

# Chapter 14

## ‘We Refugees’: Biopower, Cosmopolitanism and Hospitality, Between Camps and Encampments

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### 14.1 Introduction

The figure of the refugee continues to haunt the western imaginary disturbing apparent stabilities of political and social orders. The refugee occupies a double space of significance that is both metonymic and metaphoric, being historically specific and paradigmatic. ‘Today’ the refugee appears in a number of disconcerting guises: as awkward, needy intruder demanding hospitality and as reminder of the often very different existence, and interdependence, of the Other. As such, the refugee also signifies the Otherness of ourselves, our worlds. In the face of the refugee, everyone is estranged. The refugee is not at home and symbolises – as well as lives – unhome-ness. The presence of the refugee disturbs the meaning of home.

There are powerful suggestions in several strands of modern thought that the various resonances generated around this disturbing figure, the refugee, are not at all accidental. The refugee appears as the paradigmatic figure of the postcolonial, for example, as the product of various conflicts around national sovereignty, as signifying painfully real experiences as well as being a product of a specific political order. In its paradigm guise, the refugee is both symptom of the contemporary political order and a new kind of norm. The implications of this figure have yet to be fully thought through. This paper will explore some implications for a consideration of the figure of the ontology of the refugee in relation to contemporary discourses on education.

Although not mainly concerned with the condition of the refugee, Catherine Malabou’s ‘ontology of the accident’ presents one powerful, recently developed antidote to stable accounts of identity that accords with this paradigm figure. In Malabou’s account, the ontological accident may include personal change or

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catastrophe, bodily mutations and ageing, historical upheavals and transformations or traumas and catastrophes involving mass displacements, even genocides. The accident may be mundane or extraordinary and local or global in scale. Personal accidents may utterly transform the individual, forcing a complete break with established identity. The ‘accidents’ of history may generate inherited effects: generational identity crises, post-traumatic stress syndrome, guilt and the rumblings of ‘liquid fear’, disturbing ontological security (Bauman 2006). The fundamental condition of anxiety is exacerbated, given spectral form in memory that threatens to populate the future with uncertainty or disaster. All are at least implicitly troubled by what Walter Benjamin referred to as the ongoing condition of crisis. Malabou’s account offers a sustained development of ‘fundamental ontology’ of the ‘analytic of Dasein’ to include such elements as may have been touched on by the stoics and others, but that seem peculiarly apt for the condition of ‘liquid modernity’ and that offer an expansion of Heidegger’s account in *Being and Time* (Bauman 2001; Malabou 2012; Heidegger 1962).

In some significant lines of modern and contemporary political ontology, the accidental condition of the refugee has been cited as a paradigm case. To be precipitously dispossessed, to be classified as ‘alien’, to have to reinvent oneself, to be without access to or even simply without a mother tongue and, also, to have forge new modes of ‘mitsein’: these are elements of the condition of the refugee. For Giorgio Agamben, following Hannah Arendt, the refugee is *the* political figure of our time par excellence (Agamben 1995). The refugee signals the provisional, partial security and identity of the citizen: in doing so, the refugee problematises notions of ‘flourishing’ that rely on citizenship as its grounds. Panics about immigration can be understood according to this perspective in terms of fear of the refugee ‘within’. This spectral ‘presence’ disturbs the mythic integrity of territory, people, language and the questionable accoutrements of national identity. The refugee signifies a problematic something that must be contained or expelled and protected against. Everywhere the safeguards of citizenship are problematised. Everywhere this autoimmune state of mind infects the political domain (Agamben 1998; Derrida 2005).

The TV programme *Deadwood* provides a useful possible metaphor for contemporary political realities in relation to the general condition of the refugee. Deadwood is a real place in South Dakota but was, in the late nineteenth century, a frontier town. In the TV version, it is represented as being fraught with the depredations of modernity. Deadwood at the same time enacts the spiritual, psychological uncertainties of postmodernity. In its diegesis, Deadwood refers to itself as a ‘camp’ signifying a pre-polis condition of temporary settlement. It is semi-lawless, dominated by the powerful, the scene of a scramble for wealth, tolerant of the abuse of women and racial minorities. In Deadwood inequalities abound with no dependable social welfare support for the vulnerable. Deadwood signifies a temporary encampment at times aspiring to civic status but frequently dominated by other imperatives and struggles.

