University of Kent

Kent Academic Repository

Frost, Tom (2016) *Redemption between Politics and Ontology: Agamben on the Coming Politics*. Review of: Catastrophe and Redemption: The Political Thought of Giorgio Agamben ; The Figure of This World: Agamben and the Question of Political Ontology by Whyte, Jessica and Abbott, Mathew. ephemera: theory & politics in organization . pp. 129-137. ISSN 2052-1499.

Downloaded from
https://kar.kent.ac.uk/102842/ The University of Kent's Academic Repository KAR

The version of record is available from
https://ephemerajournal.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/16-2frost_0.pdf

This document version
Author's Accepted Manuscript

DOI for this version

Licence for this version
UNSPECIFIED

Additional information

Versions of research works

Versions of Record
If this version is the version of record, it is the same as the published version available on the publisher's web site. Cite as the published version.

Author Accepted Manuscripts
If this document is identified as the Author Accepted Manuscript it is the version after peer review but before type setting, copy editing or publisher branding. Cite as Surname, Initial. (Year) 'Title of article'. To be published in ***Title of Journal*** , Volume and issue numbers [peer-reviewed accepted version]. Available at: DOI or URL (Accessed: date).

Enquiries
If you have questions about this document contact ResearchSupport@kent.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in KAR. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our Take Down policy (available from https://www.kent.ac.uk/guides/kar-the-kent-academic-repository#policies).

REDEMPTION BETWEEN POLITICS AND ONTOLOGY: AGAMBEN ON THE COMING POLITICS

Jessica Whyte, *Catastrophe and Redemption: The Political Thought of Giorgio Agamben* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2013)

Mathew Abbott, *The Figure of This World: Agamben and the Question of Political Ontology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014)

There is a prevailing view of the thought of Giorgio Agamben that reads him as a decidedly pessimistic thinker, and a modern day Cassandra, or even a philosopher who is channelling Chicken Little, telling all and sundry that the sky is collapsing and the modern world is on an inexorable path to destruction. This prevailing view has held sway for much of the past decade and a half, but it is, slowly, and thankfully, being challenged by a new wave of scholarship. This 'negative' reading of Agamben was not without apparent justification. Agamben's *Homo Sacer* series of works propelled him to fame in the Anglophone world. His volumes began being translated into English in the late 1990's, and his declaration that 'it is not the city but rather the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West' (Agamben 1998: 181) appeared to predict the events of the 'War on Terror', the detention facilities in Afghanistan, Iraq, Guantanamo Bay and CIA 'Black Sites' around the world, and emergency powers passed in the name of protecting citizens against terrorism. His work appeared to draw direct connections between the Nazi era and contemporary governmental actions, yet many scholars questioned his analysis of contemporary responses to terrorism, arguing that they were inaccurate and lacking the scholarly attention necessary to adequately describe what was happening in the first years of the twenty-first century (Neal 2004; Rabinow and Rose 2006).

Jessica Whyte notes in her introduction to *Catastrophe and Redemption* both the fact that the reception of Agamben's work has been tied up with these outside events, and that this coincidence led to the obscuring of the underlying philosophical claims in his work (Whyte 2013: 3). This obscuring ultimately led to Agamben's work and proposals for the politics to come to be derided as nebulous and esoteric, too removed from the everyday to be of use (Sharpe 2005; Žižek 2007; Bailey 2009). Both Whyte and Mathew Abbott in *The Figure of This World* attempt to redress the balance here, adding recent 'positive' reconstructions of Agamben's thought, which can also be found in recent books published by Sergei Prozorov and David Kishik, again illustrating a sea change in how Agamben is being viewed (Prozorov 2014; Kishik 2012).

