Humanitarian Reason

A Moral History of the Present

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Preface to the English Edition

In the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia, Clifford Geertz commented with melancholy, in the *New York Review of Books* on March 24 of the following year, that "fatality on such a scale, the destruction not only of individual lives but of whole populations of them, threatens the conviction that perhaps most reconciles many of us, insofar as anything this-worldly does, to our own mortality: that, though we ourselves may perish, the community into which we were born, and the sort of lives it supports, will somehow live on." One could extend this profound insight by suggesting that the significance of such a fatality is not only about our mourning of a possibly lost world, of which all traces may even disappear; it is also about our sense of belonging to a wider moral community, whose existence is manifested through compassion toward the victims. For the attentive observer of the tsunami, the impressive magnitude of the toll, with its tens of thousands of casualties, was as meaningful as the unparalleled deployment of solidarity, with its billions of dollars of aid. We lamented their dead but celebrated our generosity. The power of this event resides in the rare combination of the tragedy of ruination and the pathos of assistance. Such disasters now form part of our experience of this-worldliness, just as do aid organizations, relief operations, and humanitarian interventions. We have become used to the global spectacle of suffering and the global display of succor. The moral landscape thus outlined can be called humanitarianism. Although it is generally taken for granted as a mere expansion of a supposed natural humaneness that would be innately associated with our being human, humanitarianism is a relatively recent invention, which raises complex ethical and political issues. This book is about this invention and its complications.

Humanitarianism has become familiar through catastrophic events, the images of which have been disseminated by the media, but it has also to do with more ordinary situations closer to us. Indeed, it is a mode of governing that concerns the victims of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and exile, as well as of disasters, famines, epidemics, and wars—in short, every situation characterized by precariousness. It involves nongovernmental organizations, international agencies, states, and individuals. It mobilizes sympathy and technology, physicians and logisticians. Its sites of action are clinics for the poor and refugee camps, a social administration where undocumented immigrants are received and a military garrison where earthquake victims are treated. The case studies I have brought together here represent an attempt to account for this government of the precarious in its diversity during the past two decades. The first part involves policies and actors in France, the second explores scenes from South Africa, Venezuela, Palestine, and Iraq, with a transition following the transnational circulation between the Third World and Europe. This assemblage poses two questions.

First, how specific is the French case? It is true that important humanitarian organizations were founded in France, that French governments often included secretaries for humanitarian affairs, and that France played a prominent role in the promotion of humanitarian policies within international institutions, including the United Nations. It is obvious too that France has a long history of private charitable works emanating from Christian orders as well as public solidarity policies translated into social security, state medical aid, and most recently universal medical coverage, all elements that have resulted in a relatively distinct set of shared political and moral values. There is thus definitely a singularity of the French relationship with humanitarianism. However, the phenomena I describe and analyze in the case studies extend beyond the national boundaries in which they are inscribed. The tensions between compassion and repression, the problems posed by the mobilization of empathy rather than the recognition of rights, the prejudices toward the dominated and their consequences regarding the way to treat them have a high degree of generality that make them relevant in various contexts. Configurations may be different, but processes are similar.

Second, how coherent is the arrangement of such diverse geographical cases? The initial series of cases was situated in France and concerns its management of the disadvantaged, while South Africa, Venezuela, and Palestine yield three paradigmatic humanitarian scenes—that is, respectively, epidemics, disasters, and conflicts—with the final study illustrating the

ambiguous links between aid workers and armed forces in military inter-
ventions such as in Iraq. The central hypothesis that holds these various
worlds together is that they are inscribed in the same humanitarian gov-
erning process, whether it deals with the poor and the undocumented in
the North or AIDS orphans and flood victims in the South, with compara-
ble moral categorizations and judgments, analogous developments of moral
communities and exclusions, and equivalent consequences in terms of ne-
gation of voices and histories. Examining these distant scenes through the
same lens is indispensable to comprehending the larger issues at stake in
our moral economies.

The argument of this book is therefore that humanitarianism has become
a potent force of our world. Its dissemination is so widespread that the tears
shed by the Chinese prime minister over the devastation of the province
of Sichuan increased his popularity, just as the apparent indifference of
the president of the United States to the tragic consequences of Hurricane
Katrina demonstrated the emptiness of his campaign slogan of compassion-
ate conservatism. Its invocation is so powerful that it can serve as grounds
for military action, allegedly to protect endangered populations, sometimes
foregoing alternative options as in Kosovo or forging evidence as in Kuwait,
or can even be used, as in the case of Augusto Pinochet in Britain and Mau-
rice Papon in France, to exempt individuals accused or convicted of crimes
against humanity from facing justice and punishment. It is this global and
yet uneven force that I attempt to analyze here.

The year 2010 began with the dreadful earthquake in Haiti, which pre-
cipitated a remarkable mobilization worldwide, particularly from France
and the United States. We witnessed in fact a competition between the two
countries, whose governments and populations rivaled each other in solici-
tude toward the victims, bounteously sending troops, physicians, goods,
and money, while raising the suspicion of the pursuit of goals other than
pure benevolence toward a nation that was successively oppressed by the
former and exploited by the latter. This emulation was certainly triggered
by goodwill, and one should not minimize the altruistic engagement and
charitable efforts of individuals, organizations, churches, and even govern-
ments involved in the treatment of the injured and later in the reconstruc-
tion efforts. Yet one cannot avoid thinking how rewarding was this gener-
osity. For a fleeting moment we had the illusion that we shared a common
human condition. We could forget that only 6% of Haitian asylum seekers
are granted the status of refugee in France, representing one of the lowest
national rates, far behind those coming from apparently peaceful countries,
or that thirty thousand Haitians were on the deportation lists of the U.S.

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Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency. The cataclysm seemed to erase the memories of the French and subsequent American exploitation of the island. Our response to it signified the promise of reparation and the hope for reconciliation.

In contemporary societies, where inequalities have reached an unprecedented level, humanitarianism elicits the fantasy of a global moral community that may still be viable and the expectation that solidarity may have redeeming powers. This secular imaginary of communion and redemption implies a sudden awareness of the fundamentally unequal human condition and an ethical necessity to not remain passive about it in the name of solidarity—however ephemeral this awareness is, and whatever limited impact this necessity has. Humanitarianism has this remarkable capacity: it fugaciously and illusorily bridges the contradictions of our world, and makes the intolerableness of its injustices somewhat bearable. Hence, its consensual force.

This morally driven, politically ambiguous, and deeply paradoxical strength of the weak I propose to call humanitarian reason.

Princeton, December 8, 2010

Introduction

Humanitarian Government

> Everyone will readily agree that it is of the highest importance
> to know whether we are not duped by morality.
>
> <div align="right">EMMANUEL LEVINAS, Totality and Infinity</div>

Moral sentiments have become an essential force in contemporary politics: they nourish its discourses and legitimize its practices, particularly where these discourses and practices are focused on the disadvantaged and the dominated, whether at home (the poor, the immigrants, the homeless) or farther away (the victims of famine, epidemics, or war). By "moral sentiments" are meant the emotions that direct our attention to the suffering of others and make us want to remedy them.[1] They link affects with values—sensitivity with altruism—and some, indeed, derive the latter from the former and morality from emotions: in this philosophical tradition, the experience of empathy precedes the sense of good. Compassion represents the most complete manifestation of this paradoxical combination of heart and reason: the sympathy felt for the misfortune of one's neighbor generates the moral indignation that can prompt action to end it. Thus, encountering the man left for dead by robbers at the side of the road, the Good Samaritan of the gospels is moved; he dresses his wounds, finds him lodging, and pays for his care.[2] This parable inaugurates the paradigm of a politics of compassion that feeds Western morality well beyond the domain of Christian doctrine, which obviously has no monopoly on concern for the misfortune of others, whether we consider the central role of compassion in Confucianism and Buddhism or its translation as charity in Islamic and Jewish traditions.

I will therefore use the expression "humanitarian government" to designate the deployment of moral sentiments in contemporary politics. "Government" here should be understood in a broad sense,[3] as the set of procedures established and actions conducted in order to manage, regulate, and support the existence of human beings: government includes but exceeds the intervention of the state, local administrations, international bodies,

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and political institutions more generally. Similarly, "humanitarian" should be taken in an extended meaning,[4] as connoting both dimensions encompassed by the concept of humanity: on the one hand the generality of human beings who share a similar condition (mankind), and on the other an affective movement drawing humans toward their fellows (humaneness). The first dimension forms the basis for a demand for rights and an expectation of universality; the second creates the obligation to provide assistance and attention to others: once again we encounter the articulation between reason and emotion that defines moral sentiments. Thus the concept of humanitarian government goes beyond the usual definitions that restrict it to aid interventions in the Third World and mimetically correspond to the image presented by organizations that describe themselves as humanitarian. In fact, humanitarianism has become a language that inextricably links values and affects, and serves both to define and to justify discourses and practices of the government of human beings.

When a candidate in the French presidential election addressed "the France that suffers," he was using the same vocabulary of moral sentiments as his colleague in the United States qualifying his own political program as "compassionate conservatism."[5] And when, under pressure from organizations providing support for undocumented immigrants, the French authorities granted residence to immigrants only on the condition that they were suffering from a serious illness that could not be treated in their home country, on the grounds of "humanitarian reason," they were using the same descriptor as the Western heads of state who called for the bombing of Kosovo as part of a military campaign that they asserted was "purely humanitarian."[6] On both the national and the international levels, the vocabulary of suffering, compassion, assistance, and responsibility to protect forms part of our political life: it serves to qualify the issues involved and to reason about choices made.

It may be objected that there is often a form of cynicism at play when one deploys the language of moral sentiments at the same time as implementing policies that increase social inequality, measures that restrict the rights of immigrant populations, or military operations with essentially geostrategic goals—to take only the examples previously evoked. In this view, the language of humanitarianism would be no more than a smoke screen that plays on sentiment in order to impose the law of the market and the brutality of realpolitik. But even if this were the case, the question would remain: Why does it work so well? Thus, beyond the manifest bad faith of some and the good conscience of others—although the significance of these attitudes cannot be ignored on the level of what we might call an

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ethics of policy—we need to understand how this language has become established today as the most likely to generate support among listeners or readers, and to explain why people often prefer to speak about suffering and compassion than about interests or justice, legitimizing actions by declaring them to be humanitarian. In the contemporary world, the discourse of affects and values offers a high political return: this certainly needs to be analyzed.

