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Since the 70s, the “war on drugs” has proven a failed initiative, yet it endures; economic engagement with Mexico has only expanded the trafficking problem the US has crusaded against. Intertwined with the economics of the drug war is a fundamental shift in the way that sovereignty operates on the US-Mexico border.

Parker, 11 – master’s degree in cultural and political studies from Royal Holloway, University of London, written extensively in the academic arena on geopolitics, ‘radical’ politics and protest, and mass media (Lindsay, “The Making of a Space of Exception: the War on Drugs, Agamben, and Ciudad

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The “war on drugs” was introduced into the American lexicon by Richard Nixon in 1971 (Cockburn & St. Clair 1998) as a continuation of the prohibitionist drug laws originating from 1914’s Harrison Narcotics Tax Act. The “war on drugs” was simultaneously enforced with Nixon’s “war on crime” that both emphasized “radical turn[s] from welfarist criminal justice approaches emphasizing rehabilitation and redistribution, towards coercive penal governance” (Corva 2008:178). Whereas a welfarist order understood illicit behaviour as symptomatic of an unjust socio-economic society and tried to rehabilitate users, the penal state adopted strict rules that would place offenders in prison for even small amounts of possession (Beckett & Sassoon 2000). Currently this “zero tolerance” policy emphasizes prohibition, halting production, distribution, and the consumption of drugs at the cost of $15 billion annually to the federal government, with state and local governments spending another $25 billion in 2010 alone (Office of National Drug Control Policy 2010). Yet the response nationally and internationally from civilians, lawyers, medical professionals, academics, and police enforcement alike is that the “war on drugs” is an overwhelming failure that has not reduced drug use, drug trafficking, or violent crime, but that has rather resulted in the growth of a multi-billion annual black market that promotes violence and results in harmful repercussions to society (Baum 1996; Bertram 1996). A major source of this violence stems from rival drug cartels throughout Central and South America fighting for trade routes and access to portals along the US/Mexican border across which they can smuggle narcotics for US consumption. The passing of NAFTA in 1994 made trafficking easier and more efficient than ever before (Andreas 1995; Campbell 2009) resulting in the competition for domination of border towns and cities, such as Ciudad Juarez, positioned a mere two miles away from the American border. This strategic location is crucial because of the United States’ insatiable demand for narcotics, especially cocaine. It is estimated that 80-90% of Central and South American cocaine ends up in the United States making border cities and towns incredibly valuable and vulnerable spaces of violent competition (United Nations 2010). As Mexico and the United States keep battling drug cartels in what seems an impossible war to win, narcotics are illegally exported into the United States where demand is still high. The war on drugs and resulting turf war in Juarez are indicative of a re-configuration of geographies of sovereignty and exceptional space along and beyond the border. Sovereign power is a key theme to Agamben’s Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (1998). Translated from “Sacred Man, “homo sacer” refers to a bare life that is stripped of all citizens” rights that can be killed by anyone without punishment. Human life becomes politicized as it becomes dominated by the sovereign’s suspension of juridical order allowing for otherwise illegal crimes to become normalized because where there is no law, nothing can be illegal. This state of exception is a “point of indistinction between violence and law, the threshold on which violence passes over into law and law passes over into violence” (1998: 32). This threshold is at the core of what Agamben calls the paradox of sovereignty. If sovereign powers are able to declare spaces of exception or suspend the law, they are effectively placing themselves outside of the law. In his own work Agamben uses the example of Nazi concentration camps to exercise the tangibility and physicality of a space of exception, or where juridical order has been indefinitely suspended by sovereign actors. More recently, Agamben and others have identified Guantanamo Bay as such a space (Butler 2002; Gregory 2006). In these examples the sovereign powers, though acting within or outside of the law, were state actors. Agamben’s reading of sovereignty loosely follows Westphalian tenets including the principle of the sovereignty of states and fundamental right to self-determination, the principle of international law equality between states, and the principle of non-intervention of one state in the internal affairs of another state (Lyons & Mastanduno 1995). Traditional theorizations of sovereignty stemmed from Westphalia have increasingly come under scrutiny with some even posing the end of a traditional sovereignty in the political realm (Camilleri & Falk 1992; Hardt & Negri 2000; Ward 2003). These are important in considering how ideas of sovereignty have shifted through history and political landscapes including times of civil disobedience, terrorism, war, and globalization, which is especially intertwined (geo)politically and economically with the drug war. The drug war in Juarez is another example that is challenging traditional ideas of how sovereignty is practiced on the ground and how strict binaries of legal and illegal are being nullified and subverted as sovereign state actors are losing power to drug cartels.

Legal approaches have failed – cartels have subverted governmental sovereignty in Juarez as sovereignty has been transferred to the drug underworld

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Recalling Agamben’s paradox of sovereignty, the drug cartels have managed to exist and command from both inside of the law and outside of it while maintaining their illegal operations. Unlike prominent visions of sovereignty that revolve around nation-states and their allocated small bodies of representatives as the sovereign actors of a territory, Juarez’s regional sovereignty is being subverted and overtaken by Juarez’s drug cartels with visible spreading to the national government as well. This threshold crossing over from order into absence of law is maintained by widespread corruption. The drug cartels have influence in all areas of governance including politicians, military officials, and law enforcement on both sides of the border (Heyman & Campbell 2007). In 1997 in a blow to US and Mexican anti-drug policy, the head of Mexico’s National Institute for the Combat of Drugs, Gen. Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo was arrested for accepting bribes from the Juarez cartel. In 2008 veteran federal prosecutor and head of an elite Mexican anti-drug task force, Noe Ramirez, was arrested for taking a $450,000 bribe from drug cartels in exchange for insider information. These two high profile arrests are the tip of the iceberg in a deep rooted system of corruption that enables drug cartels to operate outside the law while effectively overruling most legal maneuvers attempting to oust them from their positions of power that result in Juarez being cast as a space of exception. Recalling to mind the powers held by the sovereign, the city of Juarez have apadrinados, or people protected by the godfather and thus untouchable by la policia. They are “drug dealers that enjoy the protection of heavy, influential narcotraffickers, who pay the police for protection and silence and to whom they give part of the drug load that they sell” (Campbell: 103).These individuals and higher up kingpins perform illegal acts but remain in control of who would normally exercise juridical power thus bestowing sovereignty on the cartels as they get to choose what acceptable forms of conduct are, whether it is judicially legal or not. Once traditional state and governmental sovereign parties capitulate to groups who begin to exercise total power over a space, the conception and understanding of sovereignty is changed. Negri approaches sovereignty from a unique perspective saying: The concept of sovereignty is a concept of a power that has nothing above it. It is a secular conception of power, opposed to any notion of a power based outside its own dynamic… Order is the result of an activity of government which meets acceptance and/or passivity among a given group of citizens over the extent of a territory. In this perspective, sovereignty as order becomes administration; in other words, sovereignty organises itself as a machinery of authority which extends through and structures territory. Through the activity of administration, territory is organised, and structures of authority are extended through it. Increasingly within the dynamics of modern sovereignty, the connection between administration and territory becomes intimate and full. The nature of the economic regime (mercantilist or liberalist) matters little; the nature of the political regime (absolutist, aristocratic or popular) also matters little. (1996: 33) If we look to his definition we can view sovereignty as a body that doesn‟t have to hold legal authority but be able to control and direct the people who appear to be the sovereign. This is further evident with the use of la linea (the line), a formal armed branch of state police officers who work for the Juarez cartel (Bunker & Sullivan 2010).The successes of the cartels to infiltrate all walks of life including employing their own police enforcement point to the primacy and ability of drug leaders to establish the rule of the land in Juarez. Although narcotraffickers and drug kingpins are still wanted by US and Mexican governments, the capability of the cartels to constantly remain one step ahead of the formal rule of law is indicative of the transformative sovereignty the drug underworld maintain in Juarez. While traditional law prohibits the sale, possession, and trafficking of narcotics (not to mention murder, kidnapping, and assault), these laws have been deemed obsolete as both international and national governments have failed to enforce these laws and punish perpetrators while the cartels supremacy remains intact and profits swell (Naim 2005).