The redemptive qualities of Agamben's thought often appear elusive within his writings, not least because of his claim that ontology is directly political (Whyte 2013: 32). Therefore, we can agree with Whyte that Agamben's writings on potentiality and life are also his contribution to political theory. His hope for the future comes from the collapse of the

border between politics and life (Whyte 2013: 44). Despite this, whilst Agamben has often spoken of the life and politics to come (Agamben 1993: 1), details of this 'happy life' have often been scarce, particularly because they are to comprise the final part of his *Homo Sacer* series of works (Sharpe 2009; Kalyvas 2005). This final volume has been published in Italian, and is titled *L'uso dei corpi*, and an English translation will be forthcoming. Those scholars eagerly anticipating resolution to all the philosophical problems Agamben has identified over the past 40 years will be disappointed. As Agamben himself declares in his introduction, he has 'abandoned' the *Homo Sacer* series of works. Abandoned, because every philosophical effort cannot be pushed to an end or concluded (Agamben 2014a).

Because of this fact, both of these volumes should be read as crucial and indispensible additions to the secondary literature on Agamben. Both Whyte and Abbott weave together their own voices with Agamben's thought, and both are influenced by Agamben yet differ from him in clear ways, extending his thought in new and exciting directions. Both also share similar themes. Neither Whyte nor Abbott adhere to what Benjamin Noys has termed 'accelerationism', which is the tendency to read a dominant ideology and system as generating its own forces of dissolution, meaning that we need to radicalise the ideology we want to overcome: the worse the better (Noys 2012: 5).

However, both differ in their methodological approaches to reading Agamben. Broadly speaking, Jess Whyte provides an overtly political reading of Agamben's thought, whereas Mathew Abbott's is overtly ontological. Despite this point, these volumes do complement one another and both authors open up crucial points of inquiry. Whyte's focus is Agamben's contention that our time is making possible a new politics that can free human life from sovereign power (Whyte 2013: 3). Focusing her criticism on Agamben's own 'accelerationist' tendencies (Whyte 2013: 3), Whyte draws on familiar tropes in Agamben's thought - the camp, his writings on Auschwitz and the *Muselmann*, the state of exception, biopolitics, and the influence of both messianism and Martin Heidegger, whilst reading him as heavily influenced by the Marxist tradition. Contrarily, drawing on Ludwig Wittgenstein and Heidegger, as well as Friedrich Nietzsche, Emmanuel Levinas and Walter Benjamin, Abbott focuses upon the ontological dimension of Agamben's thought. It is almost as if Whyte's noting that the redemptive qualities of Agamben's thought often appear elusive within his writings because of his claim that ontology is directly political have operated as the starting point for Abbott's analyses (Whyte 2013: 32). Whilst Abbott does draw upon Marxism to illustrate the inextricability of theory and practice, Agamben's work for Abbott turns on the attempt to think the question of being. In an aim to clarify this positive 'political ontology', Abbott reads Agamben's 'coming politics' as requiring us to rethink our relation to the question raised by being (Abbott 2014: 1). Abbott defines political ontology as the study of how our conception of the world as such conditions what we take to be the ontic possibilities for human collectives (Abbott 2014: 13). In short, Abbott attempts to do for Heidegger what Marx did for Hegel: stand him on his feet (Abbott 2014: 9).

In the first chapter of *Catastrophe and Redemption*, Whyte focuses on Agamben's biopolitics and his relationship to the work of Michel Foucault. This is used as a base to assess Agamben's claim in *Homo Sacer* that Western politics has been a biopolitics since its

very inception at the time of Aristotle. In Chapter Two Whyte moves on to consider Agamben's writings on the state of exception, which he argues today has become the normal form of government. The sovereign, and those who exercise sovereign power, retains the ability to exclude or include persons within the legal and political orders. It is in this way that 'desubjects' such as bare life are created. Building upon this in Chapter Three Whyte considers the ultimate catastrophe, namely Auschwitz and the accompanying figure of the *Muselmann*, the figure representative of bare life under the Nazis. Auschwitz is the paradigmatic camp, and the ultimate combination of the state of exception and biopolitics.