In *cosmopolitanism*, Derrida considers the possibility of a new cosmopolitan city as a response to what is perceived as an excessive, paranoid policing of borders

against the threat of the foreign other in the form of the refugee. Derrida considers the aporetic condition of hospitality – making an infinite demand while being constrained by pragmatic limits in order to make itself possible – as an instance of the now familiar possible/impossible. Almost as a hope against hope, then, Derrida proposes support for the ideal of the new cosmopolitan city as though knowing full well that the conditions of 'urbanity' are closer to the image of the 'camp' in *Deadwood* than to the ideal Greek polis (Derrida 2001).

A related approach to questions concerning the refugee appears in *Monolingualism of the Other* where Derrida problematises the idea of linguistic identity in a partly autobiographical account. In language, there is essentially no home, no mother tongue. One is always subject to the other that is language and in a sense to its sovereign occupation of the self. Language is not homely. At the same time, Derrida speculates on the 'paradoxical opportunity' represented by certain North African Jews who have no direct or intimate relation to North African, French or Jewish culture. But what is the nature of this 'paradoxical opportunity' (of the refugee) and to what extent does it signify a possibility for the general condition of we refugees in modernity (Derrida 1998)? A big question attends the condition of cosmopolitanism. Could it simply be another empty liberal mantra (democracy, freedom, etc.) that refuses to recognise its own underlying conditions?

The figure of the refugee here and its ontological significance are deployed as a critique of modern discourses that see education as the necessary grounds of salvation from the depredations of modernity (Benjamin 1999; Harber 2004). The role of education is rarely expressed in these terms, partly because educational discourses, dedicated as they have been to an ethic of improvement and ultimately to a vision of redemption, have had to avoid political ontology. But the figure of the refugee, as real and as spectral presence, as actual experience and ghostly disturbance, is appropriate to express an ontological critique of education and of the pretensions of education to be a positive ontotheological force (Peim 2012). This figure interrogates hegemonic education discourses, including dominant discourses of educational critique, posing impossible questions: How can education as we know it, most extensive expression of biopower as it is, remain as it is frequently represented as the best hope of the possibility of redemption from the contemporary camp condition? Is education not something to think beyond as an (or the) essential component of that condition?

### 14.1.1 'We Refugees...'

Malabou's account of the ontology of the accident and its implications has resonances for a 'fundamental ontology' of the contemporary, including the refugee as paradigm for existential conditions in modernity and beyond. In this 'figuration', the refugee has a double semiotic function: it acts symbolically to express some essential features of being, while it also corresponds more directly to extensive actual lived experiences. Perhaps also a more generalised condition of exile is

figured in the idea of banishment from the ideal or dislocation from a primordial condition of oneness, as Jung might have it. It is also metonymic in that for significant numbers of people, the condition of the refugee is *their* condition. Refugeeedom corresponds to an actual lived experience: displaced, of uncertain abode, mobile, malleable and essentially homeless but also forging, inventive and creative; the refugee-bricoleur remakes herself in liquid modernity (Malabou 2012).

This refugee condition is articulated in the work of Arendt and Agamben as a lived experience that symbolically problematises integrity and coherence of identity. This model may have implications for understanding contemporary conditions in general: it constitutes an ontology of identity that holds in tension the relations between the global, the national and the local. An ontology of the refugee as paradigm figure will here be proposed within a wider system that addresses the governmental apparatuses of education.

### 14.1.2 *The Camp as ‘Matrix and Nomos’ of Our Time*

Agamben’s scandalous proposal that the ‘camp’ is in fact ‘the hidden matrix and nomos’ of our time presents a disturbance to comfortable accounts of the contemporary order of things. Agamben declares that the regime of governance we live within is essentially figured in the form and function of the camp. This is an analogical relation: Agamben is at pains to point out that his use of the figure of the camp, while crucial, does not relate to the actual *experience* of the camp. Agamben uses the camp to illustrate something essential about the political character of our times under biopower. Here I want to explore this peculiar – but persuasive – ontological figure in relation to a relatively recent TV series, *Deadwood*, which won significant critical acclaim for its portrayal of a frontier world designed as typical of the late nineteenth-century USA. This symbolically liminal site expresses a condition of being between the state of civilisation, the state of an assumed ‘nature’ and the acquisitive lawlessness associated with an aspect of American capitalism in its social and ecological dimensions.