This transfer of sovereignty constitutes Juarez as a space of exception. Citizens’ juridical value is suspended by both cartels and state military forces, as these categories become one in the same – rule and exception become indistinguishable, which is the enabling condition for violence

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This analysis of Juarez as a space of exception follows Agamben’s reading while slightly deviating from the traditional legal definition of a space of exception as a governmental decreed state of emergency. Using Agamben’s definition of sovereign power as “truly the one to whom the juridical order grants the power of proclaiming a state of exception” (Agamben: 15), then the juridical unofficial transfer of sovereignty to the underworld legitimizes Juarez as a space of exception. A crucial distinction Agamben makes is that “the state of exception is thus not the chaos that precedes order but rather the situation that results from its suspension” (18). The space of exception exists in a prolonged space between order and chaos. To identify the newly formed space in Juarez it is necessary to analyse the practices employed by the cartels to achieve their unique form of sovereignty and exceptional space in Juarez. Virtually all realms of the political, social, cultural, and economic have at some point been targeted by some affiliate of narcoculture. The illicit enforcer’s ability to control large parts of the population is largely a result of corruption and bribery. This situates the cartels as the sovereign actors that allow otherwise illegal acts to remain operable and widespread. However, not all who succumb to the drug lords are victims of greed. Many profit from large bribes but other times people are intimidated to the point of complacency (Campbell 2009; Vulliamy 2010). The threat of physical violence and murder is a tactic the cartels use to ensure they evade prosecution, avoid drug seizures, and ultimately secure the transportation of their illegal cargo across the border (Bowden 2010; Vulliamy 2010). A recent analysis found that the murder rate in Juarez had rose 40% from February of this year compared to last year. The month of February 2011 alone resulted in 229 deaths up from last February’s 1636. This growing violence sheds light on how drug cartels are able to operate with little recourse in Juarez. The cartels have been gaining sovereign rights for some time now but as mentioned before, the space of exception is not chaos before order, but a different form of order arising from the suspension. The increased violence over the last year is a result of the suspension incurred as the cartels sovereignty surpassed local and national authority. In linking violence, the law, and sovereignty; Agamben benefits heavily from Walter Benjamin’s “Critique of Violence” (1978). For Benjamin, violence occurs where exception and rule become indistinguishable. The violence implemented in a state of emergency both conserves the law while making vague the distinction on what is actually violence used to preserve the law. Agamben uses this theory to argue that “In laying bare the irreducible link uniting violence and law, Benjamin‟s “Critique of Violence” proves the necessary and, even today, indispensible premise of every inquiry into sovereignty” (63). If violence is used to preserve the law, then the autonomous sovereignty the drug cartels exert by using violence results in a space of exception and de facto sovereignty. The sadistic tactics used by the cartels operating from within and outside the law are what contribute to the city as a space of suspended order. The citizens are under a psychological and city wide siege that fears both the cartels and the military; contributing to the disorder. Both sides have power to kill or detain against ones rights with little impunity. In the past the majority of the murder victims were somehow affiliated with one of the rival cartels with lower incidence of bystander blowback (Campbell 2009). Now the victims are being indistinctly targeted as the cartels (and increasingly the military) have less fear of police reprisal. On January 31, 2010 a birthday party was opened fire on killing 14 people between the ages of 15-30 because it was believed a police informant was there7. As recently as March 10, 2010 a man was found alive but clearly tortured, wielding a note „welcoming‟ the new police chief to Juarez8. Bodies are commonly found hanging from bridges or dumped in public squares decapitated, missing limbs, or completely unidentifiable (Campbell 2009; Bowden 2010). The brutal tactics and spatial orientations of the murders are entangled as the public space of Juarez becomes the “stage” of these crimes. As the cartels increasingly use public space to send threatening messages to mass society, the citizen’s right to assembly and expression is limited, mimicking a legal suspension of rights during a declared state of exception. The public space of streets and plazas is no longer public as it is also controlled by the cartels to intimidate the public into acquiescence. The messages are not just found in the public dumping of the corpses, but in messages embedded in how the bodies are presented as well. Bodies displaying gun wounds in the back of the neck identify traitors, spies get shot in the ear, people who „run their mouths‟ are shot in the mouth, suspected police informants have their fingers cut off and shoved into their mouths, cheaters are found castrated (Campbell 2009). These morbid displays not only work to intimidate the public, but send a warning to rival cartels over who controls an area. In addition to the various states of the bodies, cartels have started attaching banners to bodies and public monuments to explicitly state their intentions and „ownership‟ of an area. These banners often contain lists of intended victims and messages to rival cartels and public officials (Campbell 2009). The fall of public space to drug cartels signifies an aspect of legal suspension of rights envisioning how space is reconfigured by the sovereign in a state of emergency.

The biopolitical determination of the threshold beyond which life ceases to have juridical value creates the category of a “life devoid of value” which spills over to the biological body of every living being and nullifies value to death

Agamben, 98 – professor of philosophy at university of Verona (Giorgio, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, pg. 139-140)

It is not our intention here to take a position on the difficult ethical problem of euthanasia, which still today, in certain coun­tries, occupies a substantial position in medical debates and pro­vokes disagreement. Nor are we concerned with the radicaliry with which Binding declares himself in favor of the general admissibility of euthanasia. More interesting for our inquiry is the fact that the sovereignty of the living man over his own life has its immediate counterpart in the determination of a threshold beyond which life ceases to have any juridical value and can, therefore, be killed without the commission of a homicide. The new juridical category of “life devoid of value” (or “life unworthy of being lived”) corre­sponds exactly—even if in an apparently different direction—to the bare life of homo sacer and can easily be extended beyond the limits imagined by Binding. It is as if every valorization and every “politicization” of life (which, after all, is implicit in the sovereignty of the individual over his own existence) necessarily implies a new decision concerning the threshold beyond which life ceases to be politically relevant, becomes only “sacred life,” and can as such be eliminated without punishment. Every society sets this limit; every society—even the most modern—decides who its “sacred men” will be. It is even pos­sible that this limit, on which the politicization and the exceprio of natural life in the juridical order of the state depends, has done nothing but extend itself in the history of the West and has now— in the new biopolitical horizon of states with national sovereignty—moved inside every human life and every citizen. Bare life is no longer confined to a particular place or a definite category. It now dwells in the biological body of every living being.