A remarkable paradox deserves our attention here. On the one hand, moral sentiments are focused mainly on the poorest, most unfortunate, most vulnerable individuals: the politics of compassion is a politics of inequality.[7] On the other hand, the condition of possibility of moral sentiments is generally the recognition of others as fellows: the politics of compassion is a politics of solidarity.[8] This tension between inequality and solidarity, between a relation of domination and a relation of assistance, is constitutive of all humanitarian government. It explains the frequently observed ambivalence of authorities, of donors, and of agents working for the good of others, and it accounts for what has been called compassion fatigue, the wearing down of moral sentiments until they turn into indifference or even aggressiveness toward the victims of misfortune. But it also explains the shame felt by the poor, the beneficiaries of aid, all those who receive these gifts that call for no counter gift, and accounts for the resentment and even hostility sometimes expressed by the disadvantaged and the dominated toward those who think of themselves as their benefactors.[9] Many philosophers and moralists have striven to minimize this asymmetrical relationship of compassion, placing emphasis rather on the egalitarian dimension and attempting to give it the status of a founding emotion of human community: it is because we see the other as another self, they maintain, that we feel sympathy for him or her and act for his or her good.

However, the problem is not psychological or even ethical, as these writers suggest: it is strictly sociological.[10] It is not the condescension on the part of the persons giving aid or the intention of their act of assistance that are at stake, but the very conditions of the social relation between the two parties, which, whatever the goodwill of the agents, make compassion a moral sentiment with no possible reciprocity. It can of course be pointed out that the apparently disinterested gift assumes a counter gift in the form of an obligation linking the receiver to the benefactor—for example, the obligation on the receivers sometimes to tell their story, frequently to mend their ways, and always to show their gratitude. But it is clear that in these conditions the exchange remains profoundly unequal. And what is more, those at the receiving end of humanitarian attention know quite well

that they are expected to show the humility of the beholden rather than express demands for rights.

Thus, if there is domination in the upsurge of compassion, it is objective before it is subjective (and it may not even become subjective). The asymmetry is political rather than psychological: a critique of compassion is necessary not because of the attitude of superiority it implies but because it always presupposes a relation of inequality. Humanitarian reason governs precarious lives:[11] the lives of the unemployed and the asylum seekers, the lives of sick immigrants and people with AIDS, the lives of disaster victims and victims of conflict—threatened and forgotten lives that humanitarian government brings into existence by protecting and revealing them. When compassion is exercised in the public space, it is thus always directed from above to below, from the more powerful to the weaker, the more fragile, the more vulnerable—those who can generally be constituted as victims of an overwhelming fate. The concept of precarious lives therefore needs to be taken in the strongest sense of its Latin etymology:[12] lives that are not guaranteed but bestowed in answer to prayer, or in other words are defined not in the absolute of a condition, but in the relation to those who have power over them. Humanitarian government is indeed a politics of precarious lives.

This politics, which brings into play states and nongovernmental organizations, international bodies and local communities, has a history. This is not the place to retrace it, but it is worth underlining its dual temporality. The first, long-term temporality relates to the emergence of moral sentiments in philosophical reflection, and subsequently in common sense, in Western societies from the eighteenth century onward.[13] Modern identity is indissociable from the conjunction of affects and values that regulate conducts and emotions toward others and define a respect for human life and dignity.[14] The abolitionist movement, which fought slavery in Britain, France, and the United States, is often presented, in spite of its contradictions, as the epitome of this initial crystallization of moral sentiments in politics.[15] By contrast, emotional pleas and even military interventions to defend endangered populations, starting with the British, French, and Russian mobilization in favor of the Greek Revolution in the 1820s, have received little attention until recently.[16] The second, short-term temporality relates to the articulation of these moral sentiments in the public space, and even more specifically in political action, at the end of the twentieth century: while one cannot put a precise date on this phenomenon, one may note the convergence of a set of elements over the past two decades, including the creation of humanitarian organizations (which invoke a right or duty to

intervene), the establishment of ministries of humanitarian assistance (in several French governments but also in other countries), and the description of conflicts as humanitarian crises (which then justifies military intervention under the same banner), to which should be added the proliferation of measures and initiatives designed to aid the poor, the unemployed, the homeless, the sick without social protection, immigrants without residence rights, and applicants for refugee status—measures and initiatives defined explicitly or implicitly as humanitarian.[17] The first temporality provides the genealogical framework for the second.

It is the latter that I am principally interested in here—the recent constitution of a humanitarian government. My aim is to offer a clear account of the reconfiguration of what can be called the politics of precarious lives over the past few decades: the studies presented here essentially relate to measures, initiatives, and forms of government (whether governmental or nongovernmental) that have been brought into operation, at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries, to manage populations and individuals faced with situations of inequality, contexts of violence, and experiences of suffering. Obviously I am not arguing that compassion is a recent invention, although it should be recognized that some historical periods, including the one under study, are more conducive to sentimentality than others. Nor do I hold that the shift that has begun is irreversible, for nothing is more unstable and revocable than the sentiment of compassion in politics, as can be viewed with the rise of the sentiment of fear related to the rhetoric of security in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Nor, finally, am I suggesting that the advent of compassion excludes other phenomena, for the social body is continually pulled by contradictory logics, particularly that of repression in the case of precarious lives. Of these multiple tensions, the case studies of this volume will provide many examples. My aim is simply to grasp the specific issues involved in the deployment of humanitarian reason in the contemporary public space and to understand how moral sentiments have recently reconfigured politics.

The social sciences themselves are not absent from the developments I am considering here. The 1990s were remarkable for the increasing importance, on both sides of the Atlantic, of what we might term a scientific literature of compassion—a body of writing relating to suffering, trauma, misfortune, poverty, and exclusion. Interestingly, two distinct intellectual geographies can be drawn. In France, the disciplines most involved are sociology and psychology. In the United States, this concern is above all the domain of literary criticism and medical anthropology.[18] Several of these

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publications were the result of major research programs and have been financially supported by French public and semipublic organizations and American private foundations and nonprofit institutions, respectively. In France, the grant made available by the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, a national savings and investment bank, for a series of studies on minor and major adversities among various social categories, from the young immigrant to the police officer, has produced the best-selling sociology book in a decade; in the United States, the Social Science Research Council has funded a series of seminars and publications on political and structural violence, from South Africa to Sri Lanka, which has had a marked influence on the scientific field in North America and beyond.[19] Thus a specular dynamic has developed whereby public bodies and private groups produce representations of the world, and the social sciences give them the authority of their theoretical reflection and the substance of their empirical research. Legitimized by politicians as well as scientists, this view is consolidated and gradually comes to be assumed as self-evident. Inequality is replaced by exclusion, domination is transformed into misfortune, injustice is articulated as suffering, violence is expressed in terms of trauma. While the old vocabulary of social critique has certainly not entirely disappeared, the new lexicon of moral sentiments tends to mask it in a process of semantic sedimentation that has perceptible effects both in public action and in individual practices, although the influence on policies and more generally on society of this scientific literature and these intellectual stances is probably greater in France than in the United States.[20] The translation of social reality into the new language of compassion is thus mirrored by a sort of epistemological, but also emotional, conversion of researchers and intellectuals to this approach to society, more sensitive to the subjectivity of agents and to the experience of pain and affliction. Studies, research programs, and scientific publications have proliferated. Within a few years, exclusion and misfortune, suffering and trauma have become commonplaces of the social sciences, lending academic credit to the new political discourse.

This novel account of the world has largely been taken for granted. Many have adopted the view that it simply reflected changes in society: people spoke more often about the excluded because there were more of them, and about suffering because its prevalence had increased; doctors and nurses, and even armies, were being dispatched to aid populations that were victims of war or disaster because our world had become more generous. Some, indeed, welcomed this development, seeing it as a sign of moral progress: in their view, public authorities and nongovernmental organizations, trade

unionists and politicians, journalists and researchers were finally showing greater humanity and had more understanding of the plight of ordinary people. Others, however, derided or waxed indignant about what they interpreted as a drift toward sentimentalism, suggesting that we all now consider ourselves as victims, in a sort of frantic race to expose our misfortunes, have our pain recognized, and even claim compensation.

I take a completely different approach here, analytical rather than normative. Our way of apprehending the world results from a historical process of "problematization" through which we come to describe and interpret that world in a certain way, bringing problems into existence and giving them specific form, and by this process discarding other ways of describing and interpreting reality, of determining and constituting what exactly makes a problem.[21] Whereas volunteers eager to come to the aid of victims of conflict and oppression would previously have done so through political and sometimes military struggle, like Lord Byron in Greece, George Orwell in Spain, or Jean Genet in Palestine, today they do it via humanitarian assistance and advocacy, symbolized by Bob Geldof organizing a concert for Ethiopia, Bernard Kouchner carrying a sack of rice on the Somalian shore, or George Clooney pleading for the persecuted people of Darfur. It is not that the situation on the ground has radically changed, it is rather that violence and injustice have a different meaning for us, and more specifically, that we now justify our actions in a different way, to the extent that governments are increasingly invoking the humanitarian argument as a ground for their armed interventions. But in emphasizing this evolution in our collective understanding of the world I am not seeking to judge whether it is useful or dangerous, to determine whether we should celebrate it or be concerned about it: I am simply trying to recognize the phenomenon for what it is—and also to measure its effects, or more correctly, to interpret the issues involved by these anthropological transformations. It is for the readers, if they accept my analysis of these moral and political stakes, to draw the normative conclusions they consider to conform to their ethical and ideological view.

A new moral economy,[22] centered on humanitarian reason, therefore came into being during the last decades of the twentieth century. We continue to live within it now, in the early twenty-first century. It brings forth new kinds of responses—a humanitarian government—in which particular attention is focused on suffering and misfortune. Whether this shift stems from sincerity or cynicism on the part of the actors involved, whether it manifests a genuine empathy or manipulates compassion, is another question: the point I want to emphasize is that this way of seeing and doing has

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now come to appear self-evident to us.[23] However, this problematization of our societies does not go without saying. One could even state that it is in itself problematic. It requires us to examine not only the significance of the development itself but also its social and political implications, its consequences both objective and subjective. What, ultimately, is gained, and what lost, in the deal when we use the terms of suffering to speak of inequality, when we invoke trauma rather than recognizing violence, when we give residence rights to foreigners with health problems but restrict the conditions for political asylum, more generally when we mobilize compassion rather than justice? And what are the profits and losses incurred in opening listening centers to combat social exclusion, requiring the poor to recount their misfortunes, sending psychologists to war zones, representing war in the language of humanitarianism?