The idea of both camp – drawn from Agamben – and encampment, drawn from TV programme, *Deadwood*, here provides a composite metaphor with powerful ontological resonances for our time, the time of ‘we contemporaries’. Camp has many implications, some of them very dark, and the analogy needs very careful handling. For Agamben, the camp is essentially a space of *exception* where sovereign power can exert itself more or less without restraint within a more or less continuous ‘state of emergency’. Encampment signifies more generally the temporary and uncertainty in our apparently settled way of life. This condition has demographic, economic, technological and many other dimensions.

The two terms – camp and encampment – here are used to return to some themes regarding the ontotheological role of education and its place as an essential apparatus of contemporary biopolitics. From this perspective, the faith both of everyday metaphysics and of dominant philosophy of education that education is

quintessentially a liberatory or salvatory force is misplaced. Claims that education might hold the key to healing the wounds of modernity's legacies of violence and difference are misguided. Rather, we need to understand differently what education is today and how education has become a kind of a dominant mytheme (Peim 2013). The powerful, messianic promise of education belies its central role in 'the great transformation' that has imposed a specific, if mobile, ordering onto the social order that is still gaining in reach and power. The regime of *biopower* that remains powerfully entrenched operates in parallel with 'the precariat' that is a dimension of ontology in modernity and beyond. Biopower in fact represents itself as the necessary antidote to the uncertainties of 'liquid modernity'.

The figure of the refugee – as paradigm figure for our times – provides a focus for some rethinking of the relations between biopower and the governmental functioning of education in our time.

### 14.1.3 *Arendt's Refugee*

Arendt implies the refugee (as she was herself) as the paradigm figure of identity in our time. In her account, the refugee is condemned to begin again, to remake herself in strange or at least different circumstances, prefiguring Malabou's recent assertion of the ontology of the accident. Arendt's account highlights the fundamental 'thrownness' of human existence in Heidegger's key term in its specifically modern form. In modernity, Arendt claims the accidental, uncertain and precarious quality of existence is exacerbated by instabilities in mobile global political conditions. 'Liquid modernity' accentuates the experience of refugee status, provoking the question: In what can we put our trust? For Arendt, the refugee experiences a loss of faith in collective experiences and forms of identity. For those who suffer such unhomely exile, trust can only be granted to what we have made ourselves. If so, we suffer existential loneliness, displaced and removed from the securities of localness; the refugee suffers existential crisis. For Arendt, the figure of the refugee prompts the realisation that the key political project is to understand how meaningful, dignified existence is possible under the particular conditions of the modern world.

An interesting element in Arendt's account is the reference to Chaplin's 'tramp' as a prototypical refugee. This quintessentially urban figure exemplifies contingent existence: dispossessed, marginal and not belonging; Chaplin's tramp relies on resourcefulness and creative bricolage – moving among the debris and discarded places – always a spectator to someone else's 'good life'. Chaplin's 'tramp' develops a practice of survival, depending on chance mutuality. At the same time, the tramp enjoys a kind of freedom that is always detached from, irreverent to and distrustful of the state order and the law. Chaplin's tramp frequently clashes with the law signifying the 'dangerous incompatibility of general laws with [his] individual misdeeds' (Arendt 1994). Chaplin's 'tramp/refugee' is now 100 years old. Could he still exist but now transformed into the paradigm figure of our time?

#### 14.1.4 Agamben's Expansion

A powerful development of Arendt's sketch of the refugee as a paradigm figure is offered in Giorgio Agamben's ontological claim that the refugee can be seen as the ultimate 'biopolitical' subject: the subject *par excellence* who can be regulated and governed – at the level of population management – in a permanent 'state of exception'. Agamben presents the 'figure of the refugee' as exemplary, as *the* symbolic representation of social and political reality in relation to Foucault's account of the emergence and rise of biopower and 'the great transformation'.

