, the protests received no attention from the UK or US governments save to observe how 'lucky' those citizens were that they were free to protest without fear of violent reprisal¹² (as if freedom of expression was a 'bonus').

Of course there are atrocities committed in the name of religion, and of course there are certain ways that religious groups can stand up to them. But we should not allow this task to justify the demonization of protest groups, ethnic minorities, or those of any 'alternative' faith to that of the state, as in some perverse way sanctioning the terrorists by giving a deeper explanation for their actions than that they are simply mad, religious zealots. The struggle to maintain the right to dissent in the face of increasingly repressive measures justified as 'counter-terror' are part of the same struggle to protect *any* religious faith from the paranoia and suspicion that accompanies the war on terror. One of the most positive consequences of the persistence of the anti-war protests, for instance, has been an unprecedented unification of a wide spectrum of class, political and religious identities under the banner of dissent. This has involved a tacit acknowledgment of the divergent beliefs and faiths that lie at the root of their dissent, whose complexity and influence on our lives cannot be neatly divided into our public/private, religious/secular selves. There is, in other words, a growing awareness that 'religious reasons' for broad-based popular movements are radically undermining our understanding of 'authentic' religion as a docile and ineffective participant of civil society. Perhaps, instead of forcing people to justify religious faith by guaranteeing its privatisation, we should look more carefully for those creative dynamics of social engagement, led by a great diversity of beliefs and attitudes, both religious and secular, without which our social life and civil rights would quickly die.

11 McCutcheon, op.cit, 92.

12 BBC News, 16 November 2003 [www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/3274331.stm].

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Foucault Between Past and Future^{*}

Antonio Negri

translated from the French by Alberto Toscano

Are Foucault's analyses relevant for understanding the current transformation of societies? In what domains do you think they should be renewed, adjusted, or extended?

Foucault's oeuvre is a strange machine. In fact, it only allows one to think history as present history. In all probability, a large share of what Foucault wrote (as Deleuze very correctly noted) must today be rewritten. What is astonishing – and moving – is that he never ceased searching: testing approximations, deconstructing, formulating hypotheses, imagining, constructing analogies and telling fables, launching concepts, withdrawing or modifying them... Foucault's thought is characterised by a formidable inventiveness. But that's not the essential thing. In my view, it is his method which is fundamental, because it allows him to study and to describe at one and the same time the movement from the past to the present and the movement from the present to the future. It is a method of transition in which the present represents the centre. Foucault is there, in the in-between, neither in the past whose archaeology he writes, nor in the future whose image he occasionally sketches – 'like a face in the sand on the seashore'. It is by starting from the present that it becomes possible to distinguish other times. Foucault has often been reproached for the scientific illegitimacy of his periodisations: we can understand why historians might do this, but at the same time I'd like to say that this is not the real problem. Foucault is there where real questioning is established, and always on the basis of his own time.

With Foucault, historical analysis becomes an action, the knowledge of the past a genealogy, and the perspective to-come, a *dispositif*. For those coming from the militant Marxism of the 1960s (and not from the dogmatic caricatures of the second and third Internationals), Foucault's point of view is naturally perceived as absolutely legitimate; it corresponds to the perception of the event, of struggles, of the joy in taking risks outside of any necessity and of any pre-established teleology. In Foucault's thinking, Marxism is totally dismantled, whether it be from the point of view of the analysis of

* This is a new translation of an interview with the FSU (Fédération Syndicale Unitaire) journal *Nouveaux Regards*, 26 August 2004 [http://seminaire.samizdat.net/article.php3?id_article=15]. An earlier translation was prepared by Arianna Bove and Dan Skinner [<http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpnegri14.htm>].

power relations or from that of historical teleology, of the refusal of historicism or of a certain positivism; but at the same time, Marxism is also reinvented and remodelled from the point of view of movements and struggles, that is to say, from the point of view of the subjects of these movements and struggles: because to know is to produce subjectivity.

Before moving on, however, I'd like to take a step back for a moment. It is common to distinguish three Foucaults: up to the end of the 60s, the study of the emergence of the discourse of the human sciences, that is, both what he calls the archaeology of knowledge and its economy, spanning three centuries, and a great reading of Western modernity through the concept of the episteme; then, in the 70s, the inquiries into the relations between knowledges and powers, on the appearance of disciplines, of control and biopower, of the norm and the biopolitical. In other words, both a general analytic of power and the attempt to write the history of the development of the concept of sovereignty from its emergence in political thought all the way up to the present day; finally, in the 80s, the analysis of the processes of subjectivation under the twofold perspective of the aesthetic relation to oneself and the political relation to others – but without a doubt we are really dealing with a single inquiry: the intersection of the aesthetics of self and of political care is in fact what we also call ethics.

Having said that, I am not sure we can distinguish three Foucaults, nor even two, because prior to the publication of *Dits et Ecrits* and of the courses at the Collège de France, there was a tendency not to really take the very last Foucault into consideration. In effect, it seems to me that the three themes on which Foucault's attention focused are perfectly continuous and coherent – coherent in the sense that they form a unitary and continuous theoretical production.

What changes is probably the specificity of the historical conditions and political necessities with which Foucault is confronted and which absolutely determine the fields in which he takes interest. From this point of view, to assume a Foucauldian perspective is also – I am saying this to you in my own words, though I hope they could have also been Foucault's – to put a style of thought (the one that could be recognised in the genealogy of the present, the one that he never ceased promoting when he spoke of the production of subjectivities) in contact with a given historical situation. And this given historical situation is a historical reality of power relations. Foucault repeats it often, when he speaks of his passion for the archives, and of how the emotion which seizes him in reading these archives stems from the way in which they recount fragments of existence: existence, past or present, offered up by these yellowed papers or lived day by day, is always an encounter with power – it is nothing other than this, but that is something of enormous significance.

When Foucault sets to work on the passage from the end of the 18th to the beginning of the 19th century, that is, in the work beginning with *Discipline and Punish*, he finds himself face to face with a specific dimension of power relations, of the *dispositifs* and strategies power implies. What this actually means is that he is face to face with a type of power relation which is entirely articulated onto the development of capitalism. The latter calls for a total investment of life to the extent required by the constitution of a labour force, on the one hand, and the profitability requirements of production, on the

other. Power has become biopower. Now, it is true that although Foucault will later use the model of biopowers to try and formulate a critical ontology of the present, you will seek in vain in the analyses devoted to the development of capitalism for the determination of the passage from the Welfare State to its crisis, from the Fordist to the post-Fordist organisation of work, from Keynesian principles to those of the neo-liberal theory of macro-economics. But it is also true that in this simple definition of the passage from the regime of discipline to that of control, at the beginning of the 19th century, we can already understand how the postmodern does not represent a withdrawal of the State from the domination over social labour, but rather an improvement of its control over life.

