

Bared and Grievable. Theory Impossible in No Man's Land *

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... Would it not be easier
In that case for the government
To dissolve the people
And elect another?
(Bertolt Brecht, *The Solution*, 1959)

1. Introduction

In this chapter, I capitalize on the ambiguous operations performed in and around No Man's Land to enter into productive friction with dominant theoretical positions in biopolitics, in particular Agamben's *homo sacer* and the spatiality of the ban, and Butler's ungrievable lives. My starting position is that making culture produces war, and that the need for war is socially constructed to reflect the evolving modes and cycles of cultural reproduction. A further circular premise is that a culture has been deemed to be indeed fully reproductive and deserve its chance of survival, if it can command (arrange, mobilize, deploy) the entire country (its people, its blood, its territory) for the division of labour required by the maintenance of a semblance of separation from nature. Within these premises, mobilization for war thus becomes but part of a demobilization-impossible state of affairs of our civilizational practices. And within the latter, or rather, within the escalation in our global ability to produce the devastational contraptions of cultural capital, World War I and No Man's Land mark not merely a further tragic stage of that impossibility. What, in fact, more than any other zone of attack in history No Man's Land makes sensible is the ultimate demarcation between civilizational space (qualified life) and unrestrained devastation (within the enclosure *extra muros* produced by the ban) which the converging collusions of war generate from the immediate logistics of combat. This spatial and phrasal marker, in turn, allows me to explode two core biopolitical tenets: that bare life is primarily and radically other (other blood, ethnically understood), and that it will not be grieved. The millions *bared* (reduced to bare life) in No Man's Land within the legality of an exclusion co-managed by the two warring sides, I will insist, have certainly been grieved. And it is this deeper civilizational horror, the cohesive rebooting of one's blood under the excuse of war against the enemy, that makes the overlap between the concentrationary husbandry perpetrated in the concentration camps proper (the only extermination paradigm currently verified by biopolitical thinkers) and the regenerative culling performed by the nation on the nation in the killing fields of the Great War all the more mind-shattering.

* PRE-COPY EDITED VERSION – Chapter forthcoming in Federica G. Pedriali and Cristina Savettieri, eds. 2020. *Mobilizing Cultural Identities in the First World War: History, Representations and Memory*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

2. Distant premises

Land is something you either already own or will occupy next. This is the substance of culture even before it gets to be called capital. Culture as in *cultivation* of humans, with the resulting *domestication*, bondage, serfdom, slavery – all processes marking the emergence of the aggressive sedentism of the early agrarian societies, what is now classified as the Great Leap Forward of the Neolithic, roughly 6,000 BCE onwards, first in the Near East, and then radially from there (Francis 2015; Price 2013; Wilson 1988 – but also Deleuze and Guattari 2013, pp.494-521).

Culture, essentially put, is thus but symbolic land cut into so many fields of power (Bourdieu 1993). Even more fundamentally stated, all civilizational culture is the enterprise of the agrarian state, a theory which has been well tested on early agrarian societies both within and outside Europe (Scott 1985, 2009, 2017 – but also 1998 and 2012). Ecocriticism has been more vocal than most on this one recently, challenging the whole agrarian package by deuniversalizing it, and calling it the exclusive business, the “agrilogistics” of the West. Morton’s ecocritical set (2007, 2013, 2016, 2017) provides a prime provocation in this regard. *Dark Ecology*, in particular, collapses Modern Europe and the Neolithic Revolution, latest and first sedentism respectively, to the theoretical *eureka*: “We Mesopotamians” (2016, pp.6, 9, 15, 39, 42-45, 47, 51, 54, 58, etc.).

Civilizational culture, understood in this way, becomes one long western perpetration of purposeful decimations on all those resisting its violent agrilogistics, with the one chance of deliverance finally really brooding in the ecological monsters of the West’s own raising – Hyperobjects (Morton 2013), Gaia (Latour 2017), Climate Leviathan (Mann and Wainwright 2018). Re-synthesized ecocritically, that is, this devastational device reveals the expansive circularity of its law, as territorial demarcations extend (*redraw* – pushing further out) a separation from nature always at risk of coming to an end.

It is this inclusionary enforcement with benefits, which commands further outward mobility as soon as new land is hit, that binds together whichever human capital gets captured within its processes. And it is because the founding line (the separation from *it*) each time doubles back also as a threat (of being returned to *it*) that those herded on this side (*our side vs their side*, the enemy’s by logistical default) yield the highest output (pay for their keep with the highest yield) within the territorial equation – the *eureka* of a manner of concentrationary husbandry which harvests all kinds of *others*, including same-kin others, from simple marks made in the soil.

3. Escalation man

Deep Time, anything upwards of 10,000 BCE, has no fields apart from caves. The agrarian colonist in us is keen to patrol this demarcation. Lévi-Strauss, for one, dismissively sorts Neolithic wheat from Palaeolithic chaff (“My intelligence is

Neolithic” – cit. Geertz 2007, p.367). Sahlins, conversely, pitches Palaeolithic affluence against Neolithic want (Sahlins 2017). Miserly or bountiful, what we assume did not pass into agrarianism is given as lost (left out: marked out from entry into Thin Time). A trick well learnt, that of treating the origin as the discontinued package making up the ban within the matrix of the state (Agamben 1998, pp.104-11). This is what is expected to have been active in most human affairs, no matter how immaterially: this is what works, say, in Kant, having worked in Rousseau, for western man, thanks to this stunt, can be at his most self-reliant in his estate, whether it is reason or nature making up the latter.

And yet, neurologically, metabolically, those upcoming Homos gathering in caves knew a thing or two about socialization (Lewis-Williams 2002; Lewis-Williams and Challis 2011; Rosengren 2012; Herzog 2010). In a cave system, you would both pack and sort your people, making access and initiation unequal. You could manipulate an artificial night to extract group action from biochemical by-products induced collectively. You could exploit, yes, the toxicity as well as the spatiality of this awkward place to impose sense and purpose, narrative and spectacle, over and above your material conditions, including those of your biology, given that crowded caves get quickly high in carbon dioxide and low in oxygen. Ecocriticism is right to lend spin to this spectacular proto-cinematic age – for, not so jocularly put, in their busy pre-Platonic nights-in (cf. *Republic*, VII, 514a-520a) “the Neanderthals would have loved Coca-Cola Zero” (Morton 2016, p.15). For their part, brain metaplasticity theory and neural archaeology (Malabou 2017; Malafouris 2010 and 2013; Smail 2008; West-Eberhard 2003), cultural evolutionary theory (Heyes 2018), evolutionary biology (Henrich 2016), evolutionary psychology (Boyer 2018) and DNA genetics (Reich 2018), all in their respective ways argue that the *Flintstones* were phenomenal social junkies, the Sistine Chapels of Chauvet and Lescaux proving the point in excess. People technically like us, ready to risk it, to have to yield to and for it through craving and addiction. Ready to intensify socialization by whichever means or substance to obtain the crudest returns.

