Calais's 'Jungle'
Refugees, Biopolitics, and the Arts of Resistance

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Before their destruction by the French state, the informal camps of Calais, called 'the jungle' by its inhabitants (from the Farsi term jangal, for forest), stood in close proximity to the city, its port complex, and the Eurotunnel. These tents and shacks were the precarious dwellings of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, but also from Eritrea, Sudan, Ethiopia, Libya, Somalia, Egypt, Chad, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kurdistan, and Iran. The demolition of the jungle dispersed these refugees across France, in shelters, detention centres, and other encampments, such as the state-funded camp of Grande Synthe or makeshift camps in the streets of Paris. Yet many, including unaccompanied minors, are returning to Calais, since it remains the shortest clandestine route to Dover and the United Kingdom, where family and community ties, employment opportunities, including jobs on the black market, a familiar language, and until recently, a higher rate of asylum acceptance seem to promise more hospitable conditions.[1]

Since the closure of Sangatte refugee camp in 2002, several jungle camps have coalesced in Calais and been dismantled by the state. Before its destruction in October 2016, the 'new jungle camp', built on a former toxic waste dump in the outskirts

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1   In 2015 France granted asylum to less than 22 per cent of its applicants. 'France: Country Report', Asylum Information Database (AIDA), last modified 24 February 2016, www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/france/statistics. A note on terminology: technically, an asylum seeker becomes a refugee once s/he is granted asylum on the basis of a well-founded fear of persecution. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recommends distinguishing between refugees fleeing war or persecution and migrants who move for reasons not included in the legal definition of the refugee (see Adrian Edwards, 'UNHCR Viewpoint, "Refugee" or "Migrant" — Which is Right?', UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency, 11 July 2016, www.unhcr.org/ 55df0e556.html). But if the broader definition of a refugee is a person in flight from wars and disasters, it should also encompass so-called migrants fleeing economic destitution, ecological devastation, and/or intolerable conditions in countries deemed 'safe', none of which can be separated from political factors. This essay refuses to parse differences between forms of persecution; it therefore designates those in flight as refugees, and as asylum seekers when such people focus their quest on asylum.

of Calais, was a fortified space of deterrence and detention, with routine administrative procedures of harassment, incarceration, deportation, and destruction. A large police presence, composed of the gendarmerie mobile and riot police (the CRS, or Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité), was deployed to contain 'undesirables'. The path from the jungle to the ferry terminal was lined with surveillance cameras and walled by twenty-nine kilometres of chain-link fences and triple-coiled razor wire.

Figure 9.1. (Top) Calais – the fence. (Bottom) Calais – the container camp.

Source: Léopold Lambert, February 2006. By permission of Léopold Lambert.

The ground around the tunnel's entry was flooded to block access, while helicopters regularly patrolled the area. As Eric Fassin and Marie Adam observed, such fortifications sought to implement ghettoization as a form of securitarian governmentality, where the objective was the containment, deterrence, and displacement of refugees, since outright expulsion would violate their rights (Fassin and Adam, 2015). After the eviction of autumn 2016, the United Kingdom paid 2.7 million euros to build an 'anti-intrusion' concrete wall in order to secure trucks headed for the port.

The security measures taken in Calais's jungle have been couched in humanitarian rhetoric and enfolded into the logic of protection and care. Before the jungle's destruction, the state built a camp with shipping containers by day, while the police tear-gassed men, women, and children by night (Fig. 9.1, bottom). This seamless juxtaposition of compassion and repression illustrates humanitarianism's production of what Miriam Ticktin calls 'casualties of care' (Ticktin, 2011).[2] In spring 2016,

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2   See, as well, Ticktin, M. (2016) 'Calais: Containment Politics in the "Jungle"', *Funambuliste*, vol. 5, pp. 28–33. The choice of shipping containers was symbolic at many levels. Not only did it

an estimated 3,500 occupants were initially evicted by order of Calais's prefecture, and state authorities razed the southern zone of the jungle.[3] France's then minister of the interior, Bernard Cazeneuve, euphemistically termed the destruction of the southern zone an evacuation, 'a humanitarian stage of intervention' (une étape humanitaire), conducted with 'respect for the dignity of persons', to protect them from 'indignity, the mud, and the cold' (l'indignité, la boue, et le froid) (French Ministry of the Interior, 2016). Video footage of this evacuation recorded in the name of dignity and salubrity showed bulldozers razing the makeshift shelters under heavy police protection, while tear gas and water guns were fired at protesting refugees. Several months later, Cazeneuve designated the destruction of the jungle and the eviction of close to 10,000 refugees as a 'humanitarian duty' conducted in the name of protection, shelter, and care, *une mise à l'abri* (Favre, 2016). Not only is such doublespeak symptomatic of hypocrisy, wherein humanitarian language masks securitarian violence, but it also constitutes the aporia of border security practices, which positions 'the "irregular" migrant as both a security threat and threatened life in need of saving' (Vaughan-Williams, 2015, p. 95).[4]

Calais's former jungles offer a reflection in miniature of the imbrication of repression and compassion in Europe's escalating border 'crisis'.[5] The European Union's controversial refugee deal with Turkey in spring 2016 legitimated what amounts to pushback operations or refoulement in the name of saving lives from the perils of human trafficking and Mediterranean crossings. Sending back 'all new irregular migrants' who land on Greek shores to Turkey, in exchange for Syrian asylum seekers held in Turkish detention centres, at the ratio of one illegitimate body to one deemed legitimate, is a measure that violates international laws banning collective expulsions (European Council, 2016). In response to the threat of mass migration, the EU has, in some sense, outsourced its borders to the external frontiers of Turkey, an increasingly authoritarian state that paradoxically may gain access to the EU as a result of a deal requiring its exteriority to it. Borders are not only materialized as walls or fences partitioning territories; they also function as

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reduce (racialized) refugees to the status of packaged things, as Ticktin argues, but it also materialized the state's desire to ship them off.

3   Philippe Wanneson has provided an invaluable resource as to the shifting demographic data of the Calais bidonville (slum) and the state interventions within it with his blog Passeurs d'hospitalités (https://passeursdhospitalites.wordpress.com), launched in March 2012.

4   This essay is indebted to Vaughan-Williams's lucid overview of current theoretical approaches to the border.

5   For a trenchant critique of the rhetoric of 'crisis' in the context of refugees and migrations, see Heller, C., De Genova, N., Stierl, M., Tazzioli, M. and van Baar, H. (2016) 'Europe/Crisis: New Keywords of "the Crisis" in and of "Europe"', in De Genova, N. and Tazzioli, M. (eds) *Europe at a Crossroads*, no. 1 [Online]. Available at http://nearfuturesonline.org/europecrisis-new-keywords-of-crisis-in-and-of-europe-part-2/.

pre-emptive membranes that selectively filter and regulate the movement of bodies by means of new technologies. This dislocation of borders is similarly visible in France, where the Le Touquet Treaty (2003) moved the British border and immigration checkpoints to hexagonal France, and France moved its own borders to checkpoints in mainland Britain. The construction of the 'Great Wall of Calais' funded by the United Kingdom continued this politics of border expansion, as does the ongoing use of carbon dioxide probes, sniffer dogs, and X-ray scanners by British immigration officials to check trucks crossing the channel for human cargo.

The convergence of securitarian management and humanitarian care in the encampment of refugees has a long history. Even before World War II, Hannah Arendt observed that the exiled and stateless, as lives that simultaneously threaten and are threatened, were doomed to camps: 'Apparently, nobody wants to know that contemporary history has created a new kind of human being – the kind that are put into concentration camps by their foes and internment camps by their friends' (Arendt, 2007, p. 265). For several theorists of the refugee experience, contemporary border practices materialize a state of exception that finds its historical emblem in the Nazi camp. Sites as diverse as Guantánamo Bay, airport waiting areas, crossborder zones like Calais or Ceuta, and other spaces of detention, processing, or transit are addressed as zones of exception that strip the human subject of rights, as crucibles for the production of 'bare life' (Giorgio Agamben), 'human waste' (Zygmunt Bauman), 'undesirables' (Michel Agier) or the 'living dead' (Achille Mbembe).[6] Agamben's view of Auschwitz as a paradigm for such sites has been particularly influential. For him, there exists 'a perfectly real filiation' between 'internment camps, concentration camps, and extermination camps' (Agamben, 2000, pp. 15-28). The camp, as 'hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity', is 'the pure, absolute, and impassable biopolitical space'; its emblem is the refugee, naked life stripped of political and juridical value, existing only in its unconditional capacity to be killed by sovereign power (Agamben, 1998, p. 123).

