How to Do Sovereignty without People?
The Subjectless Condition of Postliberal Power

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1. Constitution

The emergence of modern political sovereignty is founded not on a subjugated, working, tormented, reproductive, or disciplined body but on a stolen body. The establishment of sovereignty through the punishment, control, productivity, and disciplinization of the body is a recurrent theme of classic political and social theory: Hobbes's genesis of Leviathan, Marx's primary accumulation, Polanyi's great transformation, Foucault's great

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confinement. These are the stories told from the perspective of dominant power: how power gets inscribed onto the body, how the order of power absorbs the body and renders it fertile, creative, manageable, profitable, and governable. In *The Life of Romulus*, Plutarch tells the story in a different way. The myth and birth of Roman power starts with the abduction of the Sabine women.[1] By means of subterfuge, Romulus kidnapped the women of the Sabine tribe so that the future growth of Rome's population could be assured. In its very first moment, the myth of modern political sovereignty is founded not on the issue of the productive transformation of the body under its power but on the theft of bodies. The life of power is a primordial result not of a capacity to transform the body into an available thing but of its disposition over life. The life of power is parasitic. It devours something it never owns. The stolen bodies are never completely absorbed into the order of power.

While modern political sovereignty starts with the theft of bodies, it also appropriates the powers of one gender. It is installed as a radical and violent dichotomy between the sexes and overrides any attempt to reverse existing asymmetries.[2] This violent dichotomy constitutes the female gender as the site for the biopolitical application of reproductive technologies. In Nicolas Poussin's painting *The Abduction of the Sabine Women* (1637–1638), Romulus, the ruler of the new city of Rome, overlooks the space where the common religious festivities of the Sabines and Romans take place and gives the signal to his soldiers to kidnap the Sabine women and chase the Sabine men away (Figure 1). The site of religious celebration becomes a ring of bodies, a scattered soil out of which the new political sovereignty will arise. There is no apparent order in the space, the battle, or the men's flight. In this moment of fluidity, when the constitution of political power has not yet been completed, the stolen bodies of the Sabine women seem to imply that they can never be exhaustively incorporated within the political constitution to come. And whenever this seems to happen, as in Poussin's painting, the biopolitical incorporation of the female body into modern polity takes place through theft and subsequent rape.

One of the Sabine women resists violence with one hand, while the

1. Plutarch, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, trans. John Dryden, vol. 1 (New York: Modern Library, 1992).

2. In the acknowledgment of this constitutive gender asymmetry lies the importance of sexual difference feminism: Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985); Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985).

Figure 1. Nicolas Poussin, *The Abduction of the Sabine Women*, c. 1637–38, oil on canvas, 159 x 206 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

gesture of the other hand anticipates the undecidability and the irresoluteness of the order that will follow this event of political constitution. In these gestures, the energetic, decisive resistance to the present and to the immediate violence (right hand) coincides with a principal, objectless, subtle resistance which declares that this situation is incomprehensible and primarily wrong (left hand). With her left hand, the Sabine woman signals the persistence to remain beyond and outside the constitution to come, while the right hand pushes at the head of the Roman captor, and in so doing becomes the continuation of power simply by resisting it.[3] These two parallel movements interest us in this essay: the Sabine women announce that they are outside of the emerging constitution of polity, while at the same time they are forced to become its subjects.[4] As the subject of power, the

3. This is what Louis Althusser calls interpellation: the right hand responds to an action of another social body of power, and in this way it is identifiable as a subject. But what about the left hand?

4. Michel Foucault's assertion of the complementarity of power and resistance in the first

body becomes tormented, productive, and disciplined. This was the focus of modern political, as well as social/cultural, theory. But here we want to focus on the gesture of the other hand, the gesture of the stolen body. How are these two parallel movements treated by the modern organization of polity? How has this tiny and fierce promise of the left hand of the stolen body been suppressed in the history of modern political sovereignty and been transfigured in the subjugated, tormented, working, and disciplined body?

2. Modern Sovereignty

Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Carceri d'Invenzione*, a series of capriccios issued around 1750, presents fantastic imaginary interiors, visionary dungeons (Figure 2). Piranesi, who in most of his other works delivered a romanticized version of Roman architecture, created here a negative image of social space characteristic of the emerging modern form of political sovereignty.

Piranesi's capriccios can be read as a metaphor for a highly structured political space, filled with mysterious scaffolding and different hierarchical levels. Yet every level is clearly distinct from the other, always under surveillance from the internal tower. There is a chasm between the levels, but also controlled possibilities for mobility. It seems that the main purpose of this structure is to make bodies identifiable and manageable in space. The stolen body becomes domesticated, disciplined, and productive, and the Sabines become people. The logic of representation appears on the political scene of modernity, and with it also the category of people: a collective subject, whose members occupy specific positions, perform certain activities, and have rights. In other words, these members are distributed in an ordered way in a certain space. But space is never abstract; it is always limited. Space, in modernity, is territory. The core principle of modern polity is national sovereignty, which is the ideal correspondence and congruence of people and territory.[5] Modern political theory develops different models

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volume of the *History of Sexuality* refers to the long history of the gesture of the right hand but forgets the existence of the subtle gesture of the other hand.

5. For different positions on how nationalism comes into being, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991); Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London: Verso, 1991); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

of how the relation between people, nation, and territory can be configured in order to engender a viable form of sovereignty.[6]

National sovereignty attempts to establish the correspondence of people and territory in two sequential moments. First, it separates and classifies people into classes and social strata through the signification procedures of representation; second, it assigns rights of participation to each of these represented groups. National sovereignty is based on the national social compromise between different classes and strata for a potential egalitarian distribution of rights.[7] This is the so-called double-R axiom, rights and representation, which binds national sovereignty. In modern national sovereignty, constitutionalism—the question of formalized rights—has always dominated cultural politics and micropolitics, that is, how different classes and strata are conceived in the social and cultural imaginary and in everyday life.

The double-R axiom not only organizes the national-territorial corpus, it primarily designates the nation-state's relation to other states and their people. Thus, the double-R axiom simultaneously defines the matrix of positive rights and representation within the national territory, and the nonexistence of rights and symbolic presence beyond its borders.[8] When we think

6. One main tradition, for example, highlights the role of territory and refers back to the Schmittian concept of sovereignty, according to which sovereign law is the rationalization of *Landnahme* (appropriation of land). Carl Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1997). For a critical evaluation of Schmitt's concept of sovereignty, see chap. 8 of Etienne Balibar, *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004). A second major model highlights the role of the people and refers back to Hobbes. Here, sovereignty is a mutual relation of recognition between people and the sovereign. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing Co., 1994). Finally, in the tradition of Rousseau, sovereignty can be understood only as national sovereignty, that is, the ideal identification of the people's will with the national constitution. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). For the continuation of this latter line of thought in the debates on world citizenship, see Jürgen Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation: Political Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001).

7. Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (London: NLB, 1978). See also Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985).

8. Van Gunsteren develops this paradox of representation with his concept of imperfect citizenship. See Herman van Gunsteren, *A Theory of Citizenship: Organizing Plurality in Contemporary Democracies* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998). But, as we will try to show later, this concept is problematic, because the thesis that citizenship is always a

Figure 2. Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Carceri d'Invenzione*, plate VII, c. 1749–1761, etching, 54.5 x 41.5 cm, various collections.

of the double-R axiom, we have to take account of the fact that it also refers to its exact opposite: to the absence of rights and representation. This is why the state of exception in modern political theory is and was regarded as the crucial moment of modern national sovereignty.[9] Because national sovereignty inherently contains its own negation, it can always deny its own foundations and withdraw from its function as the creditor of the double-R axiom. The state of exception is the moment when borders are erected within the national territory, tearing up any apparent society of equals.[10]

This negativity and destruction of the ideal society of equals are emblematically concentrated in Romulus's signal to his soldiers to ravish the Sabine women. In this gesture, Romulus breaks the law of hospitality and condemns the Sabine women to becoming a docile element of the political corpus of the Rome to come. But instead of reading the abduction of the Sabine women as the moment when their bodies become obliterated from and productive for Roman power, we want to trace what escapes the moment of Romulus's repression and what constitutes an unspoken force that reaches up to our present. The story of Plutarch's stolen body reminds us that, at this very moment of political constitution, the body has an intimate and intrinsic affection toward the making of polity. Romulus's repression interrupts this intimate relation and attempts to canalize it according to the workings of modern political constitution. But we want to suggest that this intimate relation is always at work, producing a wild anomaly in many different moments of modern political history. Remember these incidents: March 26, 1871, Belleville and Ménilmontant (and the massacre of 30,000 citizens of Paris); the Declaration of the Rights of Woman (rights which were not granted; instead, the woman's body was sexualized and neutralized [*Liberty Guiding the People*]); the Haitian Revolution (whose representatives, on being sent to the French Revolution, were simply executed); the Räterepublik (and the Freicorps).