But how are these stakes to be understood? Social sciences and humanities have taken two main approaches in response to this question, which can be described by making a provisional distinction between humanitarian morals (the principle on which actions are based or justified) and humanitarian politics (the implementation of these actions). The first has often been limited to national territory and even to local space. The second has taken the world as its field of inquiry. The link between the two has rarely been made. This is what I intend to do here.

In the first approach—the analysis of humanitarian morals—philosophers have recently begun to examine public expressions of moral sentiments, some largely in affinity with sympathy, others on the contrary condemning its sway. The former consider suffering a lived reality that cannot be called into question (it is therefore naturalized) and frequently attempt to articulate it with a political economy (their critique thus relates to the social injustices that produce suffering). The latter see suffering as a manifestation of the modern sensibility (it is consequently culturalized), and their aim is generally to demonstrate the excesses of its public exposition (here the critique is of the sentimentality that makes a spectacle of suffering).[24] Take people who suffer seriously, say the former. Do not be fooled by the upsurge of compassion, retort the latter. Both views are seen as critique. But the realism of the first position ignores the historicity of moral sentiments and hence of the political use to which they are put, while the constructionism of the second stance ignores the subjectivation of social inequality and hence the experience that individuals have of it. The two perspectives never come together, for the first rejects the genealogy of compassion and the second turns away from the truth of suffering.

Sociology has not entirely escaped this dualism, and significantly, it was in France in the 1990s, at the point when the issue began to emerge in the public arena, that the discipline first addressed it, initially from two almost symmetrical positions. In *The Weight of the World,* Pierre Bourdieu sees suffering as the contemporary expression of "a social order which, although it has undoubtedly reduced poverty overall, has also multiplied the social spaces and set up the conditions for an unprecedented development of all kinds of ordinary suffering (*la petite misère*)."[25] The accumulation of interviews conducted by the researchers working alongside him shows that the whole of society is suffering almost indiscriminately, from the youth of the housing projects to the residents of middle-class suburbs, from immigrant workers to far-right campaigners, from police to trade unionists. The fact that suffering is also a characteristic language of the contemporary world and that compassion has become a political force escapes Bourdieu's analysis, which promotes the "intellectual love" the researcher must feel for his informants—at the risk of renouncing objectivation in his description and ultimately of reinforcing the social construction to which he unwittingly contributes. By contrast Luc Boltanski, in his *Distant Suffering*, proposes a displaced gaze, since he takes as his object the "spectator's dilemma" of those exposed to the suffering of others and caught "between the egoistic ideal of self-realization and an altruistic commitment to causes which enables one to 'realize oneself' through action," a dilemma to which the "humanitarian movement" offers a solution.[26] His inquiry thus relates to the topics of suffering and the rhetoric of pity, but in drawing on a wealth of historical cases and literary fiction it abandons almost any perspective on the contemporary world. The final section on "humanitarian action" mainly consists in a discussion of the "polemics" about the "return of moralism" to which it has given rise, and hence an analysis of strictly ideological arguments exchanged among those he ironically calls "media intellectuals." By doing so, Boltanski however risks de-realizing the political stakes of this form of action and ultimately offering a mere apologia for humanitarianism.

What eludes both sociologists, in Bourdieu's case because of his denunciation of the social order and in Boltanski's because of his sociological study of denunciation, is an approach that would allow us to analyze the effects of domination expressed through suffering (which Bourdieu does) at the same time as the construction processes of which suffering is the object (which Boltanski exposes)—in other words, to consider the politics of suffering in their complexity and their ambiguity. The reason for these authors' difficulty in grasping these issues is no doubt partly methodological:

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the interviews conducted by Bourdieu furnish accounts that put emotions into words without distance, while the texts analyzed by Boltanski present rhetorical figures that keep the social at a distance. In fact, whatever the richness of the exclusively discursive material collected by both sociologists, it is no substitute for the participant observation and long-term presence that make it possible to reconstruct more precisely described scenes and more broadly situated contexts, thus avoiding simplification, locating narratives and arguments within their frame of utterance, and eventually grasping the issues within which they are contained and which they contribute to constituting. Ethnography, if they had undertaken it, would certainly have made them see the world differently.

In the second approach—the analysis of humanitarian politics—international relations and political science have recently begun to scrutinize the deployment of these unfamiliar forms of intervention in zones of disaster and conflict. Political scientists and legal scholars have constructed ambitious panoramas of what they sometimes describe as the new humanitarian world order.[27] Here the scale of analysis is no longer an imaginary individual or an indeterminate collective, as in the philosophical and sociological approaches, but the world with relations of power between states, international institutions, and nongovernmental organizations—rather than a clash of civilizations. Two opposing positions emerge. Some do not question humanitarian intervention, even when it is conducted by the military in the name of protecting civilians: their analytical efforts focus on the conditions in which this action is deployed, its legality, or even its legitimacy, and sometimes include recommendations based on lessons learned from recent operations. Others make humanitarian intervention the subject of a radical critique: even while conceding that politicians may wish to defend just causes, they see the action undertaken in these conditions not only as a violation of sovereignty but also as an imposition of values and models.[28] Thus all of these studies address macropolitical configurations rather than microsocial situations: they concern international relations. The few case studies that have been conducted have until recently been carried out mainly by actors close to humanitarian organizations, who have been interested in the contradictions thrown up by interventions in which they themselves have been involved: detailed sociopolitical analyses have thus emerged from Darfur and Rwanda, for example.[29] But these are not ethnographic studies that could offer insight into the logics of actors and the justifications for their actions.

Anthropology has, in its turn, recently become interested in these far-off sites. There has been an unprecedented empirical investment against the

background of a broad movement to redefine the discipline, now present at scenes of war and violence from which it had hitherto scrupulously held itself apart.[30] However, the descriptions resulting from these studies take various positions. For example, Mariella Pandolfi, who has studied the joint military-humanitarian intervention in Kosovo, presents a critical reading.[31] She decrypts the language of international organizations, particularly the notions of "complex emergency" (which amalgamates all crises, from earthquakes to war) and the "right to intervene" (used to justify operations supposedly aimed at protecting civilians, especially in extralegal situations); she puts in perspective the big hotels where the military, humanitarians, and journalists congregate and the refugee camps where these same actors invent "mobile sovereignties" as a substitute for failing state authorities. As an involved participant in the situations she observes (employed as an expert by an international organization), she delivers an implacable analysis of the humanitarian world. Conversely, Peter Redfield, who focuses on the daily life of a French nongovernmental organization in Uganda, takes a more empathetic approach.[32] Examining the humanitarian gesture close-up, he finds a convergence between the moral sentiments of the humanitarian and the anthropologist, whom he sees as "faced with the same problem," the same experience of the suffering of others and the desire to act; like the doctor or the nurse, he is concerned with the precariousness of lives, highlighted by his study of the "bracelet of life" that is distributed to babies to measure their nutritional state.

Obviously, the contexts are different. In the first case, the confusion between the military and the humanitarian reaches its climax under the lights of the media and with the background of international tensions. In the second case, the nongovernmental organization acts in a peaceful and almost forgotten region, where its members attempt to provide medical assistance. However, beyond these contrasts between the situations, the perspectives adopted by the analysts are somewhat distinct: the former gives priority to denunciation, whereas the latter remains attentive to constraints and ambiguities. The parallel between the two approaches—the critical distance of one and the empathetic engagement of the other—shows to what extent the anthropology of humanitarian government is epistemologically but also morally linked to its object, in a mirrorlike relationship that is actually difficult to avoid. Significantly, most fieldwork studies, as is the case for the two I evoked here, concentrate on the politics of distant tragedies (wars, camps) rather than the politics of nearby suffering (the poor, immigrants). Yet many elements, not least the increasing involvement of humanitarian organizations, both in distant countries and at home, and the use of the same

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humanitarian language in national and global politics, suggest that the two worlds need to be analyzed together and that anthropology should simultaneously address both realities.

Considering the two lines of social science and humanities research on the humanitarian question over the past twenty years, as I have summarized it far too briefly here—referring respectively to humanitarian morals and politics—my project can thus be stated simply. It is to seize morals at the point where it is articulated with politics—to comprehend the humanitarian government. This necessitates a dual focus.

First, it involves using the same theoretical approach, and the same empirical procedure, to address what is being played out in our society and in distant worlds, what is arising in both national and international arenas.[33] The moral economies in operation in a health clinic for the disadvantaged and in a refugee camp, in a listening center for the excluded in a poor neighborhood and in a trauma consultation in a war zone, in the allocation of scarce resources to the unemployed in the French welfare system or to patients in an African medical aid program have many points in common, which need to be grasped together as a whole. The case studies presented in this book therefore relate to the government of the poor, the disadvantaged, and the immigrants in France, but also of AIDS orphans in South Africa, disaster victims in Venezuela, traumatized adolescents in Palestine, and nongovernmental organizations in Iraq.[34] Each of these contexts throws light on the broader reality of the transformations being wrought through humanitarianism in the contemporary world. To grasp what is at work in this shift, one needs both to anchor empirical studies in local realities and to get a sense of the global landscape. This combination of the two scales thus avoids both monographic narrowness that delivers only circumscribed interpretations, and teleological claims that seek to identify a direction in history.

Second, I propose to base this analysis on precise inquiries rather than general propositions, to study a small number of situations that may shed some light on the question—essentially, to subject this political and moral anthropology to the test of ethnography.[35] My hypothesis is that in-depth study of specific objects, be they letters of application for financial assistance, medical certificates for the undocumented, testimonies published by humanitarian organizations, a support service in a housing project, or a military intervention after an earthquake, are more illuminating than an exhaustive analysis or a general overview in providing an intelligibility of the social world.[36] It should therefore be no surprise that we have to go by way of the casuistry of decisions on allocation of assistance to low-income

individuals, the rhetoric of attestation of torture for asylum seekers, the tactics of immigrants applying for residence in order to understand how the state politics of compassion operates in France. It is through this work at the margins that we can grasp the logics and the assumptions, the ambiguities and the contradictions, the principles of justice and the practices of judgment: the devil is in the detail. Similarly, to understand humanitarian practices in distant regions, we need to examine the images produced of children with AIDS in South Africa, the writings of psychiatrists and psychologists reporting the situation of Palestinians under the Israeli occupation, and the debates within a nongovernmental organization over whether its members should stay in Iraq under the bombs. In each case, ethnography provides insight into the convictions and doubts of the actors, their blind spots and their lucidity, their prejudices and their reflexivity: we owe our informants the respect of restoring these dialectical tensions. This has long been missing from the essays on humanitarianism and pamphlets about moralism whose monolithic theses recognized neither the complexity of the issues nor the intelligence of the actors.