In actual fact, we find this intuition developed everywhere in Foucault, as if the analysis of the passage to the post-industrial era constituted the central element of his thought, even though he never speaks of it directly. The project of a genealogy of the present, which entirely structures his own relationship to the past ever since the beginning of the 70s, and the idea of a production of subjectivity which allows, from the interior of power, the modification and hindrance of its functioning as well as the creation of new subjectivities – both of these elements of Foucault's work are unthinkable outside of the material determination of this present and of the transition that embodied it. The passage from the modern definition of the political to the definition of a biopolitical postmodern – this was, I believe, Foucault's extraordinary intuition.

In Foucault, the concept of the political – and that of action within a biopolitical context – differs radically from the conclusions drawn by Max Weber and his 19th century epigones, as well as from the modern conceptions of power (Kelsen, Schmitt, etc.). Foucault was probably receptive to their theses – but I have the impression that from '68 onwards, the framework changes radically, and Foucault can no longer take such theories into consideration. For those of us who continue to use Foucault despite him, beyond him – and this is an extraordinarily generous gift on his part: Foucault was endowed with a generous thought, something rare enough to justify stressing this fact – there is nothing to renew or to correct in his theorisations: it suffices to extend his intuitions on the production of subjectivity and its implications.

For example, when Foucault, Guattari and Deleuze supported the struggle over the prison question in the 1970s, they constructed a new relation between knowledge and power: this relation does not simply concern the situation inside the prisons but the set of those situations in which spaces of freedom may develop according to the same model, in which one may encounter small strategies of the torsion of power from within, the reappropriation of one's own individual and collective subjectivity, the invention of new forms of community of life and struggle – in brief: what we call subversion. Foucault is a great thinker not only because of the remarkable analytic of power which he carried out, because of his methodological illuminations, or because of the unprecedented manner in which he merged philosophy, history and the care for the present. He left us with intuitions whose validity we ceaselessly verify; in particular, he redefined the space of political and social struggles and the figure of revolutionary subjects vis-à-vis 'classical' Marxism: according to Foucault, revolution is not – or in any case not only – a prospect of liberation, it is a practice of freedom. Revolution means producing oneself and others in struggles, innovating, inventing languages and

networks, producing, reappropriating the value of living labour. It is tricking capitalism from the inside.

Don't you think we are currently witnessing a certain sidelining of Foucault in most of the intellectual currents in France which declare their wish to reconnect to social and political critique? What is happening in the rest of Europe (Italy, for example) and the United States?

Foucault is detested in academic milieus. I think he was sidelined ever since the 60s, then there was the promotion to the Collège de France, all the better to isolate him – and not just because the university never forgives intellectuals for their success. Sociological positivism of Bourdieu's kind was certainly very fecund, but it was not capable of connecting with Foucauldian thought, choosing instead to denounce its subjectivism. Obviously, there is no subjectivism in Foucault. Bourdieu probably took note of this in his final years.

What Foucault always rejects, in every nook and cranny of his work, is transcendentalism, those philosophies of history which refuse to put into play all the determinations of the real in the face of the networks and conflicts of subjective powers. By transcendentalism I basically mean all those conceptions of society which claim to be able to evaluate or manipulate it from an external, authoritarian standpoint. No, that is simply not possible. The only method that allows us access to the social is that of absolute immanence, of the continuous invention of both the production of sense and the *dispositifs* of action. As is also true of other important authors of his generation, Foucault settles accounts with all the reminiscences of structuralism – that is, with the transcendental fixation of epistemological categories prescribed by structuralism (today this error is reproduced in a certain renewal of naturalism at work in philosophy, as well as in the human and social sciences...).

In France, Foucault is rejected because, from the standpoint of his critics, he does not sign up to the mythologies of the republican tradition: no one is farther from sovereignism, be it Jacobin in kind; from unilateral secularism, be it egalitarian; from the traditionalism of the conception of the family and its patriotic demographics, be it assimilationist, and so on. Does that mean that Foucault's methodology is reducible to a relativist, sceptical position, in other words, to the degradation of an idealist conception of history? Once again, no. Foucault's thought aims to ground the possibility of subversion – the word is more mine than his, Foucault would speak of 'resistance' – in a complete separation vis-à-vis the modern tradition of the nation-state and of socialism. This proposal is anything but sceptical or relativist, on the contrary, it is built on the exaltation of the *Aufklärung*, of the reinvention of man and his democratic power, after all the illusions of progress and common reconstruction have been betrayed by the totalitarian dialectic of the modern. All in all, Foucault could appropriate the motto of the young Descartes: *larvatus prodeō*, I advance masked.

We must all, I think, admit the following: national-socialism is a pure product of the dialectic of the modern. To free ourselves from it means going further. The *Aufklärung*, Foucault reminds us, is not the utopian exaltation of the light of reason; on the contrary, it is the dystopia, the daily struggle around the event, the construction of politics on the

basis of the problematisation of the 'here and now', the themes of emancipation and freedom. Do you really think that Foucault's battle around the question of prisons, carried out with GIP at the beginning of the 1970s, is relativist and sceptical? Or the position taken in support of the Italian autonomists at the most difficult moment of repression and of the historical compromise in Italy?

In France, Foucault has often been the victim of a reading carried out by his friends, students and collaborators. Anti-communism played a key role in this regard. The methodological break with materialism and collectivism was presented as a vindication of neo-liberal individualism. When he deconstructed the categories of dialectical materialism, Foucault was of precious use; but he also reconstructed those of historical materialism, which did not go down so well. And when the reading of the *dispositifs* and the work on the critical ontology of the present refer to the freedom of the multitudes, to the construction of common goods, to the contempt for neo-liberalism, all the disciples scurry away. Perhaps Foucault died at the right moment.

In Italy, in the United States, in Germany, Spain, Latin America, and now more and more in Great Britain, we did not experience this perverse Parisian game aimed at marginalising Foucault from the intellectual scene. In these places he was not passed through the murderous filter of the ideological quarrels of the French intelligentsia: he was read in function of what he said. The analogy with the tendencies that renewed Marxist thought at the end of the 1970s was regarded as fundamental. This is not simply in terms of chronological coincidence. Rather, it is the feeling that Foucauldian thought should be understood in the midst of a whole series of attempts – practical or theoretical – of emancipation and liberation, in the overlapping of epistemological preoccupations and ethico-political perspectives, implying a violent critique of parties, of the reading of history and of the subjects that were supposed to underlie it. I think that European workerists and American feminists, for instance, found in Foucault numerous avenues of research and, especially, the spur to transform their meta-languages into a common, perhaps universal, language, for the coming world – or in any case for the coming century.

You write with Michael Hardt in Empire that 'the biopolitical context of the new paradigm is completely central to our analysis' (p. 26). Can you explain the link, which is not at all immediately evident, between the new forms of imperial power and 'biopower'?

Your debt with respect to Michel Foucault, which you often bear witness to, does not exempt him from certain criticisms. For instance, you write that he did not manage to grasp 'the real dynamic of production in biopolitical society'. What do you mean by that? Should we draw the conclusion that Foucault's analyses lead to something like a political impasse?