It is precisely this warm intimacy, this intrinsic interdependency between body and power, that must be suspended and rearranged under

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process in the making does not account for situations when citizenship de facto ceases to be a universal right.

9. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998). However, Agamben's pathetic position overemphasizes the role of states of exception in the consolidation of power. By doing this, Agamben deploys a reductionist, tautological explanation of the genesis of modern sovereignty as simply naked violence over life. See Manuela Bojadzijev, Serhat Karakayali, and Vassilis Tsianos, "Le mystère de l'arrivée. Des camps et des spectres," *Multitudes* 19 (2004): 41–52.

10. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1968).

the directives of modern political sovereignty. The intimacy between body and power is reconfigured and becomes the material corpus necessary for the transformation of a mass of bodies into the big Leviathan. Modern political sovereignty digests and accommodates the stolen bodies into the grand corpus of modern polity. The stolen body redoubles itself into the common corpus of society. This is what Romulus attempts to do, namely, he endeavors to break the intimate relation between body and polity, and to govern, dominate, and subsume the body under the guidance of polity. He introduces an extrinsic relation between body and power. Sovereignty is there to redouble the stolen body, to transcend it and then to domesticate, to adjust, to educate, to torment, to discipline, to train it. Redoubling establishes externality, and externality fabricates the primal ingredient of modern political sovereignty: subjects.

Consider Albrecht Dürer's famous painting *Draughtsman Drawing a Recumbent Woman* (1525) and the way he employs surveillance and method, domination and order, the invasive gaze and the scopic regime of controlling space. While these are widely discussed topics,[11] what is for us particularly important is the relation between the object of study and the device that makes study possible: the grid between the two. Only through this grid can the artist control vision and dominate the subject of study. This upright grid of wires is the major actor in this woodcut. It splits the picture into two, transforming the artist into a male subject, and the subject of the drawing into a sexualized female object of domination. The hierarchical organization of gender relations and the organization of space and imagination along masculinized and homophobic ideologies are the outcome of the very existence of a subject as such. For before the grid is placed between the two subjects, these subjects do not exist at all. The grid is the metonymy for the order of modern sovereignty. The grid transforms the bodies into subjects and classifies subjects into groups, groups into a territory. It produces social classes, institutional positions, and social actors, directing them to the Fordist regime of productivity and, finally, establishing hierarchical relations between them.

Let us recapitulate the path: stolen body—redoubling (transcendence and subjection)—disciplined and productive body—double-R

11. For example, Svetlana Alpers, "Art History and Its Exclusions: The Example of Dutch Art," in *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 183–99; Donna Haraway, *Modest_Witness@ Second_Millennium.FemaleMan.©Meets_OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York: Routledge, 1997); and Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity, and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1992).

axiom—rights—people—territory—nation—corpus of modern sovereignty—grid—social classes—subject. The stand-alone, self-sufficient, reflexive subject, with the capacity to carry out intentional acts and to be an agent, depicts the core image of the typical individual actor of modern national sovereignty. The subject is the polar extreme of the stolen body; by becoming a subject, the stolen body is amenable to discipline, to work, and to production, to being trained and tormented. The stolen body: the building material of modern political sovereignty, and, simultaneously, the most elusive and absent element of modern polity.

3. Transnational Sovereignty

This was modernity. But times change. The Jewish Museum Berlin, on the borders of Mitte and Kreuzberg, was finished in 1998. In its rear courtyard stands Daniel Libeskind's Garden of Exile and Emigration, forty-nine rectangular concrete columns, each over six feet tall. Each column contains earth in which willow oaks grow (Figure 3). The oaks come together at the top of the pillars but are unreachable. The distance between the columns is quite narrow, the ground inclined. The visitor is compelled to look up when walking between the columns and can see the sky through the leaves and branches of the willow oaks. A feeling of calmness immediately descends upon one, yet there is something unapproachable and strange about this garden. The space of The Garden of Exile is open; it is nothing like the subterranean darkness of Piranesi's capriccios. The garden seems to be the opposite of the order Piranesi presents as a hermetic whole, with no exit and no entrance, regulated by fear, with chains, racks, wheels, and dreadful engines. Instead, we have an evolving and virtual order, with many different groups and actors; the different columns seem to be different ways of becoming, flows. One can never have an overview of the whole from inside; each column is a relatively coherent entity. At the same time these flows break, there are edges, blocked views. And yet the columns exist as a whole and come together in the form of a thousand multiple connections. They have their individual story but are still part of the same network of existence. This form of political order seems to delineate a period of time that undermined modern national sovereignty after World War II, leading to what we will later in this essay call postliberal sovereignty. This period is dominated by neoliberal politics.[12] This period is our most recent past.

12. Critical social and political theory conceptualized the social and political transformations after World War II by deploying the notion of neoliberalism: (a) on the geopolitical

Figure 3. The Garden of Exile and Emigration in the Jewish Museum Berlin, Daniel Libeskind, Architect, 1998.

We have to historicize neoliberalism to escape its seemingly inescapable presence.

Neoliberalism and the biopolitical turn brought about the collapse of modern national sovereignty and the Fordist regime of production. On the one hand, global capital practiced its own exodus from national regulation. On the other hand, the migratory mobility of work intensified the existing pressure on national borders. Neoliberalism introduced the virtual order of

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plane: the emergence of new modes of transnationalist global sovereignty; (b) on the plane of production: the consolidation of post-Fordist labor; (c) on the social plane: the dismantling of social welfare systems and the introduction of biopolitics; (d) on the cultural plane: the dissemination of postmodern life; (e) on the plane of knowledge: high tech, biotech, and neuroscience. See Bob Jessop, *Regulation Theory and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2001); Alain Lipietz, *Towards a New Economic Order: Postfordism, Ecology, and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Christian Marazzi, *Der Stammplatz der Socken: die linguistische Wende der Ökonomie und ihre Auswirkungen in der Politik* (Zürich: Seismo-Verl., 1997); and A. de Swaan, *Social Policy Beyond Borders: The Social Question in Transnational Perspective* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1994).

global markets and irrevocably undermined the nation-state's monopoly on power. In parallel, biopolitics infused a deregulated and fluid governmentality of the population into the heart of the established Fordist regime of immobility. Together, neoliberalism and biopolitics pushed national sovereignty to its end. The era of transnational global sovereignty and of post-Fordist production in North Atlantic societies came to the fore in the eighties and the nineties.

The major concern of modern national sovereignty was the assignment of rights in order to sustain the national compromise between competing social classes and strata of society. In this process, representation was a minor concern, always present and active but still minor (representation thought as the ways in which different social classes are interpellated by state apparatuses and are codified in the cultural imaginary). In the double-R axiom, rights were more central than representation. But neoliberalism brought about a major change. The dismantling of social welfare systems and the introduction of high levels of mobility by post-Fordist labor led to an increasing diversification of the social structure. And this diversification brought with it the politics of difference. In other words, the cultural politics of neoliberalism was postmodern culture: the fight for representation.[13]

But what is this fight for representation, and where does it come from? First, it comes from the dissolution of social class as the central actor in society. The different levels in Piranesi's etching seem to represent social classes; the columns in Libeskind's Garden of Exile represent different social groups of small-scale, emerging subjectivities. The political order of transnational sovereignty is an order with multiple players who establish new relations of power and introduce alliances between them. This form of relationality is precisely what is essential for the fight for representation. By gradually reversing the logic of the double-R axiom after World War II,

13. See different versions of the struggle to define, redefine, and negotiate representation: Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000); James Clifford, "Partial Truths," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 1–27; Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1976); Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999); and Michael Warner, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life* (New York: Free Press, 1999).

social actors attempted to break the blockade that modern national sovereignty had imposed on the body. The stolen body reappears on the political scene and threatens to break Romulus's law of torture, training, wage-labor productivity, and discipline. We can trace the stolen body in the civil rights movement, the events of 1968, the feminist movement, the antiwork movements and new forms of cooperation, the sixties' rebellions and the insurgence of popular culture, and in fights against colonialism. The sixties is the site where the wild anomaly of the stolen body once again spreads through society and disseminates into the world.[14]

In the attack on modern national sovereignty, the stolen body comes to the surface, forcing society to reconsider the imposed relation of externality between body and polity (in section 2 of this essay, we referred to the procedure that establishes externality as redoubling). The stolen body again poses a challenge to sovereignty by reinstalling a new configuration of the intrinsic affection between body and power. Neoliberalism is not primarily the answer to the quest for a new mode of economic regulation.[15] Nor does it address demands for a new relation between market and society.[16] Neoliberalism is the answer to the wild insurgency of the stolen body that emerges after World War II. Transnational sovereignty is the way to recapture the power of the stolen bodies of the Sabine women, to break this new intimacy between body and power of the sixties and seventies, and to transform it anew into a docile, productive actor in the new globalized, transnational networks of power. There are neither historical laws nor inherent necessities of other kinds determining the emergence of transnational neoliberal sovereignty. There is only the necessity to tame the reappearance of the stolen body in the post–World War II period.