In contrast to these catastrophes, Whyte moves on to consider the redemptive element in Agamben's thought. Chapter Four engages critically with Agamben's messianism and its relation to the law. In particular, Whyte interrogates Benjamin's 'weak messianic power', and favours this, rather than Agamben's invocation of Herman Melville's law-scribe Bartleby, who offers the response that 'he would prefer not to' when asked to complete tasks by his employer, as better suited to thinking a form of collective praxis. Finally, in Chapter Five Whyte turns to Agamben's idea of the world-to-come. Here, Whyte contends that Agamben ignores the problems of economic exploitation and the use-value of labour power in his works. As such he is unable to adequately articulate how it would be possible to put human capacities to a new use.

Catastrophe and Redemption attempts to reconstruct the history behind Agamben's philosophy. This is done in order to counter Agamben's 'one sided' teleology of Western politics. Whyte focuses attention on the 'other side' of the political events Agamben analyses in his works (Whyte 2013: 155). She claims, with much validity, that the current political malaise in which we live is as much the result of the *defeats* of political movements of the past as it is the direct inheritor of those movements (Whyte 2013: 41-42). In a salient point, she notes that Agamben does not spend any time contemplating what the world would be like where the political struggles of modernity – women's rights, human rights, workers' rights – had not taken place (Whyte 2013: 41). A result of this is that Agamben turns away from active political movements today, which leads, in Whyte's view, to a potential deterministic understanding of social transformation in his work (Whyte 2013: 45).

Whyte also points out the deficiencies in Agamben's work in relation to human agency. Agamben does have the tendency in his thought to exclude agency – notably in his treatment of pornography he leaves no room for the roles of political movements in challenging assumptions about the roles of women and the possibilities for sex (Whyte 2013: 138). Perhaps more importantly in terms of concretising the political potential of Agamben's thought, Whyte identifies that Agamben has paid insufficient attention to the role of past political struggles in resisting the forms of domination that have existed, especially in relation to human labour (Whyte 2013: 15-16).

It is the connection to Greece and capitalism that is the main strength of this book. Whyte situates Agamben within a lineage of Marxian thinkers who contend that the extension of commodification – the 'society of the spectacle' in Guy Debord's terms (Debord 1994) - empties out the 'use value' of commodities, leaving in place empty forms which are made

available for new uses. However, because Agamben assimilates his analysis of the commodity form into his analyses of the law, he risks giving credent to an evolutionary account of salvation history which pervaded through Marxist thought. As such, Whyte claims that Agamben's analysis of modernity is inadequate of adequately grasping the global dominance of capital (Whyte 2013: 127).

Agamben has claimed that the society of the spectacle has destroyed traditional identities. However, as Daniel McLoughlin has argued, Agamben's more recent work has paid less attention to the homogenous planetary petit bourgeoisie, which he identified as the social form that replaced those identities (Agamben 2000). McLoughlin sees this as a 'turn' in Agamben's work as a response to the uneven geographical development and the resurgence of nationalism in the wake of globalised capitalism (McLoughlin 2014: 323-324). Even taking this into account, Whyte's view that Agamben has been overly dismissive of forms of political praxis that do exist in the present has some weight – Whyte provides the example of the protests in Greece after the imposition of stringent austerity measures in 2011 as an example of such a messianic coming politics of which Agamben speaks (Whyte 2013: 17).

Agamben is read by Whyte as continuing Marx's inquiries, and in particular his critique of rights (Marx 2005). Whyte addresses this particularly in Chapter One, but she argues that Agamben ends up dispensing with Marx's analysis of capitalism in his oeuvre, instead focusing upon 'modernity' (Whyte 2013: 38). As such, Whyte can be read alongside many voices that are sceptical of Agamben's claim that the development of life as a political subject, which he traces to Aristotle (Agamben 1998: 1), paved the way for the Nazi state (Whyte 2013: 40). Whyte does accept that contemporary biopolitics could be traced to the great declarations of rights in the eighteenth century as Agamben claims (Whyte 2013: 41). However, in reconnecting Agamben to the Marxian lineage Whyte makes clear the deficits in Agamben's thought that result from his lack of focus upon historicity.