Starting off from these two questions, I would like to attempt to clarify what it was that in *Empire* Michael Hardt and I borrowed from Foucault, and what we instead felt compelled to criticise. Speaking of empire, we did not only try to identify a new form of global sovereignty differing from the form of the nation-state: we tried to grasp the material, political and economic causes of this development and, simultaneously, to

define the new fabric of contradictions that it necessarily harbours. For us, from a Marxian point of view, the development of capitalism (including in the extremely developed form of the global market) takes root in the transformations, as well as the contradictions, of the exploitation of work. It is the workers' struggles which transform the political institutions and forms of power of capital. The process that led to the affirmation of the hegemony of imperial rule is no exception: after 1968, after the great revolt of waged workers in the developed world and that of colonised peoples in the third world, capital could no longer (on the economic and monetary terrain, as well as military and cultural one) control and contain the flows of labour force within the limits of the nation-state. The new world order corresponds to the need for a new order in the world of work. Capitalism's response takes shape at different levels, but the technological organisation of labour processes is fundamental.

We are dealing in effect with the automation of industry and the informatisation of society: the political economy of capital and the organisation of exploitation begin to develop more and more through immaterial labour; accumulation concerns the intellectual and cognitive dimensions of work, its spatial mobility and temporal flexibility. The whole of society and the life of men thus become the objects of a new interest on the part of power. Marx (in the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*) predicted this development which he called the 'real subsumption of society under capital' with remarkable accuracy. I believe that Foucault understood this historical passage since he in turn described the genealogy of the investment of life by power – of individual life just as much as social life. But the subsumption of society under capital (just like the emergence of biopowers) is far more fragile than we might believe – and in particular than capital itself believes, or than the objectivism of the Marxist epigones (the Frankfurt School, for instance) is willing to recognise.

In truth, the real subsumption of society (i.e. of social labour) under capital generalises the contradiction of exploitation to all levels of society itself, just like the extension of biopowers leads to society's biopolitical response: no longer powers [*pouvoirs*] over life, but the power [*puissance*] of life as the response to these powers; in sum, real subsumption leads to the insurrection and proliferation of freedom, to the production of subjectivity and the invention of new forms of struggle. When capital invests the entirety of life, life reveals itself as resistance. It is therefore around this point that the Foucauldian analysis of the reversal of biopowers into biopolitics influenced our own analyses on the genesis of empire: briefly, this genesis occurs when the new forms of work and struggles, produced by the transformation of material into immaterial labour, reveal themselves to be productive of subjectivity.

Having said that, I do not know if Foucault would have been wholly in agreement with our analyses – though I hope so! – because to produce subjectivity, for Michael Hardt and I, is really to find oneself in a biopolitical metamorphosis that opens onto communism. In other terms, I think that the new imperial condition in which we live (and the socio-political conditions in which we construct our work, our languages, and therefore ourselves) puts what we call the common at the centre of the biopolitical context: not the private or the public, not the individual or the social, but that which, all together, we construct so as to guarantee humanity the possibility of producing and reproducing itself. In the common, nothing of that which makes for our singularity is

either suspended or effaced: singularities are only articulated to one another in order to obtain an 'assemblage' – the term is Deleuze's – in which each power [*puissance*] finds itself multiplied by the others, and in which each creation is immediately that of others.

So I believe that the threads linking the creative revision of Marxism (to which we adhere) to Foucault's revolutionary conceptions of biopolitics and of the production of subjectivity are quite numerous.

Foucault's last two works on the modes of subjectivation seem to have attracted your attention less than the others. Is the construction of an ethics and of styles of life foreign or resistant to biopower a path too far removed from the one you propose (the figure of the communist militant)? Or are there instead possibilities of a deeper agreement which we have failed to perceive?

Foucault's last works had a huge influence on me, and I think that what I have just said about *Empire* amply demonstrates it. Allow me to tell you a slightly curious story: in the midst of the 1970s, I wrote an article on Foucault in Italy – on what today goes by the name of the 'first Foucault', the Foucault of the archaeology of the human sciences. In that article, I tried to indicate the limits of this type of inquiry as well as, I hoped, a possible step forward, a stronger insistence on the production of subjectivity. At the time, I was myself trying to exit a Marxism which, albeit profoundly innovative on the theoretical terrain – inasmuch as it asked if a 'Marx beyond Marx' could be envisaged – presented instead on the terrain of militant practice the risk of terrible errors.

What I mean by that is that in the years of passionate struggle that followed 1968, in the situation of fierce repression that the right-wing governments wreaked on the social movements of contestation, many among us ran the risk of a terroristic drift, and some succumbed to it. But, behind this extremism, there was always the conviction that power was purely and simply one, that biopower made left and right identical, that only the party could save us – and if it wasn't the party, then it was armed vanguards structured like small parties in military guise, in the great tradition of the 'partisans' of World War II. We understood that this military drift was something from which the movements would not recover; and that it constituted not only a humanly unsustainable choice, but a political suicide. Foucault, together with Deleuze and Guattari, put us on guard against this drift. In this regard, they were all genuine revolutionaries: when they criticised Stalinism and the practices of 'real socialism' they did not do so in a hypocritical and pharisaic manner, like the 'new philosophers' of liberalism; they searched for the way to affirm a new power [*puissance*] of the proletariat against the biopower of capitalism.

Therefore, the resistance to biopower and the construction of new styles of life are not distant from communist militancy, if we agree to think that militancy is a common practice of freedom, and that communism is the production of the common. Like in *Empire*, the figure of the communist militant is not borrowed from an old model. On the contrary, it presents itself as a new type of political subjectivity which is constructed on the basis of the (ontological and subjective) production of struggles for the liberation of work and for a more just society.

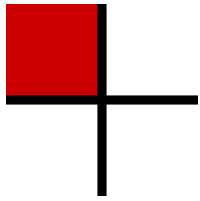
For us, but also, I think, for today's social movements, the importance of Foucault's last works is thus exceptional. In them, genealogy loses all of its speculative character and becomes political (a critical ontology of ourselves), epistemology is 'constitutive', ethics assumes 'transformative' dimensions. After the death of God, we witness the renaissance of man. But we are not dealing with a new humanism; or more precisely it is a question of reinventing man within a new ontology – it is on the ruins of modern teleology that we will recover a materialist *telos*.

the author

Antonio Negri's most recent publications include *Empire* (Harvard, with Michael Hardt), *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (Penguin, with Michael Hardt), *The Politics of Subversion: A Manifesto for the Twenty-first Century* (Polity), *Time for Revolution* (Continuum), *Subversive Spinoza: (Un)contemporary Variations* (Manchester), *Books for Burning: Between Civil War and Democracy in 1970's Italy* (Verso), *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State* (Minnesota), and *Negri on Negri* (Routledge).