This conception of the camp as a paradigm for political space, in which biopolitics, or the politics of life, turns into thanatopolitics, or the politics of death, and its corollary view of the refugee as 'bare life', can be seen to converge with humanitarian reason. As Didier Fassin has argued, in recent decades the political right to protection enshrined by asylum has been replaced by an appeal to moral sentiments such as compassion and empathy. Humanitarian governmentality, it follows, relies on the asymmetries of compassion rather than the reciprocities of justice and equal rights. When they are not dismissed as economic migrants or reviled as potential threats, asylum seekers are frequently positioned as 'speechless emissaries' whose

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6   I do not mean to suggest that these thinkers approach subjects and spaces of abjection in identical terms. The enumeration merely highlights how such designations emphasize life's vulnerability, rather than resistance, to biopolitical capture.

wounds speak louder than the words they say (Malkki, 1996). In the words of a Bangladeshi refugee I interviewed in Paris, 'We have to show that we are victims, pure victims.' Humanitarian reason capitalizes on trauma, suffering, and victimhood, reducing refugees to supplicant bodies in need of intervention and protection. It yields an impoverished view of asylum seekers' subjectivity, narratives, and political energies, in a preemptive gesture of exclusion from equal citizenship.

I am suggesting that we currently witness a convergence between biopolitical theory and humanitarian reason, both of which pivot upon figuring the refugee as 'bare life' and as apolitical, speechless victim. As Calais's destruction illustrates, humanitarian reason is but the obverse of securitarian management, which views refugees as terrorist threats, sexual predators, mass invaders, or otherwise inassimilable others. Both humanitarian and securitarian approaches, however opposed in intention, envision the irregular migrant as a body to be saved, contained, policed, moved around, encamped, kept out, or expelled – in short, as a body to be managed.

A purely negative biopolitical analysis of bodies in motion – one that essentializes categories like 'bare life' or the subaltern, and totalizes modes of sovereignty – risks colluding with this imbrication of humanitarian protection and securitarian management in the policing of borders. As refugee encampments proliferate at the borders of Europe and elsewhere, excessive analytical focus on biopolitical capture and the poignant essentialism of 'bare life' may blind us to alternate subjectivations, potential 'lines of flight', and ephemeral solidarities within these 'borderscapes'.[7] We need heuristic tools that help unravel the strands of surveillance and control composing the contemporary border regime, while remaining attentive to modes of becoming, perseverance, even resistance within it.

While it is urgent that we think through the continuities between historical forms of detention and confinement as we seek to understand the operations of contemporary borders, paradigms from the past may not be supple enough to account for their violence, nor for how such violence is negotiated, eluded, or resisted. Instead of reducing the heterogeneity of contemporary camps to the singular paradigm of Auschwitz, despite evident differences between self-organized refuges, shantytowns, and other encampments at borders, but also humanitarian camps, open-air sites of detention, or closed offshore sites like Guantánamo, we

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7   By 'biopolitical capture' I mean the subjugation of bodies and lives through technologies of control, in this case, through the border regime's dispositifs. I borrow 'lines of flight' from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and my use of borderscape comes from Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr, who 'use the concept "borderscapes" to emphasize the inherent contestability of the meaning of the border between belonging and nonbelonging … zones of abjection are not without resistance': Rajaram, P. K. and Grundy-Warr, C. (eds) (2007) *Introduction to Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's Edge*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. xxviii.

should envisage them in their diversity and adapt our conceptual frames accordingly. After all, even concentration camp survivor David Rousset, who coined the concept of 'the concentrationary universe' in postwar France, did not fix Buchenwald into a paradigm that infinitely repeats across time, nor did he essentialize history into the repetition of an identical catastrophe. Instead, the concentrationary (le concentrationnaire) circulated in the political culture of France and its colonies as a metaphor to illuminate new or ongoing forms of terror with partial or asymmetrical links to the Nazi past. Rather than assuming that sites of detention and containment are structured by an identical matrix and rehearse the biopolitical operations of the past, we need figures attuned to the mutations of form that power and resistance take over time.

This essay explores what nuance recent visual representations of Calais bring to the theorization of borderscapes as camps and to contemporary views of the refugee as 'bare life', as passive object of humanitarian intervention, and as active threat to be policed or pushed out. How do cultural forms such as cinema or photography frame the figure of the refugee and provide a symbolic platform for those denied the right to appearance and movement in traditional conceptions of the polis? The hospitality of visual form can offer 'small acts of repair' to the dehumanizing violence of border practices (Hirsch and Spitzer, 2016). Yet, perhaps more urgent than the gesture of symbolic reparation, or 'visual asylum', is art's capacity to give more complex accounts of the conditions and constraints of a refugee's politicization. Aesthetic forms open supple and reflexive frames for envisioning modes of capture and flight both past and present. Representations of borderscapes offer heuristic figures that remain on the move, thus conveying the lived itineraries and symbolic resources of those in flight. These figures give visible and audible form to the singularities of refugees' experience, sometimes by challenging normative conceptions of what it means to appear and to have a voice in traditional conceptions of the polis. In other words, experimental visual forms can reconfigure our understanding of what it means to see and be seen beyond the regime of visibility, recognition, and control we witness in borderscapes such as Calais.

In what follows, I suggest that *Qu'ils reposent en révolte*, a recent French documentary on Calais's encampments, challenges the border's securitarian logic, exposes its humanitarian conceits, and hosts alternate political subjectivations. My reading considers forms of resistance not only in the film's visual poetics but also in its subjects' testimonies and practices. These arts of resistance are not the exclusive province of cultural representation, for they are wielded by refugees seeking room for manoeuvre within the repressive apparatus of the contemporary border. Both the documentary and its subjects invoke disparate histories of racialized violence to render intelligible the operations of flight and capture in the jungle. This gesture decentres the paradigm of the Nazi camp and pries open its assumption of total biopolitical capture. I then turn to the dialectic of invisibility and visibility charac-

terizing refugees' resistance to securitarian/humanitarian management and show how their resistance is supported by the visual frames of cinema and photography. Such arts of disappearance and appearance are political, in Jacques Rancière's understanding of the term, insofar as they disrupt the partition of bodies that governs a given regime of representation and rights.

Ecologies of Belonging, Memories of Violence: *Qu'ils reposent en révolte*

Qu'ils reposent en révolte: Des figures de guerre I is an experimental documentary by film director Sylvain George. From 2006 to 2009, when the French state last razed the jungle, the director filmed refugees in Calais in what was initially conceived as the first installment in a trilogy on migration and the global neoliberal order, with projected sequels in the encampments of Greece and the Spanish autonomous cities Ceuta and Melilla, in North Africa. George's films include *Les Éclats: Ma gueule, ma révolte, mon nom* (2011), also set in Calais; the poetic and experimental newsreel *Vers Madrid: The Burning Bright* (2012), on the Indignados protest movement in Madrid's Puerta del Sol; and, most recently, *Paris est une fête: un film en 18 vagues* (2017), a cinematic poem that juxtaposes the itinerary of an unaccompanied foreign minor in Paris under the state of emergency with the waves of social movements that followed the 2015 terrorist attacks. A genre-defying thinker, poet, and filmmaker with a strong background in philosophy, political theory, and activism, Sylvain George is committed to framing migrants and refugees, neither through the victimology of trauma nor the asymmetries of humanitarianism, but through the lens of politics: 'The migrants are not victims but people, they are political subjects. … Men and women who fight and cannot resolve themselves to passively accept the violence of the State. They fight with their own strength and resources, and draw and promote at the same time, different visions of the world, as real, as necessary.' He later adds, 'I see them as political subjects who, for reasons of their own and that I find legitimate, decide to trace their line of flight' (George, n.d.).