Transnational sovereignty revokes the external relation between the body and power. The forms of domestication of the body imposed by modern sovereignty now become obsolete and constraining. But there is something unexpected happening here. Instead of simply reimposing a new

14. Christopher Connery, "The World Sixties," in *Worldings: World Literature, Field Imaginaries, Future Practices; Doing Cultural Studies Inside the U.S. War-machine*, ed. Rob Wilson and Christopher Connery (Santa Cruz, Calif.: New Pacific Press, 2005).

15. Michel Aglietta, *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation: The U.S. Experience* (London: NLB, 1979).

16. Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne, and Nikolas Rose, *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism, and Rationalities of Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Jacques Donzelot, "Die Förderung des Sozialen," in *Zur Genealogie der Regulation: Anschlüsse an Michel Foucault*, ed. J. Donzelot et al. (Mainz: Decaton, 1984), 109–60.

form of externality, transnational sovereignty accepts the new challenge of the stolen body and tries to work on the grounds of the intrinsic relation that emerged in the postwar period. Transnational sovereignty does not attempt to enact a new form of externality. Rather, it attempts to make this internal affection between body and power its core functional principle. When the intimacy of body and power is installed at the heart of sovereignty, sovereignty itself becomes intimate. We have here a new form of redoubling. In modern sovereignty, the stolen body is redoubled and its powers are absorbed into the grand corpus of society (the nation and the big Leviathan). Redoubling in modern national sovereignty installs a hierarchical externality between body and polity. Now, in transnational sovereignty, redoubling takes place in a radically different way: it generalizes the intrinsic relation between body and power into the paramount principle according to which society functions. Transnational sovereignty is decentralized and contagious. The redoubling of the stolen body in transnational sovereignty means that the body itself takes on its own control. Control is not constructed as an extrinsic relation between power and the body but is internalized in the very existence of the body itself.[17] Transnational sovereignty no longer attempts to regulate the triptych of people, nation, and territory; rather, it abandons the notion that there must be one persistent and prevalent mode of ordering this triptych. There is no primary organizational principle. Now organization arises out of the relationality of self-activating bodies[18] and of subjectivities as autopoietic systems.[19]

Consider Guy Debord's psycho-geographical maps of Paris, made at the end of the fifties, which attempt to disrupt existing representations and

17. Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," *October* 59 (Winter 1992): 3–7.

18. The self-organizing agent, the robot, the cyborg, the embodied mind, embodied feelings—all are fascinating variations of the self-activating body in conditions of transnational sovereignty. See Rodney Allen Brooks, *Flesh and Machines: How Robots Will Change Us* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002); Andy Clark, *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997); Antonio R. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999); Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991); and Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).

19. The most authoritative and imaginative conceptualization of society and action in this way can be found in Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995).

convey different visions of subjective existence in space. Rather than being entirely new images, his psycho-geographic maps were modified versions of ordinary maps. The fight for representation is not simply an exodus from modernity. It turns modernity upside down. Cartographic order and categorization was and still is the canon. What changes is the method. Debord's maps simultaneously deconstruct conventional cartographic maps (both literally and figuratively) and preserve the logic of a graphic expression of spatial order. Conventional maps convey a certain abstract and geometric truth about the social environment through use of the grid. The psychogeographical maps are supposed to convey a subjective, existential, or autopoeitic optic. They show an experience of space as fragmented, discontinuous, fluid, undecided, interconnected, and relational: networks. Neoliberalism's and transnational liberal sovereignty's imagination and practice are dominated by one banal picture: nodes and lines, no beginning and no end. One can always add new nodes or withdraw them, and some are more powerful than others and dominate a certain region of the network.

The logic of the network not only implies a specific way of ordering and making society, but it also reorganizes the very concept of the subject. Modern national subjectivity domesticates stolen bodies by transforming them into subjects. Transnational sovereignty makes the stolen body its primary source and, at the same time, its main target. People do not become subjects in transnational sovereignty. Rather, they become self-responsible agents in perpetual adaptation to others. "I think we have gone through a period when too many children and people have been given to understand 'I have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it!' or . . . 'I am homeless, the Government must house me!' and so they are casting their problems on society, and who is society? There is no such thing as society! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people, and people look to themselves first." This is not a quote from Nikolas Rose; it is Margaret Thatcher in 1987.[20]

In order to function, neoliberalism and biopolitics rely on advanced technologies of the self. Governmentality theory, a conceptual prototype for the way we understand individual experience and action in post-Fordism, introduced the idea of postsocial rationalities of regulation.[21] Postmodernity

20. Margaret Thatcher, "Douglas Keay's Interview with Margaret Thatcher," *Woman's Own*, October 31, 1987.

21. For example, Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, *The Foucault Effect:*

and neoliberalism work upon the individual's sense of the self and of conduct.[22] Many conceive of this as the process of subjectification, that is, the production of subjectivities in the network of power. Instead of reflexivity and intentionality of modern national sovereignty, a rather different image of the subject occupies the scene: governmentality and relational subjectivity. Governmentality is the algorithm of power in transnational sovereignty. There is nothing liberating in this. Governmentality and subjectification can only affirm the neoliberal structure of power. The stolen body's wild anomaly of the sixties and seventies has, in the eighties and nineties, once again been transformed into a subjugated form of life.

The stolen body is banned from the grand corpus of modern sovereignty, becomes the building material of the new transnational sovereignty, and, finally, becomes corrupted. But the corruption of the stolen body also demarcates the limits of transnational sovereignty. In modern sovereignty, the national social compromise is based on the concept of social rights. The crisis of modern sovereignty, which we described earlier, mobilizes the most intimate powers of the stolen body: its existence becomes globalized and transnational, its productivity is cooperatively organized, and subjectivities become indispensable. But transnational sovereignty fails to integrate all these evolving spaces and capacities of the stolen body into a new system of transnational social rights. All these emerging common spaces become unrepresentable. The double-R axiom still fails to perform its function of ordering society: none of its elements, neither representation nor rights, is powerful enough to accommodate and address the life of the majority of people. And in the few cases where the double-R axiom seems to be still active—primarily in certain parts of North Atlantic societies—it becomes the privilege of a few. Only those few social actors who manage to make of themselves proper subjects of representation and rights can play the game of the double-R axiom and thus shape society. The double-R axiom ceases to be a *commune bonum*, a property of the whole society and of everyone. Only some can use it, only some can have it. The rest dwell in a space of nonspace, a space beyond rights and beyond representation. Consider:

Studies in Governmentality (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Michel Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire et population: cours au Collège de France, 1977–1978* (Paris: Seuil, Gallimard, 2004); and Nikolas S. Rose, *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

22. Dimitris Papadopoulos, "The Ordinary Superstition of Subjectivity: Liberalism and Technostructural Violence," *Theory and Psychology* 13, no. 1 (2003): 73–93.

the proliferation of camps, Guantánamo, gated communities, banlieues, the prison-industrial complex, favelas, townships, informal settlements, detention centers, illegal migrants, undocumented workers, precarious labor.

Let us recapitulate the path: stolen body—redoubling (immanence and subjugation)—self-activating bodies/autopoietic systems—double-R axiom—representation—subjectivities—relationality—transnational sovereignty—biopolitics—network—governmentality—subjectification. The stolen body gets absorbed into the process of subjectification. By becoming an autopoietic, self-governed agent, the stolen body is not so much dominated by state apparatuses of modern national sovereignty; rather, it incorporates into itself the patriarchal state. The stolen body of the eighties and nineties confines itself.

Libeskind's Garden of Exile and Emigration unveils this ambivalence of the stolen body as a banal everyday perception. One cannot help but look toward the sky while walking through the narrow columns. The gaze tries to escape the coldness of the concrete and the confining strict geometrical order of the columns' edges. The feeling is one of being incarcerated in the inescapable logic of these columns, in the columns that support the machine of transnational sovereignty. Certainly one is not prevented from walking, moving, looking around, or getting out of the garden. But while one is there, it is clear that there is something—willow oaks, sky—which is simply there but never within reach. Something which is there, but never accessible, because of the already finished arrangement of the materiality around one. An arrangement that has been materialized so that the stolen body is reabsorbed by postwar sovereignty. In The Garden of Exile and Emigration, the virtuality of the stolen body—its promises and its corruption—materializes and becomes an embodied condition of being.