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Romance and Revolution^{*}

Scott Taylor

review of:

C. Jones and D. O'Doherty (eds.) (2005) *Manifestos for the Business School of Tomorrow*. Ábo: Dvalin Books. (PB, pp.220, ISBN 9529189079; PDF ISBN 9529189087. Distributed free of charge during at least three management and organization studies conferences in July/August 2005; also available to download at <http://www.dvalin.org>)

Future, *n.* That period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true and our happiness is assured.¹

This is a remarkable collection – the editors tell us so repeatedly in their introduction (the ‘Inducement’), it contains poems, photos, pictures and diagrams, biographical sketches, and some thoughtful writing. Past, present and possible futures are presented to the reader, who is encouraged to treat the collection as a ‘call to arms’, to ‘agitate, educate, organize’ around it. The 30 or so contributors have written around one word for their personal manifestos, providing us with an ‘abecedaire’ that runs from Animality to Zero, via Evil, Ketamine, Queer, and Yes. The organizing principle might be the future, or perhaps protest at the present.

The editors give us *Manifestos* because they think they have identified a crisis in education. Universities (all of them) are a ‘disgrace’, business schools (all of them) are ‘cancerous machine[s]’ in a ‘state of emergency’ offering an ‘uninspired carcass of crap’, a ‘refuge for failed business practitioners, inbred doctoral students and daddy whipped undergraduates’ populated by scholars who are (all) either ‘beaten and bloodied, worked on with hosepipes’, ‘forced into retirement with gagging agreements’, or organized into ‘self reproducing cabals’ of ‘self-arguing, infinitely frustrated privatized schizo[s]’ protecting the ‘last perk’ – international conferences. They compare this working environment with Chile and Guantanamo Bay – presumably

* Thanks to those who commented on a draft of this review: Fiona Anderson-Gough, Emma Bell, Bill Cooke, Keith Hoskin, and Nick Llewellyn.

1 All definitions from an earlier A to Z, Ambrose Bierce’s *The Devil’s Dictionary*, published in volume 7 of his collected works (1911, Neale Publishing Company, New York).

Chile during the 1970s and current US activity in Guantanamo Bay, although this is unclear. The editors are concerned because they wish to save our children, who 'all think differently' but are forced into a standard, uniform, disciplinary way of thinking that 'rewards only parrot fashion learning and conformity'.

The idea of the university, the practice of teaching and scholarship, future generations' thinking – all in deep trouble, all debased, and all because of business schools. The editors suggest a need for revolution, suggest that it is time to return to the lost values of education as a process of personal care and individual tutoring, reversing recent bureaucratization and developing people able to protest and look at 'the system' from outside. Well, this is interesting. Reads like a manifesto for rebellion.

Rebel, *n.* A proponent of a new misrule who has failed to establish it.

The editors' introduction is central to this collection in a number of ways. First, it establishes boundaries for the authors by locating their work in time and place, arguing that the current moment is pivotal – an educational nadir. Second, it sets a stylistic tone – linguistic and metaphorical violence, apocalypticism, militarism, invoking Romanticism and New Journalism as the foundations which contributing authors often echo. Third, the 'Inducement' tells us that critical management studies is dead (although both editors and many contributors attended the 2005 conference in Cambridge – were they helping to keep it alive? Hoping to bury it? Or simply taking an opportunity to distribute *Manifestos?*), and that it is now time to act rather than simply mourn.

Lecturer, *n.* One with his hand in your pocket, his tongue in your ear and his faith in your patience.

Bureaucratization and disciplinarity are the two main targets of the editors' representation of contemporary higher education. They would prefer a more personal process that frees people to think and challenge. This involves a combination of two dubious assumptions: that bureaucracies are inevitably restrictive, ethically and emotionally damaging, and that we can somehow escape discourses of subjectivity and be free to develop selves unhindered by oppressive identity regimes. The first of these claims implies that if we don't sign up to the *Manifestos* call to reclaim our freedom then we will be somehow incomplete, partial, or repressed. In addition, it is deeply romantic and therefore conservative, nostalgic even (du Gay, 2000), guiding the reader towards a pre-Enlightenment ideal of the university free of those pesky bureaucrats and their irritating questionnaires. Students could be free to develop their full intellectual potential, gently guided by scholars, if only we didn't all have to think about photocopying and learning outcomes.

What do we make of this claim of bureaucratization and the editors' condemnation of it? It is clear that contemporary universities are subject to different pressures from previous versions of the idea(1); Barnett (1997) explores the many ways in which instrumental and operational discourses have 'colonised' British universities, contrasting current technological and performative demands with the hermeneutic, liberal, and contemplative tradition. He suggests that the British state seeking tighter control of the academic labour process, the influence of professional bodies in setting research agendas and curriculum content, older students with different expectations, and changes in funding structures have all combined to encourage a narrower focus on the

‘student-as-product’. Others note the introduction into universities of structures, job titles, roles, and even management theories, resulting in educational institutions that resemble commercial organizations. However ‘broad brush condemnations of the university that are derived solely from utopian principles, free from any encounter with institutional realities’ (Marginson and Considine, 2000: 13) are more common than informed analysis.

The editors of *Manifestos* suggest that revolution is needed. Is it? British academics may have been ‘subjected’ to managerialist discourses, but they have learned to work with them in a way which meshes with local practices and knowledges (Prichard and Willmott, 1997). Individual and collective resistance is one result of this; we even find attempts to sustain a ‘scholarly craft ethic’ (Barry *et al.*, 2001). So perhaps we and the students we teach might survive after all... just like everyone else has so far under managerialism.

The second claim, that we should attempt to escape from disciplinarity, is more complex: it subsumes a variety of knowledge claims ranging from children’s cognition to discipline through discursive control. Again, the aim is freedom from externally imposed behavioural norms – free thinking, free thought, and the development of human potential free from any need to respond to ‘the system’ of examination. Once again we are presented with an implicit vision of a free university space in which education is not the hyphen in power-knowledge (Hoskin, 1990) but a space of resistance, individual development, bringing something (unspecified) out of the self. Yet the university is essentially a space constructed by and within society to control precisely this form of rebellion and resistance (Hoskin, 1990) – and has always been thus. Freedom within it is as unlikely as freedom in any of contemporary industrial society’s superstructural institutions:

Neither in its medieval nor in its modern form has the university disposed freely of its own absolute autonomy and of the rigorous conditions of its own unity. During more than eight centuries, “university” has been the name given by society to a sort of supplementary body that at one and the same time it wanted to project outside itself and to keep jealously to itself, to emancipate and to control. (Derrida, 1983: 19)

Stylistically the writing reflects the editors’ preferences in a number of ways. The ‘Inducement’ sits within a mode of writing that came to popular notice in the late 1960s with the New Journalism movement. Practitioners of this form represents worlds through their own aesthetic experiences; linguistic and typographic experimentation provide signals that the authors are playing with convention, challenging norms. It is fundamentally realist in form and epistemology (Wolfe, 1973), a happy coincidence that allows the editors to make solid truth claims as to the nature of the world they inhabit.