George's meditation on borders and lines of flight explicitly gestures to the work of Walter Benjamin, himself a refugee who committed suicide at the Spanish border while fleeing Occupied France. (George wrote a master's thesis on Benjamin's concept of allegory, a telling choice for his practice as a documentary filmmaker who moves back and forth between archive and poesis.) As we shall see, his film's visual atmospherics channel Benjamin's poles of melancholic contemplation and insurrectional charge, while specific sequences invoke the philosopher's ruminations on memory, allegory, the trace, and the archive. *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* (May they rest in revolt) also borrows its title from a postwar poem by Henri Michaux that celebrates the posthumous remembrance of rebellion: the memory of s/he who rests in revolt remains alive, 'In what suffers, in what seeps/In what seeks and

does not find … In one who harbors fever within/Who cares not a whit about walls' (Michaux, 1972, pp. 104-105).[8] Filmed in elegiac black and white, George's film is similarly an ode to the memory of transient, invisible warriors, an archive of precarious yet uncontainable life.

The formal experimentations in *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* – including techniques of over- and underexposure, mid- to low-angle shots of people's faces, jump cuts, and fade-outs – create a singular visual poetics of migration that is at once meditative and incendiary. Stretching across two and a half hours of viewing time, the film follows none of the traditional conventions of documentary narrative. No voiceover organizes the progression, nor do we hear George speak. Instead, the camera meanders through various Calaisian sites: the public park, the seafront, the water pump at the riverbank where refugees wash, the town centre with its monumental belfry, the industrial port, the encampments, a soup kitchen, a medical station. We encounter refugees who take a moment to share a piece of their story – where they are from, why they flee, who they left behind, how they feel. In sharp contrast to the partition of spaces and bodies orchestrated by the disciplinary viewpoint of state authorities, George's cinematic gaze is deeply immersed in the perspective of its subjects, in shots taken from unexpected angles and mobile perspectives: a divergence firmly established in the documentary's opening sequence, unfolding in a manicured public park in Calais under heavy police surveillance. Refugees are hunted down, rounded up, and taken away in vans, as George's camera traverses the park's fences, bushes, and walls with deliberate fluidity. The next sequence opens in the same lush setting, with the camera tilted upward and filming leafy treetops in a slow, vertiginous rotation as we hear the strains of a song. The perspective descends to three young refugees singing and clapping. Over several minutes, we witness close-ups of each face and its flicker of emotions – nostalgia, shyness, pleasure. The camera cuts to a tree's foliage whispering in the breeze, then returns to the men singing against the leafy backdrop, then finally rests its upward-tilted gaze on one of the youths as he sings about Ethiopia, his own gaze raised toward an undisclosed point on the horizon (Fig. 9.2).

Rather than a fixed, frontal close-up of the refugees' faces, the spectator witnesses and participates in an oblique relay of gazes. George's predilection for low- to mid-angle shots tilts our own gaze at an angle so that we are not looking at refugees, but rather toward them. This visual movement toward the other conveys an ethos of proximity rather than capture, a solidarity that remains mindful of the difference between the camera's unrestricted movement and the restrictions of those beheld, even as it conveys the refugees' flight from home toward an 'elsewhere'. All the while, the oblique approach of the low- to mid-angle shot resists

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8   Note that Sylvain George translates the singular form of Michaux's title into a plural, collective subject of rebellion.

Figure 9.2. Song of Ethiopia.

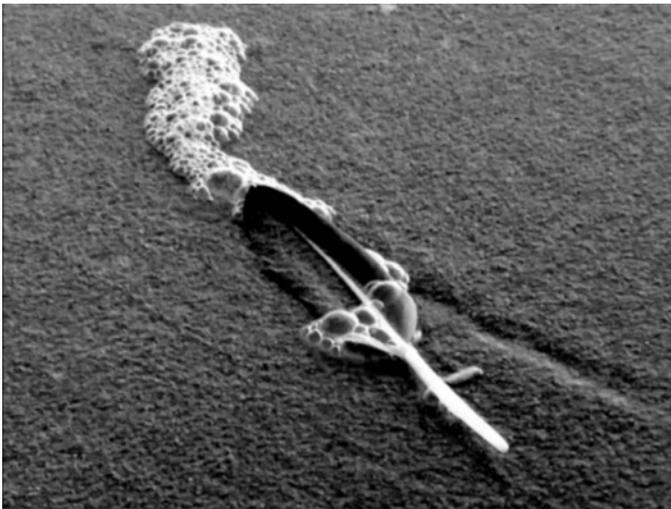Source: Still from *Qu'ils reposent en révolte: Des figure de guerres I.*

the camera's potentiality as a technology of capture and leaves open the possibility of escape from the cinematic frame: after the song, the men duck away from the camera to attempt their clandestine crossing, throwing parting words over their shoulders: 'Thank you, now, we are ready for loss!'

The environment that emerges from George's cinematic apparatus is a palimpsest of different time scales: long close-ups of rock formations gesture toward geological time; the ebb and flow of ocean tides evoke marine cycles; long shots of trees covered in foliage, then barren, then laden with snow convey the cycle of seasons. The Judeo-Christian frame is conjured in the opening shot of Mount Sinai and the references to Exodus interspersed throughout the film. Our own time of the Anthropocene and of global capital is visible in shots of giant illuminated ferries crossing the channel and audible in the soundtrack's ever-present rumble of trucks carrying goods across the border. The camera limns this temporal superimposition with a lyricism that gestures toward figuration without ever settling into anthropocentric correspondence.

Of course, there are resonances between Calais's bodies in exile and the shifting environment of living and nonliving things registered by the film: sea foam buffeted by the winds trembles on the beach; a feather briefly rests on its ethereal embankment, the trace of its quill facing erasure by the tide (Fig. 9.3). In a metallic sky, a cloud in the shape of a bird is followed by a seagull's flight. Yet these images

are not placed in an anthropomorphic logic of reflection where the natural world affirms or negates the human experience of migration. Rather, the camera weaves multiple elements of Calais's borderscape into an ever-shifting tapestry in which living organisms, atmospheric phenomena, the elements, and inanimate things are in constant, nonhierarchical interaction (as in the echoes between whispering foliage and a refugee's song). In this ecology, no body or thing is out of place. To cite Sylvain George, 'Patches of ice, insects, spiders, stone statue with eyes gnawed by time, a can of cola, a sunset radiating, bird feathers, the belfry of the town center of Calais, immigrants and onlookers, police: all are in close communication with each other as an environment' (Kuener, n.d.).[9]

Figure 9.3. Feather on sea foam.

Source: Still from *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* (00.19.00).

Even as the camera conjures this ecology of belonging and its multiple points of communication, however, the montage deliberately produces effects of irony and counterpoint that re-inject divisive historical forces into the borderscape. The film ends with the destruction of this iteration of the jungle in 2009 under Eric

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9   George situates his cinematic practice and its ethos of multiplicity within Deleuze's concept of immanence: 'On this plane of immanence, categories and hierarchies no longer apply, they yield to intensities produced by the shock of encounters, or the contemplation of the event. An encounter, as infinite as it might be, is an event, and for those who try to look at it, life is a permanent encounter.' See George, S. (2014) 'Ne pas savoir d'où cela vient, où cela va', *Débordements*, 6 November [Online]. Available at www.debordements.fr/spip.php?article306.

Besson, who at the time held the controversial, short-lived position of 'minister of immigration, integration, national identity and co-development' (Ministre de l'immigration, l'intégration, l'identité nationale et le développement solidaire). The title disclosed the state's assumption of tensions between these categories, which were amalgamated into a single office, while couching the securitarian regulation of labor flows from the global south in the humanitarian rhetoric of 'development in solidarity'.[10] *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* shows us Besson, like Cazeneuve this year, qualifying the camp's destruction as a humanitarian measure that protects migrants from human traffickers and spells 'the end of the law of the jungle' (la fin de la loi de la jungle). We watch tents crushed by bulldozers, the police clash with refugees and activists, unaccompanied minors lined up for deportation, unwanted bodies forcibly pushed out. In the aftermath of this eviction, the camera contemplates the deserted jungle's wreckage, pausing on a sign that reads 'hunting prohibited', a scrap of paper that bears the words 'forget fingerprints in other states and give us asylum in France, but not such asylum as it is'. We see the remnants of tents in the bulldozers' wake, precarious dwellings built out of the debris of global capital and its false promises: a piece of cardboard advertising social lodging, a torn poster exhorting the joys of thrift ('Je me simplifie la vie, je fais des economies'), a canvas bag sporting an Air France logo, the packaging from a Goodyear tyre. The camera lingers on a shoe half buried in the sand and crawling with bugs (Fig. 9.4).