4. Postliberal Sovereignty

The BMW plant in Leipzig, Germany, started production on May 1, 2005. In the medium term, the plant will produce up to 650 vehicles per day. The new plant provides the necessary capacities to manage the planned growth in sales of up to 1.4 million vehicles per year in 2008 (Figure 4). According to the architect, Zaha Hadid, the building enables innovative working-time models and operating times of 60 to 140 hours per week, and because of this the plant can react quickly to specific changes in the market. The BMW plant is a strange building. It is difficult to tell if it is modern or postmodern, Fordist or post-Fordist. It is a mixture of Piranesi's multilevel

Figure 4. BMW plant, Leipzig, Germany, start of mass production on March 1, 2005, Zaha Hadid, Architect.

scaled structure and the breathing porosity of Libeskind's construction. It is a network and a grid simultaneously. Despite the similarities to both models, the BMW plant neither represents a totality, as in Piranesi's hermetic environment, nor has anything in common with the transversal design of Libeskind's model. The BMW plant is a highly contingent and closed structure, inherently fluid and simultaneously inherently stratified.

From the workers on the production line to the managers, all share the same space. They pretend to belong to the same group of people. In fact, social stratification in the form of classes or subjectivities is reversed here and reincorporated into a virtual but effective matrix of a new commonality, into a vertical aggregate. This vertical aggregate attains its strength precisely by placing all actors on a common horizontal corridor of action. The BMW plant is an interactional order, neither open nor closed, but open as soon as it incorporates the actors necessary for its functioning, and closed as soon as it can protect and sustain its functionality. The BMW plant is maintained not by its exclusivity or by an internally generated authenticity but by a fluid belonging of different independent trajectories to an effective system of production. It is an aggressive structure, opposing everything that sets limits to its own internal interests or tries to infuse it with impurity. The BMW plant is aggressive because it opposes the fear of virus. It is

aseptic, clean, pragmatic, an example of Western oblivion at the highest level. Immunity is its major concern.

We use this image as the paradigmatic figure for the emergence of a new mode of political power—postliberal sovereignty—which breeds in the core of the dominant transnational sovereignty. Postliberal sovereignty is neither a substitute nor an alternative, nor is it the next stage of transnational sovereignty. Transnationalism is an integrative constituent of postliberal sovereignty. The notion of postliberal sovereignty allows us to recognize the formation of emerging hegemonic projects that make up the space of transnationalism.[23] The commonality between transnationalism and postliberal sovereignty is that both deal with the aporias of constitutionalism, that is, they both attempt to solve, on a global level, the national crisis of the double-R axiom. The difference between them is that transnationalism is inherently apolitical, by pretending to solve the problem on a simply horizontal level, while postliberal sovereignty inserts hegemonic political claims into the global horizontal space.

Transnational sovereignty, as we showed earlier, presents a solution for the problem of rights and representation by adding dynamism to the borders of national sovereignty. Historically, borders were demarcation lines between national sovereignties. Transnationalism implodes these demarcation lines and reinterpellates, on a global scale, the participating actors of national sovereignty in many different ways.[24] Transnational sovereignty merges national spaces and their actors with other international players into a unified horizontal plane by asserting arbitrariness in the way borders are established.[25] Borders are no longer by definition the limits between national sovereignties; rather, they are erected wherever there is a need to solve and to organize social space and political governance.[26] This was the strategy transnationalism deployed to solve the crisis of the double-R axiom.

Postliberalism appropriates this solution—and in this sense post-

23. Michael Greven and Louis W. Pauly, *Democracy Beyond the State? The European Dilemma and the Emerging Global Order*, Governance in Europe (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).

24. Neil Brenner, *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

25. Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997).

26. Wendy Larner and William Walters, *Global Governmentality: Governing International Spaces* (New York: Routledge, 2004); and Enrica Rigo, "Citizenship at Europe's Borders: Some Reflections on the Post-colonial Condition of Europe in the Context of EU Enlargement," *Citizenship Studies* 9, no. 1 (2005): 3–22.

liberalism is also the heir to the crisis of constitutionalism and relies on the same organizational substratum as transnationalism—but it attempts to initiate a strategic rearrangement of the transnationalist horizontal and networked organization of space by establishing vertical aggregates of power in the midst of an even plane of global action. The break occurs when postliberalism leaves nationalist imperialist geopolitics behind irrevocably. It feeds on the horizontal transnational order of power and, finally, introduces a new hegemonic strategy with a project of global corporativism. Postliberalism is a verticalization of horizontal geopolitics. Transnationalism is the legal algorithm of post-Fordist, neoliberal globalization. In this sense, transnationalism is hegemonic on a global scale. At this point, postliberal sovereignty hegemonizes hegemony.[27]

The figure of the BMW plant in Leipzig illustrates this verticalization of horizontality. The social is constituted not only out of horizontal layers of different actors, be they social classes, interest groups, or social subjectivities. The social consists of vertical aggregates containing and intermingling segments of social classes, social subjectivities, or other social groups into large formations along an imagined commonality. These social bodies condense economic, technoscientific, political, and cultural power, and control decision-making processes. They are different from the social structures we have known up to this moment. There are no clear-cut social institutions, social classes, or associations of civil society interacting in the making of polity. There are no people (*Volk*) in the BMW plant. Rather, we observe the emergence of legitimate players consisting of many different bits of all these various actors that together constitute social bodies vertically traversing society and its institutions.

There is nothing left over from the base-superstructure formation of political power. There is nothing left over from the politics of difference and subjectification—neither ideology nor discourse.[28] The actors participating in

27. A similar movement in a different historical time is described by Lenin, when he presents imperialism as the way to establish hegemony in the already established hegemonic capitalist system of production. See Vladimir I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970).

28. The politics of difference of the eighties and nineties intervenes in the given conditions of representation, then renegotiates and rearticulates them under the imperative that resistance is possible. Cultural studies, postcolonialism, postfeminist positions, queer studies, and radical democratic approaches revealed that the given systems of representation generate the effacement of certain differences (the migrant, the queer, the subaltern, the excluded) and introduce a new subversive strategy of visibility. But these times

these vertical aggregates are detached from their original indexes. They do not refer to themselves as members of collective interest formations (social class, ethnicity, gender, etc.). They are there themselves as members of the vertical aggregate. We can understand this form of neocorporativism as the rising need of different aggregates of local or international government for engaging in activities beyond their immediate borders.

These vertical aggregates are by no means solidified, unchangeable, or closed systems. They are, rather, interactional entities, neither open nor closed. They are open to the extent that they can assimilate the actors necessary for their functioning and the retention of their power, and closed as much as is necessary to protect their existence. They carry neither the modern fetish of wholeness nor the postmodern obsession with partiality. It is not so much that the state disappears or that transnational processes and institutions take control. We know that states play much harder now than during many other times in history. And we also know that patriotisms, fundamentalisms, and new nationalisms play a crucial role in the makeup of current cultural politics. The difference is that the state ceases to act as representing itself and instead splits itself, and certain parts of it participate in broader social aggregates that articulate interests, wills, and political views linking with many different segments of social classes, social groups, associations of civil society (such as trade unions, customer organizations, pressure groups), local business companies, transnational corporations, nongovernmental organizations, international governments, and transnational organizations. These aggregates use the cultural politics of patriotism, nationalism, and fundamentalism in an arbitrary way, not because these politics refer to a nationalist ideology but because they help to maintain the coherence of the aggregate. The main target of postliberal sovereignty is to articulate, in a combative way, the not-yet-represented commonality of the actors participating in the social aggregate. The emergence of vertical aggregates of this kind constitutes a renewed form of corporativism that attempts to get rid of totalitarian ideas as well as the commitment to a liberal democratic organization.[29] This is why the vertical aggregates leave behind the neoliberal project and give birth to *post*liberal sovereignty.

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are over. The crisis of multiculturalism, the difficulties of lining queer politics with other social movements, the gradual occupation of postfeminist positions by communitarian neo-essentialisms, the obsession of radical democratic approaches with the question of formal rights—all these mark a phase of stagnation of subversive politics and their absorption into the vortex of neoliberal thinking.

29. For the origins of this peculiar form of progressive corporativism, see Zeev Sternhell,

In the scheme of postliberal power, we have neither state supremacy and omnipotence (as in national sovereignty) nor simple self-governed actors (as in transnational sovereignty). The constitutionalist structure of modern national sovereignty retreats, and out of the governmental model of neoliberalism emerges transnational governance on a global level. In transnational conditions, governance becomes the model for connecting and realigning different segments of social groups into a horizontal plane on the basis of common global normative principles.[30] Governance signifies the erosion of the boundaries delineating single self-governed actors as well as the limits of constitutionalism. Governance is postconstitutionalism. There is no longer a centralized statist apparatus or a fluid network of regulation. There are new formations of power bringing together many different global actors, regulating their relations by using an inclusive and contingent strategy of governance guided by a set of normative universal principles. But the project of postliberal sovereignty attacks the claim for global normative universal principles and installs hegemonic claims into the geopolitics of governance. Not only does postliberalism install vertical aggregates at the horizontal level—as we described earlier—but it can do so only if it starts from global vertical aggregates that interrupt the normal business of transnational hegemony. Postliberalism employs a strategic selectivity to work on the level of horizontal geopolitics, and in this way it relocalizes the social question. Vertical aggregates consolidate hegemony, and therefore they absorb and annul the dualism of global and local.