In its more extreme moments the writing also echoes 1980s British fiction that took the ‘postmodern condition’ as a theme – known as the ‘new unpleasantness’ in tribute to the characters and settings. The lead British exponent of this genre is Martin Amis, a writer sometimes portrayed as the leading novelist of his generation, sometimes derided for his inability to see beyond his characters’ and his own physicality. The writing is generally acknowledged as masculinist, grotesque, hyperbolic, and reliant on caricatures. The desire to shock that this style displays is transferred directly to the editors’ introduction,

but unfortunately the vividness or linguistic imagination of the best fiction and journalism are missing. As Amis has noted, it also becomes increasingly difficult to engage with and represent rebellious underworlds when separated from them by relative wealth and educational privilege.

Cynic, *n.* A blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be...

Third, it seems that the editors wish to present an alternative to critical management studies (CMS), a movement born around a decade ago within business and management studies departments. It is incontrovertible that CMS is, in some senses, successful: four UK-based conferences, the last attended by around 500 people, a special interest group at the American Academy of Management, a wide variety of journal papers and books that at least claim to be informed by a critical approach to understanding management and managers. There is even a business school in the UK that is represented as oriented towards research and teaching informed by CMS. Yet the editors would have us believe that CMS is dead, having expired through simply being critical (implicitly: negative, backward looking, complaining). Time to be positive, to build for the future, to revive hope...

Once again the editors have identified something significant, but once again may be looking in the wrong direction for a solution. Their manifesto for change rests on a vision of student and scholar standing outside, observing, analysing, and presenting knowledge. The practices of managing and organizing are reduced to thoughtless activities, undertaken by unreflective dupes for their own aggrandisement. The editors' approach to critique, in theory and practise, is echoed in a paper presented at the CMS conference in 2005 (Rhodes and Pitsis, 2005). In that paper, the authors also claim that CMS has 'failed' in its 'unmasking project'; as the 'CMS project' has been unable to convince students or practitioners that critical analysis reflects reality we need to move on. To overcome this 'impotence' we need to be more stylish in writing, to attempt to connect with rather than reflect the world, through writing magical fictocriticism (Rhodes and Pitsis, 2005). Or perhaps Romantic revolutionary manifestos.

Is this the alternative? Standing outside, writing about managers and organizations as if they are captives that we can emancipate? Well, it would be if we were able to escape or stand apart from the institutions we work within, the disciplinary conditions that we have submitted to in order to become established academics, and separate our subjectivities and hence capacity to resist from capitalism and education. This does seem unlikely, however; indeed protest has long been acknowledged as driving the progress of capitalist relations (Weber, 1930; Chow, 2002). Of the two *Manifestos* editors, one is a senior lecturer in an English university (senior indeed), while the other works at Manchester Business School (Manchester indeed). It would surely be fair to say that they are both working successfully within what they call 'the system', as most of us are; in order to work within a business school in the UK there are a number of games that must be played. Authority to speak, to write, to critique, is granted through acceptance to some degree of the rules of the game. We all already have dirty hands (Anderson-Gough and Hoskin, 2005); washing them briefly and loudly in public while remaining in the job that made them dirty seems oddly contradictory.

But whatever the direction we look in for a solution to disciplinarity, it is necessary to react to it in some way. It appears that the editors of *Manifestos* would have us be post-disciplinary, somehow outside the knowledge-power games of writing and lecturing. To achieve this it seems we might be oppositional, fighting against ‘capitalism’, ‘management’, ‘organization’, universities, business schools, by fomenting revolution and rejection. (But you go first, students – we’ll be right behind you, theorizing your actions and building careers.) Writing ‘fictocriticism’, encouraging students in a ‘fantastic journey’ of individual development – these critical futures preach change without engaging with practice (Anderson-Gough and Hoskin, 2005). This lack of engagement leads directly to the construction of them and us, with an implicit hierarchy, and a denial of the ethics of teaching and writing.

Despite the editors’ attempts to disavow their authority, by collecting the contributions to *Manifestos* and publishing them they inevitably establish themselves as vocal. In writing and publishing we accept the authority that allows us to speak, and in exercising that authority we also potentially silence others. So we might ask the editors where the student voices are in this collection, why there are no accounts of critical management practice, why there are so many young, white, male contributors, and we might ask why the editors decided the collection needed an introduction. In addressing these and other questions the editors might perhaps have been able to reflect a little more on their own actions, their own practices, to everyone’s benefit:

... there is a way in which one can lie in the guise of (telling the) truth, that is, in which the full and candid admission of one’s guilt is the ultimate deception, *the* way to preserve one’s subjective position intact, free from guilt. In short, there is a way to *avoid* responsibility and/or guilt by, precisely, *emphasizing* one’s responsibility or too readily *assuming* one’s guilt in an exaggerated way, as in the case of the white male PC academic who emphasizes the guilt of racist phallogocentrism, and uses this admission of guilt as a stratagem *not* to face the way he, as a ‘radical’ intellectual, perfectly embodies the existing power relations towards which he pretends to be thoroughly critical... [the problem with this form of critique is] that, in its very excess, it is *not radical enough*... the subjective enunciation of position *remains the same*... [it] tell[s] us *nothing* about the subject’s inner truth (maybe because there is actually nothing to tell). (Žižek, 2000: 46, emphasis in original)

Excess does not necessarily equate to radicalism, in thought or deed; nor does ignoring one’s own position within existing power-knowledge relations enable change; and nor does claiming to reveal the ‘real truth’ lead directly to emancipation.

All of which is a pity. *Manifestos* for the future of the business school are necessary, and should be written, collected, printed, read, and acted upon. The editors have certainly recognised some urgent problems, contributors often make suggestions that would help academics and students engage more with each other, and might even provide practically useful in the pursuit of education, knowledge and understanding. There is thoughtful reflective writing in this little book, in particular about our own practices towards each other and students; how conferences might be different from the current disjointed individualist espousals they often are, how challenging indifference in ourselves and students could help to make a difference, how students might weave courses within a community of scholarship rather than be subjected to standardised content, how business schools might engage more with local communities and organizations rather than just large corporations. These contributions stand out in their

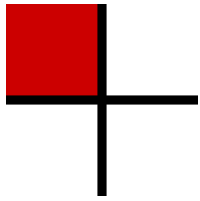
approach, prioritising understanding of the current in order to inform the future, promoting personal accountability, and exploring local practices and social order. They are, in short, reflexive (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2000). They emphasise interpretation and reflection in relation to both the object (research, teaching) and the self. More of this would have been welcome. The title of the collection, however, mentions only the future, and titles do provide us with a means of understanding editorial intent (Jones, 2004). Perhaps the editors and most of the contributors are more interested in suggesting alternative futures, rather than exploring current practice and seeking to effect change through engagement with what is.

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Participation or Democracy at Work?