The book is constructed around two series: the implementation of humanitarian reason in the politics of precarious lives in the French context, and the dissemination of humanitarian government in tragic contexts throughout the world. The nine scenes thus analyzed, covering a period spanning the mid-1990s through the middle of the first decade of this century, sketch vignettes of what we might call the humanitarian moment in contemporary history.

The first series of case studies has for background the important social, economic, demographic, and political changes that took place in France in recent decades. After what has been called in French the *Trente Glorieuses*—the thirty years of prosperity following the Second World War—the so-called oil crisis and, more crucially, the restructuring of the economy with the industrial decline had important consequences. First, the increase in unemployment and job insecurity, concomitant with the enrichment of a minority, resulted in growing levels of poverty and inequality; as a "minimum guaranteed income" was instituted in 1988 for the disadvantaged, the language of social exclusion, with the idea that disparities were no longer vertical (up/down) but horizontal (in/out), became commonplace. Second, the immigrant workforce, which had been so decisive in the period of economic growth, became undesirable, and restrictions were brought to labor immigration, then to family reunification, eventually to any entry of foreigners from developing countries, including asylum seekers, henceforth

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suspected of being so-called false refugees; the rapid progression of the far-right National Front, whose candidate came second in the 2002 presidential election, was mostly based on a xenophobic discourse, which made the "immigration question" a central issue in the public debate. Third, after twenty-three years of right-wing domination—under Charles de Gaulle, Georges Pompidou, and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing—the left took power with the 1981 election of Socialist François Mitterrand, who remained president for fourteen years, the longest mandate under the Fifth Republic; however, this political change opened a period of instability, with the alternation of majorities in the National Assembly, leading from 2002 to an exclusive domination of an increasingly conservative right, with Jacques Chirac and later Nicolas Sarkozy as presidents. It is in this context of profound objective change that the subjective metamorphosis I am analyzing here should be understood. The contradictions between the social, economic, and political evolution and the founding values of French democracy, the confrontation between the neoliberal policies of the governments and the moral concerns of civil society partially expressed via nongovernmental organizations, account for the emergence of compassion as an ambiguous principle underlying the politics toward the disadvantaged, not exclusive, in its actual practice, of the exercise of repression.

The second series of case studies is embedded in broader transformations on the global scene. The progressive collapse of the Communist regimes, which reached its climax with the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, reconfigured the international political order that had been shaped by the Cold War for several decades. These events precipitated rather than directly provoked structural changes at the level of the planet. First, the neoliberal creed appeared not only stronger than ever, but even the only viable ideology; the negotiations of the World Trade Organization established this ultimate victory, leaving open however the 2002 Doha "health exception," a compassionate measure to keep certain drugs accessible for the most severe diseases. Second, the supremacy of the Western world under the banner of the United States gave birth to a doctrine of interventionism, officially sanctioned by the adoption of the "responsibility to protect" principle at the 2005 World Summit of the United Nations; from Somalia to Bosnia to East Timor, the invocation of this moral obligation served as a justification for military interventions, with or without the legality of the Security Council vote. Third, the presence of nongovernmental actors instituted a new equilibrium of power with states and international agencies; AIDS activists such as the South African Treatment Action Campaign, charity organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières, and private foundations on the

model of the Gates Foundation redrew the political map of the world. It is in this context of changing moral geography that one should apprehend the attitudes toward children in South Africa or disaster victims in Venezuela, and the stakes of humanitarian action in the Palestinian Territories or in Iraq.

In the first section of this book, I examine the policies implemented in France over the past two decades in relation to the marginal and the excluded, the unemployed and the poor, undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers through four case studies. The identification of psychic suffering resulting from social conditions led to the establishment, from 1996 onward, of so-called places of listening for marginalized teenagers and youth at risk in poor urban neighborhoods. Set up by psychiatrists and staffed by psychologists, these facilities redefined social inequality in the language of mental health; however, rather than a psychiatrization or psychologization of the social question that many prophesied, what actually occurred was the dissemination of moral sentiments in deprofessionalized spaces where presumed suffering was taken care of (chapter 1). Shortly after, the abolition of emergency welfare grants for the unemployed in late 1997 sparked major protests, to which the government responded by announcing the distribution of 1 million euros on the basis of individual case assessments. Analysis of the actual procedures for distribution of this public largesse reveals the principles of justice and the practices of judgment within state services. Notably, given that applicants were required to adopt the method of petition, we can see how the exposition of their hardship results in an emotional fatigue among administrators that ultimately produces a mixture of contingency and arbitrariness in the allocation of financial aid (chapter 2). The following year, as a result of demands by charitable organizations seeking to prevent people in poor health being deported, a criterion was introduced into the 1998 law on immigration allowing immigrants suffering from a serious illness to be granted residence. This compassionate regimen concludes a development whereby the body of the immigrant, previously valued for its labor force, is now increasingly recognized on the basis of the illness that invalidates it. A study of the practices of physicians responsible for selecting the individuals to be granted residence demonstrates the shift in legitimacy from social life to biological life (chapter 3). In parallel, the dramatic decrease in the numbers of those granted asylum, which fell to less than one out of five in 2000, induces a growing demand for evidence, primarily medical certificates testifying to the persecution suffered. As the condition of refugees is delegitimized, this new situation underlines the way the applicant's word is discredited and increasingly

replaced by the opinions of experts. Analysis of the attestations produced and of campaigns by support organizations shows how what appears to be a simple search for truth becomes a practice of testing veracity through the body, altering the spirit and even the letter of the 1951 Geneva Convention (chapter 4). Although oriented toward different publics, these politics of precarious life draw the moral landscape of contemporary France.

The liminality of the situation of refugees and the ambiguity of the hospitality they are provided offers a transition between the national and the international scenes (chapter 5). The controversy over the center of Sangatte between 1999 and 2001 is particularly revealing, since it opens onto transnational issues, with the growing tension between compassion and repression in the management of immigrants and the deterrence of asylum seekers. On the border, the contradictions between the rhetoric of human rights and the practice of exception and the polarization of the world between a North to be protected and the South viewed as a threat become extreme.

In the second section of the book, I consider the implementation of humanitarian practices as a means of addressing afflictions throughout the world, again via four case studies distributed across four continents. The AIDS epidemic has affected South Africa more than any other country and since 2000 has resulted in an unprecedented political and social crisis, particularly painful in relation to children. The vulnerability of this age group is manifested through the three images, omnipresent in the public space, of the sick child, the abused infant, and the orphan. However, the empirical investigation reveals the implications of this emotional mobilization, particularly the misrecognition of historical and social realities to which it contributes (chapter 6). A similar observation can be made about Venezuela, where the natural disaster of December 1999 occurred in a specific context of moral reconstruction of the nation and indeed, by a remarkable coincidence, on the very day of a referendum on the new constitution. Faced with collective misfortune, the entire society supported the declaration of a state of exception to facilitate aid to the victims. The unanimous compassion thus masked both the violence perpetrated by the police and the army and the deep disparities in the support offered to victims (chapter 7). The same affective dimension is at stake during the Second Intifada, which erupted in September 2000, and more specifically via the emergence of a humanitarian testimony in the international public arena. On the basis of their members' experience as psychologists and psychiatrists, nongovernmental organizations exposed the wounds of the violent occupation of Palestinian territories by the Israeli army using the language of trauma.

The documents produced by Médecins Sans Frontières and Médecins du Monde illustrate the difficulties and obstacles this language presents both to articulating the historical and political context of suffering and to recognizing local forms of subjectivation of violence (chapter 8). Humanitarianism is again put to the test in April 2003 by the launch of the Iraq War, which highlights, even more clearly than any other recent conflict, its complex relationships with the military. The heated debate in Médecins Sans Frontières about whether it should remain in Baghdad when bombing was about to start questions the meaning of such a potential sacrifice. The implications of the decision to stay demonstrate the difficulty of weighing the relative value of lives and ultimately reveal ontological inequalities rarely recognized for what they are (chapter 9). Beyond the diversity of situations and contexts, it is the logics and consequences of the deployment of humanitarian reason in these various sites that are at stake.

This book thus brings together works I have conducted over a decade. However, the project, which was outlined in my seminar on "the politics of suffering" at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in the early 2000s, has progressively shifted and been refined over time. My initial intuitions have been confirmed for some and corrected for others. This is why I decided to publish the texts, many of which were not easily accessible, that marked this journey, but to rewrite them completely to give my argument the coherence that is now apparent to me. It is usual when collecting papers for a volume to leave them in their original form, partly through a concern for authenticity, partly because of the difficulty and length of any revision that transcends the purely cosmetic. I go against this custom here in order to make sense of a project that only became completely intelligible to me when I reached the end of it—an end that is of course in itself provisional. Via a series of studies on apparently disparate subjects and geographically diverse locations, it is an endeavor to grasp humanitarian government in the diversity of its expressions, to explore the complexity of contemporary moral economies, and thus to contribute as an anthropologist to the moral history of the present.