Mario Sznajder, and Maia Asheri, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994). Here we do not mean corporativism in the sense of domination of local or multinational companies and economic trusts in decision making, but rather in the Gramscian sense, as a form of social organization that attempts to resolve the organic crisis of state power. Corporativism was the conservative turn that reorganized the Italian production forces by connecting the management of production and the political government of the people. See Notebook 1, §135 in Antonio Gramsci, *Gefängnishefte. Bd. 1: 1. Heft* (Hamburg: Argument, 1991).

30. Commission of the European Communities, *European Governance: A White Paper*, COM(2001) 428 final, Brussels, July 25, 2001, (http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance/white_paper/index_en.htm, 2001); and James N. Rosenau and Ernst Otto Czempiel, *Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). For a critical evaluation of the concept of governance, see Castells, *The Power of Identity*, chap. 5.

5. Postliberal Sovereignty and the Question of People in Europe and the United States

The 2005 debates about the European Constitution reflect some of the main features of the crisis of constitutionalism. These debates make apparent the need for a postconstitutional solution to the tension between national governance, on the one hand, and transnational governance of the European space as a whole, on the other. To a certain extent, both the failure of the 2005 referenda for the European Constitution (which were supposed to establish for the first time a postconstitutional Europe) in France and in the Netherlands and the resulting Euroscepticism address an issue that has been circulating in the dispute about the future of Europe for many years, namely, if there is a state in Europe.[31] A peculiar alliance of left and right *souverainistes* celebrates this failure as a reappearance of the European people of different nations on the political scene. They proclaim that it speaks to two concerns. First, it responds to the absence of representation of European people in the constitutional initiatives, and, second, it responds to the neoliberal support of this constitution. But the invention of "European people" is just another European myth. We argue that the reason for the failure of the referenda is not the result of the inherent weakness of postconstitutionalism to revitalize the double-R axiom,[32] as *souverainistes* assert. There are no people (*Volk*) in Europe, and it is good that it is so. And there are no people because Europe can be neither a state nor a confederation of states.[33]

Modern national sovereignty is finished in Europe, and transnational sovereignty cannot yet solve the problem of a common European vision. It is true that transnational sovereignty and governance created the ground for a common European space.[34] But this horizontal governmental space of European unification has not answered the question of a unified hegemonic

31. Balibar, *We, the People of Europe?*

32. See part 2 of this essay for an elaboration of the concepts of the double-R axiom and the relation between people and territory.

33. Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande, *Das kosmopolitische Europa: Gesellschaft und Politik in der zweiten Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004); and Kalypso Nicolaïdis and Robert Howse, *The Federal Vision: Legitimacy and Levels of Governance in the United States and the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

34. This transnational space is, by definition, a hegemonic project. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Sandro Mezzandra, "Citizen and Subject: A Postcolonial Constitution for the Euro-

European block on a global scale. This is the moment when the issue of postliberal sovereignty emerges. Because a stable hegemonic strategy for a hegemonic Europe has yet to appear, the referenda could not convey a global vision for Europe.[35] Such a vision would transform current transnational Europe into a global postliberal project and instigate a European attempt to hegemonize hegemony.

This is apparent in the way different political forces used the referenda in order to articulate the opposition to the ongoing transnationalization of European institutions. For example, many traditional left social movements and organizations, such as national and European trade unions, ATTAC (Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens), and most of the left parties represented in the European parliament (GUE/NGL [European United Left/Nordic Green Left]), used the internal political contradictions in single nation-states, especially in France and the Netherlands, to oppose the ratification of the proposed EU Constitution. The dominant element of the public debates leading to the European referenda was fear: of the mobilization of the phantasms of an omnipotent neoliberal hegemony, of a Europe with permeable borders, of a multiculturalism out of control.

However, we know from Spinoza, and others since, that the politics of fear interrupts the moment when people are frightened by a given order. Fear breaks the internality between people and political transformation by reactivating the mechanism of exclusion of the double-R axiom. It encapsulates people into the national territory and its institutions of representation, and excludes everything that threatens this mediation between people and nation. That is, it excludes all these political actors that are external to national sovereignty but are nevertheless crucial players in a transnational Europe. The EU Constitution was rejected not because this was an effective means to oppose neoliberal policies (as if the national governments are not

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pean Union?" (paper presented at the Conflicts, Law, and Constitutionalism Conference, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme [MSH], Paris, February 16–18, 2005).

35. Even people who opposed the constitution cannot hide their peculiar form of Eurocentric euphoria that actively calls for a new planetary hegemonic role for Europe: "To put it bluntly, do we want to live in a world in which the only choice is between the American civilisation and the emerging Chinese authoritarian-capitalist one? If the answer is no then the only alternative is Europe. The third world cannot generate a strong enough resistance to the ideology of the American dream. In the present world constellation, it is only Europe that can do it" (Slavoj Žižek, "The Constitution Is Dead: Long Live Proper Politics," *The Guardian*, June 4, 2005).

enforcing such policies) and the freedom of movement in Europe (as if the Schengen Agreement is not in force) but because of the fear of new social actors entering the terrain of local national politics: other groups and communities of Europe (remember the Polish plumber in Aix en Provence), the new Muslim citizens of Europe (remember the painful negotiations between the EU and Turkey), illegal migrants (remember the Mediterranean Euro-African space), Bush and Blair, the Deutsche Bundesbank, the European Commission itself.

The target of the "No" campaign was to prevent the ongoing transnationalization of European states. But this proved to be a false strategy, because blocking the ratification of the European Constitution did not question the process of transnationalization at all. The left social movements and organizations that participated in the "No" campaign had neither the power nor the will to effectively oppose a series of major policies which have already made transnational governance in Europe a reality, including the Schengen Agreement for the creation of common migration, border, and surveillance policies across Europe, the Bologna Process for establishing a European area of higher education, and the Lisbon Agenda for stimulating Europe's economy.

The politics of fear simultaneously dissects the European transnational space into nationally regulated segments and revokes the postcolonial constitution of this one Europe. As Étienne Balibar notes, the denial of the postcolonial condition of Europe disrupts any possibility of understanding the meaning of otherness and the problem with the ongoing makeup of European citizenship today.[36] Although the failure of the referenda did not have any serious effect on the transnationalization of Europe, the "No" campaign celebrated this failure in the name of the European people as a univocal synthesis that is apparently absent in the proposed constitution. But the very form of the referendum is the moment when political sovereignty mobilizes people as a nation; the referendum is, par excellence, the materialization of the idea of national sovereignty.

Other left social projects and movements across Europe, such as the Euro-wide network against precarity (EuroMayDay), various border activist campaigns, and migrant groups, heavily critiqued exactly this reinstatement of a nation-centered logic in left politics. These movements remind us that politics which refers to European people as a *Volk* forgets that it is impos-

36. Étienne Balibar, *L'Europe, l'Amérique, la guerre: Réflexions sur la médiation européenne* **(**Paris: La Découverte, 2003), 46.

sible to think of people outside of a nation, that is, without deploying a notion of a political subject bound to national sovereignty. By doing this, Eurosceptic political movements and traditional left organizations undercut the possibility of creating a common European social space that operates beyond the institutions of national sovereignty and creates a viable alternative to transnational neoliberal governance. Moreover, Eurosceptics establish a notion of European people through the discourse of a betrayed European nation. And it is on the basis of this betrayed univocal notion of European people that otherness is constructed in and expelled from the current political landscape.

Consider, for example, the "moral panic" that shook the Netherlands after the assassination of Theo van Gogh in 2004.[37] The declaration of a state of emergency and the pogromlike raids that followed these events questioned thoroughly and irrevocably the established status of inclusion of migrants in Dutch society. A new form of exclusion of otherness is under way in current European politics. This exclusion is not primarily organized as a form of white supremacy (although this is in many cases valid), but it is the result of the creation of the illusionary paranoia of the univocal category "European people." The fictional notion of European people, which is nothing other than the annulment of the colonial and postcolonial past and present of Europe, manifests in conflicts around the Eurocentric limits of integration (as the rebellion of the banlieus during the French riots of October–November 2005 showed) and the freedom of movement across the new borders of Europe (consider the September 2005 crisis in Ceuta and Melilla, which was literally the first collective attack on a European border wall by transit migrants from Africa).

The resulting picture of the situation in Europe after the 2005 ratification failure has two aspects: the dominant neoliberal forces did not manage to create a postliberal global project for Europe out of the ongoing process of European transnationalization; and the traditional European left failed to challenge neoliberal transnationalization (rather, they returned to a melancholic Keynesianism or, better, a "left conservatism,"[38] fancying the logic of national sovereignty).

An exactly different picture regarding the process of postliberal sovereignty reveals the apocalyptic rhetoric of George W. Bush, which has

37. Geert Mak, *Der Mord an Theo van Gogh: Geschichte einer moralischen Panik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005).