4. “To Our Enemies”

Our bodies matter for their toxic gregariousness. They matter (we matter) if together they produce (bring forth, push forth, escalate forth – but above all: synthesize forth) the most powerful psychotropy affordable (it is sheer biological scatter otherwise – Smail 2008). They are, after all, the renewable (replaceable, restockable, redeployable – in short: reproducible) matter which the original ban (the state of nature, henceforth SON) would anyway waste. To be charitable to ourselves, it has taken inordinate hubris to achieve as much as we have, against the kind of odds that we had. By the time we were, let’s say, ready to leave the Palaeolithic behind, we had allegedly spent, on today’s date, some ninety per cent of our species existence (Sahlins 2017, p.XI) having made do with rock and bone. It

is no wonder, against such data, that altered minds have issued their *eureka* whenever hitting upon the next material leap of immaterial faith within the latest stumbling blocks.

Generation Z, in its turn, keeps asking, this at least in class, how the twentieth century was possible. The bloodiest time in history. The darkest hour for the “dark continent” (Mazower 1998). An hour that became never ending as Europe kept upgrading its “laboratory atop a vast graveyard” (p.X – citing Czech politician Thomas Masaryk). Seldom has the next generation looked more diverse and ready to champion itself in the name of what diversity could indeed stand for. They are “the plurals,” and rightly look at the world with fresh energy. They expect to be a great generation, one of those changing the course of history, as great generations don’t need to end up in great wars, do they – even though, right now, as they sit in my class and look up to their final year tutor distributing emergency rations before their send-off for life proper, this same one society the world over is busy enlarging its exclusionary zones to get to manage exactly their type.

“You can’t be sure,” writes Neil Howe, “where history will someday draw a cohort-dividing line until a generation fully comes of age” (Howe 2014 – for the full generational theory, Howe and Strauss 2000, and Strauss and Howe 1997, but also Furlong 2013, and Harrison 2014, pp.1-16). It is precisely over this notion of history drawing lines on cohorted living matter that I feel some of my greatest concern. I generally worry about the production of culture, especially as it is currently being extricated from the production of Europe. And I, certainly, fully side with those who, from Foucault onwards, use what goes under the umbrella of biopolitics to obtain from our societies the principle of their *self-defence* (our subjugation to *their* victory – Foucault 2004, pp.10-18).

Europe, to stay with that enemy, has taken a major ideational hit in recent years, ending up operating in net negative overdrive as a result. In most scientific quarters, in the Humanities especially, the Old Continent now stands for everything which is implodingly wrong with the present time (Braidotti 2013; Haraway 2016), its mentions triggering the absolute urgency of the need to *delink*, to disassociate first and foremost *from within* (Latour 2017). Europe, Modern Europe that is, the first civilization ever to have pulled out all the stops in its bid for global dominance (Bauman 2004; Hirst 2009), today ranks, correctly, as the top toxic of all time (Dabashi 2015; Fukuyama 2012; Kagan 2003; Stoler 2013). Previous civilizations may have been globalizations of sorts, taking over the available human and non-human capital (Marramao 2012; Mignolo 2000, but also 2003 and 2011). No other villain, however, has shown the same reckless, criminal flair, or has been caught as much on tape – not by chance, its present ruination comes declaredly from it, the poison, five full centuries of it, having become by now utterly unflushable (Stoler 2013).

We have never been modern, we say (Latour 1993, also 2010). We cannot stand “sky-gazing Homo” (Haraway 2016, p.2). We had better take nature down, given that it too has served Europe’s dubious exclusionary horizons (Morton 2007). It is

this formidable theoretical kit that patently drives the most progressive conversations at present, deciding what goes in or out of, say, Haraway's communities of compost (2016), Braidotti's nomadic monism (2011), or Morton's Mesopotamian ID (2016) – positions fundamentally unafraid of either pest or pesticide, and euphorically stating that the age of Europe is truly over. Time, that is, for a disgraced paradigm to be decolonized, provincialized, humiliated – a technical word this one, as in the *humiliation* of the *anthropos*, in the name of the *humility* of the material and artefactual world (Bennett 2010; Cohen 2015; Hodder 2012; Miller 2005 and 2010). Returned to thick environmental recycling, and interspecies co-presence, yes – but not before being surgically taken out of our disciplinary midst to avoid further contagion. “At the start of it all there is He: the classical ideal of Man, formulated first by Protagoras as the measure of all things, later renewed in the Italian Renaissance as a universal model, and represented in Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man” (Braidotti 2013, p.13). Exceptionalist privilege rounded off, written off, done away with – with “glee” (p.16).

Decolonization is always violent. Always a violent substitution of one “species of mankind” by another (Fanon 2004, p.1). Fanon's prophetic message couldn't have been clearer at the time of its last issuing, in 1961. It justifiably sent Sartre in hyperdrive with pre-posthumanist anticipation: “our victims know us by their wounds and shackles ... Europe is doomed” (p.XLVIII). Europe, “what they call ‘the West’” is “a dead interlocutor” and “people like me are no longer interested in whatever it is they fancy to be *hegemonic* or *counter-hegemonic* in Europe and for Europeans,” Dabashi writes today, with a level of attacking self-possession comparable to that of former Modern Europeans: “we need to change the interlocutors with whom we discuss the terms of our emerging worlds. We should no longer address a dead interlocutor. Europe is dead,” “we come together at a new gathering of knowledge not to mourn but to dislodge the link” (Dabashi 2015, pp.4, 10, 23, 29, etc., italics at source – but also at least Rachman 2016, on western death by disarray, easternization and China).

Historians assemble voluminous end-game life-cycle narratives (Simms 2014). Classicists upgrade the clash of civilizations (Huntington 1997) to the climate changes of antiquity (Harper 2017). Anthropologists stand by stone age economics to locate a present-day final-chance hunter-gatherer Utopos (Suzman 2017). Economists and population biologists calculate the costs of the total overhaul of today's mess (Stern 2015; Beddington 2009). Journalists raise the alarm, in case we hadn't noticed (Murray 2017; Emmott 2017). Statisticians stun us with their pet statistical predictions (Rosling 2018 – citing Gore's project *fear*, p.229). Former politicians accuse the derailed world of western politics (Klaus 2011). Former bankers give us the last wake-up call (Bongiovanni 2012). Sociologists state that this climate will not pass (for this is “definitive” – Latour 2017, p.13). NBIOOs (No Better Identified Opinionated Others) reply “bollocks” to all of the above (Feldman and Marks 2009) – while honest political scientists succinctly call for the reform of the European Union first (Bartolini 2005; Bersani 2019).