The refugee problematises strongly embedded categories of contemporary politics. Firstly, the refugee exposes the 'fiction' of national sovereignty, national identity and all associated legal and political categories such as 'the people' and 'the citizen' and their attendant safeguards. Refugees within the polity are in some senses always already reduced to 'bare life': humans without (or with a suspended) political identity or status. Secondly, 'the refugee' can be represented as the paradigmatic site of modern techniques of what Michel Foucault called 'governmentality': the organised practices and techniques used to produce, care for and/or dominate individual subjects within normative regimes of disciplinary care. Thirdly, Agamben argues that refugees can be seen as the ultimate 'biopolitical' subjects: those who can be regulated and governed at the level of population in a permanent 'state of exception' outside the normal legal framework – the camp (Agamben 2005). In detention camps, refugees are effectively reduced to 'bare life' whose status and identity are suspended under the law. Finally, Agamben suggests that by fully comprehending the significance of refugees in the present political order, we may countenance new ways of political belonging and the limits and possibilities of political 'community' in the future. After the nation-state and its associated legal and political categories have been assigned to history, the refugee will remain as 'perhaps the only thinkable figure'.

In the first three of these ways, the refugee is also strongly related to the 'child' of education, the schoolchild. The child is often both legally and practically represented as a form of 'bare life', a way of being that precedes entry into culture and identity 'proper'. The child is its subjection to disciplinary care, particularly through the apparatuses of schooling, intensively governed in relation to modes of conduct and habits of thinking. The child exists in a state of exception, being a 'special' subject subjected to special provisions under the law. The child is a key example of the state of exception that is indicative of the dispersed form of sovereign power that characterises modernity and beyond. As if to offer a disturbing specular case of the child under the law in the state of exception, the child as refugee has a real face: in the UK, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children are held in 'camps' ('detention centres') in a 'state of exception'.

According to Agamben's perspective, significantly developed from Foucault, the apparently rational (say, Kantian) instruments of the state are the very institutions that may facilitate an infinite expansion of disciplinary coercion and 'biopolitical' control. According to this perspective, merely updating and expanding the classical

discourse and reach of rights fails to grasp how power actually works with regimes of biopower. As history amply demonstrates, the reform of existing institutions – rather than develop freedoms and expanding the range of capacities – serves to entrench the worst aspects of sovereign power and the system of nation-states that produces refugees. According to Agamben, liberal and conventional realist theories do not provide sufficient analytical and normative understanding of the real and symbolic violence administered to refugees, including by liberal democracies. Rather, the figure of the refugee symbolises the nature of the political regimes we live within. The treatment of asylum-seeking children in the UK, for example – and other kinds of exceptional detainees – indicates the totalitarian potential of an apparently liberal political order, hence, Agamben's affirmation of the paradigm of the camp in modernity as essential to political-historical ontology. Agamben claims that 'the concentrationary universe' – in terms of experience a perhaps unparalleled extreme – signifies something essential about the juridical structure within which we live.

The camp constitutes an exceptional space that stands outside of or beyond the law, while at the same time, it is instituted by a constitutional action involving the legally sanctioned suspension of law. The camp constitutes a paradigm case: the camp (and camp in this sense may refer to a variety of exceptional, but legally sanctioned places, spaces such as Guantanamo bay, detention centres for asylum seekers and other social spaces, including, oddly perhaps, but decisively, spaces of protection) by virtue of its very existence problematises the status of the citizen within even the most liberal political order.

#### ***14.1.5 Education/Schooling***

Key aspects of schooling can be understood in analogy with Agamben's metonymic interest in the camp. In the first place, consider the legal ontology of schooling. Across the world, legal compunction is generally the norm with alternatives such as home schooling variously permitted under strict conditions or simply banned. Recent cases have highlighted this juridical dimension of education in our time and ought to alert us to something crucial in the governmental role that schooling plays. This surely is a fundamental ontological point. At the same time, schooling and education's institutions, invested with enormous social power and authority, exist in some significant ways in a state of immunity from general law. Decisions that are made about identities, decisions that frequently have lifelong implications and judgements that are conferred regarding the very quality of subjects that may have far-reaching, credentialing effects that may significantly determine social destinies are beyond appeal and may not be legally challenged. They operate rather a regime of truth that organises populations for differentiated social futures.