**The impact is the sovereign’s ability to exploit fundamental flaws in the legal system and continue the global biopolitical war – the ballot should side with the global countermovement against such violence – refuse the line**

**Gulli, 13** - professor of history, philosophy, and political science at Kingsborough College in New York, (Bruno, “For the critique of sovereignty and violence,” <http://academia.edu/2527260/For_the_Critique_of_Sovereignty_and_Violence>, pg. 1)

We live in an unprecedented time of crisis. The violence that characterized the twentieth century, and virtually all known human history before that, seems to have entered the twenty-first century with exceptional force and singularity. True, this century opened with the terrible events of September 11. However, September 11 is not the beginning of history. Nor are the histories of more forgotten places and people, the events that shape those histories, less terrible and violent – though they may often be less spectacular. The singularity of this violence, this paradigm of terror, does not even simply lie in its globality, for that is something that our century shares with the whole history of capitalism and empire, of which it is a part. Rather, it must be seen in the fact that **terror as a global phenomenon** has now become **self-conscious**. Today, the struggle is for global dominance in a singularly new way, and war –regardless of where it happens—is also **always global**. Moreover, in its self-awareness, terror has become, more than it has ever been, an instrument of racism. Indeed, what is new in the singularity of this violent struggle, this racist and terrifying war, is that in the usual attempt to neutralize the enemy, **there is a cleansing of immense proportion going on**. To use a word which has become popular since Michel Foucault, it is a biopolitical cleansing. This is not the traditional ethnic cleansing, where one ethnic group is targeted by a state power – though that is also part of the general paradigm of racism and violence. It is rather **a global cleansing**, where the sovereign elites, the global sovereigns in the political and financial arenas (capital and the political institutions), in all kinds of ways target those who do not belong with them on account of their race, class, gender, and so on, but above all, **on account of their way of life and way of thinking**. These are the multitudes of people who, for one reason or the other, are **liable for scrutiny and surveillance, extortion** (typically, in the form of over- taxation and fines) and **arrest, brutality, torture, and violent death**. The sovereigns target anyone who, as Giorgio Agamben (1998) shows with the figure of homo sacer, **can be killed without being sacrificed** – anyone who can be reduced to the paradoxical and ultimately impossible condition of bare life, whose only horizon is death itself. In this sense, the biopolitical cleansing is also immediately a thanatopolitical instrument.¶ The biopolitical struggle for dominance is a fight to the death. Those who wage the struggle to begin with, those who want to dominate, will not rest until they have prevailed. Their fanatical and self-serving drive is also very much **the source of the crisis** investing all others. The point of this essay is to show that the present crisis, which is systemic and permanent and thus something more than a mere crisis, **cannot be solved** unless **the struggle for dominance is eliminated**. The elimination of such struggle implies the demise of the global sovereigns, the global elites – and this will not happen without a global revolution, **a “restructuring of the world”** (Fanon 1967: 82). This must be a revolution **against the paradigm of violence** and terror typical of the global sovereigns. It is not a movement that uses violence and terror, but rather one that counters the primordial terror and violence of the sovereign elites by **living up to the vision of a new world** already worked out and cherished by multitudes of people. This is the nature of **counter-violence**: not to use violence in one’s own turn, but **to deactivate and destroy its mechanism**. At the beginning of the modern era, Niccolò Machiavelli saw the main distinction is society in terms of dominance, the will to dominate, or the lack thereof. **Freedom**, Machiavelli says, is obviously on the side of those who reject the paradigm of domination:¶ [A]nd doubtless, if we consider the objects of the nobles and of the people, we must see that the first have a great desire to dominate, whilst the latter have only the wish not to be dominated, and consequently a greater desire to live in the enjoyment of liberty (Discourses, I, V).¶ Who can resist applying this amazing insight to the many situations of resistance and revolt that have been happening in the world for the last two years? From Tahrir Square to Bahrain, from Syntagma Square and Plaza Mayor to the streets of New York and Oakland, ‘**the people’ speak with one voice against ‘the nobles**;’ the 99% all face the same enemy: the same 1%; courage and freedom face the same police and military machine of cowardice and deceit, brutality and repression. Those who do not want to be dominated, and do not need to be governed, are **ontologically on the terrain of freedom**, always-already turned toward a poetic desire for the **common good**, the **ethics of a just world**. The point here is not to distinguish between good and evil, but rather to understand the twofold nature of power – as domination or as care.¶ The biopolitical (and thanatopolitical) struggle for dominance is unilateral, for there is only one side that wants to dominate. The other side –ontologically, if not circumstantially, free and certainly wiser—does not want to dominate; rather, it wants not to be dominated. This means that **it rejects domination as such**. The rejection of domination also implies the rejection of violence, and I have already spoken above of the meaning of counter-violence in this sense. To put it another way, with Melville’s (2012) Bartleby, this other side **“would prefer not to”** be dominated, and it “would prefer not to” be forced into the paradigm of violence. Yet, for this preference, this desire, to pass from potentiality into actuality, **action must be taken** – an action which is a return and **a going under, an uprising and a hurricane**. Revolution is to turn oneself away from the terror and violence of the sovereign elites toward the horizon of freedom and care, which is the pre- existing ontological ground of the difference mentioned by Machiavelli between the nobles and the people, the 1% (to use a terminology different from Machiavelli’s) and the 99%. What is important is that the sovereign elite and its war machine, its police apparatuses, its false sense of the law, **be done with**. It is important that the sovereigns be shown, as Agamben says, in **“their original proximity to the criminal”** (2000: 107) **and that they be dealt with accordingly**. For this to happen, a true sense of the law must be recuperated, one whereby **the law is also immediately ethics**. The sovereigns will be **brought to justice**. The process is long, but it is in many ways already underway. The recent news that a human rights lawyer will lead a UN investigation into the question of drone strikes and other forms of targeted killing (The New York Times, January 24, 2013) is an **indication of the fact that the movement of those who do not want to be dominated is not without effect**. An initiative such as this is perhaps necessarily timid at the outset and it may be sidetracked in many ways by powerful interests in its course. Yet, **even positing**, at that institutional level, **the possibility** that drone strikes be a form of unlawful killing and war crime is a clear indication of what common reason (one is tempted to say, the General Intellect) already understands and knows. The hope of those who **“would prefer not to”** be involved in a violent practice such as this, is that those responsible for it be held accountable and that the horizon of terror be canceled and overcome. Indeed, **the earth needs care**. And when instead of caring for it, resources are dangerously wasted and abused, **it is imperative** that those **who know and understand revolt** –and what they must revolt against is the squandering and irresponsible elites, the sovereign discourse, whose authority, beyond all nice rhetoric, ultimately rests on the threat of military violence and police brutality¶