Peter Scott

review of:

B. Harley, J. Hyman and P. Thompson (eds.) *Participation and Democracy at Work: Essays in Honour of Harvie Ramsay*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (PB: pp. xiv + 257, £25.99, ISBN 1403900043)

The academic study of forms of employee participation in workplace decision-making possesses a number of unusual (and unenviable) distinctions. There are few topics in the study of organisations and the workplace whose dominant scope has become so circumscribed and focus has changed so much over the past thirty years. In the UK, the discussions of the nineteen seventies about the prospects and potential of what was then normally termed 'industrial democracy' were framed in the context of the seeming economic success of continental models of corporate governance. However, the Anglo-American managerialist ideological revolution of the nineteen eighties and thereafter rapidly swept this away and, under the influence of human resource management, the locus of debate shifted towards much more task-specific notions of 'worker participation' or even 'employee involvement'. The principal terminology of the subject has been peculiarly prone to confused or interchangeable use, but this cannot disguise an overall dilution of meaning. The idea that participation should consist of joint negotiation and agreement between workers or their representatives and management has diminished to the notion that managers consulting with, or providing information to, the workforce about the business is sufficient. 'Democracy' in the workplace became distorted to mean the limited voice of the suggestion scheme, the team briefing or the quality circle, devalued in much the same way as the political choices available to Western electorates have degraded to little more than a form of consumer democracy.

While never viewing the limited experiments of the nineteen seventies through rose-tinted spectacles, several critics have always stood out against restricted visions of the extent of voice afforded to workers. Notable here are those authors associated with the annual conferences on the Organisation and Control of the Labour Process, the Critical Perspectives on Work and Organisations book series now published through Palgrave featuring some of the output from these conferences over the years, and the figure of Harvie Ramsay in particular, who was at the forefront of this academic field until his

premature death in 2000. Hence this edited book, dedicated to Harvie's memory, which draws together all these strands.

I feel the book is timely for a number of reasons, quite apart from the fact that it forms a more than fitting memorial to Harvie Ramsay's best known area of academic enquiry, from his influential 'cycles of control' thesis in the nineteen seventies through to his later work on the potential of European Works Councils. Firstly, while we now seem to be in an era where the spread of Western-style electoral democracy has moved up the political agenda, however cynical the motives for this may sometimes be, it is striking that the workplace is an arena increasingly characterised not by representative democracy but by managerial prerogative. The reasons for this are many and complex, and are well explored as part of Crouch's (2004) excellent elaboration of his concept of 'post-democracy', but the consequences can be frustrating. Concerned citizenship, and the voice that goes with it, is all very well as long as it does not step inside the factory gate or office doorway. In an admirable study, which sadly gets no mention in the volume under review here, Towers (1997) charts the retreat of worker representation in the UK and American workplace and its deleterious consequences for employees. He rightly regards its diminution as an atrophy of citizenship rights in a larger sense. Certainly, there is plenty of evidence that lack of effective oversight of major companies has failed to reveal a particularly responsible management: take the travails of the privatised rail industry as just one example. Secondly, and some might say superseding Towers' analysis as far as the UK is concerned, the 1994 European Works Council (EWC) Directive and 2002 Information and Consultation of Employees (ICE) Directive have put the subject of participation more firmly back into political and academic frames. The impacts of these measures, especially the latter, are likely to be considerable in the UK (see, for example, Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, 2005). Yet much of the discussion of the purposes of EWCs and national-level consultative bodies is largely conceived in terms of their potential to 'add value' to the enterprise (to borrow from the title of Storey's (2005) recent edited collection on this subject), raising productivity and easing the path to industrial restructuring. All in all, if the workplace is not to remain an island isolated from more expansive concepts of citizenship and democracy, then the time is certainly ripe for the review and revitalisation of this field of study.

This book will interest anyone who wishes to know more about the current state of this field in its broadest sense or is looking for a text to recommend that encapsulates the scope of the subject. The frequent danger of edited books is that the substantive chapters can seem eclectic, with the editors struggling to impose a coherent theme on the contributions. Such an accusation cannot be levelled at this volume, which consists of an introduction by the editors followed by eleven substantive chapters from authors well-known in their fields that cover most of the aspects and forms of worker participation that one would expect to see. Thus, for example, Andrew Pendleton investigates financial participation through employee share ownership, Jos Benders writes on team-based forms of direct participation, and so on.

Several chapters pivot upon assessment of Ramsay's theoretical contribution to the subject, using the 'cycles of control' thesis (Ramsay, 1977) as a reference point. The 'cycles' thesis essentially argued that management willingness to concede worker

participation in industry varied in proportion to the ebb and flow of historical periods of high labour militancy. There is a potential danger here that participation could be viewed within purely functionalist terms: management will grant forms of participation insofar as they are deemed necessary to permit the continued functioning of capitalism (a Disraelian 'reform that you may preserve' approach). A number of chapters point out the consequent difficulty of reconciling the 'macro'-level 'cycles' approach with more recent management enthusiasm for introducing forms of direct participation in a period of labour quiescence. Harley, Hyman and Thompson's introductory overview chapter explains this apparent paradox by distinguishing between task-centred, power-centred and financial forms of participation and noting that different parties normally lie behind the impetus to push for each of these three types (employers, employees, and the state respectively).

In this and other chapters, the point emerges that while the decline of representative participation may be explicable within the terms of the 'cycles' view, it fails to account so fully for the expansion in the other forms. Notably, Marchington's overview of employee involvement attempts to synthesise the debate between Ramsay's 'cycles of control' thesis and his own view that internal differentiations within management have produced 'waves' of employee involvement based upon the waxing and waning of successive direct participation initiatives. Much of the current theoretical (and certainly the more managerialist) interest in worker participation and employee involvement derives from its alleged locus as one interlocking component of so-called high performance work systems. This new holy grail is addressed centrally and critically by Harley's and Danford's two chapters, and is also discussed in others. There are rather fewer chapters that cover indirect forms of representative-based participation: there is a chapter on EWCs, but nothing specific on company-level works councils, although it would be fair to argue that it is yet premature to draw too many conclusions about the latter. A number of chapters highlight relatively neglected aspects of the subject. For example, Sturdy and Korczynski investigate participation within the rapidly expanding area of customer-facing service work; Ramsay himself and Scholarios attempt to disaggregate the differing experiences of the two genders; Nigel Haworth presents an optimistic assessment of the potential of the international labour movement to enhance the voice of workers. A closely-argued chapter by Jonathon Payne and Ewart Keep puts the spotlight on the possible democracy implicit in the design of jobs and work systems themselves. They assemble much evidence detailing the relative neglect of this aspect in the UK compared to the record of Norway and Finland.

To my mind, Boreham and Hall's final chapter, entitled 'Theorising the State and Economic Democracy', forms one of the most important contributions of the book. This broadens out the ambit of workplace democracy to encompass the process and outcomes of the distribution of economic surpluses at an institutional, state level. Central here are the different policies that can be adopted through the interplay of state, labour unions and employers towards the provision of employment, decommodification of certain public goods, and the compression of income differentials. Although necessarily an abbreviated account, Boreham and Hall summarise the main developments in OECD countries in income and wealth distribution, social transfer payments, employment creation and skills development. Their overall conclusion is that 'the neo-liberal ascendancy has, on balance, had disastrous consequences for workers'

(p. 241). They attribute this to the decline and deinstitutionalisation of organised labour, and the conscious decision of states to abdicate from, or turn over to the private sector, many former responsibilities in these spheres. They argue that such trends have found less fertile soil in those states retaining more robust social democratic traditions, although this claim looks increasingly parlous when one surveys some of the more recent developments in mainland Europe.