That schools are concerned, at a fundamental level, with the shaping of subjectivity is beyond question – in an important double sense. The will to shape the substance of the subject of education, in the form of an inexplicit model of virtue, is ensconced

in myriad rituals of the institution. It is a concern that is separate from the acquisition of knowledge and from the development of knowledge-related skills, but becomes sometimes crudely and sometimes subtly entrained with them, and has become a taken-for-granted element of the school's function in the condition of education that dominates the social ecology of our time. Virtues promoted are not democratically defined and publicly shared. Anyone who has worked in a school knows the often scandalous positive and negative descriptions that are offered for the attributes of pupils as individuals and often as whole groups by practising teachers. While this dimension of education might be considered to have positive social effects of inculcating necessary virtues, the inexplicit dimension also has to be acknowledged. What's more, of course, as we have long known, judgements made about desirable characteristics in scholastic environments are heavily class-biased. The apparatuses of education are sensitive to class differences and – in the name of scholastic dispositions – make negative judgements that are clearly class, not aptitude, based.

At the same time, an enormous amount of institutional energy is committed, as Foucault so meticulously recognised and demonstrated in his account of modern forms of discipline, to the promotion of bodily conduct and comportment (Foucault 1977). The intrusion of practices of person management into significant aspects of being, conduct, dress, language, the performance of specific acts and 'tableaux vivants', have a double function. In the first place, they seek to regulate the conduct of the age-stratified groups they address. In the second, they are also the grounds for 'differentiation' (for years, a keyword in educational practices). Discipline disciplines but also provides a set of norms to deploy in the dual process of producing hierarchies of attitude and attainment and imbuing the individual subject with a clear sense of one's place in the order of things.

The government of subjectivity that is a key dimension of the fundamental ontology of the school, and of education in our time, also relates to the social architecture of the apparatus. The institution of the school necessarily works in terms of confinement. In terms of time, space and association, the school determines the limits of the movement of its subjects. This generalised topography with its essential and consistent organisation of spaces effects a 'dislocating localisation'. The topographic distribution of the institution thus has powerful effects of normalising its distinctive – and surely – rather strange and possibly disturbing features. When the National Curriculum was installed from 1988 in the UK context, such a norm-dominated version of what is proper to knowledge met with little resistance. The promotion of curriculum-based national cohesion was accompanied by a strict hierarchy of attainment tied to norms of development that were also the ground for judging the essential qualities of the school's subject. This fundamentally eugenicist project has never been questioned for what it is, a hierarchisation of social trajectories based on cultural biases that negatively and positively interpret certain kinds of social comportment, hence, the casual ascription of essential qualities to subjects of schooling that is evident in the commonplace language of school reports and is more extremely evident in casual staffroom talk.



Of course it would be wrong to minimise positive effects of the nineteenth century's reinvention of childhood especially relating to certain safeguards children came to enjoy, eventually, under the law, against violence and abuse. Schooling signals a gradual end to the appalling depredations of mass child labour in western nation-states. At the same time, it is important to recall that, in the UK context, at least, protective legislation postdated the drive towards establishing a schooled society. In 1870 the priorities were for the production of a well-managed, organised population that could be subjected systematically to certain kinds of training and imbued with certain values. The new nationally sanctioned elementary schools were not in their inception – nor for long after – envisaged as vehicles of nurture and were certainly never conceived of as vehicles for social justice.

The school as we know it, like the camp, is a specifically European invention, although now thoroughly globalised. The world dominance of the institution continues to carry through a rapidly accelerating process that we don't yet understand. Prestigious, traditional fee-paying English schools, for example, now replicate themselves in China with the connivance of the Chinese government. Non-western nation-states throughout the world seek to emulate – from a subordinate position, of course – the form and function of western education systems, even down to the minutiae of curriculum specifications. In doing so, they partake a globalised system that is not merely dispersed throughout the world but that divides the world into centres of privilege. The global university system is rabidly hierarchical with each institution aware of its status in the world's league table of prestige.