Interrogation of Juarez as a space of exception is valuable in its ability to foster understanding the operation and implication of such categories

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All countries have their own legal procedures and definitions of what a state of emergency is but usually follow the pattern of a governmental declaration that may suspend normal executive, legislative, and judicial powers following a man-made or natural disaster (Abbott 2006). Under a state of emergency individual constitutional rights may also be suspended until further notice by the ruling governmental sovereign. This is in contrast to Agamben who views a space of exception as the space in which events unfold as opposed to the actual declarations by the government in a state of emergency. This distinction is important to address due to a recent WikiLeak disclosure (Wikileaks #3101) that showed in 2009 United States and Mexican officials rejected the possibility of declaring a state of exception in Juarez. Invoking Article 29 of the Mexican Constitution would have given the military larger control and less recourse for their counternarcotics efforts. Deployed under Pres. Calderon, the Mexican military has come under attack for detaining, beating, and torturing suspected members of the drug trade who turned out to be innocent. The leaks allude to an urgency to stress the legality of sustained military occupation in Juarez. Besides instituting a form of martial law, the exchanges between the US government and Mexican Secretary of Defence, General Guillermo Galvan reveal that the state of exception would “suspend rights…including freedom of expression, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, freedom of passage, or some tenets of legal due process. The military, for example, might be granted broader detention authorities” (WikiLeaks #3101). The suggestion would later be turned down due to the US and Mexican governments not wanting to give the US and Mexican governments and public oversight on the war on drugs‟ failures. This situation is interesting due to both the US and Mexican government’s opposition to declaring a state of emergency when many facets of what would be suspended under the declaration are already in place due to the actions of another ruling sovereign: the cartels. The examination of Juarez as a space of exception is an important one because its situation falls into both legal and theoretical definitions. This can provide valuable information on the nature of states of emergency and exception, the implied legality of such categorizations, and how these terms are exercised and implicated on the ground in physical spaces desperately needing a restoral of order.

Representations and exposition are the organizing principles behind the debate which we can challenge to alter power

Agamben, 2000 – professor of philosophy at the College International de Philosophie in Paris (Giorgio, Means Without End: Notes on Politics, p. 93-95)

Exposition is the location of politics. If there is no ani­mal politics, that is perhaps because animals are always already in the open and do not try to take possession of their own exposition; they simply live in it without car­ing about it. That is why they are not interested in mir­rors, in the image as image. Human beings, on the other hand, separate images from things and give them a name precisely because they want to recognize themselves, that is, they want to take possession of their own very ap­pearance. Human beings thus transform the open into a world, that is, into the battlefield of a political struggle without quarter. This struggle, whose object is truth, goes by the name of History. It is happening more and more often that in porno­graphic photographs the portrayed subjects, by a calcu­lated stratagem, look into the camera, thereby exhibiting the awareness of being exposed to the gaze. This unex­pected gesture violently belies the fiction that is implicit in the consumption of such images, according to which the one who looks surprises the actors while remaining unseen by them: the latter, rather, knowingly challenge the voyeur’s gaze and force him to look them in the eyes. In that precise moment, the insubstantial nature of the human face suddenly comes to light. The fact that the actors look into the camera means that they show that they are simulating; nevertheless, they paradoxically ap­pear more real precisely to the extent to which they ex­hibit this falsification. The same procedure is used to­day in advertising: the image appears more convincing if it shows openly its own artifice. In both cases, the one who looks is confronted with something that concerns unequivocally the essence of the face, the very structure of truth. We may call tragicomedy of appearance the fact that the face uncovers only and precisely inasmuch as it hides, and hides to the extent to which it uncovers. In this way, the appearance that ought to have manifested human be­ings becomes for them instead a resemblance that be­trays them and in which they can no longer recognize themselves. Precisely because the face is solely the loca­tion of truth, it is also and immediately the location of simulation and of an irreducible impropriety. This does not mean, however, that appearance dissimulares what it uncovers by making it look like what in reality it is not: rather, what human beings truly are is nothing other than this dissimulation and this disquietude within the appearance. Because human beings neither are nor have to be any essence, any nature, or any specific destiny, their condition is the most empty and the most insubstantial of all: it is the truth. What remains hidden from them is not something behind appearance, but rather appearing itself, that is, their being nothing other than a face. The task of politics is to return appearance itself to appearance, to cause appearance itself to appear. The face, truth, and exposition are today the objects of a global civil war, whose battlefield is social life in its en­tirety, whose storm troopers are the media, whose victims are all the peoples of the Earth. Politicians, the media establishment, and the advertising industry have under­stood the insubstantial character of the face and of the community it opens up, and thus they transform it into a miserable secret that they must make sure to control at all costs. State power today is no longer founded on the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence — a mo­nopoly that states share increasingly willingly with other nonsovereign organizations such as the United Nations and terrorist organizations; rather, it is founded above all on the control of appearance (of doxa). The fact that politics constitutes itself as an autonomous sphere goes hand in hand with the separation of the face in the world of spectacle — a world in which human communication is being separated from itself. Exposition thus transforms itself into a value that is accumulated in images and in the media, while a new class of bureaucrats jealously watches over its management.

Theoretical thinking concerning security problematizes militarized practices like the “war on drugs” – it constitutes reality

**Bilgin, 5** – Professor of IR, Bikent University, *Regional Security In The Middle East A Critical Perspective*, Page 7

From a critical perspective, thinking differently about security involves: first, challenging the ways in which security has traditionally been conceptualised by broadening and deepening the concept and by rejecting the primacy given to the sovereign state as the primary referent for, and agent of, security. Critical approaches also problematise the **militarised** and zero-sum practices informed by prevailing discourses and call for reconceptualising practice. Second, thinking differently entails rejecting the conception of theory as a neutral tool, which merely explains social phenomena, and emphasises the mutually constitutive relationship between theory and practice. That is, the way we (the community of students of security) think and write about security informs practice; it privileges certain practices whilst marginalising others, thereby helping **constitute** what human beings choose to call **'reality'**. Theory is itself a form of practice; theorising is recognised as a political activity. Finally, adopting a critical approach to security implies adopting an explicitly normative (for some, emancipation-oriented) approach to security in theory and practice.