The intensity of George's cinematic gaze on the trace, the remnant, the afterlife of things, recalls Benjamin's figure of the nineteenth-century rag-picker who picks up what the city discards and commits it to memory, a figure crucial to postwar reflections on mass disappearance.[11] It is also reminiscent of the concentrationary aesthetic developed by poet and Mauthausen camp survivor Jean Cayrol, who authored the screenplay for Alain Resnais's classic documentary on Nazi deportation, *Night and Fog* (1955). This concentrationary or Lazarean aesthetic was the correlative of Rousset's concentrationary universe I evoked earlier; its inspiration was the figure of the survivor, likened to Lazarus arisen from the dead. The Lazarean project resurrected the remnant and committed the anonymous to memory, with the aim to 'restore life, so that a shoe lost in a garbage can may be part of our legacy. The concentrationary taught me to leave nothing aside. Man lives on in his remains' (Cayrol, 1982, p. 110). *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* similarly frames a visual archive of ghostly presences still palpable in the material traces left behind.

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10   For an incisive critique of this office, see Thomas, D. (2013) *Africa and France: Postcolonial Cultures, Migration, and Racism*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, pp. 65-70.

11   See, for instance, Patrick Modiano's narrative pursuits of the disappeared in postwar Paris (for example, in his book *Dora Bruder*), frequently figured in relation to the Baudelairean poet as visionary and chiffonier.

Figure 9.4. Shoe half buried in the sand.

Source: Still from *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* (2.23.08).

Yet if the testimonial poetics of Calais's camp in this documentary bear traces of the Nazi camps, other histories of detention and racialized violence are conjured and coalesce with this memory, forming a palimpsest, a 'coexistence of sheets of past' within the cinematic image (Deleuze, 1989, p. 122). In one sequence, a young man recounts his chaotic itinerary from Turkey while striding down railroad tracks flanked by barbed-wire fences, as the camera turns to follow a seagull's unfettered flight and we hear its cries. The train tracks and barbed wire recall iconic scenes, from Resnais to Claude Lanzmann and beyond, of train journeys leading to concentration and death camps. The upward tilted camera hurtles past a silhouette splayed on the barbed wire above the tracks, clothing left behind by a refugee who was probably caught in its spikes (Fig. 9.5). This fleeting evocation of a body hanging off a fence conjures visual memories of detainees electrocuted in Nazi camps, yet the dangling shape simultaneously evokes the 'strange fruit' of American lynching – a history acoustically fleshed out on the soundtrack by free-jazz pioneer Archie Shepp that George had chosen for a previous version of the documentary.[12] But the absence of an actual body on Calais's fence – at once a reminder of the differences

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12   Archie Shepp's 'Rufus (Swung, His Face At Last To The Wind, Then His Neck Snapped)' comes to mind. Sylvain George refers to the various objects left behind by the migrants of Calais's jungle as 'strange fruit' and mentions the importance of Archie Shepp's music for his film (conversation with the director).

between these regimes of racialized terror and a trace of their allegorical continuity – twists this image of biopolitical capture into a figure of flight.

Figure 9.5. Clothing on barbed wire fence.

Source: Still from *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* (00.21.58).

Other scenes of refugees bearing witness to their own dehumanization similarly echo testimonies of Nazi camp survivors, while gesturing toward the legacies of colonialism and slavery. These accounts of dehumanization are all the more haunting for their emergence from within the city and port of Calais, signaling the extent to which spaces of extremity that the European postwar imaginary primarily associated with the Third Reich are folded into the everyday life of a Western (neo)liberal democracy. A refugee conveys this abjection within the polis in piercing terms: 'I give my life to cross this storm, the desert, the sea, ok? But I came in Europe. I didn't lose my life in the Mediterranean Sea and the Sahara Desert. I lose my life here, the city … it's a matter of time.' Another stark testimony to Calais as a death-world within the city emerges after a long tracking shot of graffiti that depicts scenes of war and destruction. A faceless voice describes the refugee's condition as the suspended animation of a living death: 'Comme ci comme ça, fifty-fifty, so-so, not dying, not living, I exist, I no exist, in between the tombs in between, not human being, not animal, in between.' We do not see the man's face, only his gesturing hand, which signals this indescribable in-betweenness, or indistinction, between life and death, humanity and animality, while cheerless laughter punctuates his words.

These accounts of existential spectrality, of flickering between life and death, man and beast, make it tempting to read the exiled in Calais through a purely negative paradigm of biopolitics turned zoopolitics, exercised on bare life as sheer animality. Yet even if such utterances attest to the grim precarity of a refugee's condition, their expression as testimony decisively refutes the analogy between the refugee and 'bare life', drawn by Agamben and theorists in his wake, who view the asylum seeker as an avatar of the Muselmann, or detainee at the threshold of extinction in Auschwitz.[13] It is one thing to articulate the conditions of 'bare life', such as the slippage from human to inhuman, or the unstable threshold between existence and non-existence. It is quite another to embody this condition. There is an abyss between being the Muselmann, who for Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi embodied abjection beyond speech, and expressing this condition of abjection.

If contemporary refugee testimonies reverberate with those from the Nazi camps, they simultaneously and explicitly evoke other legacies of dehumanization, in particular those of colonialism and slavery: the evocation of abject spaces nested within the polis recall Frantz Fanon's colonial city, 'a compartmentalized world, a world divided in two … inhabited by different species' (2004, p. 5). Further, if we consider that 'the plantation is one of the bellies of the world', the afterlife of slavery, as necropolitics or 'the subjugation of life to the power of death', continues to shape contemporary zones inhabited by 'the living dead' (Glissant, 1997, p. 40; Mbembe, 2003, p. 40). The racialized histories of terror and dehumanization brought to bear on the so-called 'refugee crisis' are inextricably entwined and therefore irreducible to the Eurocentric prism of the Nazi camp, which itself, as Aimé Césaire, Fanon, and Arendt have taught us, is not a unique locus of biopolitics but requires historical rethinking in relation to sites such as the plantation and the colony.

Calais's jungle may be designated as a camp or theorized as a state of exception that produces bare life, but *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* pictures it as an unstable zone of traversal between political and 'bare' life, biopower and necropolitics, resistance and abjection, city and camp. It is a place where bodies, in all their clandestine 'out of placeness', nevertheless create, construct, and persevere in their attempt to survive, remain in place or stay on the move. These are 'political subjects' who draw from the knotted symbolic resources of the past in their resistance to the contemporary border's regime of surveillance and control.

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13   For example, David Farrier recognizes the perils of likening asylum detention to the extermination camp, but nevertheless considers such parallels worth pursuing, insofar as both the asylum seeker and the Muselmann are 'exemplary in incarnating the point in which the human slides into the inhuman' (65); 'biopower and necropower … converge in both the asylum seeker and the Muselmänner' (65) so that 'both asylum seeker and Muselmann embody a form of limit situation, analogous to the state of exception' (66). Farrier, D. (2011) *Postcolonial Asylum: Seeking Sanctuary Before the Law*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press.

Bodily Arts of Resistance

My reading has sought to illuminate how *Qu'ils reposent en révolte*, in both its form and contents, resists the state's partitioning of space, time, and bodies in Calais's jungle. The visual allusions to slavery, colonialism, and the Final Solution track continuities between the past and the present while preserving the particularity of Calais's borderscape and challenging the refugee's figuration as mute 'bare life'. If the film may be understood as an art of resistance – resistance to the surveillance gaze, to state disciplinary technologies, to biopolitical capture – in a similar vein, the refugees it documents practice their own arts of resistance, both in their testimonies and upon their bodies. The most powerful – and disturbing – illustration of bodily resistance is the erasure of fingerprints. For migrants within the Eurozone, fingerprint mutilation by means of razors, fire, or acid is an attempt to escape the reach of Eurodac, the database that collects and manages the biometric data of asylum seekers and illegal entrants into the European Union. As one technological arm of the Dublin regulation, requiring that refugees lodge an asylum claim in the first EU country they enter (often Italy or Greece), the Eurodac database ensures that migrants who cross additional borders after being fingerprinted are returned to the previous country.[14] Destroying their skin, as they would their papers, the subjects of these passages in George's film paradoxically reveal themselves becoming unclassifiable, illegible, even invisible.