This theme – the need for leftist thought to engage with concrete forms of social change – looms large throughout the work. Whyte's engagement with Agamben's treatment of Auschwitz is particularly insightful. Engaging with the Holocaust and the camps is fraught with danger, especially as Whyte attempts to elucidate forms of politics and resistance which did exist within the camps (Whyte 2013: 93-94). However, Whyte is careful not to fetishize such forms of action. Instead, she skilfully connects Agamben's writing to Heidegger's influence, in particular *The Question Concerning Technology* (Heidegger 1993a). This reading of Agamben is useful, as it paints his thought as influential for political theory, but also both too optimistic and too pessimistic at the same time (Whyte 2013: 95). Agamben is too pessimistic about the avenues for political transformation that are open to us in the present – as mentioned, Whyte points towards Greece as a possible example for this politics. However, she also contends that Agamben is too optimistic about the redemptive consequences of catastrophe. For Whyte, politics is a necessarily contingent event, a possibility that cannot be determined in advance (Whyte 2013: 94).

Whyte sees politics as what is at stake in his theorisation of the exception (Whyte 2013: 50). The on-going departure for legal norms offers opportunities for thinking the centrality of legalism to emancipatory political strategies (Whyte 2013: 51). Whilst Agamben focuses upon developing a politics of withdrawal, giving the messianic figure of Bartleby as an example of such a life lived in pure potentiality, Whyte counters by noting that the fate of Bartleby at the end of Melville's tale was death (Whyte 2013: 121). Concerned that such a fate could not be seen as 'salvation', Whyte adopts the notion of such a politics of withdrawal, but refocuses it, asking what a politics of withdrawal from *capital* would be. This is important because for Whyte Agamben underestimates the way in which capital creates new identities that are bound up with reactionary and emancipatory political claims (Whyte 2013: 128). Perhaps related to this point, Whyte is clear that this work does pose more questions than is answered, concluding that what is necessary is to begin to formulate a political thought within a society where spectacular consumption of useless commodities exists with subsistence living for billions and where a flexible class of people have their belongings made in sweatshops and worry that their holiday destinations are being engulfed in separatist struggles (Whyte 2013: 157). Such a world does not resemble Agamben's world to come.

However, Whyte identifies key questions which will need to be asked in order to transform this world. Such questions relate to challenging inequality, challenging capitalism's colonialism of the future, and creating new forms of solidarity. To address these issues, Whyte draws us to her conclusion – that it is not enough to accede to teleological formations of capitalism. We must begin to develop ways to contest it (Whyte 2013: 157).

The Figure of This World also ends with Mathew Abbott connecting Agamben's work with his Marxist origins. Marxism illustrated how ordinary life is marked by a contemplative tendency in which humans are separated from, and end up as distracted observers of, their own lives. It is this tendency *The Figure of This World* interrogates. For Abbott, capital has exacerbated the ontological problems that he traces in the world to such an extent that it has opened the possibility for their resolution (Abbott 2014: 191). However, Abbott's work operates on an ontological register. Central to Abbott's ontological focus is the fact that things *are*. Philosophy is ill-equipped to own up to this fact, which is, for Abbott, both banal and singularly inexplicable. Abbott's construction of 'political ontology' stems from this. Political ontology makes a particular kind of claim on us, which is political in the fundamental sense that it bears on our being in common, as we share exposure to the world (Abbott 2014: 1).