38. Christopher Connery, "Actually Existing Left Conservatism," *boundary 2* 26, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 3–11.

addressed and answered precisely this problem: it creates a universal language for the aggressive postliberal project of a new global corporativism. If the reappearance of neoconservatism on the political scene in recent years has a meaning, this meaning must refer to the installation of a postliberal project of local and global sovereignty.[39] There is a certain objection to this thesis, which considers U.S. foreign policy during the Bush administration as the consolidation of a new imperialism.[40] In this approach, the United States reoccupies the power vacuum left after the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to this position, the United States no longer performs Bill Clinton's multilateral hegemonic geopolitics but a unilateral politics of violent dominance. But what this position of a new imperialism refuses to understand is that unilateral power without an embedded global claim is naked power. And naked power in the era of postliberal sovereignty blocks and cancels transnationalist horizontality between global social and economic actors. This is something that no one can afford today. The United States—more than anyone else—needs a viable transnational, horizontal, hegemonic system that frees capital flows and access to both resources and technological innovation. A neoimperialist strategy could possibly impose domination in order to restore superiority when a rupture in the actual balance of power occurs, but it can never render the balance of power productive. A neoimperialist strategy signifies the opposite of what the United States is striving for today: globalized markets, circulating culture, traveling technoscience.

The United States is striving not for neoimperialist dominance but

39. Here we mean not only the influence of neocon think tanks and foundations such as the American Enterprise Institute, Heritage Foundation, Project for the New American Century, Adolph Coors Foundation, Koch Family Foundation, Scaife Foundation, among others, on the Bush administration, but also the elaboration of a neoconservative policy, which primarily attempts to unite different parts of American society and different global actors on the global scale in a new solid, effective, and virtual vertical aggregate.

40. For example, David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). The role of the United States in the formation of a new global system of power is the main point of divergence between the different theories of the current geopolitical situation. For different approaches to this issue, see Giovanni Arrighi, "Entwicklungslinien des Empire: Transformationen des Weltsystems," in *Kritik der Weltordnung: Globalisierung, Imperialismus, Empire*, ed. Thomas Atzert and Jost Müller (Berlin: ID-Verl., 2003), 11–30; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, "Globaler Kapitalismus und amerikanisches Imperium," in *Klassen und soziale Bewegungen: Strukturen im modernen Kapitalismus*, ed. Joachim Bischoff (Hamburg: VSA-Verl., 2003), 194–218; and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Decline of American Power: The U.S. in a Chaotic World* (New York: New Press, 2003).

for a system of postliberal sovereignty by establishing a fluid planetary vertical aggregate that incorporates different social actors in a common hegemonic formation. These actors can vary immensely and can rarely be reduced to nation-states. They are much more polymorphic, fragmented, energetic, and diversified than a massive block of a series of nation-states. The United States is not undertaking nationalist-based geopolitics and is not aiming to superimpose a center of power on the rest of the world; rather, it is attempting to create a strong formation of alliances with many different actors (not primarily nation-states) using the existing transnational multicentered networks of power. The United States does not dominate globalization; it attempts to hegemonize the already hegemonic structure of globalization.

This necessitates a very different response and a very different form of resistance from a simplistic anti-imperialist approach or the traditional left position we described earlier in the case of European politics. The main problem with reductionist anti-Americanism, formulaic anti-imperialism, or left conservatism is that these approaches define themselves in the negative; they fail to connect with the productivity of power, and they condemn resistance to melancholy. Resistance then becomes the constitutive outside of what it tries to negate. A response to this situation consists in developing a counterhegemonic project,[41] one that thrives on a transnationalism from below. This is the moment when the stolen body reappears on the sociopolitical scene of the nascent third millennium.

6. Transnationalism from Below

A rather short distance separates Tangier and Tarifa. Changing continents takes less than two hours. In Tangier, the harbor and the nearby streets are packed with people—people from North and West Africa, arriving in the cities of Maghreb, seeking a chance to come to the coastline and to cross the sea. Marrakesh, Beni-Mellal, Rabat, Casablanca, Oujda—these are transit cities. The southern frontiers of Europe include Tarifa, Sebta, and cities reaching as far as Lampedusa, Crete, Lesbos. Both trajectories together, the European frontiers and Maghrebian transit places, mark the outlines of a living and breathing transnational space extending in many concentric circles around the Straits of Gibraltar.

41. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Nuestra America: Reinventing a Subaltern Paradigm of Recognition and Redistribution," *Theory, Culture & Society* 18, no. 2/3 (2001): 185–218.

The border activist networks around Europe make maps of migration and mobility in an attempt to produce cartographic visualizations of the multiplicities of the social space that migrants live and move within: routes of migration, transit and rest stations, informational channels, employment possibilities, illegal networks of trafficking, militarized spaces, places of increased electronic surveillance, detention centers, prisons, deportation centers.[42] These maps are very different from Debord's psycho-geographic maps of Paris. Instead of a fragmented experiential perception of urban space and the visualization of processes of subjectification, these maps represent spaces of pure sociability in movement. These subjectless maps of migrational flows seem to visualize a space that oscillates according to the power of postliberal sovereignty and yet develops its own imperceptible dynamics outside of it. If postliberal sovereignty hegemonizes transnational space, then the subjectless sociality of the stolen body infiltrates into transnationalism by means of a counterhegemonic project from below.

The subjectless maps of the border activist networks around Europe oppose the logic of conventional maps that convey an abstract and geometric truth and simultaneously oppose a simply subjective, existential, and autopoeitic vision of the social and the political. The map conveys truth, a common and universal truth, a truth that is not abstract. Nor is it transcendental like the truth of universal human rights. This truth is defined by the common asubjective struggle to establish it.[43] This truth is here; it is the truth from the standpoint of praxis. Like the Sabine women, transnational nomadic movements declare their determination "to stay" by announcing that they just prefer to be outside of the current constitution of polity. Nomadic motion is not about movement but about the appropriation and remaking of space. What characterizes the nomad is not his or her passage through enclosures, borders, obstacles, doors, barriers. The nomad does not have a target, does not pass through a territory, leaves nothing behind, goes

42. See, for example, Hackitectura's "Map of Migrational Flows in the Estrecho de Gibraltar," http://mcs.hackitectura.net/tiki-browse_image.php?imageId=593. See also "MapOMatix," http://mapomatix.sourceforge.net/. Another good example of border activist mapping is "MigMap," a cartography of European migration policies and movements, http://www.transitmigration.org/migmap/. "MigMap," and more broadly the project "TransitMigration" (http://www.transitmigration.org/), illustrates the forms and practices of supranational governance of migration in Europe and the various actors participating in the complex structures and interconnections of trafficking, illegal migration, asylum procedures and practices, and smuggling.

43. Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003).

nowhere. The nomad embodies the desire to link two points together, and therefore he or she always occupies the space between these two points.

The migrant never arrives somewhere. Transnationalism from below breaks with a classic conception of migration studies as a unidirectional, purposeful, and intentional process.[44] In this version of the notion of migration—typical of Fordist societies—the migrant is the signifier of a particular conceptualization of mobility: the individualized subject carefully calculates the cost-benefit ratio of his or her trip and then plans an itinerary with fixed points of departure and arrival.[45] But migration is not an individual strategy, nor does it designate the "exit" option. Rather, it characterizes the continuous shifts and radical rearticulations of individual trajectories. Migration is not the evacuation of one place and the occupation of another; it is the making and remaking of one's own life in the world as it presents itself. World-making. One measures migration not in changes of position or location but in terms of its inclusiveness and the amplitude of its intensities. Even if migration starts sometimes as a form of dislocation (forced by poverty, patriarchal exploitation, war, famine), its target is not relocation but the active transformation of social space.[46] By being embedded in broader networks of intensive social change, migration challenges and reconstitutes sovereign population control, which functions solely through the identification and regulation of the individual subject's movements.

How does migration create possibilities for rethinking contemporary transformations of sovereignty? Migration has always revealed the limits of the social compromise between different groups and strata (a compromise designated to ensure the egalitarian distribution of rights in modern national sovereignty). In most European countries, for example, migration was assimilated in the form of *Gastarbeit*, the right for temporary employment without the extensive granting of equal political rights.[47] In other countries that actively encouraged immigration, migrants were incorporated into the national social compromise by being accepted as an integral part of the

44. Michael P. Smith and Luis Guarnizo, *Transnationalism from Below* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998).

45. For a critical perspective, see Bill Jordan and Franck Düvell, *Irregular Migration: The Dilemmas of Transnational Mobility* (Cheltenham, UK: E. Elgar, 2002).

46. Alejandro Portes, Luis Guarnizo, and Patricia Landolt, "The Study of Transnationalism: Pitfalls and Promise of an Emergent Research Field," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999): 217–37.