In the first of two sequences on fingerprint mutilation, we witness anonymous hands brandishing a plastic razor and applying its blade onto finger pads in a swift curving motion that shaves off slivers of skin (Fig. 9.6). A young man's face suddenly surges into the frame. With blazing eyes and a bitter twist to his lips, Temesghen, from Eritrea, exclaims (Fig. 9.7):

> Survive! We have to survive in Europe. This is virus, HIV virus you know, this is virus in Europe [brandishing his hand]. If it was possible to cut this one and throw it and bring another hand, I was doing that. But it is not possible. Just burning my hands. I don't know what happens to my hand. They are making us slaves, you know, slaves of [their] own country, by this fingerprint. They destroy our life. We can't go. We can't change our life [the sound is muted, his head turns in slow motion, face drawn in a grimace of disgust].

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14   Databases in Europe's information system that form the 'digital border' also include the Schengen Information System (SIS), storing information on visas in order to flag illegal immigrants as they arrive in the Schengen Area (the Schengen Agreement of 1985 abolished internal border controls between its signatories and instituted a common visa policy; the Schengen Area now includes 26 countries). Other databases regulating movement within the EU are False and Authentic Documents Online and the Visa Information System.

Figure 9.6. Fingerprint mutilation by razor.

Source: Still from *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* (00.40.00).

Figure 9.7. Temesghen, 'They are making us slaves'.

Source: Still from *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* (00.42.48).

The mute slow motion and fade to black on which this scene concludes is visually reminiscent of Benjamin's concept of history as 'petrified unrest', time sunk into rigor mortis, eternal movement that knows no development. It is the stalled time of border encampments. Yet far from assuming the position of supplicant victimhood assigned by humanitarian reason, Temesghen embodies the rebellion celebrated in the documentary's title. He voices the rumble of *rogne*, the 'cheerless humor of the rebel' that Walter Benjamin ascribed to the stalled rage of poets and revolutionaries.[15]

Temesghen's designation of his own dark hands as 'HIV virus … in Europe' is an accurate ventriloquism of contemporary rhetoric on the migrant as figurative and literal contagion; it reflects xenophobic discourses in Europe and the United States that dehumanize irregular migrants through the rhetoric of swarms, infections, vermin, plagues. The virus has a long history as a figure for the Western state's contamination by various racialized others deemed inimical to its values: a figure in anti-Semitic rhetoric during World War II, designating the Jewish population as an oriental plague that migrates across the oceans to infect Europe, it has re-emerged in current discourses as fundamentalist Islam's contagion, a primary vector of which is the viral diffusion of internet jihadi propaganda sites. The contagion evoked both then and now is not simply signifying the contamination of a body politic by foreign values. It is quite literal, as we see in the medicalization of borders and fear mongering about 'irregular' immigration as an infectious threat. Temesghen powerfully conveys how the border defending 'Fortress Europe' functions like an immune system, both in the epidemiological and symbolic senses.[16] Framed by George's cinematographic poetics, Temesghen's analysis illuminates and resists the new technologies of information management and topographies of surveillance that unfurl the tentacular reach of what Roberto Esposito has termed the 'immunitary dispositif' of contemporary societies of control. In Esposito's words:

> This immunitary *dispositif* is … the coagulating point, both real and symbolic, of contemporary existence. … The fact that the growing flows of immigrants are thought (entirely erroneously) to be one of the worst dangers for our societies also suggests how central the immunitary question is becoming. Everywhere we look, new walls, new blockades, and new dividing lines are erected against

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15   That is to say, Charles Baudelaire and Louis-Auguste Blanqui. Benjamin, W. (1999) *Arcades Project* (trans. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin), Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, pp. 329, 332.

16   'Fortress Europe', in its post-Second World War understanding, and specifically in the aftermath of the Schengen Agreement, designates the system of patrols, detention, and regulations in place to defend Europe's external borders against migrants and refugees. In common parlance, it describes the hardening of European policies and attitudes against immigration.

something that threatens, or at least seems to, our biological, social, and environmental identity. It is as if that fear of being even accidentally grazed has been made worse, that fear that Elias Canetti located at the origin of our modernity in a perverse short circuit between touch (tatto), contact (contatto), and contagion (contagio). The risk of contamination immediately liquidates contact, relationality, and being in common. … What is important is inhibiting, preventing, and fighting the spread of contagion wherever it presents itself, *using whatever means necessary*. (Esposito, 2013, pp. 59-60, my italics)

Temesghen's response to these 'new walls, new blockades, and new dividing lines', both material and digital, is self-mutilation as an enactment of 'the right to disappear'.[17] For the allusion to his hands as 'HIV … in Europe' also suggests that the unique self that is imprinted on these fingers, attached to these hands, is itself the virus requiring eradication. An instrument of touch and contact that short-circuits into a vector of contagion, this hand that the young man would cut off and throw away if he could, must be disfigured beyond recognition. The destruction of a 'self' in its official biopolitical inscription, as digital marker of identification, is the price of survival and flight toward another becoming. As a challenge to the border's immunitary paradigm with its practices of detection, displacement, and expulsion, Temesghen invokes an autoimmune crisis, in the form of severing one's hand or cutting away fingerprints. The fantasy of self-amputation and the practice of erasing fingerprints are a subversive mimicry of state violence, where the will to circulate confronts the state's blockade, in turn 'using whatever means necessary'.

The production of illegibility by means of razors, fire, sandpaper, or battery acid is a political tactic devised in resistance to the biopolitical dispositif that manages bodies and polices frontiers. As we see in Calais, these frontiers are increasingly virtual even as, paradoxically, they act upon and intrude on the human body's biology itself: consider the carbon dioxide probes or heartbeat detectors used to determine human cargo on trucks. The body becomes a zone recorded, mapped, and traversed by technologies of management and governance. For Esposito, the human body's penetration by technologies has taken unprecedented proportions:

The world, in all its components – natural and artificial, material and electronic, chemical and telematics – … penetrates us in a form that eliminates the separation between inside and outside, front and back, surface and depth: *no longer content merely to besiege us from the outside, technique has now taken up residence in our very limbs*. (Esposito, 2011, p. 147, my italics)

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17   'The right to disappear' is Maurice Blanchot's formulation. Blanchot, M. (1987) 'Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him', in *Foucault/Blanchot* (trans. J. Mehlman), New York, MIT Press, pp. 61-110.

If technique has 'taken up residence in our very limbs', most visibly in biometric controls, resistance must alter those same limbs. While Temesghen rages against the border's immunitary dispositif, the camera cuts to his companion, who calmly, pedagogically, explains that the mutilation of fingerprints is a technique crafted in resistance to the techniques implemented by the European Union to restrict migrants' mobility: 'Because, you know, all European have their system for circularization of our fingerprint in order to know where you arrive and where you will go. And where the European nations have their techniques, we have our techniques to be hide our fingerprints.' A disposable razor and a red-hot screw are invoked as weapons that mirror the EU surveillance databases and their transnational reach. As incommensurable as these techniques may be, the claim underscores the impossibility of reducing refugees to abjection or bare life; they must be recognized as resourceful subjects struggling to affirm their right of mobility in order to 'change their future', as Temesghen puts it.[18] The make-do tactics documented by these cinematic scenes show refugees as political beings who, in George's words (evoked earlier), 'fight with their own resources and draw different visions of the world'. Their practices or techniques, exercised to transform their own bodies into unreadable hieroglyphs, offer the fleeting glimpse of an affirmative biopolitics in which the power over life wielded by border controls cedes to the power of life to evade them. A vitalist view of the priority of the irregular migrant's movement glimmers through the biopolitical paradigm of total capture.