This is to say that the “end times” are again clamouring (Žižek 2011 – citing Marx’s project *terror*, p.XIII). Terminality is not just pulling together the stuff of the ban. It is stoking up system pressure to extract maximum energetic profit from paradigmatic refuse (Lat. *proficere*, to advance). It is reprocessing enemy Europe, the thanatopolitical prerogative that passes for Europe, those “secrets of European responsibility” exposed by Derrida in connection with the two World Wars (1995, pp.1-34 – discussing Patočka), into the smarter biological spend which will forward-fuel the next “paradigmatic capture” (the next “subjugation of the future” – Berardi 2017, pp.16 and 12, respectively, but also pp.1-29, and on cultural fuels “powering the species in new directions,” Pinkus 2016, pp.3 and 1-19 more generally). Call it a fact of gregarious species life, “cognitive automation” or “neuro-totalitarianism” (Berardi 2017, p.20), or even “neural-hijacking” by alpha individuals (Smail 2008, p.173). It is classic “psychotropic economy” (pp.157-89).

The excellent *Wars and Capital* not for nothing is addressed “To Our Enemies” (Alliez and Lazzarato 2017, pp.11-33). Faced with the instrumentality (exploitability) of *our* demise, this gutsy political theory refuses to affirm euphorically, aggressively, or vacuously there being but the end (of the West) in wait (in the Open), the messianic restitution utopia envisaged, say, by Agamben (1993, 2004) after the final act of incremental total war on the entirety of our premises. The newer (deadlier) forms of totalizing motility, the ever more volatile frenzied consumption of human exchange, the constant upgrade to neater (faster) wars (Virilio and Lotringer 2008 – but also at least Singer 2010) of course *must* (cannot but) be classed as the most recent civilizational horrorism (Cavarero 2008). However, the Age of Capital, the “Capitalocene” as Alliez-Lazzarato had rather it be called, is also most definitely “not the result of a modernity and a humanity blinded to the negative effects of technological development, but the *fruit of the will* of some people to exercise absolute domination over other people” (Alliez and Lazzarato 2017, p.30 – italics in the original). Sudden and total mobilization for Culture (*our* culture, *our* progress) against any and all *our enemies*, capitalizing on the “stark physicalism of walls” (Brown 2010, p.20 – but also Agier 2016, p.53) to harvest the energy of the generations working in duped sync on those wondrous (wondrously exclusive) time-limited tickets and special-edition timeshares that in each new chunk and segment of History mark out the ultimate Fiction (again, and quite conveniently, the SON redoubled as the End on the other side of the usable Precinct) has, in sum, and not just lately with the help of Modern Europe, become but part of a demobilization-impossible state of human affairs which, haphazardly rushed from crisis to crisis, liberally (purposefully) draws (feeds) on lives no matter what – including no matter *which* classification they come under.

I have provoked on matters of war before (Pedriali 2017). And I do stand by provocative works when it comes to Europe and the West. The lie in the bond (Appiah 2018) committing us in earnest to escalational states of mutual intoxication is what I am exploring in this chapter, as part of a book on the mobilizing factor of World War I – the “supernormal,” overshooting plasticity

(Massumi 2015, pp.1-4) of which, I tell my studious Gen Z, is an aberration only in the sense that from the centric primate excitedly romping about in his pen one can always obtain yet more maximal coimplication of the fusionary forces available for collective convulsion. Enemy Europe, to start managing my own demarcations, has long played the continent on a high in a destiny on the go, its “escalating manufacture of what could be manufactured” (Alliez and Lazzarato 2017, p.22 – citing Heidegger) going as far, lately, as commingling old-school emancipatory action (what invariably has justified “the most violent” to act violently – Agamben 1998, p.30, citing Pindar’s fragment 169) and brand-new restitution-style self-demonization (what I call today’s CO₂ regimes: Cultural Emissions Europe, CO_E for short).

Transgressing one’s rule having embedded it in the soil, this is my line of argument here, has worked wonders for the traffickers of destinies, each latest smarter device (the *dispositif*, the *apparatus*, the terminology of an era – Agamben 2009, pp.1-2) reinstalling the excess, the surplus, this side of the pale, of the unarchivable binding agent (the “psychic life of power” – Butler 1997). Raw masculinity, in its turn, “sovereign masculinity” as it has also been called (Mann 2014), has never once failed to thrive on this toolkit, hubristically working out the *cult* of manhood (Donovan 2012, but also again at least Singer 2010, and the caption-citation below the image of the US pilots firing drones over Afghanistan from their offices in Nevada: “It’s antiseptic. It’s not as potent an emotion as being on the battlefield ... It’s like a video game. It can get a little bloodthirsty. But it’s fucking cool”) from the *cultivation* of serviceable lesser biological assemblages earmarked for strife by “eons” of strife (Crook 1994, pp.130-52 and also 1-28, reviewing the Darwinian mindset of Victorian-Edwardian Europe and its trust in the “blind chance,” those “positive checks” on your kin which make a people’s history “full of extinctions,” pp.18, 17 and 25, respectively, and Meyer 2011, pp.1-13).

There is nothing like land, I suggested earlier, to excite our sedentism. This, I added, has been driving human commerce well before capital made it with Modern Europe. Conflict, I note now, has been doing specialist agrarian work ever since taking over from the generalized strife of the more accidental primate gangs of Deep Time, making it possible for agrarianism to be deemed better suited (more successful: more fully reproductive: more in control of its human resources) for the supply-line labour required by the maintenance of the ban (again, our evolving SON). The future of war, contemporary war theorists tell us, is both secured and “purposive” (Freedman 2017, p.X), so much so that it may not really matter whether conflict is a “social affliction” or a “social affectation” (p.XI – citing John Mueller). For their part, the two World Wars remain “connected like two fiery continents, linked rather than separated by a chain of volcanoes” (Ernst Jünger, cit. Alliez and Lazzarato 2017, p.165 – but also at least Winter 1995, pp.1-11). The hyperactive fire-trench which twice in close succession ran along Europe’s core fault lines (“the revenge of geography” for the “colonial defilement” of the rest of

the globe – Marshall 2015, p.104, citing Robert Kaplan, and Pitzer 2017, pp.88-116, respectively) holds us not just to account, but agrilogistically *on-site* and at the ready in our landmarks, our “frames of war” – the “frames by which war is wrought” (Butler 2010, p.184).