This book takes us some considerable distance further in critically rejuvenating this subject and analysing the seeming paradox that there appears to be more ‘participation’ than ever in the contemporary workplace but that it is producing less and less real ‘democracy’. The key for future theoretical work in this area, as Harley *et al.*’s introduction stresses, is the need to take account of the actors forming the prime movers for any instance of participation, their interests in doing so, and the context in which they are doing it. Recently, the main impetus has come from employers, keen to improve motivation and extract employee know-how within the current confines of power relations in the workplace, and from the state, which – as Harley *et al.* point out (p. 14) – needs to bring forward measures to promote its own legitimacy to a greater extent than does management. The omens for a new era of critical research into worker participation now appear more promising than they have done for some time. The EU-imposed resurrection of representative participation as a result of the EWC and ICE Directives sets us off into unknown territory, particularly in relation to the synergies or frictions with unionised forms of employee representation that may result. Overlaying this, recent evidence suggests the existence of generally low levels of job satisfaction in the high pressure twenty-first century workplace that have not been significantly mollified by such opportunities for participation present to date (Green and Tsitsianis, 2005). Assuming workers conclude that continued organisational ‘voice’ is preferable to the resigned silence of ‘exit’, worker demands for more meaningful opportunities for intervention in organisational decision-making are indeed possible. Harley *et al.* and their contributors have done us a considerable service in reasserting the salience of this topic of enquiry and emphasising its complexity. Hopefully, it will provide the inspiration over the next few years for renewed critical scholarship of the increasing variety of employee voice mechanisms now becoming available.

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The Demography of Time and the Times

Angela Mitropoulos

review of: S. Federici (2004) *Caliban and the Witch*. New York: Autonomedia. (PB, pp. 285, \$15.95, ISBN 1570270597)

In writing of the history of *Caliban and the Witch*, Silvia Federici remarks: “my stay in Nigeria did not allow me to forget this work” – which is to say, the work that she and Leopoldina Fortunati had done for a previous book, *Il Grande Calibano* (1984). “I had buried my papers in the cellar, not expecting that I should need them for some time” (2004: 9). Yet in the midst of Structural Adjustment Programmes and the officially designated ‘War Against Indiscipline’ that were devastating the poor in much of the world, she felt that her work on *Il Calibano* “took on a new meaning”. Further along, Federici writes: “Today, these aspects of the transition to capitalism may seem (for Europe at least) things of the past – or as Marx put it in the *Grundrisse* – ‘historical preconditions’ of capitalist development, to be overcome by more mature forms of capitalism. But the essential similarity between these phenomena and the phase of globalisation that we are witnessing tells us otherwise” (2004: 82).

The aspects of the transition Federici refers to are those processes that Marx situated under the heading of ‘primitive accumulation’. Simply put: for Marx, ‘primitive accumulation’ indicated the transition between feudalism and capitalism. Its most decisive elements included the enclosures of the commons, the clearing of the estates and the introduction of laws which ensured that those who might instead have gone roaming acquired the “discipline necessary for the wage system” through “laws grotesquely terrible” such as whipping, branding and torture (Marx, 1978: 688). In many respects, for classical Marxism the concept of ‘the transition’ is a theory of different forms of subjectivation. Specifically, it marks the threshold between subjection accomplished by violence and that distinguished by habituation, between a discipline brought about by the application of external force and the internalisation of control. In a political-economic register, that schema can be characterised as the transition between ‘bonded’ labour – legally and substantively fixed – and abstract labour, that is: the ostensible freedoms of the wage contract coupled with an indifference to the content of labours.

To Marx's account of the transition, Federici will add the terrors of the witch-hunts and anti-heresy campaigns that, in tandem with the rise of Rationalism, combined to produce the mechanisation of the body, the repression of women and the patriarchy of the wage. *Caliban and the Witch* includes a detailed study of the anti-feudal struggles of the European Middle Ages: the commons and the emergence of money-rent; heretics and the Inquisition, the Black Death and peasant armies. Federici diligently traces the connections between these and the witch-hunts which unleashed a campaign of terror against women, the ways in which "the female body – the uterus reduced to a machine for the reproduction of labor – [was consigned] into the hands of the state and the medical profession", and the "transformation of sexual activity into work, a service to men, and procreation" (2004: 144, 192). It concludes with a chapter on colonisation and Christianization in the 'New World', where the terror of the witch-hunts assumed a particularly vicious intensity in the subjugation of populations, but the course and methods of which also indicates the "global character of capitalist development" (2005: 233).

In one sense, and perhaps from the perspective of a cursory reading, what is at stake in *Caliban and the Witch* is the inclusion of women and the 'Third World' in the narrative of the transition as Marxism has, for the most part, understood it. Yet, this is no mere additive pluralism that would serve to merely widen the scope of the family portrait, give or take a few figures. That significant parts of the emerging proletariat gained a relative advantage through their – often active – complicity is discomfiting of the idea of an essential harmony of interests that pluralism requires. Indeed, to the extent that Federici introduces the notion of "the patriarchy of the wage", the very understanding of 'the transition' becomes reconceptualised as an *enduring* 'transition' and, thereby, hardly a transition at all. Because if the wage represents the reconfiguration of – 'feudal' – hierarchies as a quantitative difference of measure, the abiding distinction between paid and unpaid labour (as well as the racialised and gendered segmentations within the former) reminds us that the abstract indifference of capital grounds itself through the distinction between value and non-value.

In this way, *Caliban and the Witch* interrupts the vacillation between – and false choices of – optimism and pessimism that various critiques of capitalism, including diverse Marxists, have tended to assemble their temporal metaphysics around. Neither teleology will do. Unlike those Marxists (and others) who look upon capitalist 'development' as a necessary, if at times lamentable, prelude to the advent of communism, or those who, on the other hand, regard pre-capitalist times with nostalgia, Federici insists that the transition was a disaster brought on to "destroy the possibilities that had emerged from the anti-feudal struggle" (2004: 21, 24). At its narrative core, *Caliban and the Witch* is a story of an apocalypse.

And, it is this sense of an apocalypse that refuses to stay buried in the cellar, as it were. It is why *Caliban and the Witch* makes sense, *for us and in this time*. It is a sense, moreover, that cannot be subdued by historicist assertions of an inevitable, if at times unfortunately waylaid, capitalist progress. As Walter Benjamin remarked in his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', written in occupied Paris and under the shock of the pact between Hitler and Stalin: "To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognise it 'the way it really was', [as positivist historicism would have it]. It means to

seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger” (1992: 247). For if *Il Calibano* took on a ‘new meaning’ in the context of, as Federici calls it, globalisation, *Caliban and the Witch* acquires for the reader the demanding intensity of a fable as the sense of the world segues from ‘globalisation’ to war.