47. Klaus J. Bade and Myron Weiner, *Migration Past, Migration Future: Germany and the United States* (Providence, R.I.: Berghahn Books, 1997).

national project in general.[48] In this case, migrants were granted not only full work rights but also political rights.[49] But despite the seemingly egalitarian treatment of migration in this second case, migrants came across the racist *dispositifs* prevalent in these societies. Equal rights did not mean the possession of equal symbolic capital in the politics of representation. That cultural studies and postcolonialism (which, as we said earlier, are primarily concerned with the critique of the representational deficit) arose mainly in these countries and only later came to continental Europe is the result of this particular historical experience, namely, the coexistence between equal rights and racist treatment, between formal equality and de facto ethnic segmentation. Despite all these variations in the treatment of migration, the main question was the same: how to assign rights and representational visibility to migrants? The demand for unrestricted rights and extensive representation (the double-R axiom) is, among other things, the outcome of the pressure that migration exerts on national sovereignty to restructure the functional relationship between people and territory.

Historically, the masses' escape from enslavement and indenture to the guild led to the systematic control of the workforce's mobility. The establishment of wage labor is the attempt to translate the freedom of the vagabond masses into a productive, utilizable, and exploitable workforce.[50] The freedom to choose and to change employers is not a fake or ideological liberty, as traditional working-class Marxism suggests, but a historical compromise designed to integrate the newly released, disorganized, and wandering workforce into a new regime of productivity.[51] In fact, from the outset, wage labor is more an ordering principle of the surplus of worker's freedom than a mere mechanism of oppression. Only later, and gradually, with the emergence and global expansion of capitalist production, does wage labor

48. David Jacobson, *Rights Across Borders: Immigration and the Decline of Citizenship* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

49. Saskia Sassen, "The Repositioning of Citizenship: Emergent Subjects and Spaces for Politics," in *Empire's New Clothes: Reading Hardt and Negri*, ed. Paul A. Passavant and Jodi Dean (New York: Routledge, 2004), 175–98.

50. Robert Castel, *From Manual Workers to Wage Laborers: Transformation of the Social Question* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2003).

51. For the concept of "autonomy of migration," see Serhat Karakayali and Vassilis Tsianos, "Mapping the Order of New Migration: Undokumentierte Arbeit und die Autonomie der Migration," *Peripherie* 25, no. 97/98 (2005): 35–64; Sandro Mezzandra, *Diritto di fuga: Migrazioni, cittadinanza, globalizzazione* (Verona: Ombre Corte, 2001); and Yann Moulier Boutang, *De l'esclavage au salariat: Economie historique du salariat bridé* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998).

again become an oppressive constraint on workers' potential freedom. Fordist wage labor transforms the worker's liberty of movement into a fixed and stable workforce market. Fordism transformed the promising force of the freedom of mobility into competitively organized upward social mobility. Disciplinary institutions prepare men to enter the Fordist organized labor market and bind women into the socially effaced and symbolically devalued realms of reproduction. The incorporation of the split between productive and reproductive fields in the Fordist regime stabilized the hierarchical patriarchal order of gender relations pertinent to national sovereignty. This was migration's modernity. But times change.

In the transnational borderline between the United States and Mexico, the coyote is more than a Canis latrans. It designates commercial "guides" who are able to cross the national borders and to organize illegal migrational movements and undocumented mobility. British sailors call the elusive helpers of stowaway passengers "sharks." In the Greek-Albanian borders, their name is *korakia* (ravens). In Chinese they are called *shetou* ("snakehead," a person who is as cunning as a snake and knows how to use his or her agile head to find a way through difficult situations). *Shetou* was also the name of the Chinese network blamed by the public antitrafficking unit for the death of fifty-eight illegal migrants in a container lorry at Dover, England, in 2000.

The official antitrafficking discourse is bound to a sovereign conception of border politics: it individualizes border crossing and presents migrants as victims of the smuggler mafia. In the public imaginary of modern sovereignty, migration is an illegally organized scandal with only two players: lawbreaking migrants and criminal smugglers.[52] But the criminalization of border crossing and the reduction of the complex and polymorphic networks that sustain migrational movements to a single-act/two-actors play conceal something—how the alleged sovereign humanitarian doctrine "save the people" operates as a violent fixation on the politics of "save the national borders" and on the protection of the national corpus from unchecked intrusion. Migration is not a unilinear individual choice process; it is not an effect of a push-and-pull mechanics of supply and demand for human capital. Migration adapts differently to each particular context. It changes faces, links unexpected social actors together, absorbs and reshapes the sover-

52. Rutvica Andrijasevic, "The Difference Borders Make: (Il)legality, Migration, and Trafficking in Italy Among Eastern European Women in Prostitution," in *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, ed. Sara Ahmed (New York: Berg Publishers, 2003), 251–72.

eign dynamics targeting its control. Migration is arbitrary in its flows, is de-individualized, and is constitutive of new transnational spaces that exceed and neutralize sovereign politics. Migrants are like big waves: they never appear precisely where they are expected, their arrival can never be predicted exactly, but they always come, and have a magnitude capable of reordering the whole given geography of a seashore, the sandbanks, the seabed, the maritime animals and plants, the rocks, the beach. This is the transnational age of migration.[53]

In Turkey, trafficking of illegal migrants, *koyun ticareti* (sheep trade), is more than an affair of corrupt policemen and has little in common with the phantom of a globally active "smuggler" mafia. The coastal "sheep trade" is a whole regime of mobility, a whole informal transnational network in which hundreds of different actors participate (each one with different stakes) to make borders permeable. Migration makes material and psychosocial spaces porous, a Benjaminian porosity, where public and private intermingle, deviance and norm are renegotiated, zones of exploitation and justice are rearranged, and formal and informal structures are reassembled. Rendering states' apparatuses and borders porous is the tactic migrants deploy to avoid the capture of their desires. Becoming animal is not only a mere metaphor for the transactions in the current regime of mobility, nor just a new academic theoretical trend; it is the cipher for the corporeal substratum of transnational migration in times of a postliberal regime of forced illegality.

In 1991, Spain imposed a visa requirement for migrants from the Maghreb region. Since then, migrants from Morocco, Mali, Senegal, and Mauretania gather in Tangier and wait for an appropriate moment to cross the Mediterranean. They are called *Herraguas*, "the burners," people who are prepared to burn their documents when they reach the Spanish Schengen border in order to avoid being returned to their country of origin. In the film *Tanger, le rêve des brûleurs* (Morocco/France, 2002), Leila Kilani follows the paths of Rhimo, Denis, and others, and documents the de-individualized dreams and practices of all these burners. But the strategy of de-identification is not primarily a question of shifting identitarian ascriptions; it is a material and an embodied way of being. The strategy of de-identification is a voluntary "dehumanization," in the sense that it breaks the relation between one's name and one's body. A body without a name

53. Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993).

is a nonhuman human being, an animal that runs. It is nonhuman because it deliberately abandons the humanist regime of rights. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Convention for asylum seekers protects the rights of refugees on arrival, but not when they are on the road. The arrival has a *longue durée*; it is not about the moment of arrival but the whole trip, almost an entire life. This is how migration solves the enigma of arrival. As the burners say, "If you want to cross the Spanish borders, it is not sufficient to burn your papers, you have to become an animal yourself." Becoming is essential to mobility. The trope of becoming animal is only one of the options migrants employ in order to claim their freedom of movement. Becoming woman, becoming child, becoming elder, becoming soil, becoming fluid, becoming animal is the migrants' answer to the control of their desire for mobility.

Becoming is the inherent impetus of migration. Migrants do not connect to each other by representing and communicating their true individual identities or by translating for others what they possess or what they are. Migrants do not need translation to communicate; migration does not need mediation. Migrants connect to each other through becomings, through their own gradual and careful, sometimes painful transformation of their existing bodily constitution. They realize their desire by changing their bodies, voices, accents, patois, hair color, height, gender, age, and biographies.[54]

But this continuous becoming, this ceaseless process of diversification and transformation, does not fabricate an infinite series of differences. Differences, individuations, and modalities are only the starting point; they are the building materials of the world. The concept of becoming seeks to articulate a political practice in which social actors escape their normalized representations and reconstitute themselves in the course of participating and changing the conditions of their material existence. Becoming is not only a force against something (primarily against the ubiquitous model of methodological individualism and the sovereign regimes of population control), it is also a force that enables desire. Every becoming is a transforma-

54. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987): "Starting from the forms one has, the subject one is, the organs one has, or the functions one fulfils, becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are closest to what one is becoming and through which one becomes. This is the sense in which becoming is the process of desire" (272). See also Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell; Cambridge: Polity, 2002).

tion of multiplicity to another, write Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari; every becoming radicalizes desire and creates new individuations, new affections, and new diversifications. Becoming is a drift. But, interestingly enough, the end of all becomings is not the proliferation of diversity and difference, it is its disappearance. Becoming imperceptible is the immanent end of all becomings; it is a process of becoming everybody/everything by eliminating the use of names to describe what exceeds the moment. Becoming indiscernible, impersonal, and imperceptible is Deleuze and Guattari's universal political project, because we have suppressed in ourselves everything that prevents us from slipping between the cracks and growing in the midst of things. In what follows, we will trace these political implications of the notion of imperceptibility in relation to migration and its role in the emergence of new modes of cooperation and action.