Both the dispersed school and the proliferating university are in themselves antidemocratic, in spite of protestations of reformers and redeemers (including 'critical' educationists). With its insistently hierarchical distribution of differentiated statuses – for subjects, for institutions and for nation-state system – contemporary education looks more like a new global feudalism than a triumph of the democratic spirit of education (Foucault 2007). What's more in its intensifying bureaucracy and the ordering of subjects that goes along with it, education looks like the key instrument of Heidegger's 'technological enframing', applied to the human world (Heidegger 1977). This practical restriction of being is accompanied by the confinement of knowledge in rationalised curricula that inhibit possibilities. The celebration of education as a total way of life seems misplaced.

Many hold to the idea that while the current order of things in education may have been beset by the depredations of neo-liberalism, education and its key instruments can be redeemed from those dark forces. These positions and their rhetorics hold onto the notion that there is something essential and positive about education itself. They assume that pedagogical relations in their ideal form are nurturing, necessarily productive and essential to any idea of the meaning of being that is concerned with self-improvement and with the improvement of the species. The dark logic of Agamben's 'state of exception' challenges such liberal faith in reform. Within biopower that is the present order of the day and that is most exemplified, in my account, in the school and in education in general, 'bios' – belonging to the culture, the 'national' group – is granted but can be withdrawn. The state of exception that the liberal state holds as necessary to its functioning institutes totalitarian

powers under the law. Some of these, even though rarely foregrounded, and rarely explicitly deployed, are frighteningly extensive. For Agamben, the liberal state is as good as totalitarian insofar as the power to become a totalitarian state makes the state totalitarian. This state of affairs echoes with Benjamin's assertion of the continuing state of crisis and with the more recent articulation of the provenance of 'mitsein' as posing as an ontological and ethical problem by Jean-Luc Nancy (2004).

Our world is dominated by a politics that relies on a mythology of education as redeeming power (Agamben 2000). The redemption of education accompanies the commitment to education as redemption in this ontotheological myth. The sovereign idea of education though is seriously challenged by what we might call the aporetic thinking of contemporary cosmopolitanism that problematises a rationally programmed or reprogrammed 'future' and proposes, alternatively, a more open expectation of 'l'avenir' (Derrida 1994).

#### ***14.1.6 Derrida: Cosmopolitanism and Monolingualism of the Other***

Derrida's work includes several excursions into the terrain of 'Mitsein', including an explicit address to cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism in Derrida, although represented as a positive condition, when thought alongside hospitality, is also represented essentially as a challenge: an impossible if indispensable idea. In *Cosmopolitanism*, Derrida considers the possibility of a 'new cosmopolitan city' as a response to an excessive, paranoid policing of borders against the threat of the foreign other in the form of the refugee who appears in this guise, interestingly, as a figure of fear. Hospitality, though, turns out not to be a clearly embraceable opposite of autoimmune paranoia but an aporetic condition that makes infinite demand on the host while being constrained by pragmatic limits in order to make itself even possible. Hospitality appears then as an instance of the now familiar 'possible/impossible', almost as a hope against hope. And while Derrida proposes support for the ideal of the new cosmopolitan city, the real point, perhaps, is that within the juridical structure described by Agamben's awkward reminder of the provenance of the camp – a version of biopower – hospitality is both strictly delimited and unpredictable.

Hospitality belongs with the discourse of the refugee and the possibility of being 'at home' elsewhere. In a further twist, though, Derrida's work, rather like Lacan's in this respect, problematises the very idea of being at home in language. Published at more or less the same time as *Cosmopolitanism*, *Monolingualism of the Other* addresses linguistic identity in a partly autobiographical account. Derrida claims to have only ever had one language, but that language, at the same time, was never 'his'. In language, there is essentially no home, no mother tongue. One is always subject to the other that is language and to its sovereign occupation of the self.

Language is not homely. Identity in this sense can never be the expression of some proper unity with an interior being of the self nor with a unified way of life, a mode of being proper to a determinate group held together by common language that expresses a consistent unity.

As Nancy suggests, 'Mitsein' is always paradoxically fundamental and accidental, the grounds for identity *and* expressive of 'thrownness'. The accoutrements of belonging and of identity are inessential and borrowed. While we may embrace them as fundamental expressions of what we are, in fact, we acquire them retrospectively once that decision of belonging has been made on our behalf. Inessentiality then is primary and fundamental. Its shadow remains as a possibility as exemplified in the potential condition of being a refugee.