As the film shows, the symbolic touchstone for those in Calais's camp is not the concentrationary universe but the memory and temporality of colonialism and slavery: 'They are making us slaves, you know, slaves of [their] own country, by this fingerprint.' Temesghen historicizes biometric prints as an update on the branding of slaves, where disposable racialized bodies are held hostage by one territory. In George's film, the symbolic significance of slavery for those who seek to elude biometric capture is further developed in the second sequence on fingerprint mutilation. A close-up of a crackling fire plunges viewers into a strange rite, the significance of which is not immediately grasped. We discern small screws attached to wire stems, heated to incandescence in the flames as we hear the cry of seagulls, eruptions of laughter, hisses of pain, and untranslated exclamations. We only

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18   In a commentary on this scene, Jacques Rancière evokes 'a certain equilibrium between the mutilation of bodies and the vision of these beings' capacity to paint themselves, sculpt themselves, tattoo themselves in order to escape the logic of identification, as if what the film showed was a double capacity of bodies, on the one hand the capacity to travel, to move through all stages, on the other this capacity to transform themselves, to find a response that is a painful response, expressed as painful.' Rancière, J. (2011) 'Savoir où l'on place l'intolérable dans nos vies', interview with C. Fouteau and J. Confavreux, *Mediapart*, 16 November 16 [Online]. Available at https://www.mediapart.fr/journal/france/151111/ jacques-ranciere-savoir-ou-lon-place-lintolerable-dans-nos-vies.

gradually come to realize that we are witnessing the searing away of finger-prints by hot screws. 'I say this is our tradition. They did it to our great grandfathers', jokes a faceless voice to a chorus of hoots and guffaws, while we watch anonymous dark fingers grow striated with white marks, then outstretched hands bearing scars of disquieting beauty (Figs. 9.8-9.9). As we witness the methodical application of hot screws to flinching fingers, the same faceless voice continues, joined by other voices:

> FIRST VOICE: Now we are not going to wait somebody to pain me, I will pain ourselves. The fire … [sucking sound of pain].

> PERHAPS ANOTHER VOICE: Inch Allah . . [fragment of song]; Africa unite!

> FIRST VOICE: Too much, very very painful, but what can we do? We have to [exclamation of pain]. What can we do? What can we do, what can we do what can we do [rueful groan]. Anyway, it shall stop one day. I believe that one day Africa will become Europe and Europe will become Africa.

> ANOTHER VOICE: This is our pray.

> ANOTHER VOICE: Yah, this is our prayers. One day we shall see Europeans migrating to Africa to look for a job. Shame on Europe.

> CHORUS OF VOICES: Africa, unite, Africa proudest! Africa proudest! Africa unite!

'Now we are not going to wait somebody to pain me, I will pain ourselves', says the anonymous voice with grim humour. The oscillation in pronouns from singular to plural (we, me, I, ourselves), the alternations of his voice with the laughter, hisses, and exclamation of others, in languages that are not translated in the film's subtitles, produce a choral voicing, intimations of a collectivity to come. The same voice repeats, again with a kind of jovial resignation, that the burning screws are 'very very painful, but what can we do? What can we do?' As the faceless narrator goes on to anticipate that future in which 'Africa will become Europe and Europe … Africa', we hear the fragment of a song and exclamations of 'Africa unite!'[19] While

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19   The reversal of Europe and Africa is the central conceit of Abdourahman Waberi's 2009 novel, *In the United States of Africa* (trans. D. and N. Ball), New York, Bison Books.

Figure 9.8. Fingerprint mutilation by burning.

Source: Still from *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* (00.44.36).

Figure 9.9. Scarred hands.

Source: Still from *Qu'ils reposent en révolte* (00.47.10).

the crackling fire heats up these new miniature irons and their paradoxical promise of fugitivity, global memories of slavery and colonialism fuse with the present of postcolonial migration, flickering toward a transnational liberation to come. This temporal conjunction within Calais's flames visually recalls Benjamin's dialectical image, in which past and present are disruptively illuminated in a flash.[20]

For George, the evocation of slavery in this scene is not symbolic, but utterly material, for the contemporary politics of migration and its biometric controls 'literally' brands migrants, marking their bodies within a European economy of recognition and forcing them to brand themselves in response: 'This is no longer an image. An image, to brand oneself with hot iron? … It isn't simply a metaphor' (George, 2012). Yet if today's digital imprints are analogous to the branding of slaves by hot iron, their concealment by burning is a strategy of counter-branding, a self-tattooing in resistance to the border's dispositif. The violence once inflicted by slave owners to mark their property ('I say this is our tradition') is now self-inflicted by slavery's descendants in order to deterritorialize themselves, in what could be seen as a contemporary form of marronnage or fugitivity. The inscription of racial violence is made visible as a white scar on dark skin, enhanced by the black and white image. Yet this mark of enslavement is redrawn as the threshold of a line of flight.[21]

The rights of the stateless are predominantly framed as a right to be seen and heard, a right to appear in public space. An Arendtian view of rights hinges on the right to action and to speech in the public realm that is the polis, that is to say, 'the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me' (Arendt, 1998, p. 198). In contrast to the logic of recognition implicit in discourses of rights, however, the erasure of fingerprints is not conducted in the name of a right to be seen, but in the name of a right to disappear. The reduction of recognizable, politically qualified, and hence containable and deportable life, to what might be seen as illegible, 'bare' life – a body that cannot be identified as belonging to any state, or indeed to any (registered) name – is precisely what constrains the violence of sovereign power. In the current landscape of migration and statelessness, claiming one's right to have rights, which for many means staying on the move, involves strategically claiming the right to disappear, the right to a naked, yet politically charged, life at the threshold of what counts as human, unprotected, and undetected by the state.

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20   This is entirely in keeping with Sylvain George's intention: 'The fixed image is an attempt to capture something fleeting, to extract layers of emotion and reality, and to create some dialectical links between the present and the past': 'Welcome to Calais: Sylvain George and the Aesthetics of Resistance'.

21   I am inspired here by Michelle Koerner's 2011 essay, 'Lines of Escape: Gilles Deleuze's Encounter with George Jackson', *Genre*, vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 157–80.

The Right to Disappear

The 'right to disappear', for Maurice Blanchot (by way of Michel Foucault), is constitutively denied under modernity's regime of surveillance and control, which finds its origins in seventeenth-century techniques for containing the plague. The containment of a literal virus forms the blueprint for today's immunitary borders:

> How did we learn to fight the plague? Not only through the isolation of those stricken, but through a strict parceling out of the contaminated space, through the invention of a technology for imposing order that would later affect the administration of cities, and, finally, through meticulous inquests which, once the plague had disappeared, would serve to prevent vagrancy (the right to come and go enjoyed by those of little means) and *even to forbid the right to disappear, which is still denied to us in one form or another*. (Blanchot, 1987, p. 84, translation modified, my italics)[22]

The 'right to disappear' invoked by Blanchot back in the 1980s, with reference to the birth of immunitary borders, is all the more pertinent today within the overlapping systems of surveillance, control, and filtering that compose the digitized Fortress Europe. Refugees who resort to erasing their fingerprints may find symbolic and imaginative resources within the past, in such tropes as slavery's legacy and the figure of the fugitive or the maroon. But their 'techniques' speak to an acutely contemporary grasp of what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri diagnose as the current security regime, with its imperatives of visibility and capture, and its criminalization of those in flight:

> All you can do is flee. Break your chains and run. Most often, flight involves not coming out into the open but rather becoming invisible. Since security functions so often by making you visible, you have to escape by refusing to be seen. Becoming invisible, too, is a kind of flight. The fugitive, the deserter, and the invisible are the real heroes (or antiheros) of the struggle of the securitized to be free. (Hardt and Negri, 2012, p. 38)

As moving targets of a global security regime and its humanitarian alibis, refugees who erase their fingerprints participate in a wider struggle for mobility, where 'the right to disappear' is tactically seized to elude a border regime that blocks and

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22   For a compelling discussion of Blanchot's 'right to disappear' in the context of the global War on Terror and the emergence of the citizen as target, see Goh, I. (2006) 'Prolegomenon to a Right to Disappear', *Cultural Politics*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 97–114. Goh designates the escalation of visual technologies and surveillance in the state's management of life and death as 'photo-biopolitics'.

encamps in the name of protection. Without seeking to generalize 'data disappearance' as the only path to survival and safety, its strategic use can effectively elude the surveillance and control of technological borders.