Our affirmation is a form of play that liberates debate from rigid rules and detaches humanity from the sacred

Dragona, 8 – PhD Candidate in the Faculty of Communication and Mass Media at University Of Athens, Freelance media arts curator (Daphne, “WhoDaresToDe-sacraliseTodaySPlay,” Personal Cinema, Page Last Modified 24 April 2008, http://www.personalcinema.org/warport/index.php?n=Main.WhoDaresToDe-sacraliseTodaySPlay?)

Giorgio Agamben considers play a most important element in culture, explaining that it is the only one that can profane what is considered sacred. It can liberate humanity from the “sacred”, without negating it. It can profane the “sacred” without destroying the myth behind; it does not simply politicise. And if play is to cause changes and form our lives in better ways, this would be through its capacity to be an act of profanation by itself. But, unfortunately, this tendency according to Agamben is in decline and the need to regain it is a political necessity (Agamben 2006 : 127). What are the conditions of play today? Can it seriously play a role in our everyday lives? Who could re-attribute its capability to profane? Defining play There have been many definitions of play from different disciplines and orientations. Sutton – Smith in his book The Ambiguity of Play refers frequently to Mihail Spariosu who had called play “amphibolous” describing a basic disagreement between the Western philosophers over whether play is an orderly and rule- governed affair according to the common western society norms, or a chaotic, violent and indeterminate interaction of forces, according to some more modern approaches (Sutton Smith 1997/2001: 80). Roger Caillois had also seen two poles in play, but as a continuum where diversified forms could be set. On one extreme we find “paidia”, an “indivisible principle”, common to diversion, turbulence, free improvisation and carefree gaiety which is manifested by uncontrolled fantasy. At the other end, we find “ludus”, bound with “arbitrary, imperative and purposely tedious conventions”. The more the “frolic and impulsive exuberance” of paidia is “disciplined by an inversed tendency to its anarchic and capricious nature”, the more play approaches ludus (Caillois 1958/2001: 13). The Western European thought mostly followed the rationalistic common pattern and embraced the politicized, ruled form of play surpassing its anarchic and vivid features. This can be easily seen by the well known definitions of Huizinga and Caillois who, although they described play as free and unproductive activity, still insist on its dependency on the rules and its separation from everyday life. (Caillois 1958/2001: 43, Huizinga 1955: 13) Is it play or game? The old scholars, Huizinga and Caillois, did not especially differentiate the two terms. It seems that the rules that institutionalised play gave form to games. Play appears to be the idea, the notion, the anarchic and spontaneous basis, the activity based on fantasy, what Caillois called paidia, as Plato and Aristotle first put it. Accordingly, games seem to be the expressions and the forms of play that are governed by rules, demand discipline and form hierarchies, need a constraint space and time, reflecting more the ludus element. Generally, one could assume that play as a notion precedes games – it is their presupposition; it is the play ‘instinct’ that inspires the formation of forms. (Huizinga in Wark 2007: 181) In our times, with the explosion of the video game industry, the two words seem to have enclosed different features and ideas. Edward Castronova highlights the difference as follows: “Play is an intense, survival- relevant action that is not serious… Play is make believe… Play is an easy- to- copy behaviour that brings joy… Games are not the same thing as play. Games are designed goal environments with uncertain outcomes. They are social institutions. Games are a perfect environment for creating play, but also they appear under other circumstances. Elections… stock markets… wars are games.” (Castronova 2007: 100,101) In the digital era, games in the form of video games distant themselves more from play. Games compared to play can be described, can be analysed; they become a product, a commodity; they can be copied, copyrighted and become a subject of control. As Alexander R. Galloway notes, the video game is a cultural object bound by history and materiality, consisting of an electronic computational device and a game simulated in software (Galloway, 2006: 1) Risks of play Mckenzie Wark writes in his recent book Gamer Theory that games are no longer a past time, outside or alongside of life. They are now the very form of life, and death, and time, itself (Wark 2007: 06) To a certain degree, every civilization can be described and characterised by its games but what happens today is that life itself has taken the form of a game; of game and not play. While gaming platforms today are being used widely for different disciplines we might need to wonder: What are the risks play runs in this context? How could they be faced? The risk of contamination According to the classic thinkers of play, there was one main threat for play, its “contamination” by the ordinary life. Play could only be considered as a “stepping out of real life, into a temporary sphere with a disposition of its own” (Huizinga 1955: 8). The world of play and that of everyday life were considered as two different universes, antagonistic to each other (Caillois, 1958/2001: 44, 53). This austere distinction was what the situationists tried to break and to transcend. “Play, radically broken from a confined ludic time and space, must invade the whole of life”, they stated in 1958. The situationists with their notions of the psychogeographies, the derive, the situation and the détournement had proposed a fusion of play into the cities, a total swift where the player is in reality the “liver”. In our days, a different fusion of play occurred. Our everyday life is a fusion in itself of the virtual and the real. As Edward Castronova mentions “the real world can be a terribly empty place.” Synthetic worlds may offer experiences and opportunities that one might not have in their real life. Of course, “reality remains reality, strongly sensated but unfiltered, raw. It will always command attention, but it has long since abandoned the claim to all of our attention. We already live partly in media. Games are just the latest improvement.” (Castronova 2007: 30, 69) The risk of productivity Play is longer by definition an occasion of pure waste; waste of time, energy, ingenuity and skill. Play’s second major risk is the one formed by productivity, by players who belong to the generation of the prosumers, as they are producers and consumers at the same time. Play nowadays becomes part of the immaterial labour, within which as Lazzarato notes ‘leisure time’ and ‘working time’ are increasingly fused, making play – in our case- inseparable from work (Lazzarato 1997). This affective labor of play produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity that at the end is defined as game. Within this content stand today’s synthetic worlds where the players contribute voluntarily with their work and behaviour to the formation of the gaming worlds and the augmentation of the virtual economy. Communication is continually improved as the power of this form is found in the collective process, in the users/prosumers social relations. People of course might as well make profit for themselves. This kind of play can be to their advantage. But one can not overlook the fact that this era of ludocapitalism, as Dibbel frames it, is “a curious new post-industrial revolution, driven by play as the first one was driven by steam”. (Dibbell in Shaviro 2007) The risk of being the alibi The risk of play being exploited and being used as an alibi for economical or political profit is not a new one. The ambiguous –in ethic terms - economy of the casinos, the lotteries and the hippodromes or even the economy of the sports industry are such phenomena that have given birth to discussions, problems and even scandals for most of the countries of the Western world. However, the highest risk for play today is found in the exploitation of play being made by the military entertainment complex. War as a game is an old metaphor. Chess and Go and especially the 19th century Kriegsspiel which was used to aid Prussian officers, could be considered as predecessors of the games that would be used for military entertaining purposes later on (Halter 2002). But what the media and especially the video games changed was the possibilities given for nationalistic propaganda. Games like America’s Army, are at the same time a recruiting tool, an edugame, a test bed and tool and a propaganda game. Such games can influence attitudes and behaviours and win a communication battle that would otherwise be lost. Creating falsifying images of super-clean pure war, as seen on the screens, the games succeed in “using sweet power to win a war on ideas” (Neiborg 2007: 79) Summarizing the risks above, the impression given is that we have “nowhere to hide outside the gamespace” (Wark 2007: 183). But, are we trapped within a total game or is play itself trapped as well at the end? The sovereignity of the game over play today is a fact. Having been institutionalized, play has been accredited with the seriousness of an academic, social, political and economic value and has