5. Destination No Man’s Land

To stay on top of the drift, we cling and put out lines. For in a “world of blobs,” were there really no lines, there could be “no social life” (Ingold 2015, pp.3-8). Thus fastened, we recruit frames in discrete differential sequences, each output (each world) an unrenowable synthetic expendability made sensible (made inhabitable) for the erective labour whizzing us forward also facing back at the destruction (consumption) we leave in our trail like Klee’s *Angelus Novus* (Benjamin 2003, p.392).

Again, trying to be charitable. We “sleepwalked” into the First World War (Clark 2012 – but also at least Churchill, in a letter from August 1914, cit. in Allison 2017, p.58: “we all drift on in a kind of dull cataleptic trance”). In the general pull of vitalistic narcosis, the decision makers had but to reinstate (recycle) the venerable command: “To my peoples! It was my fervent wish to consecrate the years which, by the grace of God still remain to me, to the works of peace and to protect my peoples from the heavy sacrifices and burdens of war” (Emperor Franz Joseph, cit. Clark 2012, p.469 – replicating the format used to declare war against Prussia some fifty years previously).

Most climateric men in a position to have some say were elated: “For the first time in thirty years, I feel myself to be an Austrian, and feel like giving this not very hopeful empire another chance. All my libido is dedicated to Austria-Hungary” (fifty-eight years old Sigmund Freud – cit. Clark 2012, p.470, but also at least and by contrast, the Einstein-Freud 1931-1932 correspondence on the ineradicable “collective psychosis,” the “instinctive craving” for the slaughter of foes, the ease with which one can “infect,” i.e., “bind” and “alloy” men through war fever, in the anticipation of the resulting “boon,” the increased domination over destinies, from the increased domination over land, the only domination-domestication affordable in our motility-for-mortality: a belated truly difficult conversation on the latest chances of peace tellingly cut short by Hitler’s power seizure in 1933 – Belilos 2016, pp.4-15).

The avoidable conflict, that is, was terribly in the way of the inevitable one. The progressive (pro-ductive) call of the future guaranteed (pro-jected) fast easy gains. All Europe had to do, at this junction, was to battle it out, once more, on its own soil, the only one worthy of great conflicts, the forty odd years of European peace since the Franco-Prussian War being the actual outrage, the sure sign of a blood gone to seed. Only, in fact, an advanced degenerative process heading for *our* end, to the advantage of *our* enemies, could cause real men to forget that civilizational reproduction commands that they too bleed regularly.

The recruiting gags did their work egregiously, unwaveringly on target: “There is still a place in the line for you. This space is reserved for a fit man. Will you fill it?” (Doyle 2014, pp.6-7 – reproducing British recruiting posters issued as cigarette cards). Millions rushed to blend in (bleed in) for the sake of the masculine event warranted by the super patriarchs; terrestrial success, societies and states in short, had to remain, indeed quite circularly, a “masculine task” (Mosse 1996, p.73). The youth did get culled, both sides of the frontline – both the enemy’s and one’s own. The heroes did get restocked. Women did nurse more than they could breed. All that could be requisitioned did get requisitioned, and this not just through the relentless exploitation of occupied enemy land and people (Kramer 2007, pp.41-68).

“We all have some element of power in our bodies,” writes Foucault in a last-ditch attempt to warn against the biopolitics of modern conflict (2004, p.30). But, again, bodies with power have been captured since time immemorial on *this* map and in *this* plan, having been made available to *this* society for injury (Puar 2017, p.64). Hominized, domesticated, branded – for “initiated man” is a “marked man” (Clastres 1987, p.184). Scripted, scarified in their skins (Rush 2005), wasted traumatically as groups visit “injuries on one another” instigating “rounds of social suffering” as collective processes centring on meaning making (Alexander 2012, pp.1-2); ritually excluded at the check points, repeatedly threatened with “exiles of shame” (Mann 2014, pp.108-36) as part of being made to retest for admission to *this* precinct; enslaved to the bloodline, the most archaic *telos*-making *device* there is, for blood, not semen, is “that awfully seductive fluid” (Hill 2014, p.139) which given a chance will recruit the same-kin totally (De Sanctis 2015 – using archaic Rome as evidence of blood-for-territory belligerent *contact-making* with the enemy to capitalize on an agrarian people’s crudest claim, their consubstantial right to land).

“The modern state moves toward its own overcoming,” argues Cacciari, hoping to expose (Lat. *exponere*, to put forth, put out) the governing *dispositif*, the line-pull of the globalizing present-day *lyra*. The latter, however, and within the same argument, is still the ridge-and-furrow deployed by archaic cultivation and above all cerealization; the foundational line that, deserted by those chosen to advance it with gain, would return the World’s Plot to the *un-limit*, i.e., that which “has neither shape nor measure” (2007, p.277). Contact, on *this* plan and in *this* generalized great confinement, gets “*inexorably* established” wherever the *finis* is fixed, generating the latest *cum-finis* from the line on which any two domains touch – so much so that “to define place is to describe the movement toward their *eschaton* of the entities therein *contained*, their *conversio* to their extreme limit ... place is nothing other than the border itself... Place is *where* the place ends” (pp.277 and 279 respectively, italics at source – but also at least Esposito 2010, p.149, and Gentili 2015, pp.143-44).

Which is another way of saying, again somewhat provocatively I guess, that the difficult conversations which we too are having on the “delirium” of Europe’s

modernity (Mbembe 2017, pp.1-9), as part of the ongoing *de-noming* of the former “Nomos of the Earth” (Mignolo 2015, reversing Schmitt 2006 – but also at least Luisetti 2015, pp.69-71), get their deep-down spin from the same non-random kinesis pressing outwards from all sides of the Enclosure: “this model, obsessed by the threat of the disorderly practice of politics by an undifferentiated *demos* (the political people), favours divisions and a system of worlds that are watertight, reduced, in which control and adherence to the system are exercised” (Agier 2016, p.7). Or more narrowly put still, and making the key *domestic* distinction in regard to *this* utopia: “the border ritualizes the relationship to the other ... The *margins* of nations-states are the unthought in the theory of public-order policies, just as urban interstices or so-called informal economies remain unthought.” In this double margin, in fact, a first worldism denouncing its own primary outputs (the civilizational intractability of the *other*: their *de-lirium* on the other side of the same *lyra*) gets *con-fined* in return, it too put out and brought forth (ex-posed), placed in a “relation of ban with the state of law” (Agamben 1998, p.41) exactly for having too much “purchase” (“it has to be a puzzle how Giorgio Agamben’s evocation of ‘an obscure figure of archaic Roman law’ has assumed such purchase on recent political and philosophical thought” – Fitzpatrick 2005, p.49, and more generally 49-73). Unparadoxically, that is, the critique of what passes for thanatopolitics, the rejection, for instance, of the concluding statement of Part II of *Homo Sacer* (“Sacredness is a line of flight ... moving into zones increasingly vast and dark ... we are all virtually *homines sacri*” – Agamben 1998, pp.114-15, anticipated p.84, and cit. Ek 2006, pp.367-68) gets spatially assertive, exclusionary in its turn – the argument being that a globalization mired in violence through unequal distributions of precarity (Butler 2010, p.171) and making abundantly sensible its devastational intent to those targeted (the “ungrievable” – Butler 2004) at the appointed wastelands and No Man’s Lands (Leshem and Pinkerton 2015) will not be addressed, let alone transformed, by a western school of biopolitical thought still investing in the paradigmatic centrality of Europe’s darkest hour (“Auschwitz still occupies and colonizes political thought” – Ansah 2010, p.150, and more generally pp.142-53, but also at least Mazower 2008, Norris 2005, Thobani 2012, Forti 2015, pp.125-79, and Mills 2018, p.43, as “for many, this figuration of the concentration camp as ‘the hidden matrix’ of biopolitics or the ‘*nomos* of the modern’ has stretched Agamben’s thesis beyond the bounds of credibility”).