The Figure of This World openly engages with ideas that are not explicitly articulated in Agamben's thought. This is a deliberate move, and one which is designed to provide a defence and development of Agamben's thought, reflecting Abbott's aim to engage with Agamben's texts in 'a more vital way than direct exegesis allows' (Abbott 2014: 3). Like Whyte, Abbott counters an accelerationist reading of Agamben (Abbott 2014: 3). However, Abbott argues that it is impossible to understand Agamben's work except as a form of political ontology. On this view, if we see Agamben as a political philosopher or a critical theorist we misunderstand the claims he makes. As such, Abbott argues that criticisms of Agamben depend upon a 'category mistake'. His work and concepts are only intelligible if

understood as grounded in an ontology that attempts to think the question of being (Abbott 2014: 17). It is this that, for Abbott, distinguishes Agamben from Foucault, and explains why, unlike Whyte, he does not engage as directly with the question of biopolitics.

Crucial to Abbott's argument is the notion of the 'picture-concept', which is a metaphysical scheme that views the world as a concept, something that can be understood, grasped, mastered and appropriated, necessitating the need for a 'grounding' to all political and social forms (Abbott 2014: 2). However, this effaces the fact that the world *as such* presents itself to us through its 'pure gratuity' (Abbott 2014: 26). Picture-concepts are presuppositions, designed to ignore and exclude the question of being, closely connected to the question of nothing (Heidegger 1993b). The consequence of these metaphysical foundations and presuppositions is a close connection between life, authority and violence, with violence providing the necessary authority for the metaphysical grounding of any legal order (Abbott 2014: 117). The legal order, to maintain legitimacy, seeks to capture pure being, and the state of exception is the space where the sovereign tries to take hold of this fact (Abbott 2014: 182).

The Figure of This World comprises of nine chapters. In Chapter One Abbott defines political ontology, distinguishing it from both political philosophy and political theology. Chapter Two focuses on Heidegger's phenomenology of poetry, arguing that poetry that helps us realise that our relation to it runs deeper than knowing. In Chapter Three Abbott focuses upon the political aspects of experiencing the world's existence, which shows that human life desires for grounding and justification, but the question of being means such justification always rejects the absolute gratuity of the poetic experience that the world simply is. Chapter Four focuses on the problem of ground, drawing a connection between Agamben's thought and Emmanuel Levinas's use of the *il y a*. This helps understand what Agamben means by the possibility of the world's appearing 'as a good that absolutely cannot be appropriated' (Agamben 2005: 64). Chapter Five illustrates the biopolitical stakes of the problem of foundation. Extracting a form of messianism from Walter Benjamin's *Critique of Violence*, Abbott reads 'divine violence' as a radical disenchantment, transforming the individual's relationship to the law by intervening into our metaphysics of human animality. Chapter Six reads Nietzsche's philosophy of life with and against political ontology, arguing against a will to power and in favour of a Pauline conception of redeemed humanity as non-hierarchical, turning on the possibility of a collective appropriation of our common consignment to unassumable animality.

Chapter Seven reads Agamben with and against Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, connecting happiness to Wittgenstein's picture-theory of language, and arguing that Wittgenstein shows us that any talk that passes over the existence of the world as a 'non-problem' is itself a problem. Chapter Eight then reads Wittgenstein with and against Heidegger's world-picture, illustrating that the question of being leads to philosophical beguilement penetrating the ordinary. The final chapter refers to Agamben's 'remnant' as an attempt to think what it would mean to live beyond the picture-concept of the world which conceives of the world as a representable totality.

Abbott's resoundingly ontological reading of Agamben is buttressed by his incredibly engaging style and detailed reading. A particular example is his ontological treatment of bare life. The question of the existence and representation of bare life is a vexing one. Agamben himself gives several examples of the concrete manifestations of bare life in his work, including the inhabitants of concentration camps (Agamben 1998: 81-86), refugees (Agamben 1998: 131), and the global poor and 'the entire population of the third world' (Agamben 1998: 180). Abbott's innovative approach is to treat the *zoē* / *bios* distinction as relating to Heidegger's ontological difference (Abbott 2014: 19). This is based on Agamben's claim in *Homo Sacer* that bare life is akin to 'pure Being (*on haplōs*)'. Agamben's key difference from Heidegger is to insist on the ethical and political stakes of the question of being (Abbott 2014: 58). From this, Agamben claims that there is nothing to life *as such* within our politics (Abbott 2014: 19). Bare life is a metaphysical figure of thought, representing the unthought ground of the metaphysics that underpins our political systems. Abbott reads the discussions of concrete politics in Agamben's work as secondary, which operate only to illustrate his main ontological point (Abbott 2014: 20). Importantly, this leads Abbott to downplay Agamben's hyperbolic statements in his work, which have been the source of much criticism. Very persuasively, he argues that Agamben's hyperbolic tone results from his method – hyperbole is what becomes of ontological thought when it 'bleeds into the ontic' (Abbott 2014: 20).