become an issue of controversial discussion accordingly. But in reality, again, it is mostly games we are talking about, not play. Contemporary play is purposely sacralised and distant, used as an excuse for games’ abuses. Being considered sacred, play’s case reminds us of religion. Religion does not unify all; on the contrary it keeps the roles distinct and separated. It keeps people apart from the divine (Agamben 2006: 124). So it happens with play, keeping the players apart from play itself. Could this separation be broken? And could play become an important contributory factor to our lives’ amelioration? Setting play free “It was in fact from art that play broke free” Raoul Vaneigem wrote in reference to Dada (Vaneigem 1967). To transcend rigid and crystallized forms, rules need to be broken. One can play by rules, or play with the rules. Freedom can be regained by those who can play with today’s forms of play, who can appropriate them, see through and reverse them, by those who can profane what is considered sacred. Following the famous predecessors of the dada, Surrealism, Fluxus and Situationism, artists today turn again towards play and use it as a means to challenge stereotypes, to offer new ways of reading and understanding, to break the constraints and offer new perspectives. Art merged with new media, activism, philosophy, politics and social sciences takes the role of the animator, the hacker, the player – “liver” today. Artists working on these fields through projects that do not necessarily need to be game – based, reveal play’ s multifaceted original character and propose means for its use, liberation and expansion within different sides of life. Play as play… Play can not be doubted and its fundamental role, original features and continuous presence is what some artists highlight. Axel Stockburger’s Tokyo Arcade Warriors – Shibuya and William Wegman’ s Dog Duet (Two Dogs and a ball) showcase how play absorbs one in the most serious and utter way. Documenting only the figures of players and not the action itself, one can still not deny or doubt play even if it is hidden. Other artists working on the field, show how playfulness is kept intact, while common playgrounds are being transformed into new ones based on technology. Such are the cases of Himalaya’ s Head by Devart where a snow war takes place between physical and virtual players or Jumping Rope by Orna Portugaly, Daphna Talithman and Sharon Younger, where participants are invited to jump a rope which is being turned by two virtual projected characters. Play back in action… Artists like the Ludic Society and Gordan Savicic follow a neo – situationist approach of play; they bring action back to the real dimension and spread it in the cities. In their projects they create ludic ambiances and city walks where the notions of the “dérivé”, the “détournement” and the “psychogeographies” are being appropriated to raise questions about today’s everyday life and potentialities for playfulness. Objects of Desire by the Ludic Society is a playful metaphor where objects take the place of subjects, with obsessions and desires that they follow to find their home. Gordan Savicic’ s Constraint City / the pain of everyday life is based on a corset with high torque servo motors and a WIFI-enabled game-console, that when worn, can write and read the city codes while also being a fetish object causing pain according to the strength of signal it gets. Following a different direction, David Valentine and MediaShed, also re-invite play back to the ordinary life, as seen on their video The duellists that documents a CCTV parkour performance. Two free-runners run an acrobatic competition in a shopping mall of Manchester Arndale. The fluid, uninterrupted movement of them acting as players re - energizes the environment in the most vivid and spontaneous way. Play caught in between… Other artists look into limits between the virtual and the real in today’ s play. The work of Silver and True named Sell your Rolex comments on the virtual dimension lived by millions of people today. Taking the roles of the user and its avatar, players note that behaviours of the virtual world are odd, funny and embarrassing when brought back to real life. How accurate is simulation after all in realistic terms? The MIT Lab with Stiff People’ s League mingles the two dimensions through a mixed reality game of soccer, happening simultaneously in the real space and in the world of Second Life. The common relationship between physical and virtual world is inverted as physical players need to rely on the virtual ones to play the game. Play reclaimed… Different questions are being raised by artists regarding play’s exploitation for purposes of political, nationalistic and ideological propaganda. Is morality a question? Are people conscious enough about what they are playing? John Klima in his project The Great Game.Epilogue brings reality into a game context as he incorporates in a child’s arcade ride true information from the conflict in Afghanistan, which has been collected by the Department of Defense of the US. John Paul Bichard with the Art of War addresses the issue of the representation of violence and its ways of interpretation through the contemporary media. Through two video works with footages from the army, one cannot tell what is real and what is imaginary anymore. In a similar direction, Vladan Joler has created the Schengen Information System, Version 1.0.3, a game where the player takes on the role of the activist who should intrude the building of the Schengen Information System and destroy the archives. Making use of publicly accessible technology and information, the artist has managed to make a realistic reconstruction and reverse the common use of games for military training purposes. Derivart wishing to tackle a socio-economical issue -that of real estate in Spain - use play to situate a problem and raise people’s awareness. The Burbujometro, showing the prices of apartments in different Spanish cities in the form of bubbles, that the user can shoot, criticizes the building boom of the 2000s. Play 2.0… The Folded-in project, created by Personal Cinema and the Erasers is a different critique on today’s play. The project examines the notion of borders in the era of the web 2.0 social networks. In the form of an online game application which reverses and criticizes the platform of YouTube, the projects seeks to find if players in the digital spaces could be liberated from their common prejudices and beliefs and to what extent they are supporters of immaterial labour, being the ideal prosumers. Taking this problem more to its extremes, one meets the phenomenon of the gold farming. Ge Jin with his documentary The Gold Farmers examines how the growth of virtual economy has given birth to the phenomenon of the gaming sweatshops and aims to answer how it leads play to become real work and what facts are hidden behind it. Play re-discussed… But how far can games and their creators go when observing, reproducing and criticizing today’s real world? Danny Ledonne, a young artist from Colorado, polarised the audience when he made a videogame of the Columbine assassination in the 90’s. Wishing to express this controversy, he made a documentary about the game investigating the issues of games, violence, and ethics. A lot of answers regarding the strategies followed by artists today and the phenomenon of the play culture, are also given in the 8 bit documentary by Marcin Ramocki & Justin Strawhand where they examine the overall influence play has in our everyday culture. CONCLUSION Play in our times presents a paradox. Despite its wide use and continuous presence in different forms of cultures, it is distant and trapped in its own formations, the games. Games are being accused; play is being sacrilised and is placed on a pedestal. Running certain risks, within this structure, play’s influential role on our culture is questioned. If, following Giorgio Agamben, play’s significance lies on the fact that it can detach humanity from the “sacred”, play would need to liberate itself first from the constraints of the sacred. To achieve this, one should not deny play; because this would lead to its cancellation. What one should do is to profane, to neglect, to surpass the constraints and break the rules. And this again can happen only through play itself, through its anarchic and vivid features that are today being wept out. This is how the actions taken by the artists can be described: as actions of profanity where they appropriate the myth and reverse the ceremony of the sacred. This violation is also an act of play itself that is then set free from all constraints. But there is one last point to remember: According to Agamben, profanation gains its complete meaning only when what has been profaned, is then rendered back to the people, at their disposal to start all over again. So this act is not an act of cancellation or politicisation; it is an act about raising awareness and about re-assigning to play its capacity to become a passage for true life, as Vaneigem would describe it. Can art fulfill this? Let’s hope so and wait and see…

Truth and predictability are nihilistic illusions built upon a myth of sameness and unity grounded in a fear of the flux and movement which lie at the heart of life – embrace the ecstasy of risk and the glory of active interpretation which uses force to wrest meaning from the abyss of nihilism.