Yes, and to insist. Operations (thoughts) get pretty congested (tight) in the linearized drift (allegedly / presumably / undoubtedly) shuttling us between Utopia (the non-place shored up against all of our origins) and No Man’s Land (the non-place unpacking it all again on all of our thresholds). In the congestion, Agamben too passes for Europe, counter-mobilized against for laying ultimate claims on our futurability and closing in on that horizon of possibility that should have never become decisional (necessary / inevitable / irreparable). “There is life no longer,” only production, comments Adorno in the opening paragraphs of *Minima moralia* (2005, p.15), leaving one perfectly caught in the explosion of discourse (once

supposedly enlightened, now uninhabitable – Adorno and Horkheimer 1997). Man is not “given once and for all; he is, rather, a field of dialectal tensions cut by internal cesurae,” adds Agamben, paraphrasing Kojève’s reading of Hegel (2004, p.12 – but see also at least Esposito 2010, pp.73, 147), and exhibiting precisely that divided and divisive “bad Agamben” (Ansah 2010, pp.150-52) clamouring for deactivation from a manner of political thought that still raises the SOS for the drowning philosophies of the West (Esposito 2018, 2019 – the latter text in particular rethinking negation in the name of the ultimate attractor: an affirmative philosophy at the limit). “Comprised within ... is what one might call the entire hallucination, or the entire imposture, of the self-consciousness of a modern world that has exhausted itself in the fabulous representation of its own power,” writes Nancy (1991, p.46), articulating the conundrum faced by theory itself when challenging the delusional (teleological) contact obtained on the border by the “biomechanics of obsession” (Berardi 2015, p.14, paraphrasing Gombrowicz, and 2017, p.25) – “we know the scene: there is gathering and someone is telling a story” (Nancy 1991, p.43, and pp.43-70 more generally).

I am not digressing. I am insisting. Thoughts (theories) spatialize executions (Lat. *exsequi*, to follow up to the end, steadfastly accompany, pursue persistently), getting in turn exhausted at the *eschaton*, the outermost extraction site (Lat. *exhaurire*, to draw out, drain out, take the water out of a field); processed as far out, in the synthetic drift, as the cut-off point into refuse, on the side of refuse, for on the side of the Future the same tough spot promises lasting riches to all those graduating on its riddles – “a truly *mything* humanity becoming truly human in this *mythation*” (p.45). The law of the non-place thus gets inscribed as also theoretically *in place* (*in force* – at minimum, but this is staple political theory, Agamben 1998, pp.52, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, typically citing Kafka’s *Before the Law*, p.49, “Nothing ... prevents the man from the country from passing through the door of the Law, if not the fact that this door is already open and that the Law prescribes nothing”); theoretical executions too breed fidelity of cultural transmission “faster than genes” (Heyes 2018, pp.1-6), all the more gathered and packed with anxiogenics as bonding and hope get further crammed into the thoughtful further nothing, threshold, interstice, gap cut out tightly (obtained affirmatively: although remaining squarely *unthought*) from the contentless line-limit-*lyra*-law.

We “are not special, just recent” – just embedded in our reality “below God and above rock” (Margulis 1998, pp.3-4); just erective enough, between those two markers, to devise Google, to then ask Google to sort us out (“In the days and weeks that followed the Terasem gathering, I thought frequently of Jason Xu’s *protest* ... the ‘GOOGLE, PLEASE, SOLVE DEATH’ placard ...” – O’Connell 2017, p.179). The hardest selling trend-setters may have the fastest linearizing captions (“align your choice ... lead from the future as it emerges” – Scharmer 2016, pp.1-20). Yet, in the restricted manoeuvrability imposed by socialization, no school of thought can afford not to overcrowd the limit to demand the furthestmost

impossible (“we do not want power, we just want a free space outside your control” – Žižek 2011, p.IX, citing Solidarity). “My point,” Foucault admits quite circularly, perhaps even candidly, in a series of relentless late conversations on the uses of his work, “is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous ... If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do ... the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger” (1983, pp.231-32).

I am a narratologist, not a nihilist. I look into aspirational stories told at epochal gatherings. Europe, I read lately, “has little desire to reproduce itself” (Murray 2017, p.82); “Europe is no longer the center of gravity of the world. This is the significant event, the fundamental experience of our era ... the demotion of Europe opens up possibilities – and presents dangers ... to capture the precise contours of these dangers and possibilities ... etc.” (Mbembe 2017, p.1). I look into today’s ambitions and see system revolutions being revved up. I see a brave Gen Z enter the globalized fray and dare us (for they will not fail). I see inflammatory discourse nearly everywhere, but no questions being raised on cultural profit remaining universally tensive (one-versed and capturing). I see adversarial reception-rejection (ex-posure) of the “academic Holocaust industry” (Vogt 2005, p.74 – citing Žižek). Yet I also see the same constituency ending up wanting a “good Agamben” (Ansah 2010, pp.150-52), the one perhaps hinting (please, at least hinting) at some further precious *unthought* within otherwise unhelpful (“alarmistic,” “fatalistic,” “profoundly Manichean” – Kalyvas 2005, pp.113, 115; not to say “flawed” and “close to fanciful” – Ansah 2010, p.159, citing Fitzpatrick 2005, p.55) zones of indistinction and “no-man’s-land” (Agamben 1998, pp.76, 90, 148, 159, 161, etc. – but also at least 2005, p.1, citing Alessandro Fontana, on the “‘ambiguous, uncertain, borderline fringe’ ... this no-man’s-land” at the core of the state of exception).