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5. Ambivalent Hospitality

Governing the Unwanted

> In contrast to the *peregrinus,* who lived outside the boundaries of
> the territory, *hostis* is "the stranger in so far as he is recognized
> as enjoying equal rights to those of the Roman citizens". A bond
> of equality and reciprocity is established between this particular
> stranger and the citizens of Rome, a fact which may lead to a precise
> notion of hospitality. By a development of which we do not know
> the exact conditions, the word *hostis* assumed a "hostile" flavour
> and henceforward it is only applied to the "enemy".
>
> ÉMILE BENVENISTE, *Indo-European Language and Society*

On May 23, 2002, just two weeks after taking office in the French govern-
ment under Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, Nicolas Sarkozy, the
new minister of the interior, made a highly publicized visit to the Sangatte
transit center in the north of France. Since September 24, 1999, the giant
hangar, located in a small coastal resort, had become an almost obligatory
staging post for foreigners en route to the United Kingdom to seek asy-
lum: during those two and a half years, it is estimated that fifty-five thou-
sand people found temporary shelter there before crossing from Calais
by train or boat. Run by the Red Cross under contract to the French gov-
ernment, the center, which had previously served as a depot for the machin-
ery used to excavate the Channel Tunnel, was repeatedly denounced by
immigrant support organizations and human rights campaigners. Point-
ing to the material conditions of the accommodations and the undefined
legal status of the place, these activists described it not as a center but as
a "camp."[1] A rather unusual camp, however, since it was not enclosed by
barbed wire, and residents were free to come and go as they pleased. When
it opened it had places for 200 people, but two years later the 700 beds
were no longer sufficient and in fact there were 1,300 people living in the
25,000-square-meter space; each week 400 new people arrived, and almost
the same number left. In drawing the media spotlight to his visit, Sarkozy
was symbolically demonstrating his intention to break with the policy of
his left-wing predecessors: he would be tough on immigration and strict with
foreigners who had no right to stay in France, but he would not tolerate

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breaches of democracy.[2] He would close the Sangatte center in the name of the Republic. Branding the building "sinister," he threw his opponents' argument back at them, asserting that he rejected the "undignified conditions" foreigners were being subjected to. He and his collaborators, notably Brice Hortefeux, who would go on to become the minister of immigration several years later, went so far as to adopt the word "camp" themselves in order to condemn past policy and justify closing the center. The term had in any case become common currency in the public arena, and it was used as an almost innocuous description in press reports: newspapers deemed the center the "Red Cross camp."[3] The paradox being that the center, opened ostensibly for humanitarian purposes, was now being closed on the same grounds. In both cases, the publicly stated compassion was just a step away from hidden repression.

The prehistory of Sangatte is longer than is generally supposed.[4] In the mid-1980s most of the foreigners in the Calais area were Pakistanis and Vietnamese waiting to cross to England. In the early 1990s there were increasing numbers of East Europeans, particularly Poles, liberated by the collapse of the Communist regimes, and Sri Lankans, mainly Tamils, fleeing the civil war in their country. During this period the British began to refuse to assess some requests for asylum and to send undesirables back to France. In the mid-1990s local initiatives emerged to address the needs of the increasing numbers of people sleeping on the streets and in the parks of Calais and the surrounding area: the organization Belle Étoile (Under the Stars) in 1994, and the Collectif de soutien en urgence aux refoulés (Emergency Aid Collective) in 1997. The situation became more dire in 1998, with the arrival of Kosovars who had suffered persecution under the Serbian government. "Calais, a Reflection of Chaos," read the headline of local newspaper *Nord Littoral* on August 6, 1998: "Kosovars seeking asylum in England in the worst conditions, a Romanian who has come to try his chances on the other side of the Channel, Gypsy families rejected by the British authorities—encounters that reveal Calais as a pit of misery." The following spring the prefect, the local representative of the state, who had until then been reluctant to use this solution, found himself forced by the influx of Kosovars to open up a warehouse, but only as a night shelter. "After the time of securitization, has the time of humanization come?" asked a local journalist on April 24, 1999, the day the building was opened. But by June 4 the prefecture authorities had closed the warehouse. During the summer, asylum seekers, who no longer had anywhere to go, camped in the Saint-Pierre Park in central Calais, supported by the organization C'Sur. The Kosovars were gradually replaced by Afghans and (mainly Iraqi)

Kurds who had fled the Taliban and Baathist regimes. On August 11, 1999, in an article headed "Government Seeks a Way Out," a journalist of *Nord Littoral* declared: "The prefect's aim is to reconcile humanitarian aid to refugees with the rejection of illegal immigration: he admits he is having difficulty finding a balance between the two."

The struggle to make real a watchword that looked like an oxymoron—compassionate repression—gave rise to contradictory decisions in the days that followed. On August 14, the opening of an emergency reception center was announced. On August 19, in the streets of Calais, 210 individuals were arrested. On August 24, approximately 200 refugees were installed in the hangar. Intrigued, *Nord Littoral* commented: "While the Saint-Pierre Park returned to looking a little more like a park, the deputy prefect of Calais indicated that policy was now shifting from the humanitarian approach to the security phase." The reverse, in short, of what the journalist cited earlier from the same newspaper had surmised four months earlier, when "securitization" seemed to be yielding to "humanization."

It is the tension between humanity and security, between compassion and repression, as it is manifested around the issue of refugees and more broadly that of immigration, that I wish to explore here. This tension is currently a major factor in the management of aliens in France, and to some extent also more broadly throughout Europe. In his comparative Indo-European linguistics, Émile Benveniste emphasizes the curious ambiguity of the etymology of the word "hospitality."[5] The Latin term from which the word is derived is *hospes*, itself stemming from *hostis*. The first of these terms denotes the guest, while the second signifies the enemy. "To explain the connection between 'guest' and 'enemy' it is usually supposed that both derived their meaning from 'stranger', a sense which is still attested in Latin. The notion 'favorable stranger' developed to 'guest'; that of 'hostile stranger' to 'enemy'." However, *hostis* has not always held this negative connotation. Initially, as the epigraph to this chapter points out, it referred to a contractual relationship of equality and reciprocity with the stranger who lives in the city. Similarly in Greek, *xenos*, which means "stranger," assumes a pact implying obligations and exchanges. A moment arose in Roman history, though, when social changes were no longer compatible with the type of relations of equality and reciprocity that had been established with regard to strangers. "When an ancient society becomes a nation, the relations between man and man, clan and clan, are abolished. All that persists is the distinction between what is inside and outside the *civitas*." When *hostis* came to signify the enemy, another word, *hospes*, was required to refer to the guest—each of the two terms referring explicitly

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to the stranger. The confusion between hospitality and hostility, which thus goes back to the etymological and political origins of this figure, is central to our reflection on the contemporary condition of foreignness.

Extending this reflection, Jacques Derrida gives an almost psychological reading of it:[6] "One can become virtually xenophobic in order to protect or claim to protect one's own hospitality, the own home that makes possible one's own hospitality. I want to be master at home, to be able to receive whomever I like there. Anyone who encroaches on my 'at home', on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming his hostage." A dialectics of hospitality and hostility, of host and hostage: we recognize the rhetoric of immigration policies that has become widespread over the past two decades. "We can only integrate legal immigrants on condition that we are more strict in turning away illegal foreigners," ran the argument in the 1990s, conveniently forgetting that a growing number of legal immigrants became illegal foreigners because their residence permit was not renewed, their request for asylum was rejected, or they had been convicted of a crime—in other words, evading the fact that the boundary between the two categories was increasingly porous and that "legal immigrants" no longer had any guarantee that they would remain so. "We have the right to be selective in our immigration policies," one would hear only ten years later, reducing hospitality to a simple issue of utility and deeming those not "chosen" unwelcome, with the risk that asylum would shrink like an evaporating puddle.[7] In other words, we have evolved in one decade from a logic of legal differentiation (separating the legals from the illegals within the country) to one of legitimate discrimination (separating the desirables from the undesirables before they enter the country).

Sangatte is testimony to this slippage: it was not a true reception center where requests for asylum would be processed, nor was it a detention camp for those rejected and about to be deported. It was a place of indeterminate status, with a humanitarian mission but set up for reasons of security, through which foreigners were supposed to pass but where they were not supposed to stay. It was a place of transit in which illegal status was not punished (though they were present, the police were exceptionally tolerant) but in which the undesirables were rendered invisible—as long as they quickly disappeared by leaving for the United Kingdom. Neither guests nor enemies, they enjoyed a furtive hospitality that conferred no rights—and in particular no right of asylum. They were pure obligees. But as the British authorities toughened their policy on accepting these refugees and the

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journey became more difficult and risky, the relations between humanitarian reason and security logic in the center became increasingly tense. Ultimately, the same arguments used to justify opening the Sangatte center—humanitarianism and security—served to explain its closure.

To explore this singular combination of compassion with repression, of which Sangatte represents a revealing moment[8], I begin by returning to what took place within and around the center, and especially how the dual invocation of these contradictory logics resulted in the suspension of the law. I then resituate these issues in the context of contemporary immigration policies, focusing particularly on the humanitarianization of asylum. Finally, I propose a rereading of the processes of globalization in light of the history of this last caravansary.

INVERTING ROLES

Anyone visiting the Sangatte reception center in early 2002 could not fail to be struck by the juxtaposition of two symbols: on one side of the entrance to the huge depot a Red Cross flag fluttered in the wind, while on the other a French riot police van was permanently stationed. On entering the center, the visitor would be struck again by the area known as the "village square": this was a sort of vast hall that one had to cross in order to reach the large military-style tents and barracks where the refugees slept. The following is a paragraph from my field notes, written on March 22, 2002:

> In the village square, most of the men are standing in small groups. In the middle there is a little wooden play structure for children; a few older children are on bikes or roller skates, and others are playing hopscotch. There is also a television area with eight rows of seats, of which only the first three can see the tiny screen, and only the first row has any chance of hearing the sound. Further away, near the infirmary, a dozen or so men are waiting on a bench to see the nurse. Behind the barriers that separate the refugees from the staff, Red Cross workers talk with one another or busy themselves with work. When new arrivals come in they are welcomed by the staff, who cross the barriers to ask them a few questions and register them, a process that takes less than one minute. Personal circumstances are discussed aloud in front of everyone around. Five meters [sixteen feet] above the heads of the crowd milling about the village square, there is a metal gangway that overlooks the area like an innocuous viewing platform. Policemen, ostensibly calm, their weapons clearly exposed, watch over the bustle a few meters below them. At several points during the day, especially at mealtimes,

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patrols pass through the midst of the refugees, who do not seem to be disturbed by these now familiar walkabouts.