The becoming imperceptible of migration does not mean that migration itself is imperceptible. On the contrary, the more migrational flows become powerful and effective by materializing the practices of becoming, the more they turn out to be the most privileged targets of registration, regulation, and restriction by sovereign power.[55] Becoming imperceptible is an immanent act of resistance, because it makes it impossible to identify migration as a process that consists of fixed collective subjects. Becoming imperceptible is the most precise and effective tool migrants employ to oppose the individualizing, quantifying, and representational pressures of hegemonic postliberal sovereignty.[56]

This is the end of the politics of representation. And the decline of representation means simultaneously the end of the strategy of visibility.[57]

55. Peter Andreas and Timothy Snyder, *The Wall Around the West: State Borders and Immigration Controls in North America and Europe* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000); and Lynn Snowden, "Can We Control Illegal Migration? Evaluating Methods of Immigration Law Enforcement," *Security Journal* 11, no. 2/3 (1998): 171–77.

56. Of course, migration's weapon of imperceptibility does not always succeed. It is a route without guarantees, and it involves pain, suffering, hunger, desperation, torture, even death. But in this essay, we deliberately decided not to present migration once again as a humanitarian scandal or as a deviation from the evolutionist human rights doctrine of Western modernity. Is it a coincidence that the widespread images of migration in the media and public discourse as monstrous tragedies equally serve the ubiquitous humanitarian discourses as well as the xenophobic and racist politics of forced repatriation? We attempt to change the perspective and to approach migration as a constitutive moment of the current formation of transnationalism from below and not as a mere target of regulation from the perspective of power.

57. On the politics of imperceptibility and the constitution of experience beyond represen-

These are the politics of the imperceptible body, the stolen body in the midst of postliberal sovereignty: instead of visibility, we say imperceptibility. Instead of being perceptible, discernible, or identifiable, current migration puts on the agenda a new form of politics and a new formation of active political subjects whose aim is not to become a different way or to be a political subject, but to refuse to become a subject at all. Rather than wait for a decision regarding their asylum status, many migrants in border camps escape and dive into the informal networks of clandestine labor in the metropolises; the migrants waiting on the shores of North Africa to cross the Mediterranean in floating coffins choose to burn their documents and enter a life which de facto puts them outside of any politics of visibility. Meanwhile, visibility, in the context of illegal migration, belongs to the inventory of technologies for policing migrational flows.[58]

Of course, migrants become stronger when they become visible by obtaining rights. But migrants' demands cannot be limited to visibility and rights, because both function as differentiation markers that establish a clear and visible link between the person and his or her origins, the body and an identity. This is precisely what migrants do not want when they are clandestine, on the road. What they really want is to become everybody, to become imperceptible. They try to become like everybody else by refusing the imperative to be someone and to become integrated in the logic of border administration. Migration is the moment when one prefers to say "I prefer not to be" (i.e., not to be something in order to be able to be, to exist). And this is not something that characterizes contemporary migration alone. It is only because of the fixation on a communitarian, humanist, and identity politics–oriented conceptual system in social sciences (and associated public discourse) that we are prevented from seeing migration as one of the biggest laboratories for the subversion of the hegemonic project of postliberal sovereignty.

Even the emblematic Ellis Island cannot be considered as the melting pot out of which the new American citizen was born. Rather, it is the space where endless stories of virtual identities were invented in order to make one eligible to go through the "golden door" into America. The whole vision of an America welcoming everyone from abroad and open to difference is based on an infinite series of inventions and lies. Valuable lies, nice lies,

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tation, see Niamh Stephenson and Dimitris Papadopoulos, *Analysing Everyday Experience: Social Research and Political Change* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

58. William Walters, "Mapping Schengenland: Denaturalizing the Border," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20, no. 5 (October 2002): 1–38.

vital lies: America's history and the cunning of migration. Migration is the sister of transience; it produces mixed forms, "menwomen," a new species. The cunning of migration breeds animals. How to register them in the clean and pedantic archives of the administration? How to respond to a sheep or a raven when it has the courage to encounter the gaze of the bureaucrat in a police department of immigration affairs and demand asylum? How to register all these liminal animals? How to record all these paperless subjects? How to codify all these continuous becomings? It is impossible. Travel becomes the law, becoming becomes the code, and imperceptibility becomes the ground to enunciate counterhegemony.

7. Counterhegemony

A specter is haunting this text. It is the specter of resistance. There is something rotten in the enunciation of resistance as symmetrically and radically opposing the present system of power. The present is out of joint. The great transformation taking place today anticipates forms of resistance to come that are very different from the ones we would expect. In a similar way, the deceit of Romulus against the Sabines gives birth to an unforeseeable form of resistance. It is a form of resistance that has its source in the stolen body of the Sabine women and not in the obvious and predictable opposition of the Sabine men to Roman power. The women in Jacques-Louis David's *The Sabine Women* (1799) intervene to stop the fight between the Romans and the Sabine men when they return to avenge the abduction (Figure 5). The Sabine men's attack on Rome was a foreseeable opposition to the injustice Romulus created. But this form of resistance to the deed is one that takes place at the level of the expected, on a symbolic masculine universe concerned with the appropriation of other bodies. The Sabine women interrupt this form of opposition to the fact of their abduction, and in so doing they expose the resistance of the Sabine men as just another variation of the same theme of oppressive power. The story of the stolen bodies tells a secret about contemporary sovereignty and the possibilities for counterhegemonic action. We are looking for history in David.

We want to suggest that the Sabine women are not intervening between the two armies and adjuring both sides to stop the fight. For in the moment of actively entering the conflict, they act not as the Sabine women but as the embodiment of a long history of effacement. If the Sabine women were acting as subjects, they would be representable either as wives of

Figure 5. Jacques-Louis David, *The Sabine Women*, 1799, oil on canvas, 385 x 522 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

the Sabine men or the Roman men. But there is no return here—not only because their identities were irreversibly effaced in the moment of the abduction, but primarily because they were already obliterated by the patriarchal power of both the Sabine men as well as the Roman men. The stolen body was already stolen before the abduction took place. In the moment of the abduction, its feature as a stolen body becomes apparent, or more specifically, it starts to fabricate historic effects beyond the dominant matrix of power and resistance.

Thus, the intervention of these women in David's painting is an act that does not result from their identity as Sabine women. To read them as acting from their identities involves taking the perspective of the power that attempts to identify subjects and to nail them to their fixed positions in the nexus of given hierarchical relationships. Even David, by sexualizing the female bodies—either in the form of noble femininity (Hersilia) or in the form of a vulgar expressivity of emotionality—and by elevating the male bodies to supreme, heroic, stilted, pure physicalities, sides finally with the gaze of

power.[59] David represents women as the bearers of reconciliation, and, in this sense, he designates a metaphoric and symbolic role for them, while the men occupy the level of action.[60] The conflict is, from the very beginning, constructed as a hierarchical gendered discourse, because the actors in the painting are entrapped in the logic of representation.[61]

But here we suggest a reading of both this conflict and of David's painting that opposes and exceeds the logic of representation. The bodies of these women become stolen bodies, and in the very moment of their action, they reveal that they act from an imperceptible position. And it is not only the source and the logic of their action that is imperceptible, but also they themselves are rendered imperceptible in the way David depicts them.

Stolen bodies act together and make a world without giving any permanent name to their alliances, actions, and conditions of existence. Without ever intending it, the myriad of subjectivities are tantamount to a multiple unity. It is a moment when social control is exercised from below, when social change is subjectless, when the new elusive historical actors dwell in the world of imperceptibility and generate a persistent and insatiable surplus of sociability in motion, a new world in the heart of the old world: world 2.[62] World 2 does not spend this surplus of sociability in the politics of rights and representation but in forms of politics which claim that another world is here.

59. Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, "Nudity à la greque in 1799," *Art Bulletin* 80, no. 2 (1998): 311–35.

60. Regarding a similar reading of David's painting as the consolidation of a masculine-based political order, see Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, "David's Sabine Women: Body, Gender, and Republican Culture under the Directory," *Art History* 14, no. 3 (1991): 397–430.

61. Erica Rand, "Depoliticizing Women: Female Agency, the French Revolution, and the Art of Boucher and David," *Genders* 7 (1990): 47–68. Regarding the relationship of representations of femininity and nation, see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), chap. 10.

62. Dimitris Papadopoulos, "World 2: On the Significance and Impossibility of Articulation," *Culture, Theory, and Critique* 47, no. 2 (2006): 165–79.