I am no historian, and no political theorist, and again I am not digressing. “Every society sets this limit; every society ... decides who its *sacred men* will be,” posits Agamben as a matter of theoretical fact (1998, p.139), while methodically trashing both the “ambivalence of the sacred” (a preposterously Victorian “mythologeme” compromising the very recovery of the “originary political structure,” the “originary spatialization” governing “every localization and every territorialization,” and going all the way “back to the period of pre-social life ... the primitive life of Indo-European peoples” – respectively, pp.75-80, 74, 111, and, citing Jhering, 104) and Foucault’s presumed oversight (e.g., pp.4, “Foucault, in just as striking a fashion, never dwelt on the exemplary places of modern biopolitics ...,” and 119, “Foucault never brought his insights to bear on what could well have appeared to be the exemplary place of modern biopolitics ... The enquiry that began with a reconstruction of the *grand enfermement* in hospitals and prisons did not end with an analysis of the concentration camp”).

I may be a “perennialist” (Guibernau 2007, p.14), but there are real non-variables here – one of them being that No Man’s Land gets increasingly claimed

for camp theory, where it stands for the *uncertainty* of indeterminacy (in a delimited zone of indistinction) which triggers the *definite* exemptions of the concentration camp (Latin *eximere*, to take out following sorting). Not once, for instance, does Agamben verify the final solution of sovereign power (elimination of those classed as *other-genus* by means of a spatialized ban, the “single master concept” of the *Homo Sacer* series – Kalyvas 2005, p.112, on Agamben 2017) on the upgrade of No Man’s Land from undesignated multi-purpose wasteland (this already at least in premodern Europe – Leshem and Pinkerton 2015) to wasteland purposefully destined to *same-kin* youth deployed in civilizational formation (the SON of industrial warfare uniquely assigned to Europe’s sons – on in-line combat in a further “zone of horror” / “forbidden landscape” / double prohibition reserved to no-one (else) / ultimate “misnomer” delivering the full “economy of social guilt,” at minimum Ball 2016, p.18, Brown 2003, Das 2005, pp. 11, 87, Fussell 2013, Leed 1979, p.204).

Nor does a highly theorized No Man’s Land devoid of reference to the First World War raise questions in or beyond political theory, this being clearly by now too archaeological a conflict across all of its artefacts (Doyle 2014 and Sheffield 2013) for the deposition work presently required by and for Europe, operations that become indeed all the more exemplary in the unequal cultural circulation regimes producing and maintaining our knowledge of the past (Trouillot 1995; Craig 1990 – but also at least Sontag 2003, p.76: “collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating”). Scholars of the Great War engaging in Agamben readings of its civilian and POW camps, for example, do not raise a similar case for trench warfare (on the former, and on whether the First World War was concentrationary only with regard to the former, at minimum Gibelli 2016, Kamiński 1997, Pitzer 2017, Procacci 2016, Stone 2017, Winter 2017, pp.49-53), thus missing to revisit the reasons why this conflict in particular stands for an undivided combatant iconography of “irreplaceable lives honourably lost in a rotten cause” (Wilson 2014, pp.303 and 296, showcasing how the British press used the First World War as its commotive asset of choice to angle views on *our* loss of life in Afghanistan, the same Afghanistan as Singer’s, cited earlier – but see also Winter 2010 and Wittman 2011, on the social construction of post-WWI mourning and memory, and Winter 1995, pp.223-29, and 2017, on the extended consumption of the Great War as the time and place of specialized commemoration).

I see scope, that is, for welcome trouble in the above frictions. And, given toxic habits developed by societies in the initiation of their youth (Pedriali 2017), I see further intriguing trouble in the accelerated emergence of a great next generation, not least because biopolitics has as yet no discourse on the “explicit calculations” (Foucault 1990, p.143, with “explicit” implying *folded out, unrolled, executed-extorted*, Lat. *extorquere*, in the *limen-pli*) driving intergenerational biopower – this, surprisingly, in a discipline making the (re)production of products, “State racism” in short, its key scientific preoccupation:

what we see as a polarity, as a binary rift within society ... is the splitting of a single race into a superrace and a subrace ... the race that holds power ... is entitled to define the norm ... against those who pose a threat to the biological heritage ... “We have to defend society against all the biological threats ... that we are, despite ourselves, bringing into existence” ... At this point ... we see the appearance of a State racism: a racism that society will direct against itself, against its own elements and its own products. (2004, pp.61-62)

By 1914, “not one in Europe could have been unaware of the effect of these modern weapons of mass destruction,” writes Kramer in hindsight from the collision shadows of our time (2007, p.79). The bond among men, even more than the “single totality” of the chief (Clastres 2010, p.165), again demanded exaction of tax, fee and toll (the “blood tax” of an economy of sacrifice permitting no *rotation* – Mondini 2014, pp.59-106). The foundational collusion of civilization remained not just measured in gendered profits. It made *exclusive* explicit calculations on the *generational* “price of male citizenship” (Bourke 1996, p.77) based on the questionable “political liberty of sons” (Pateman 2018, pp.77-115 – but also at least Esposito 2010, pp.34-40, using Freud as reader of Hobbes to dispute a *belle époque* of highly suspect “mytho-totemic” narratives, p.37, of primitive brotherly guilt as debt).

Agamben acknowledges all of this, briefly and in passing. “It is as if male citizens had to pay for their participation in political life with an unconditional subjection to a power of death, as if life were able to enter the city only in the double exception of being capable of being killed and yet not sacrificed” (1998, p.90). This is what “attaches itself to every free male citizen from birth” (p.88), making the “*puer son ... sacer* with respect to his father,” and “the magistrate’s *imperium ... nothing but the father’s vitae necisque potestas* extended to all citizens” (p.89, italics at source) – a line of argument, in a key central chapter of Part II of *Homo Sacer* (pp. 87-90), which gets entirely subsumed (side-lined), in the progress to Part III, “The Camp as Biopolitical Paradigm of the Modern,” through the unrelenting demystification of the “sacrificial aura” erroneously attached to the extermination of the Jews (“the wish to lend a sacrificial aura to the extermination of the Jews by means of the term *Holocaust* was ... an irresponsible historiographical blindness ... The Jew living under Nazism is the privileged negative referent of the new biopolitical sovereignty ... His killing ... constitutes the actualization of a *mere capacity* to be killed inherent in the condition of the Jew as such ... the Jews were exterminated not in a mad and giant holocaust but exactly as Hitler had announced, *as lice*, which is to say, as bare life ... The dimension in which the extermination took place, is neither religion nor law, but biopolitics,” p.114 – again, italics as by the original).