To be very clear on this: calling *Caliban and the Witch* a fable is by no means to divest it of its historiographic rigour and detail, of which it is particularly abundant. (In any case, the contempt for fables – the adamant distinction between literature and academic writing – remains tethered to the notion of historiography as a disinterested presentation of a mass of data, the metaphysical figure of a History which records itself.) Rather, it is to emphasise that what is at work here, and what makes *Caliban and the Witch* a significant work, is a version of Horace’s dictum, “*mutato nomine de te fabula narratur*” – “with a change of names, the fable is told about you”. What the genre of the fable demands, as a requirement of both understanding and the getting of knowledge, is identification. But, crucially, it is a form of identification that runs counter to the structural negativity of legal or political recognition, in which identity is granted through the disavowal of the other. By contrast, in the reading of the fable wisdom is achieved through a complex identification with alterity, as in the classical fables by Aesop – many of which instruct the reader on the traps of identification. (For more on fables, see Keenan, 1997.)

What is at stake in *Caliban and the Witch*, therefore, is not so much history nor, quite, a dispute over the presentation of history as it has been played out within and around Marxism through numerous themes: capitalist progress, capitalist decadence, primitive accumulation, dialectics, historicism, immanence, transition, and so on. To the extent that such disputes arise, they turn not on the question of history *as such* – that is, history conceived as an abstract temporal schema whose ‘supreme virtue’, as Marx quipped, ‘is to be transhistorical’. On the contrary, those disputes revolve around the question of who ‘we’ are. As Jean-Luc Nancy has argued, history “does not belong primarily to time, nor to succession, nor to causality, but to community, or to being-in-common” (1993: 143). To put this another way: history – as it is written and written of, spoken and shared, and therefore performed – is always the demarcation of ‘our time’, whether this is premised on a distinction with that which is deemed, ‘for us’, to be past or, as here in *Caliban and the Witch*, on a continuity. According to Federici, Marx’s concept of ‘primitive accumulation’ does not characterise a past epoch, a time that has passed. For her, ‘primitive accumulation’ indicates “the past as something which survives into the present” (2004: 12).

What “survives into the present” – the condition of making sense of *Caliban and the Witch* – is, I would argue, that experience which renders the present time, ‘our time’, as the state of a seemingly permanent but, significantly, *global* civil war. That is to say: the mobility of the threshold – or, as some have argued, the indistinction – between violence and habituation that the concept of ‘the transition’ sought to delineate. In short: a state of emergency. Of his experience of the state of emergency, Benjamin argued that the “current amazement that the things we are experiencing are ‘still’ possible [...] is *not* philosophical.” For Benjamin, thought – which is to say the possibility of thinking about the state of emergency that he confronted in 1940 – is immobilised by the idea of history as an inexorable and “triumphal progression”. “This amazement”, he wrote, “is

not the beginning of knowledge – unless it is the knowledge that the view of history which gives rise to it is untenable” (1992: 249). So that thought might escape the apocalypse that Benjamin himself attempted to flee, the thought of history as a line of development must be relinquished. For Benjamin, that flight was tragically halted by border guards and, perhaps one should add, his own understandably desperate yet untimely resignation.

The importance of Benjamin’s argument and experience is not simply his critique of a destinal conviction that, confronted with the terror of the state of emergency, was only capable of evincing stupefaction or acquiescence. Nor is it crucial to point out Benjamin’s idealism, which is more than apparent. What needs to be emphasised here is the phrase “*we are experiencing*”. A question, then, of sense – in every way it is possible to understand this word and beyond any separation between thought and matter. In that simple phrase rests the key to understanding how it becomes possible to characterise the current time, ‘our time’, as that of a global civil war – and how, in doing so, it might be possible to reconsider an exodus from it that is something other than the reterritorialising consolation of the ‘exit strategy’ for some.

And it is here that *Caliban and the Witch* hesitates. To the extent that Federici opts for designating the current time – or, rather, the time of writing *Caliban and the Witch* – as “the phase of globalisation”, she repeats the standard temporalisation of spatial distinctions around which, to use Agamben’s phrase, the “biopolitical fracture” of the world has been constructed. In this instance, the complicity of the concept of ‘the transition’, as it has mostly been understood, with the notion of ‘capitalist development’ reasserts itself. The sense of the world becomes the standard division of *worlds* – first, second, third – serving as placeholders for a division of times. If Nigeria provokes a reconsideration of history, it does so by appearing as Europe’s past: “these aspects of the transition to capitalism may seem (for Europe at least) things of the past” (2004: 82). Where examples are presented of those aspects of “the past” which survive “into the present” (2004: 12, 239), they are almost invariably taken from Africa and Latin America. The exception is where mention is made of immigrant workers – which is to say, in the figure of those who come from ‘elsewhere’, the not-here, not of this time. In this way, geopolitical divisions are depicted as temporal ones, and the schema of history as linear succession remains intact, if uneasy.

The world has not ceased being at war, in one form or another. What is at stake here is the *sense* of what it means to say, and to have an experience of, *the world*. The ‘Cold War’ was a displaced version of a global civil war, fought by proxy and within satellites through the consolidation of an inter-state system that triumphed under the banner of ‘national self-determination’. The global civil war was – for a time and therefore ‘for us’ – contained by the enclosures of the ‘Third World’. Today, that demarcation has become unstuck, mobile. This is due, most notably, to the unprecedented movements of people from ‘periphery’ to ‘core’ since the late 1960s. The return of ‘World War’ since 1989 marks the insufficiency of financialisation (and abstraction) to accomplishing the task of reasserting the differential, segmented markets that capitalism requires.

And so, while Federici refuses to concede the mind-body distinction in her account of the witch-hunts, here it risks being read as a distinction between finance capital and

landed property, where the latter appears in the guise of ostensibly pre-given national territories subdued by a globalising finance. But if ‘primitive accumulation’ consisted of a pact between capital and landed property against the rest of the world, that pact has not ceased to be effective. This is why the figures of the parable cannot be read as synonymous with the identities of women or people from the ‘Third World’, even if at times, and perhaps in the mode of an address, Federici makes it seem as if they might be. Yet Caliban is not Othello, the Witch is not the Princess – the enslaved and the persecuted do not belong to the community that belongs, in turn, to sovereignty. Federici concludes *Caliban and the Witch* by writing: “as soon as we strip the persecution of the witches from its metaphysical trappings, we recognise in it phenomena that are very close to home” (2004: 239). What might be added to this insight is that history is often one of the most captivating of the metaphysical trappings of ‘home’, of the *habitus* in which ‘we’ are said to reside. The state of emergency is not the exception which suddenly takes shape under the geopoliticised heading of ‘war has come home’; rather, it is the norm and the experience of the world, whose functioning is laid bare in moments of crisis.

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