As such, Abbott claims that sociologically, or ontically, Agamben's claims are exaggerations. However, ontologically their status is yet to be properly grasped. This means that bare life can never exist, and has never existed, an argument running contrary to much scholarship and even Agamben himself, who Abbott also sees as, on occasion, making the same category mistake his critics make. This neatly illustrates the 'breaks' from Agamben that demonstrate Abbott is interested in more than exegesis, and this argument has huge potential for future scholarship. Ontically, bare life is therefore a metaphysical condition of the possibility of ontic spaces of domination, which are the camps (Abbott 2014: 20). No life is bare in the ontic sense. Rather, it represents the passing over of the question of being. What is exceptional is the ordinary – on this reading Agamben's work has transformative potential, in that his messianism should not be read as supporting an extraordinary event that would puncture the tissue of the ordinary (Abbott 2014: 3). Our task is to seek a revolution of everyday life in the event of thought (Abbott 2014: 29).

What strikes the reader about *The Figure of This World* is how Abbott's argument is supported by incredibly close and careful readers of a number of different figures. As Agamben's name is in the book's title readers could assume that the book would be primarily focusing on him. This is not the case, and it is a better volume for doing so. For example, Abbott skilfully shows how Heidegger's writings on poetry and art can show that the experience of being is akin to poetry, which opens the way for a refusal of metaphysical grounds of existence (Abbott 2014: 72). This clearly chimes with Agamben's happy life and refusal of biopolitical domination, yet it is a connection that to date scholarship has glossed over.

This ‘refusal’, as we can call it, does not involve an affirmative biopolitics, in the sense preferred by Roberto Esposito (Esposito 2008). Abbott makes it clear, countering Nietzsche’s call to ‘affirm the beast’ (Abbott 2014: 133), that such a move will not render the biopolitical machine inoperative. Political ontology questions such an affirmation of life, considering that this sets up another metaphysical foundation for existence. Rather, our shared unassumable animal life should be attended to in its ungraspability (Abbott 2014: 138-139). This Pauline non-hierarchical collectivity appears to invoke a kind of radical equality, but Abbott sees this as necessary to release politics from the dialectic of danger and salvation that characterises accelerationism (Abbott 2014: 118).

This is the messianism that can challenge the picture-concepts that lead us to view the world as a representable totality. Like Whyte, Abbott’s view of Agamben’s politics places the emphasis on change on us – there is no hope of an outside intervention or event (Abbott 2014: 11). Abbott’s ontological reading leads him to see Agamben’s happy life as akin to Heidegger’s hermeneutic circle (Heidegger 1962: 188-195) – namely, we must come to being in the right way. The ‘real’ state of exception which Benjamin refers to is an ontological experience of the world as such, when the real and the exceptional become indiscernible (Abbott 2014: 186-187). In Agamben’s terms, this life coincides completely with ‘the destitution of the social and biological conditions into which it finds itself thrown’ (Agamben 2014b: 74). The ontological Agamben wants us to think what it means to live and think beyond the picture-concept of the world (Abbott 2014: 193).