The space of Sangatte was structured and occupied by a dual institutional presence: the Red Cross, with its offices, infirmary, and volunteers, and the French police, with its company of riot officers, overhead surveillance stations, and discreet but quite visible presence around and inside the hangar. Yet, the two institutions had not always cohabited in this way. The Red Cross, on the one hand, had managed the center since it opened, commissioned to do so by the state, with funding from the national Department for Population and Migration. It had tendered for this role, and in addition to the close political links the organization had with the government (its president at the time, Marc Gentilini, presented himself as a friend of then French president Jacques Chirac), it could point to its experience not only of refugee camps in other parts of the world but also of spaces of exception within France (such as the waiting zone at Roissy airport, whose Red Cross manager, Michel Derr, subsequently became director at Sangatte).[9] The riot police, on the other hand, only established a presence at the center following a number of violent incidents among the refugees, since in a context of competition between different national groups for control of the holy grail of passages to England, intimidation and fighting had become more frequent, particularly between Kurds and Afghans (I was told that the rate for those wishing to cross was between US$500 and US$1,000 in this period, the Kurds charging less than the Afghans for arranging the journey). In early 2002 the police were therefore requested to provide twenty-four-hour security, which did not however prevent various disturbances, some serious (one fight resulted in one death and two serious injuries in April 2002, and a soccer match between the two groups in May 2002 degenerated into a pitched battle). Thus humanitarian care and security concern were intimately linked, because of the increasing concentration of people in poor living conditions and the growing difficulty in crossing the Channel.

In the day-to-day working of the center, the roles of the two institutions partly overlapped. The Red Cross was frequently called on to exert a controlling function or even administer punishment. I witnessed the following scene. A refugee was trying to enter the camp with three ten-pound bags of apples. The Red Cross volunteers at the entrance would not let him in, fearing that he was "trafficking goods." The reception manager was asked to back them up. The refugee explained that the apples were for a party with his friends. The manager replied that she did not believe him. Other refugees

then became involved. A woman intervened to mediate. The Red Cross staff, weary of arguing, let the man with the apples through, adding that no other foodstuffs would be permitted for the party. An hour later a Red Cross volunteer reported having found the men selling the apples near the "mosque," an unenclosed space set aside for prayer. The manager decreed that the apples must be distributed for free. The refugees protested. Soon the police had to intervene to calm them. This kind of episode happened every day: not only did the aid workers find themselves "policing" the center, but the most trivial events took on enormous significance and gave rise to a permanent state of readiness to intervene. As one Red Cross volunteer noted:[10] "It was disappointing to see how a group of humanitarian workers could become so embittered. For the staff, any initial illusions that refugees are docile and grateful recipients of assistance gave way to compassion fatigue." In reality the problem was that the task the state had conferred on the humanitarian organization was primarily one of public order, a fact that the Red Cross volunteers had not appreciated when they took it on.

But conversely, the riot police showed a fairly indifferent, even almost benevolent attitude. The officers were never aggressive toward the foreigners, never checked their residence permits despite the fact that almost none of them were there legally and that everywhere else in the country identity checks were on the rise. Nor did they apparently ever take them to the nearby Coquelles detention center, where hundreds of undocumented immigrants were waiting to be deported. They often even brought individuals found wandering the streets of the town or around the port back to the center, so that they could be cared for and have lodging. Their regular patrols through the hangar occasioned no antagonism, even when they made generalized searches for weapons. They were not interested in the smuggling networks unless fights broke out. Their security task was thus essentially preventive, and it was the Red Cross who maintained order in the center. Paradoxically, Sangatte was the place where undocumented immigrants were the least harassed by the police and—if I dare say—the safest in France.

This fragile equilibrium and institutional ambiguity was able to last as long as the center functioned as a place of transit. Refugees spent no more than a few days or weeks in the hangar before leaving for Britain, and consequently, the local tensions were only transitory. The discourses and practices of the Red Cross managers themselves confirmed this situation. A document drawn up by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was distributed to the refugees when they first entered the center.[11]

It began with these words: "You are currently a resident of the Sangatte reception center which is managed by the French Red Cross. This center was set up by the French Government in order to provide short-term humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants like you. However, this situation is and can only be a temporary and precarious one." Given this situation, the options proposed in the title of the pamphlet—"dignity or exploitation"—seemed at best an impossible choice.

On the one hand, the document emphasized the dangers run by those who attempted to reach the English coast: "The barbed wire is razor wire. It contains thousands of metal blades. These can cause you deep injuries. The railway is electrified. It carries 25,000 volts. If you get too close, you risk electrocution. Hiding under a lorry, you can be crushed or choked to death. Jumping onto a moving train, you can be maimed or killed. The windspeeds in the tunnel reach 200 mph. You can be blown off the train." The pamphlet even referred to the deaths of four undocumented immigrants who tried to cross in 2001 and of fifty-eight Chinese migrants hidden in a truck in 2000. In addition to these threats to life and limb, it emphasized the risk of an application for asylum in the United Kingdom being rejected and the applicants being returned to their country. But on the other hand, it made no mention of the possibility that refugees could seek asylum in France. Nor did the Red Cross ever divulge this information, so that the center's residents were not aware of it. It was as if the United Kingdom, despite its increasing inaccessibility, was the only country where asylum was a possibility. This strategy worked well, since of the 65,000 individuals who passed through the Sangatte center in two and a half years, only 350, less than 1%, applied for asylum.[12]

In fact, only one solution was presented at the end of the document *Dignity or Exploitation:* return to one's country, for which the IOM would provide assistance. It is easy to comprehend, however, how unrealistic this hypothetical solution was, given the months the refugees had traveled to get there, the considerable amount of money they had spent, and the many perils they had faced in order to reach the gates to what some local journalists called the "British El Dorado." But it is also easy to understand why, when five hundred mainly Afghan refugees stormed the tunnel between the two countries on Christmas Day 2001, before being arrested and then released by the police, the United Kingdom held the Red Cross responsible.[13] This was just one more episode, albeit a more spectacular one, in a long history of accusations that the French government's policy encouraged the flow of refugees into England: once again, the British called for the closure of what they termed "the Sangatte refugee camp." Negotiations, which had

begun under the previous government, continued from May 2002 between French minister of the interior Nicolas Sarkozy and British home secretary David Blunkett, and resulted in an agreement under which the center would be closed in return for the British authorities granting residence to the people still staying there. "Goodbye to Sangatte" was the headline in the French national daily *Libération* on December 3, 2002, above an article reporting the departure of the last refugees.

However, the history of Sangatte, from its ambiguous opening to its paradoxical closing, has a wider significance. The replacement of the right to asylum with humanitarian reason, which the politics of the Sangatte center demonstrates in exemplary fashion, forms part of a phenomenon that emerged during the 1990s: the sidelining of asylum and the advent of humanitarianism. The background to this development is the process whereby the refugee issue became subordinate to migration control policy, a process that began at the Tampere Summit in 1999 and was completed with the signing of the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum in 2008.

ASYLUM AS SUBSIDIARY

Marie is a young Haitian woman. She came to France at the age of twenty-three. She sought asylum in 2000. The story she told me is no doubt virtually the same as that she gave the Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et des Apatrides (French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons, OFPRA), and later in her appeal to the Commission des Recours des Réfugiés (Commission of Appeal for Refugees, CRR). Her father, a political dissident, had been murdered a few years earlier. Her mother disappeared some time later, and everyone believed she had been abducted and killed. One day when Marie was at home with her boyfriend, a group of young men burst into the house. She was gang-raped. Terrified, she hid at an aunt's house. Several weeks later, she managed the leave the country and came with her boyfriend to France to seek asylum. OFPRA rejected her application, probably deeming that it had not been demonstrated that the gang rape was politically motivated and that this was essentially a matter of ordinary violence that did not amount to persecution on the grounds of belonging to a particular social group, as stipulated in the 1951 Geneva Convention.[14] Marie appealed to the CRR, which was no more favorable, and her case was definitively closed. There was nothing surprising in this: the decisions were in line with the practices current during that period. Not only had OFPRA's rate of acceptance of applications plummeted to 11.3% by

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2000, augmented by the 5.8% approved on appeal by the CRR (in other words, overall one applicant in six was granted asylum), but Haitians were even less likely to receive a favorable response, with only 3.3% accepted by Ofpra and 3.8% on appeal by the CRR (that is, one in fourteen applicants obtained refugee status).[15] The civil war in Haiti, the military regime of terror, the political instability between Jean-Bertrand Aristide's two terms as president, were obviously not enough to meet the criteria of the Convention.

The only choice left for Marie, like most of the 80% of asylum seekers whose applications are turned down, was to become an illegal immigrant. She hid at a friend's place, not leaving the house for fear of identity checks. After two years, depressed and underweight, she submitted to the urgings of her friends and went to see a doctor who, concerned by her condition, sent her to the hospital. There she saw a psychiatrist who wrote a report describing her as suffering from depression and at risk of suicide, in the hope that this emphasis on her condition might help the application for residence that was to be made to the prefect's office on her behalf. The physician was attempting to help her stay in France on medical grounds under Article 12a11 of the 1998 immigration law. This was a risky venture, since as we saw in chapter 3, cases centering around mental health could result in contradictory assessments, depending on the views of the medical officers called on to adjudicate: some held that mental illness could be better cared for in the country of origin and therefore did not justify residence permits, while in the view of others, the applicant's precarious legal status itself was the source of the depressive symptoms and granting permission to remain could have therapeutic benefits. But the psychiatrist did not have to deliberate long over the best strategy.

On Marie's second visit to the hospital, the results of the blood tests taken at her first visit revealed that she was HIV positive. Further investigation confirmed that she was suffering from an advanced AIDS condition. It seemed clear to everyone that the infection resulted from the gang rape. The application to the prefect's office was drawn up quickly and residence was granted without problem. Here too, statistics were coherent with this favorable outcome: Haitians constituted the third-largest group seeking residence on medical grounds, and AIDS was by far the most commonly cited condition, the opinion of the examining doctors being generally favorable in these cases.[16] Thus Marie, who had initially been refused asylum, was granted residence under the so-called humanitarian rationale. Her word about the violence she had suffered was doubted, but ultimately her body spoke for her.

Marie's story is exemplary but not unusual. How many others who were refused refugee status owed their residence permit to a serious illness that allowed them to appeal on medical grounds? Often the diagnosis of AIDS "helped" to repair the injustice of a rejected application for asylum, as in the case of the Central African woman whose husband had been tortured and murdered, the Congolese priest who asserted that he had been persecuted for his ministry, or the Cameroonian trade unionist who was jailed and beaten before his house was burned down—among many asylum seekers whose stories I collected. Advised by a lawyer, a support organization, or a relative, they had consulted a doctor with the "hope" that their medical condition would fit the criteria of the humanitarian rationale. How to make sense of this development? Reasoning pragmatically, we could of course consider that the most important thing is to obtain the precious document, and simply rejoice that Marie, the Central African woman, the Congolese priest, and the Cameroonian unionist all did so. But this would be to ignore three important aspects of the issue.