This is a pivotal moment in several converging respects – not least, as one of the cluster of instances when the First World War plays but a temporal marker (e.g., pp.37-38, 40, 129, 131, 132, 167, etc.), on the way to an unrelated *limit concept* which even Foucault would have missed, and which in turn revectorizes many to

reject Agamben, while granting him that the *camp*, the failure to posit a politically viable “way out of a fallen world” (Giaccaria and Minca 2011, p.68 – citing Mazower 2008, p.32), may be all the trouble there is to his ban. What does get missed, in the operations of this puller of a thought combining rejection (of positions reached by others) and discovery (of a brand of *apparatus* or *dispositif* thinking to be claimed in one’s own name), is the theoretical force of the notion of the *puer sacer* of the core of Part II – which, had it been developed in parallel with the concept of the camp, would have had to arrive at stating the overlap between the concentrationary husbandry perpetrated in the concentration camps proper and the regenerative culling performed by the nation on the nation in the concentrationary killing fields of civilization at war.

It is exactly the latter profit that the First World War perfected as its *exemplary place* (Lat. *perficere*, to bring to full development, and again *proficere*, to advance, and indeed *exigere*, to require, enforce, demand, collect revenue), as more than any other zone of attack in history, before or since, No Man’s Land made unequivocally sensible the ultimate demarcation between civilizational space (qualified life) and unrestrained devastation (within the SON which the clashing collusions of war generate from the immediate logistics of combat). Mobilization for annihilation-in-stalemate, on that line, at that point in time, was not merely in the predictions of many (De Bloch 1903); a new and improved “No-Man’s-Land” packed with deadlier husbandry rights (Swinton 1909) was not just upscaling the tight race (tight conceptually = tight terminologically) with the non-Roman, non-Christian *terra nullius* of the colonial conquest overseas (Pateman 2007). Unlike the line surreptitiously encircling the *Jews* as entire sets and whole *genera* of disposable *other* people (Livingstone Smith 2011, pp.132-62), this line was destined to agitate the matter of young men / young testosterone very publicly. *Public* as in pertaining to the *people* making up *this* people; *people* as in the definitely *replaceable asset* managed by a race of compromised elders – the “government” of my epigraph from Brecht, or the Old Man Abraham of the *Parable* by Owen (on the latter patriarch’s syndrome, in conjunction-conivance with that of Isaac, Pedriali 2017, p.105).

This and not the other line has made the ever renewable / entirely sustainable *next generation* exceedingly exploitable (again Lat. *explicare*, to unfold, unroll, disentangle, till full selfish use is made – via Old French, *exploitier*, *espleiter*), confirming it as both bound and willing, determined to invest in its own *social immortality*, and hence thoroughly *collusional* expendable surplus. Nearly 50,000 died on the Roman side in one day at Cannae, 216 BCE, out of a population which in just three battles lost some 20% of those of usable military age: but who could stop *Rome* asking for more, given the expansionary commitment of its men (Gabriel 2008, pp.25-53 – and also Goldsworthy 2006, pp.197-221, for the comparison with Day One of the Battle of the Somme, which claimed 19,240 fatalities in the British Army). Of all available lines, that is, this one has for ever mobilized, coerced, and taunted this disposable income, making it get closest to

where tight indecisions reveal our most resolute plans; the one promising that a people (a generation) will make history by advancing in segmental line with(in) the Line, fire and men ballistically belonging together, as no one, not even chance, must waver (“not a man wavered ... after nightfall we found ... the straight lines of the dead as if the Platoons had just been dressed for parade,” – Ball 2016, p. 95, citing from the records of the 16th Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers on Day One of the Somme). The one showing that heroes will be indeed to blame for the trespassing: for “exceeding the limits of our vital and social determinations,” and for fulfilling a “luminous and peaceful element of inhumanity within the human element itself” (Badiou 2012, p.41, but also at least Agamben 1998, p.85, for a revealingly altogether-too-quick discussion of the three crimes – cancellation of borders, violence against a parent, and swindling in a contract – marking one as a *homo sacer* under Roman law).

This was and is a fully synthetic, truly man-made non-extension in neither space nor time, unfailingly processing all those asking to be blessed as fit and chosen *young men*, because the line separating them from the rest in theory makes them *sacred*, the matter of sacrifice (Mosse 1985, pp.114-32); whereas in practice, and given that the enemy too needs to have their line, and it too is feeding this one dubious double-exception, the resulting overall narrow strip of duplicity makes them en masse the matter of a curse (and hence, again, *sacred*: for language, our most portable device, is at its most productive under same-word binary overload). Suspect rhetorically, suspect linguistically: suspect and accursed in the understanding of the fanatic pragmatism of a present guarding itself against the social indeterminacy of the *biological threat that we despite ourselves bring into existence*. What some have called the “holocaust” of a self-mobilizing “misguided youth” (Savage 2007, p.147; Bourke 1996, p.247; Horne 1997), others the most archaic of modern wars (Leed 1979, p.115), was not just a culling, or a rebooting of one’s blood. It was typically, though also overemphatically, a subjugation of the future by pre-emptive erasure: another “little piece of overemphasis” (Das 2005, p.3, citing Woolf’s reading of Singer Sargent’s *Gassed*) in the drastic selections of the people we want onboard; a “civilizational habit” raising apocalyptic eschatologies (Keller 2005; Zylinska 2018) to support those who will pass on the *eureka* for a deal shrewdly rewon; a consummate manoeuvre to control next-generation admission into “categorized social location” (Ásta 2018) to make sure that no land is ever fit for heroes, and no infancy ever innocuous.

Agamben makes a rhetorically rather wonderful statement on this point. “The search for a *polis* and an *oikia* befitting this void and unpresupposable community is the *infantile* task of future generations” (2007, p.11, pp.3-11 more generally). However, this conciliatory move, which like hope “is not for us” (1993, p.101, citing Kafka – but also at least Bartoloni 2008), cannot delink our Utopia from our No Man’s Land: it cannot give scope for hypothetical further thresholds (Perone 2012) unless it conceals that those improbable opportunities are but another effect of the Line, something that biologically we did not have to draw (Dennett 2017), yet

won't stop manufacturing – materiality of the barbed wire included (Razac 2009). The supposed loss of the anthropological *frontline* which the First World War had conjured up to claim European ownership of the people of the future has not by chance been mourned with the Second World War (Derrida 1995, p.16 – i.e., mourned *theoretically*, and not just by former service men, e.g., Dunn 1987, or Boer 2016). Whereas its scripting as the final solution reserved to a fated youth has remained, again not by chance, more problematic than that of the Holocaust (on the latter's initial and partly continuing “failure of identification” through incorrect *scripting*, at least Alexander 2012, pp.31-97). Understanding the former extermination correctly, I contend, involves disputing the myth of a simple, natural, virile, naked, preindustrial combatant youth (Mann 2014, Connell 1995 and 2000, Meyer 2011, Mosse 1996, Gilmore 1990), the output of the *mythation* by a *truly mything humanity* we supposedly owe our seniors through their right of ownership on their *products*. This is why, against the temptations of remembrance, and given the centenary just past and those forthcoming, I have provoked a reading of Agamben that allows me to reinscribe what took and takes place in the most active of our lines – including what was and is missing in the line of sight of theory – as “neither religion nor law, but biopolitics.”