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Freud is not blind to this: "The producer which the author makes his Zoe adopt for curing her childhood friend's delusion shows a far reaching similarity - no, a complete agreement in its essence - with the analytical method which consists, as applied to patients suffering from disorders analogous to Hanold's delusion, in bringing to their consciousness, to some extent forcibly, the unconscious whose repression led to their falling ill" (Standard Edition, IX, 88). Such is the powerful thrust of similitude. Freud has no more qualms to reduce "poetic creations" to real persons or the "Pompeian fancy" to a simple "psychiatric study." Beneath the trappings of truth, on the razor's edge of demonstration, forces are confronting each other in order to turn the process - the text -into a product. If Gradiva adheres so perfectly to the analytical mold, the analysis of the novel must serve as an absolute proof, in Freud's words, of the theory of the unconscious. Absolute proof - or absolute counter-proof... Even thought "absolute" is clearly too strong a word for such a circum-scribed operation, to counter Freud's interpretation and thus unsettle he theory of the unconscious is indeed the substance of the present attempt. Not to replace Freud's elaborate construct with another, more powerful, mode of evaluation would certainly prove the wisdom in the face of the illusion of truth. Although "nihilistic" at heart, such a perspective is not bound to be simply negative. It can attest to a growing force. I realize that I can overcome the temptation of total interpretations, whose values are universal (they are actually symptoms of fear and apathy). To destroy the belief in the law, to dissipate the fiction of predictability, to reject the sage recurrence of the "same," this is not just a "critical" stand. It is an act of force. But destruction must not open onto an absence of values, worthless or meaninglessness. It must lead to a new evaluation. Nietzsche sees in the wisdom of the East a principle of decadence, a weakening of the power of appropriation. Force of intention matters more than will to truth. To reject truth without intensifying the force of invention still participates in the ascetic ideal, thus in ressentiment. "To read off a text without interposing an interpretation" therefore is "hardly possible" (The Will to Power, 479). I must use my creative forces to create values without falling into the inertia of truth or an anemia of will. I must render the text, and the world, to their "disturbing and enigmatic character"; will them incomprehensible, elusive, "in flux," only indebted to perspective valuations: "The greater the impulse toward unity, the more firmly may one conclude that weakness is present; the greater the impulse toward variety, differentiation, inner decay, the more force is present" (WP, 655). Inner decay: to dance away over oneself. Motion, not emotions. Freud's interpretation resists the false neutrality of science. It only shows a sign of decline when it aims for the truth, when it succumbs to the temptation of unity, the sick security of monism, the illusion of a reconciliation. A reactive interpretation, it assumes powerful, but fabricated, weapons: the difference between objects and subjects, cause and effect, means and ends, etc. That Gradiva presents a certain order of succession in no way proves that individual moments are related to one another as cause and effect, that they obey a "law" and a calculus but rather that different factions abruptly confront each other in their attempt to draw their ultimate consequence at every moment. "As long as there is a structure, as long as there is a method, or better yet as long as structure and method exist through the mental, through intelligence, time is trapped - or else we imagine we have trapped it" (John Cage, Pour les Oiseaux. Belfond, 1976, 34). Structural analysis properly discerned that a narrative establishes | a confusion between time (succession) and logic (cause and effect). However, instead of "delogifying" time, it forced narrative time to sub-mit to narrative logic. Far from being dispelled, the confusion became the very springboard of analysis! It is high time to take advantage of this latency of the narrative, of the divorce between consequence and construction, in order to "rechronocize" succession. I will, here and now, stop wanting the story to go somewhere. I will forget what I know feebly, in advance, in order to gather the whole complexity of forces at play in a text. I will learn to resist the melody of casual relations and the torpor of narrative accumulations in order to reinvent the intensity of risks, ceaselessly menacing and forever being reborn.

## 2AC

#### Biopolitics is the precondition for the fungibility of colored bodies

Tesfahuney and Dahlstedt, 8

MEKONNEN and MAGNUS, Linköping University, Department of Social and Welfare Studies, "Maze of Camps: (Im)mobilities, Racism 26 Geographies of Exception", Pg.175 //bghs-ms

According to Agamben, it is neither the prison nor the city that constitutes the space of pure exception but the camp. Hence it is the camp and not polis (the city) that is the founding biopolitical paradigm of the modern. However, the camp as the nomos of the modern did not appear at the end of the 19th century, as Agamben seems to suggest. The camp, as the “hidden matrix and nomos of the political space in which we are still living” (Agamben, Homo Sacer 166), has a long history that stretches from the slave camps, plantation economies, indentured labor, and Indian reservations in the 16th-19th centuries, the Spanish and German concentration camps in the 19th and 20th in Cuba and Namibia, the concentration camps for Japanese and Asians in the USA in the 1940s, and finally to the English con-centration camps in Kenya in the 1950s. Like Foucault before him, Agamben over-looks the slavery and colonial pedigrees of the camp as the nomos of the modern. Discourses of modern terror tend to circumvent plantation slavery as one of the “first instances of biopolitical experimentation” and the “emblematic and paradoxical figure of the state of exception” (Mbembe, Necropolitics 21, emphasis added). As such, **these are racialized, partisan, and Eurocentric/‘white’ accounts**. **Colonialism**, moreover, **refined and expanded the terror regimes developed in plantation slavery**. Indeed, as noted by Mbembe, colonialism coincides with “a peculiar terror formation,” one that folds or collapses “biopower, the state of exception, and the state of siege,” and has race and racism as crucial nexus of its “regimes of terror” (Mbembe, Necropolitics 22).