First, not all of asylum seekers whose applications are rejected have a serious illness they can turn to their advantage, and the doctors they consult find it extremely difficult to have to tell them that their condition is "not serious enough" to justify an appeal on medical grounds. Second, the residence permit granted to rejected asylum seekers on medical grounds does not confer the same guarantees as the status of refugee; in particular, holders of this permit have to submit to reexaminations, usually annually, which generates profound anxieties and may lead to their documents not being renewed. Third, it seems likely that the level of social recognition and the sort of subjective experience are different for those benefiting asylum than for those allowed to remain on health grounds: there is more dignity in being a refugee victim of political persecution than in being a sick immigrant receiving charitable support for one's medical condition.

Thus, in a little more than two decades, as asylum gradually lost its credence, illness gained prominence and there was a shift in the award of residence rights, from the less legitimate to the more legitimate. Let us return for a moment to OFPRA's statistics. In the early 1980s there were just under 20,000 applications for asylum per year, of which nearly 15,000 were accepted, representing a 75% success rate. In the early 1990s, although the number of applications had risen substantially to more than 80,000 per year, the number granted refugee status remained roughly the same, approximately 13,000, meaning that the proportion of acceptance had effectively plummeted to 15%. During the subsequent decade, application numbers

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began to decrease, as a result of major efforts to deter asylum seekers at the point of entry to the country, but although it might have been expected that this selective process would result in an increase in the acceptance rate, that rate remained low, and even began to fall again in the early 2000s, dropping to below 3,000 accepted as refugees, or 7.8% of applicants. Within twenty-five years, therefore, the rate of asylum granted had plunged to a fifth of its previous value in absolute terms, and a tenth in relative terms. The net result was a swelling in the number of rejected applicants, in other words illegal immigrants: 171,000 more in the period 2003–2007 alone. Some of these turned to other means of gaining residence, primarily medical conditions when these were deemed sufficiently serious by the administration doctors.

The substitution of humanitarian rationale for the protection of asylum is not merely a mathematical phenomenon, a simple shift from one category to another, as if some rejected asylum seekers would simply choose to seek residence rights on medical grounds. It corresponds more profoundly to a government strategy, and ultimately to a political decision. This is revealed by the amnesty program of 1998.[17] The program was the third great wave of legalization since the "closure of the borders" in 1974. The first, organized in 1981, related mainly to immigrants who had contracts of work but were not legally resident: out of 150,000 applicants, 130,000 were granted documents. The second wave, launched in 1991, examined the cases of those refused asylum: of 48,000 applications, 15,000 were granted leave to remain. The third wave, implemented after the left won the parliamentary elections in 1997, was aimed at assessing the effects of increasingly restrictive immigration control legislation known as the Pasqua and Debré laws, which had resulted in a sharp rise in the number of foreigners illegally resident in France, some of whom were considered "not suitable for either legalization or deportation," according to the semiofficial lexicon. In this wave, 180,000 applications were submitted, of which 150,000 were valid; 80,000 applicants were finally granted permission to remain, 3,238 of them on medical grounds. Commenting on these figures in June 1999, a senior official in the Ministry of the Interior's Department of Public Liberty and Legal Affairs, who had been responsible for the national monitoring of this major initiative, explained to me how they had proceeded when faced with situations where "deadly danger" of a political nature was combined with a "serious illness" requiring care not available in an applicant's country of origin: "Humanitarian reason is a new, clearly identified category. We routinely considered the political risks as secondary and the serious illness as the principal issue." Thus what might appear to be an individual decision—

by rejected asylum seekers in poor health, by the lawyers working on their behalf, by the organizations supporting them, or by officers of the prefect's office willing to give them another chance—was also a choice made by state authorities. Political asylum became subsidiary to humanitarian reason. More consensual, the logic of compassion now prevailed over the right to protection.

This is a significant shift. To use Giorgio Agamben's distinction, it marks the loss of recognition of *bios,* "qualified life," and the new legitimization of *zoē,* "bare life."[18] Being in danger because of one's political activity or one's belonging to a persecuted group is secondary to the threat to one's body from pathology. The authorities are less willing to give credit to the combatant for a cause or the victim of violence than to the human being suffering from a serious condition. "This disease that is killing me is what enables me to live today," was the striking way it was put to me by a Nigerian man who, after a dozen years spent as an illegal immigrant roaming around France and Germany, through exposures and arrests, precarious jobs and makeshift shelters, had finally been granted a residence permit on humanitarian grounds when he was diagnosed with an advanced stage of AIDS: he knew that returning to Nigeria meant death from lack of treatment, and that by contrast his documents finally allowed him to live almost normally.[19] Gradually, thanks to universal health insurance and welfare benefits and the care of doctors and support organizations, he had reinvented a life constructed entirely around his disease. In short, his biological life had given him the right to a social life. And for the health professionals and those working for charities who helped him, this was the deep meaning of their action: using a physical disorder to recover social rights. More broadly, humanitarian organizations, foremost among them Médecins Sans Frontières and Médecins du Monde but also AIDS organizations such as Aides and Act Up, made good use of the bare-life argument (one cannot deprive the sick from treatment) to obtain a minimal citizenship (incorporating the right to residence and to health care).[20] In so doing, they exposed a form of governmentality whereby the claim to bare life was the ultimate way to access a political existence. Of this logic, the episode of the wrecking of the *East Sea* offers a final illustration.

HUMANITARIANIZING RIGHTS

On February 17, 2001, a Cambodian-registered cargo ship ran aground on the French Riviera, with nine hundred people—men, women, and

children—on board. Media images of boats crossing the Mediterranean to reach Spain, Italy, and Greece as well as Malta had become familiar at the time. The sight of dozens of people, usually Africans, shivering on a beach under the watchful eye of police was almost routine, as were reports of dead bodies being recovered from the sea. But the circumstances surrounding the *East Sea* were unique in a number of ways: the ship—a freighter—was carrying many more passengers than was usual in these cases; it originated from the Middle East rather than Africa; and most of those on board asserted that they were Kurds fleeing persecution in Iraq; they therefore intended to request asylum, but had planned to do so either in Germany or in Britain, and France was simply a "land of exile by accident" for them, as an officer of the French border police observed. While these "illegal immigrants," as they were initially defined, were held at the Fréjus military base, where Red Cross teams hastily fitted out disused barracks to accommodate them, the media swarmed in, disseminating images of crying children, imploring pregnant women, and the aged and infirm behind fences to which men with defeated expressions clung.

These poignant scenes prompted a strong emotional reaction in France. While the initial response of François Hollande, the general secretary of the Socialist Party, was to say that the government could not "encourage trafficking of workers and give the illusion and the hope of integration in France," Patrick Devedjian, spokesperson for the Conservative Party, was paradoxically more hospitable, declaring: "We have no choice, at this moment, but to offer support to those suffering and to welcome them naturally." It seemed that in general politicians were playing against type: the left (in the government) took the strict line of insisting that "France cannot take everyone in," while the right (in the opposition) adopted a tone of generosity, speaking of these "unfortunate people."[21] For the government, the minister of the interior, Daniel Vaillant, recognized that this was a "human tragedy," but he added that "over and above emotion, there are rules," indicating that he had no intention of prejudging the refugee status of these men and women, whereas Prime Minister Lionel Jospin declared that "the first choice would be the humanitarian route," but that "such organized criminal trafficking should not be rewarded." However, faced with the wave of public sympathy (less than a week after the event, a poll indicated that 78% of French people were in favor of accepting the shipwreck victims and 58% thought they should be "granted refugee status on a case-by-case basis")[22] and above all aware of the risk that the detention in the Fréjus camp could be declared unlawful in a court (the constitution of a supposedly extraterritorial "waiting zone" ruled as a space of exception

was illegal because the foreigners had touched French soil when they dis-
embarked from the ship), the government decided to release the survivors,
giving them safe-conduct, which allowed them to seek asylum.

Surprisingly, very few took advantage of this opportunity. Two months
later, only 196, or 21% of the initial total, had remained in France; the others
had left for neighboring countries, mainly Germany. From an examination
of the 130 applications for asylum finally submitted to Ofpra, it emerged
that actually they were not Iraqis but Syrians, that they had embarked not
on a Turkish beach but on the Libyan coast, and finally that they were in-
deed Kurds, but from the little-known Yezidi minority.[23] Thus the maps of
their journeys, patiently reconstituted and proudly displayed in the news-
papers, were pure fictions. "If you say you're Syrian," the traffickers had
told them, "you'll be sent back." At the time, from the cynical but realistic
point of view of the smuggling networks in the Middle East, the demon-
ized Saddam Hussein's regime appeared to have a much worse reputation
in the West than the tolerated Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad: this appre-
ciation of the moral geography of tyranny was probably accurate. Whether
or not the traffickers were correct, this anecdote is revealing of the imagi-
nary of refugees and traffickers, and hence of the idea they have of the ra-
tional and emotional bases on which their request for asylum will be as-
sessed. The often stereotypical character of the accounts, of which Ofpra
officers and Cour Nationale du Droit d'Asile (CNDA) judges regularly
complained, is testimony to this: rather than true stories, refugees need ef-
fective narratives.

A few days after the shipwreck, one columnist wrote the following moral
of the story: "A ship, a sort of smuggled, phantom *Exodus*, came knocking
at the doors of our coast. With no other destination but the intention not
to leave again, and flying only the flag of asylum seekers who had burned
their boats, the *East Sea* has come to test the humanitarian principles of
France, the home of human rights."[24] In this sense, the drama of the ship
and its passengers represented a truth test for French society, not just the
French government. But a test for which truth? At first, as we have seen,
some described the shipwreck victims as "illegal immigrants" whereas
others saw them as "unfortunate people"; commentators rushed to condemn
human trafficking while the authorities announced that these uninvited
guests would not be staying—for the best of reasons, that is, the fight against
crime. Subsequently, however, as emotion escalated, the survivors were able
to present themselves or be represented as victims of both Iraqi persecu-
tion and unscrupulous smugglers, and new attitudes had to be assumed:
"The heart has its reasons, or even simply its reflexes, that reason needs to

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understand," enthused an editorial in *Le Monde,* paraphrasing Blaise Pascal's famous "thought" in an expression of approval for the prime minister's reversal now that he was willing to "take the humanitarian route" in the treatment of individual cases.[25] In a situation where reference to the Geneva Convention of 1951 would have provided sufficient grounds, moral sentiments, and even emotional "reflexes," were being invoked to justify asylum.