Similarly to Whyte’s analysis of Agamben, Abbott makes clear that political ontology does not provide a blueprint for political action (Abbott 2014: 188). Given his critique of metaphysical forms of politics, this is unsurprising. There may inevitably be some who react to such a conclusion in disappointed terms, once again making the point that Agamben’s thought is not transferable into concrete political action. However, to do so would be to miss the nuance in Abbott’s argument. The very critique of metaphysics he practices works for the solution of the negative ground, by thinking the conditions of possibility of radical change (Abbott 2014: 188). There *are* ontic conditions for ontological change, and political ontology’s role is to think practically by experimenting with new political forms. In respect of this element of Agamben’s work, both Whyte and Abbott are in agreement. Most importantly, today’s society of the spectacle has reduced the value of the world to exchange value. In doing so, it has denied any value to the world as such (Abbott 2014: 196). This is not accelerationism. The task now is to attend to the fact that there will be no epochal event – once this is accepted, then we can think of what it means to be in common, exposed to the same world (Abbott 2014: 195). Abbott’s volume expresses the same desire as Whyte, but perhaps can be seen as adding an extra caveat – in order to contest the society of the spectacle, we have to come to the world in the right way.

Scholars of Agamben have long pondered about the coming community, and laboured to defend their Agambenian inspired work against accusations of negativity and esotericism. Now, thanks to Jessica Whyte and Mathew Abbott’s scholarship, that task will become a little easier. If you at all interested in Agamben and his thought, you need to read both these volumes. You will not be disappointed.

Tom Frost, Lecturer in Legal Theory, University of Sussex

Reference List

Agamben, G. (1993) *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Agamben, G. (1998) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Agamben, G. (2000) *Means without end: Notes on politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Agamben, G. (2014a) *L'uso dei corpi*. Vicenza: Neri Pozza.

Agamben, G. (2014b) 'What is a destituent power?' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 32: 65-74.

Bailey, R. (2009) "Up against the wall: Bare life and resistance in Australian immigration detention," *Law and Critique* 20 (2): 113–132.

Debord, G. (1994) *The Society of the Spectacle*. New York: Zone Books.

Esposito, R. (2008) *Bíos: Biopolitics and Philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Heidegger, M. (1962) *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Heidegger, M. (1993a) 'The Question Concerning Technology', in D. Farrell-Krell (ed.) *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger*. Abingdon: Routledge Cavendish.

Heidegger, M. (1993b) 'What is Metaphysics?', in D. Farrell-Krell (ed.) *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger*. Abingdon: Routledge Cavendish.

Kalyvas, A. (2005) 'The Sovereign Weaver: Beyond the Camps' in A. Norris (ed.) *Politics, Metaphysics and Death: Essays on Giorgio Agamben's Homo Sacer*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Kishik, D. (2012) *The Power of Life: Agamben and the Coming Politics.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Marx, K. (2005) 'On the Jewish Question' in K. Marx and D McLellan (ed.), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Oxford: OUP.

McLoughlin, D. (2014) 'Rethinking Agamben: Ontology and the Coming Politics', *Law and Critique* 25 (3): 319-329.

Neal, A. (2004) 'Cutting off the king's head: Foucault's *Society Must Be Defended* and the problem of sovereignty', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 29 (4): 373–398.

Noys, B. (2012) *The Persistence of the Negative: A Critique of Contemporary Continental Theory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Prozorov, S. (2014) *Agamben and Politics: A Critical Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Rabinow, P. and N. Rose, (2006) 'Biopower today', *BioSocieties* 1: 195-217.

Sharpe, M. (2005) ''Thinking of the extreme situation...' on the new anti-terrorism laws, or against a recent (theoretical and legal) return to Carl Schmitt', *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 24 (1): 95–123.

Sharpe, M. (2009) ''Only Agamben Can Save Us?' Against the Messianic Turn Recently Adopted In Critical Theory' *The Bible and Critical Theory* 5 (3): 40.1-40.20.

Whyte, J. (2013) *Catastrophe and Redemption: The Political Thought of Giorgio Agamben*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Žižek, S. (2007) *In defence of lost causes*. London: Verso.