**Positioning personal experience as a justification for action creates an insulation from reevaluation--“You can’t criticize how I felt!” This process prevents criticism of the status quo, which can be rendered as purely subjective—“That’s only your experience, it can’t be applied to larger structural problems of social organization.” Vote affirmative to affirm criticism of ANY identity categories.**

Scott 97. Joan Scott, Professor of History at Princeton, 1997, Feminists Theorize the Political, “Experience”

When the evidence offered is the evidence of “experience,” the claim for referentiality is further buttressed – what could be truer, after all, than a subject's own account of what he or she has lived through? It is precisely this kind of appeal to experience as uncontestable evidence and as an originary point of explanation – as foundation upon which analysis is based – that weakens the critical thrust of histories of difference. By remaining within the epistemological frame of orthodox history, these studies lose the possibility of examining those assumptions and practices that excluded considerations of difference in the first place. They take as self-evidence the identities of those whose experience is being documented and thus **naturalize their difference.** They locate resistance outside its discursive construction and reify agency as an inherent attribute of individuals, thus decontextualizing it. When experience is taken as the origin or knowledge, the vision of the individual subject (the person who had the experience of the historian who recounts it) becomes the bedrock of evidence upon which explanation is built. Questions about the constructed nature of experience, about how sunjects are constituted as different in the first place, about how one's vision s structured – about language (or discursive) and history – are left aside. The evidence of experience then becomes evidence for the fact of difference rather than a way of exploring how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world. To put it another way, the evidence of experience, whether conceived through a metaphor of **visibility** or in any other way that takes meaning as transparent, **reproduces rather than contests given ideological system**- those that assume that the facts of history speak for themselves and, in the case of histories of gender, those that rest on notions of a natural or established opposition between sexual practices and social conventions, and between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Histories that document the hidden world of homosexuality, for example, show the impact of silence and repression on the lives of those affected by it and bring to light the history of their suppression and exploitation. But the project of making experience visible precludes critical examination of the workings of the ideological system itself, it's categories of representation (homosexual/heterosexual, man/woman, black/white as fixed immutable identities), its premises about what these categories mean and how they operate, its notions of subjects, origin, and cause. The project of making experience visible precludes analysis of the workings of this system and of its historicity; instead it reproduces its terms. We come to appreciate the consequences of the closeting of homosexuals and we understand repression as an interested act of power or domination; alternative behaviors and institutions also become available to us. What we don't have is a way of placing those alternatives within the framework of (historically contingent) dominant patterns of sexuality and the ideology that supports them. We know they exists, but not the extent of the critique. Making visible the experience of a different group exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms, but not their inner workings or logics; we know that difference exists, but we don't understand it as constituted relationally. For that we need to attend to the historical processes that, through discourse, position subjects and produce their experiences. It is not individuals who have experience, but **subjects who are constituted through experience**. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is know, but rather what we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced. To think about experience in this way is to historicize it as well as to historicize the identities it produces. This kind of historicizing represents a reply to the many contemporary historians who have argued that an unproblematized “experience” is the foundation of their practice; it is a historicizing that implies critical scrutiny of all explanatory categories usually taken for granted, including the category of “experience.”

## 1AR

Refuse attempts to reform the legal system and doom it to its own nihilistic destruction—we must refuse all conceptual apparatuses of capture

Prozorov 10. Sergei Prozorov, professor of political and economic studies at the University of Helsinki, “Why Giorgio Agamben is an optimist,” Philosophy Social Criticism 2010 36: pg. 1065

In a later work, Agamben generalizes this logic and transforms it into a basic ethical imperative of his work: ‘[There] is often nothing reprehensible about the individual behavior in itself, and it can, indeed, express a liberatory intent. What is disgraceful – both politically and morally – are the apparatuses which have diverted it from their possible use. We must always wrest from the apparatuses – from all apparatuses – the possibility of use that they have captured.’32 As we shall discuss in the following section, this is to be achieved by a subtraction of ourselves from these apparatuses, which leaves them in a jammed, inoperative state. What is crucial at this point is that the apparatuses of nihilism themselves prepare their demise by emptying out all positive content of the forms-of-life they govern and increasingly running on ‘empty’, capable only of (inflict- ing) Death or (doing) Nothing.¶ On the other hand, this degradation of the apparatuses illuminates the ‘inoperosity’ (worklessness) of the human condition, whose originary status Agamben has affirmed from his earliest works onwards.33 By rendering void all historical forms-of-life, nihi- lism brings to light the absence of work that characterizes human existence, which, as irreducibly potential, logically presupposes the lack of any destiny, vocation, or task that it must be subjected to: ‘Politics is that which corresponds to the essential inoperability of humankind, to the radical being-without-work of human communities. There is pol- itics because human beings are argos-beings that cannot be defined by any proper oper- ation, that is, beings of pure potentiality that no identity or vocation can possibly exhaust.’34¶ Having been concealed for centuries by religion or ideology, this originary inoperos- ity is fully unveiled in the contemporary crisis, in which it is manifest in the inoperative character of the biopolitical apparatuses themselves,

which succeed only in capturing the sheer existence of their subjects without being capable of transforming it into a positive form-of-life:¶ [T]oday, it is clear for anyone who is not in absolutely bad faith that there are no longer historical tasks that can be taken on by, or even simply assigned to, men. It was evident start- ing with the end of the First World War that the European nation-states were no longer capa- ble of taking on historical tasks and that peoples themselves were bound to disappear.35¶ Agamben’s metaphor for this condition is bankruptcy: ‘One of the few things that can be¶ declared with certainty is that all the peoples of Europe (and, perhaps, all the peoples of the Earth) have gone bankrupt’.36 Thus, the destructive nihilistic drive of the biopolitical machine and the capitalist spectacle has itself done all the work of emptying out positive forms-of-life, identities and vocations, leaving humanity in the state of destitution that Agamben famously terms ‘bare life’. Yet, this bare life, whose essence is entirely con- tained in its existence, is precisely what conditions the emergence of the subject of the coming politics: ‘this biopolitical body that is bare life must itself be transformed into the site for the constitution and installation of a form-of-life that is wholly exhausted in bare life and a bios that is only its own zoe.’37¶ The ‘happy’ form-of-life, a ‘life that cannot be segregated from its form’, is nothing but bare life that has reappropriated itself as its own form and for this reason is no longer separated between the (degraded) bios of the apparatuses and the (endangered) zoe that functions as their foundation.38 Thus, what the nihilistic self-destruction of the appara- tuses of biopolitics leaves as its residue turns out to be the entire content of a new form-of-life. Bare life, which is, as we recall, ‘nothing reprehensible’ aside from its con- finement within the apparatuses, is reappropriated as a ‘whatever singularity’, a being that is only its manner of being, its own ‘thus’.39 It is the dwelling of humanity in this irreducibly potential ‘whatever being’ that makes possible the emergence of a generic non-exclusive community without presuppositions, in which Agamben finds the possi- bility of a happy life.¶ [If] instead of continuing to search for a proper identity in the already improper and sense- less form of individuality, humans were to succeed in belonging to this impropriety as such, in making of the proper being-thus not an identity and individual property but a singularity without identity, a common and absolutely exposed singularity, then they would for the first time enter into a community without presuppositions and without subjects.40¶ Thus, rather than seek to reform the apparatuses, we should simply leave them to their self-destruction and only try to reclaim the bare life that they feed on. This is to be achieved by the practice of subtraction that we address in the following section.¶