Proponents of the 'autonomy of migration' theorize the tactical agility of bodies on the move, in sites such as Calais, in precisely this vein. The heuristic model of autonomous migration departs from the assumption of sovereign power's total capture of life toward a vitalist account of migrant agency that traces the priority of movement over control and encampment ('Escape comes first!') (Papadapoulos et al., 2008, pp. xv, 42-83).[23] The autonomy of migration perspective valuably attends to the subjective and social aspects of migration, the 'world-making' powers of migrant itineraries, and the challenge that border crossings pose to the very structure of the nation-state. In this view, the migrant becomes an unruly figure of excess and resistance to the borders and coordinates of the sovereign state. Dimitris Papadopoulos and Vassilis Tsianos qualify tactics such as burning papers, mutilating fingerprints, and other creative strategies of disappearance as Deleuzean forms of becoming imperceptible that, within the context of migration, challenge the ubiquitous politics of representation, rights, and visibility, thereby undoing the humanist regime of subjects and citizenship. A strategy of disidentification such as fingerprint mutilation is 'a voluntary "de-humanization" in the sense that it breaks the relation between your name and your body. A body without a name is a non-human human being; an animal which runs. It is non-human because it deliberately abandons the humanist regime of rights' (Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2008, p. 227). From the autonomy of migration perspective, then, the migrant is the harbinger of a politics beyond the exclusions of representation, visibility, citizenship, and (human) rights.

In its focus on agency and resistance, the autonomy of migration perspective poses an important challenge to the humanitarian and securitarian reduction of refugees to bodies that must be managed. Yet the celebration of anonymity and disappearance remains a perilous gesture, given the tragically embodied reality of these terms in the mass grave that is the Mediterranean Sea. By the same token, even as we recognize the cunning and creativity of refugees as they cross borders, the priority of mobility over control cannot be assumed when so many are migrating in response to intolerable forms of control, and whose flight is arrested by camps proliferating on Europe's shores. In addition, it is difficult to assume the temporal priority of migrants' movement given the border's preemptive filtering

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23   For a lucid overview of the 'autonomy of migration' model, see Nyers, P. (2015) 'Migrant Citizenships and Autonomous Mobilities', *Migration, Mobilities and Displacement*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 23-39.

of 'risky' bodies through the increasingly sophisticated technology of biometrics.[24] Even if techniques of resistance such as fingerprint mutilation continue to be prac- tised by the exiled in sites like Calais, Europe's unparalleled anxiety about potential routes of terrorist infiltration that materialized in France's ongoing state of excep- tion is compromising such room for manoeuver.

In short, just as we must remain wary of paradigms that immobilize the refugee into the essentialism of 'bare life', we must also take care not to essentialize the mi- grant's imperceptible mobility in heroic terms. Conceptualizing the im/mobility of those on the move requires figures, rather than paradigms, to mediate between au- tonomy and control, agency and capture, strategic imperceptibility and the claim to representation, tactics of subversion and the discourse of rights. 'Becoming im- perceptible', or having the right to disappear, is not opposed to but on a continuum with the need to appear, become visible, remain in place, or, indeed, claim a place. Refugees may tactically disappear to remain on the move. Yet they also join to- gether to form provisional communities during their itineraries, becoming visible as bodies within a common space, however constrained, from which they claim the right to have rights. As a point on the itinerary toward the United Kingdom, Calais's former jungle exemplifies how the most transitory of habitations can also become the material site of politics, how refugees confronting the most abject of conditions nevertheless endure, come together, resist, and organize. The perseverance, resis- tance, and creativity harboured in these borderscapes assume many forms, from strategic invisibility to tactical visibility.[25]

The Right to the Image

Approaching Calais's jungle as a zone of political virtuality on a continuum with biopolitical capture yields insight into what Vicki Squire, in dialog with Engin Isin and Kim Rygiel, has termed 'the critical inhabitation of abject spaces' (Squire, 2009, p. 147). The encampments of Calais may be 'abject spaces', in Isin and Rygiel's for- mulation, 'spaces in which the intention is to treat people neither as subjects (of

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24   For a concise analysis of how biometric databases reduce migrants' room for manoeuver, see Scheel, S. (2013) 'Autonomy of Migration Despite Its Securitisation? Facing the Terms and Con- ditions of Biometric Rebordering', *Millienium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 575-600.

25   A bracing illustration of the right to disappear exercised through visible mobilization took place in Vienna, in 2012, when refugees protested against their encampment and demanded both the right to freedom of movement and the right to data sovereignty. Their manifesto read, 'If you don't meet our demands, then please delete our fingerprints from your databases and let us move on. We are entitled to our future.' See Kuster, B. (2013) 'Erase them! The image as it is falling apart into looks' [Video]. Available online at https://vimeo.com/59932817.

discipline) nor as objects (of elimination), but as those without presence, without existence, as inexistent beings, not because they don't exist, but because their existence is rendered invisible and inaudible'. Yet 'it is precisely in this difference that abject spaces are not spaces of abjection but spaces of politics' (Isin and Rygiel, 2006, p. 184). Indeed, collective actions such as Art in the Jungle, a festival in November 2015 during which refugees, migrants, activists, and artists cocreated art installations, even gesture toward the possibility of a creative inhabitation of abject spaces. Recent mobilizations in Calais have drawn unprecedented media attention to France's 'ghettoization' of undesirables in the name of hygienic compassion. Yet they also have made visible the ways in which this camp, ghetto, shantytown, or jungle was a vibrant city-in-the-making, harboring sites of gathering and sustenance (termed *lieux de vie* or sites of life) such as kitchens, restaurants, mosques, schools, churches, an office of legal counsel, even a library called 'Jungle Books'.

In the spring that preceded its destruction, Calais's jungle became a world stage, even a global spectacle, with particular media focus on the fate of unaccompanied minors seeking to reunite with family in Great Britain. Activists, aid workers, volunteers, artists, and media personalities from all over Europe formed 'bordering solidarities', to borrow another concept from Rygiel, participating in the promise of 'a tentacular collective oeuvre built despite the barbed wires and mud … a city-world'.[26] Earlier that year, when the police issued an ultimatum for the jungle's evacuation in preparation for the destruction of its southern zone, refugees, migrants, and activists mobilized in protest and drew up the following manifesto (Fig. 9.10):

> We, the united people of the Jungle, Calais, respectfully decline the demands of the french Government with regards to reducing the size of the jungle.

> We have decided to remain where we are and will peacefully resist the government's plans to destroy our homes.

> We plead with the french authorities and International Communities that you understand our situation and respect our fundamental human rights.

The designation of disparate individuals cohabiting in a space as 'we, the united people' conjured into existence a people at once deterritorialized from the state

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26   For a rich account of how such alliances contribute to transforming sites of detention into sites of contestation, see Rygiel, K. (2011) 'Bordering Solidarities, Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movement and Camps at Calais', *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 15, no.1, pp. 1-19.

and yet embedded within its borders. As we saw, the jungle's law/lessness was considered intolerable to French state authorities at the time of its prior demolition in 2009, when Eric Besson declared, 'The law of the jungle cannot last eternally on this territory of the French Republic.' Yet it is from within the new jungle that refugees ushered themselves into collective being through the language of the law and the rhetoric of human rights. This language was used to make perceptible bodies that have been deemed irregular and out of place, while pointing out the exclusion of such bodies from the universal rights incarnated by the French state. 'The united people of the Jungle, Calais' symbolically regularized and politicized themselves by dint of their ephemeral belonging to an encampment conjoined with a city. The capitalization of both camp and city underscored the continuity and contiguity of these spaces, even situating the jungle as the capital of Calais.[27] The collective self-designation of the jungle's inhabitants as a 'united people' staged a provisional 'becoming perceptible', but in terms that refused (and continue to refute) the dichotomies that govern the political sphere of appearances: statelessness/citizenship, illegality/legality, jungle/sovereign territory, camp/polis. To be sure, the plea's rhetorical tactics did not halt the bulldozers' course. Nevertheless, something shifted in this performative evocation of a different kind of body, space, belonging, and community. The misplaced articulation of rights opened up the very category of citizenship to critical, even creative, inhabitation.

In order to illustrate how such instances of appearance, which remain on a continuum with disappearance tactics, challenge and re-imagine the border regime, I turn to a photograph taken at the threshold of Calais's jungle before its destruction. In December 2015, Youssef, a sixteen-year-old boy from Sudan, was killed by a truck in a hit-and-run collision as he attempted to access the Eurotunnel. (Such deaths are a regular occurrence in Calais, yet their public mourning is prohibited under the state of emergency's ban on gatherings.) In response to Youssef's death, 'the united people of the Jungle, Calais', composed of refugees, migrants, and international activists, organized a silent march in his memory, bearing signs such as 'Our Destiny Here is Unknown', 'We are humans, not dogs', and 'Borders are Killing us'. The riot police (CRS) were stationed at the camp's entrance to block the marchers' procession toward the city of Calais. There is no small irony in the fact that the protestors' bodies were halted in their movement underneath a highway bridge on which vehicles generally pass with unfettered mobility. The heavily fenced and now walled highway leads to the port two kilometres away, illustrating the differential filtering of goods, services, and bodies under the current border dispositif.