6. Exploding the thought conclusively (Lat. *explaudere* – to drive out, hiss off, hoot off)

In asking, not unusually, “Why Biopower? Why Now?,” Cisney and Morar work their way through Foucault's later positions on the transformation of power in the West since the classical age (of France):

... A more insidious and *expansionary* model appears (or is invented): “a new mechanism of power which had very specific procedures, completely new instruments, and very different equipment ... This new mechanism of power applies directly to bodies and what they do rather than to the land and what it produces.” Power now appears not to limit but to provoke, purify, and disseminate force for the purposes of management and control, ramified throughout all areas of life, the expansion of which is now its *raison d'être*. This new form of power is “working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them.” (Cisney and Morar 2015, pp.3-4, italics at source – citing Foucault 2004, p.35, and 1990, p.136, respectively)

Having insisted thus far, I will insist once more. Can there ever be power, and hence the imposition of limits, without provocation? Fear is “terribly originary” (Esposito 2010, p.21). It is fear that maintains “the central situation of power” – for “one can ensure life, which is the first necessity, only by accumulating power, which is the first passion. Yet one can accumulate power only at the expense of

others; at the cost of *their* life; living in their place, at the cost of their death” (respectively, pp.26 and 21, italics in the original – citing and paraphrasing Canetti for empathizing with the intellectual courage of a “man filled with fear” like Hobbes). Surviving for fear has taken all sorts – “humanity as such,” writes Schmitt perhaps believing his own words, “cannot wage war because it has no enemy, at least not on this planet” (2007, p.54). And while all kinds of exemplary operations continue to get waged under such premises, those placeless demarcations (that resolute “last wall” – Esposito 2019, pp.1-9) ensure that we appear before the Line, having been rounded up by the Law, to affirm (to sort out: through all manners of decisions) that we stay proud and aspirational (erect), tensive and capturing (forward-fuelled), synced and upgradable (deliriously alive: and recombinant, like life itself, no more no less – at minimum Cooper 2008, pp.12, 13, 17, 20, 21, 30, 31, 34, 49, etc., on life’s “capitalist promise” and “capitalist delirium,” p.20, provoking life systems, which are actually not closed, to come up to limits, which are actually not there, so that there may be “pre-emption” of the future in the form of exhaustible worlds, p.24, the “inhabitable present” having been reduced to a “bare minimum,” p.31, while resources get unendingly, and not just etymologically, *reborn*, from Lat. *resurgere*, pp.46-47, given that there is no “essential limit to evolutionary complexity,” pp. 39 and 44, no end, no entropy, this at least for a biomedicine informed by the latest in physics).

Forget about never having been modern. Or having been Mesopotamians since gateway and year XY, or thereabout. “We, the moderns, live” (Tarizzo 2017, p.1). “We are primitive humans. We are not just like them, we are them” (p.44). Ours is a “savage ontology” (pp.1-13), aggressively asserting our Separation (p.183), so that a “*pure will ... devoid of a specific purpose*” (p.60) may never refrain from overstating our non-negotiable terms of engagement – either “palingenesis or radical extinction” (p.206). Because “we are the *living ... we are the warriors of life*” – or more devastatingly put, “... all those that win do not fight each other... those that win belong to the same race ... We are the men of destiny, adults positioned to guard the human Race ... This is an invasive war ... a war for progeny ... *We are racists ... Worse still, we are the last racists, because we already embody the future ... we embody the eschatological Race, that by definition and on principle cannot be followed by any other*” (pp. 206-20, all italics at source, and reworking Darwin to extrapolate a “*racism of extermination,*” p.207 / “metaphysical eliminativism,” p.214, the “secret force that *flexes* all discourses about *life,*” p.13, as “*tertium non datur,*” p.205).

Hobbes, Darwin, Nietzsche, Agamben – and now Tarizzo. No wonder they are all, in some way, unpalatable. We cannot afford, in fact, to hear their message. There is already too much that we must not to hear as we seek exoneration from our explanations (Butler 2004, pp.1-18); there are already those abject *others* outwith the frames we have recruited – not *innocent civilians*, and not even *innocent women and children* (Butler 2010), as these categories are categorically inapplicable in their case, given where we have placed them (whereas those

categories are all too easily (ab)usable and indeed (ab)used within *our* zone of self-protection, when it is us who get hit). However, with *supercivilization at any price* ruling as ever the waves (biologism and supercivilization have again synced, Meacham 2016, and are sailing on beyond device *Europe*, seriously sizing up device *Mars*, surely with a view to finalizing rich fat symbolic contracts with the upcoming next best bidders over there), we had better pause in the “gash” of our frontlines, which no amount of levelling will ever manage to erase (Clout 1996, pp.4, 241-300, on the levelling of the First World War in the 1920s and 1930s, with dozens of recorded deaths by live shells well into the 1990s; but also at least Fenwick 2016, for the panoramas of the *restored* and again *productive* fields of France), and ask the further question, given that no lives, in the end, are grievable or irreplaceable (they are merely rhetorically so in the fiction of their logistics) and that we live exclusively in their place – yes, how come that we cannot stand the “surplus of negation” (Esposito 2019, p.7) which makes us tick, and profess that the work of thought “cannot be concluded but only abandoned” (Agamben 2015, p.XIII), having found refuge and repose, if not sustenance and replenishment, in that peculiar threshold of possibilities which is Theory once you have taken out the No Man’s Land of History?

Agamben would like us to have a Last Scene. A Final Banquet before the Open (2004, pp.1-3), when we shall eat of the flesh of the two monsters, the Land and the Sea, while presenting ourselves in animal form – “Theriomorphous” is the name and the title for the story of that unjolly gathering. Personally, I doubt that the Gen Z of that reconciliation will be sitting among the Just. And, if consulted, I might suggest some entertainment, some reminder of the risky politics of young bodies with power – *Young Men*, 2017, or *They Shall Not Grow Old*, 2018. In this way, I will do the remembrance I can, for those who having been signed up to civilization lost their “title to life” (McMahan 2008; Shepard 2002, pp.53-71), a crime supposedly of their own. No, not reconciled even on the last day. Just recharged. Hormones, by the way, were the buzz-word of the scientific world of 1905 (Geroulanos and Meyers 2018). From the Greek ὀρμάω – to impel, set in motion, excite.

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