### 14.1.7 *Paradoxical Opportunity*

Derrida's rumination on language and identity speculates on the 'paradoxical opportunity' represented by certain North African Jews who have no direct or intimate relation to North African, French or Jewish culture. Such a 'figuration' suggests Arendt's refugee as positive bricoleur of identity. What is the nature of this 'paradoxical opportunity' (of the refugee) and to what extent does it signify a possibility for the general condition of 'we refugees' (the condition of subjectivity itself) in modernity? A big question attends the condition of cosmopolitanism. Could it simply be another empty liberal mantra ('democracy', 'freedom') that refuses to recognise its own underlying conditions under the ubiquitous regime of biopower? Could its emergence out of various catastrophes of modernity paradoxically signify and force recognition of another way of being together as Agamben ('inessential community') and Nancy ('inoperative community') have begun to suggest?

The TV programme *Deadwood* provides a useful possible metaphor for contemporary political realities in relation to the general condition of the refugee. Deadwood is a real place in South Dakota but was, in the late nineteenth century, a frontier town. In the TV version, it is this proto-civic space that is represented as being fraught with the depredations of modernity and with the spiritual, psychological uncertainties of postmodernity. In the TV programme, Deadwood refers to itself as a 'camp' signifying a pre-polis condition of temporary settlement. It is semi-lawless, dominated by the powerful, the scene of a scramble for wealth, tolerant of the abuse of women and of the subjugation of racial minorities. Law emerges to protect incipient citizens but also to act in frequent states of emergency to impose a more or less arbitrarily conducted authority and order. Its manoeuvres are more or less arbitrary. In *Deadwood*, inequalities abound with no dependable social welfare support for the vulnerable. One group, the Chinese, enjoy the status of permanent outsiders, outside of even the uncertain, capricious protections of the law. Their presence signifies a social space of exception where the unconscionable can happen. In general, *Deadwood* signifies a temporary encampment at times aspiring to civic status

but frequently dominated by other imperatives and struggles. It is both an account of emergence of modernity but also at the same time a radically critical depiction of contemporaneity. As the ‘civilising’ forces in *Deadwood* emerge, the school occupies a central ideological and instrumental function in the transformation of the frontier environment. As the civilising process (in the Elias sense) gains momentum, the ‘other’ lawless manifestations of sovereign power do not disappear but become less visible (Elias 1991).

### 14.1.8 *Finally*

Education today operates as the essential instrument of biopower as briefly indicated above. Derrida’s aporetic thinking of cosmopolitanism, configured around the ontology of the accident and centred on the paradigm figure of the refugee, problematises the rationally programmed ‘future’ of education, as opposed to a more open ‘avenir’ that may only be anticipated without schedule, but also disturbs the claim of education to be on the side of either liberation or critique. The TV programme *Deadwood* serves as a dramatic fictional reminder that the order of the established encampment is founded over the rough and ready condition of the ‘camp’ initially signifying a temporary, not yet civilised social space. It is a paradoxical and disturbing realisation that the civilising process of the ‘camp’ is caught up with a new form of invasive power that seeks to work upon the substance or ‘soul’ of the subject. This is the political ontology that Agamben’s articulation of ‘homo sacer’ and ‘bare life’ and ‘the state of emergency’ invites us to consider. In this light, the redemption of education from its present inequalities and from its entrapment in impersonal bureaucratic processes looks remote, to say the least, founded as it is on a critical misreading of the order of things.

Within the order of modernity appears the disturbing figure of the refugee, now as much as ever a troubling, spectral presence. Arendt’s account of the figure of the refugee is not entirely negative, however, rather like Derrida’s account of cultural ontology of language difference and sameness. As Agamben notes, Arendt turns the position of the refugee into ‘the paradigm of a new of historical consciousness’. This figure, as described above, promises at least the possibility of rethinking the ‘mitsein’ of any future that is not founded in the narrow forms of disciplined identity that are promoted by the apparatuses of education in the era of biopower.

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