A photo essay by Marie Magnin published in the pages of *Libération* captioned the wordless confrontation between the protestors and the police not as a stand-

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27   My thanks to Églantine Colon for this point.

Figure 9.10. 'We, the united people of the Jungle, Calais'.
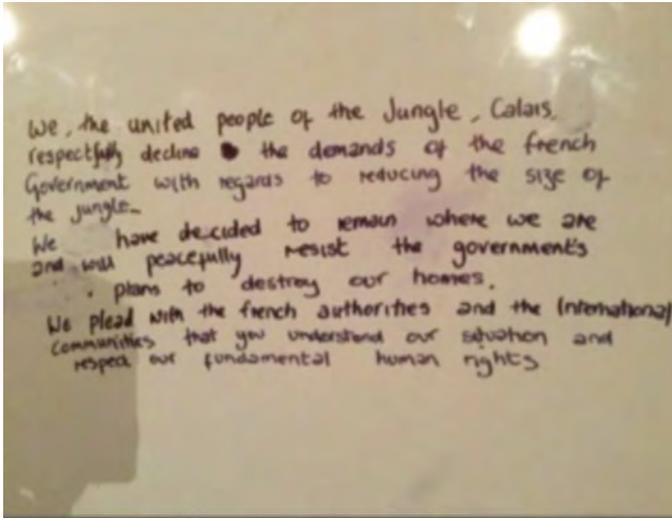
Source: Nick Gutteridge.

off between undesirable bodies at the threshold of their allocated zone and the armed forces seeking to contain them, but as a calm face-to-face encounter (Fig. 9.11). According to Ariella Azoulay, photography is the product of an infinitely re-actualizable encounter between photographer, photographed subject, and camera. The photographic image has the capacity to arrest the state's divisive perspective and nourish alternate visions of governance, thus conjuring a citizenry without borders:

> A civil discourse is … one that suspends the point of view of governmental power and the nationalist characteristics that enable it to divide the governed from one another and to set its factions against one another. When disaster is consistently imposed on a part of the whole population of the governed, civil discourse insists on delineating the full field of vision in which disaster unfolds so as to lay bare the blueprint of the regime. (Azoulay, 2012, pp. 2-3).

This alternate field of vision opens up relationality between citizens and noncitizens within a given regime and invokes their fundamental partnership in a shared world. The image has the capacity to instantiate 'a civil space – the citizenry of photography – within whose borders the photographed subjects fight for their rightful place by means of the photograph and the space of appearance' (Azoulay, 2012, p. 51).

Figure 9.11. *'Dans le calme, le face-à-face entre migrants et CRS'.*

Source: Marie Magnin.

How might Azoulay's vision of photography, as exposing a regime's immunitary blueprint and as an alternate scene of appearance, help us read the march for Youssef? The blueprint of France's securitarian regime is made visible as a stark confrontation between bare life and sovereign bio-power: unarmed protestors are blocked at the border of a camp on French territory, laying bare the division between camp and city, between the concentrationary space of the jungle and the polis of Calais.[28] Yet life, however exposed, is never altogether 'bare', nor is it an indivisible or absolute biopolitical substance. It is always already suffused with differences such as race, gender, religion, and class, qualifying a body as 'human, not quite human, and non-human' (Weheliye, 2014, p. 43). With her choice of black and white photography, Marie Magnin, like Sylvain George, underscores the racialized violence of this encounter between lawlessness and the law within a state whose official republican discourse prohibits any discussion of race.

The photograph is a cropped version of another wide-angle shot disclosing the larger scale of this confrontation with the state's machinery of containment. The cropped version, however, singularizes the encounter between protest and power while displaying the glaring asymmetries of this 'face-to-face': the exposure of protestors' faces – the metonym of the individual par excellence – contrasts the serial uniformity of the riot police, whose reflective shields, plastic visors,

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28   On the relationship between Foucault's biopower and Agamben's sovereign power, see Squire, *The Exclusionary Politics of Asylum*, p. 151.

helmets, and shoulder and elbow pads form a gleaming shell around them. Perhaps this asymmetry explains the anxious set of the older officer's face. Despite his protective plastic layers, he appears perturbed: his lips are pursed, his jaw pugnacious. His expression may betray an awareness that no polycarbonate shield can defend against the moral damage of inflicting force on undefended life – unless it is simply fear. In any case, it is in stark contrast with the quiet defiance of the protestors, whose bare hands hold up a banner, their gazes intent, their faces exposed yet composed, the grain of their skin visible.

Yet even as this encounter discloses an absolute separation between naked flesh and militarized carapace, noncitizen and citizen, vulnerability and force, the officer is exposed as well, albeit in fragments: an ear, the sliver of jaw, and the nape of the neck escape his helmet, visual reminders of our common vulnerability to violence even as the scene stages the spectacular inequity of this vulnerability's distribution. Still, the participants remain visually bound by their common corporeal condition. They are also bound by the text on the creased banner, illegible to us but reflected back in fragments on the shields of the riot police. If the shield seems to virtually throw the words back into the protestors' faces, the illegible letters nevertheless weave the subjects and their place into a common semiotic field, as does the graffiti on the wall, enigmatic hieroglyphs at the jungle's entry.[29] The photographer appears to stand in the middle of the encounter, inscribing the viewer at the seam between statelessness and state power. As viewers of this image from Calais, 'we' are inevitably implicated in the conditions of its making, for, as Azoulay reminds us, 'the central right pertaining to the privileged segment of the population consists in the right to view disaster – to be its spectator' (Azoulay, 2012, p. 1). The embodied encounter we observe at the threshold of Calais's camp is thus at the same time a powerful scene of reading, self-inscription, and interpellation.

In the march for Youssef, refugees came out of the jungle not as furtive illegals who attempt to cross borders at night, or as fugitives whose bodies are subjected to biometric inscription and decoding, but as silent plaintiffs who stood upright and bore the text of their grievances. Significantly, these were not addressed to any particular nation-state, but to the supranational bodies of Europe and the United Nations. Although we cannot see it in this photograph, the banner held by the refugees carries the following questions: 'Today Youssef, tomorrow who?'; 'Europe, do you hear our call from Calais?'; 'Where is the United Nations in all this?'; and, finally, 'Living is illegal?'. The concluding interrogation conveys the tension we currently witness at Europe's borders between law and life: law experienced not as protection but as deterrence and containment, and life as the right to survival and mobility until sanctuary has been secured rather than assigned; law as the total capture and

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29   The graffiti may be by EMC, a French graffiti crew.

management of life by the operations of sovereign and biopower, whether physically manifested by a line of armed officers or in virtual form as biometric data, and the sheer aliveness that perpetually eludes capture. Such aliveness may tactically disappear to remain in motion or coalesce into a collective body to stay in place.

The collective mobilization captured by this photograph, occurring from within the abjection and perceived rightlessness of the jungle's border, in the form of bodies stopped in their movement, is precisely what Jacques Rancière calls politics. Politics is what disrupts the boundary between so-called bare life and politically qualified life; it stages 'a dispute over what is given and about the frame within which we see something as given' (Rancière, 2010, p. 69).[30] Such dispute performs equality and belonging from within inequality and exclusion, as when those who apparently have no legitimate voice enact the right to be heard, and when those who are unseen seize the right to the image and find material support in visual frames fashioned by themselves and others. These claims to be seen and heard from the border of the camp dismantle the very binaries by which bodies-in-flight are being figured: 'bare life' versus speaking agent, abjection versus agency, illegality versus citizenship, jungle versus polis. As refugees continue to be envisioned in France and elsewhere through the reductive and related poles of contained threat on one hand and pure victimhood and object of compassion on the other, what these visual productions illuminate is something different: the traces of political subjects on the move.

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30   For a powerful analysis of migrant activism in Calais through the lens of Rancière's dissensus, see Millner, N. (2011) 'From "Refugee" to "Migrant" in Calais Solidarity Activism: Re-staging Undocumented Migration for a Future Politics of Asylum', *Political Geography*, vol. 30, no. 6, pp. 320-28.

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