With reference to the post–Second World War context, Hannah Arendt writes: "The first serious attack on the United Nations following the arrival of hundreds of thousands of stateless people was that the right to asylum, the only right that has ever figured as a symbol of human rights in the domain of international relations, was abolished. The second great shock suffered by the European world as a consequence of the arrival of refugees was the awareness that they could neither be got rid of nor transformed into nationals of the country of asylum."[26] Shortly after she wrote this text, the Geneva Convention was signed. It was possible to imagine that the right to asylum had just been restored and that refugees would now find a place in the world. Half a century later, the *East Sea* episode—which is of course just one among many signs of this phenomenon—shows that matters are not that simple and that the two tensions evoked in Arendt's chapter on "the decline of the nation-state and the end of human rights" are still manifest in France (and the analysis would not be so different for other European countries). On the one hand, the right to asylum has been, if not abolished, at least considerably reduced not only quantitatively, since the proportion of applications accepted by Ofpra dropped fifteenfold over three decades, but also qualitatively, with the tarnishing of the image of the refugees, increasingly assimilated to that of illegal immigrants and submitted to the strict rules of the Schengen space that was created in 1985 as a European zone of free circulation having for counterpart a much stricter control over the border countries. On the other hand, asylum seekers have once again become the unwanted that cannot be gotten rid of; hence the policing exercised by most European governments in an attempt to pass the burden of refugees to their neighbors, an important issue in the negotiations that preceded the signing of the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum in 2008.

States have two means of resolving this tension between the discredit of asylum and the inevitability of refugees: repression, aimed at dissuading refugees (and this is definitely more effective than is generally believed), and compassion, which renders the undesirables acceptable (by showing them in the most touching light). With the *East Sea,* the French government initially

tried the first solution but finally opted for the second. In her time, Hannah Arendt, who had certainly witnessed one (repression) did not see much of the other (compassion). This is probably an indication of the contemporary political shift. In order to revalorize asylum, it has to be articulated with humanitarian reason. This process may go as far as hiding it, as at the Sangatte reception center, where information on the right to asylum was not made available to immigrants.

THE LAST CARAVANSARY

It was precisely at Sangatte that theatrical director Ariane Mnouchkine sought material for her play *Le Dernier Caravansérail* (The last caravansary), created at the Cartoucherie in Vincennes in 2003 and presented at the Avignon Festival that summer. This was an ambitious and impressive artistic endeavor consisting of about sixty scenes, performed by thirty-six actors from all over the world, and lasting eight hours (in the complete version I attended). Its theme was the refugees dispersed around the globe and their journeys to get to countries where they imagined a promise of asylum. Persecution in countries of origin, human-smuggling networks, trafficking of young women, crossings of seas and deserts, detention in camps, and escapes over barbed wire: the play aimed to reconstitute contemporary "odysseys," as the eponym subtitle of the play indicated. It made no bones about playing on moral sentiments, but it mobilized the spectator's anger rather than compassion. Its intent was political as much as poetic, seeking to bear witness to lived situations, even if they were partially reinvented.[27] The creative adventure had begun two years earlier, at Sangatte, where Ariane Mnouchkine had gone to collect refugees' narratives, accompanied by a Kurdish poet and actor. Subsequently, at the request of her company, the director and her collaborators visited detention centers in Australia, New Zealand, and Bali. The play was created from the sum of these experiences and narratives. The geography of the refugees it evokes barely distinguishes between the (open) reception center at Sangatte and the (closed) Baxter detention center in Australia, or between the *East Sea,* running aground on the French coast (whose 908 Kurdish passengers were ultimately allowed to request asylum) and the *Tampa,* carrying Afghan survivors of the wreck of a fishing boat (which was refused permission to dock in Australia).[28] Ultimately, the condition of refugee becomes the paradigm of a human condition, within which the specific contexts, national realities, and political outcomes make little difference. Homelessness, danger,

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uncertainty, detention, rights scorned—these are the elements constitutive of the condition. And at the end of the journey—Sangatte, the last cara-vansary, whose borders on the stage merged with the barbed wire protect-ing the Eurotunnel buildings. The permanently open and constantly crowded hangar that the French authorities tried to depict as harmless tended to become, through its artistic recreation, a threatening space of detention—a camp.

The reference to the term "camp" is subject to debate in the case of San-gatte. Adding the descriptor "transit," suggested by the short stay with its focus on leaving for the United Kingdom, evokes the image of the "transit camp" at Drancy, the Second World War internment camp outside Paris where Jews were held before being deported to extermination camps. Pub-lic authorities therefore spoke of Sangatte as a reception center while non-governmental organizations denounced it as a refugee camp, a description that Nicolas Sarkozy, as we have seen, took up in 2002 in order to condemn his predecessor's policy. The press, both in France and in Britain, seemed uncertain, playing up the dramatic effect of "camp" in headlines but using the official formula of "center" in the body of articles.[29] The issue was per-haps all the more sensitive because it recalled a little-known local mem-ory. Sangatte had indeed been the site of a Nazi camp. As in other coastal towns, from 1942 onward, it was a camp where Jews provided forced labor to build the Atlantic wall, often before leaving for Auschwitz.[30] The fact that all physical traces of it have disappeared and there is no memorial to mark it today does not mean that the past has been completely buried.

Let us return to this question of naming. Must we choose one or the other? I have employed the terms "reception center" and "transit center" in this text; this is, so to speak, the native terminology, which is why I use it. But this does not resolve the problem. In a strict sense, Sangatte was cer-tainly not a camp, because it was open and foreigners were free to enter and leave under the placid gaze of the police (as is also the case, however, in most refugee camps in the developing world). But Sangatte exhibits most of the structural and organizational features of a camp—from the numbers of people living there in total dependence, to the presence of staff who provide both assistance and control, to the operating procedures that resemble those of a kind of military space, and so on.[31] In his history of French concentra-tion camps, Denis Peschanski shows that above and beyond the ostensible role of a camp (which may run from a declared aim of protection to an assumed role of persecution) and the population it brings together (which varies in relation to political needs), some traits are common to all:[32] "One thing is constant: the weight of the situation, the primacy of time over

space. Governments have always attempted to take up the challenge of the constraints of the context and the voluntarism of supervising bodies. They were always trying to manage the unmanageable." The force of contingency ("the primacy of time over space") and aporia of governmentality ("managing the unmanageable") are without doubt features of what we might call the configuration of a camp, and from this point of view Sangatte does indeed conform to these logics and exhibits this configuration. But is this similarity enough for the issues to be comparable? The question is thus less one of deciding whether this is a camp than of problematizing it. To put it another way, does the form give us the content, and can the figure of the camp be taken away from its context? It seems to me that asserting this, or even suggesting it, misses the singularity of the contemporary politics of asylum.

The powerful and controversial thesis developed by Giorgio Agamben is well known:[33] "Instead of deducing the definition of camp from the events that took place there, we will ask instead: What is a camp, what is its political-juridical structure, that such events could have taken place there? This will lead us to regard the camp not as a historical fact and an anomaly belonging to the past (even if still verifiable) but in some way as the hidden matrix and *nomos* of the political space in which we are still living." Continuing his analysis, he comes to the following remarkable definition, inspired by Walter Benjamin's famous formula: "The camp is the space that opens up when the state of exception starts to become the rule." This leads the Italian philosopher to assimilate all forms of internment where exception is manifested, although the Nazi camps are notably absent in the following comparison:

> The stadium in Bari into which the Italian police in 1991 provisionally herded all Albanian illegal immigrants before sending them back to their country, the winter cycle-racing track in which the Vichy authorities gathered the Jews before consigning them to the Germans, the *Konzentrationslager für Ausländer* in Cottbus-Sielow in which the Weimar government gathered Jewish refugees from the East, or the *zones d'attente* in French international airports in which foreigners asking for refugee status are detained will then all equally be camps. In all these cases, an apparently innocuous place actually delimits a space in which the normal order is de facto suspended and in which whether or not atrocities are committed depends not on the law but on the civility and ethical sense of the police who temporarily act as sovereign.

The unavoidable conclusion of this demonstration is therefore that "today it is not the city but rather the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical

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paradigm of the West."[34] Here "city" also refers to the political space of the *polis*.

Extending this thesis, some analysts have indeed linked Sangatte to the most extreme forms of exception, including the U.S. detainment facility of Guantánamo. For example, Michel Agier writes:[35] "On different levels, recent episodes concerning the Red Cross center at Sangatte, the Australian government's isolation of Afghan refugees on the island of Nauru, and the perpetuation of a legal vacuum in relation to the 600 detainees at Guantánamo Bay, have all demonstrated the establishment of a set of spaces and regimes of exception throughout the world. It seems to be open season on the world system's undesirables." There is a significant shift in register here compared with Agamben's thesis, as Agier moves from political analysis (the state of exception becomes the rule) to polemical condemnation (open season has been declared on undesirables). But the postulate of the continuity between the forms of internment—from the Sangatte open hangar where immigrants may circulate to the Guantánamo detainment facility where supposed militants are deprived of any civil rights—remains problematically unchanged.

Both moral and historical arguments have frequently been advanced against this thesis of the camp as the paradigm of modernity: the former have contested the alarmist vision of the contemporary world (the conclusion of Agamben's *Homo Sacer* predicts an "unprecedented biopolitical catastrophe"); the latter have objected to the undermining of the unique character of the Holocaust (his *State of Exception* proposes a comparison of Guantánamo with Auschwitz in terms of the disappearance of all citizenship for the detainees in the two camps).[36] But this kind of critique is somewhat external to Agamben's demonstration, and I propose rather to adopt a critical perspective that I view as internal, trying to go where I believe the core of his analysis lies.

On the one hand, if it is true that the camp is the space that opens when the state of exception begins to become the rule, we need to identify the state of exception for what it is. At Sangatte, common law holds, more or less as it would in a homeless shelter—which is to say with many exceptions. Moreover, the police are limited not by their degree of civility or their moral sense, but by the legal framework of their professional activities. Significantly, the main area where the law is suspended is the right to asylum, which is not presented as an alternative to leaving for Britain. On the other hand, if we recognize that the camp has a political-juridical structure, we need to address the political element as rigorously as we analyze the legal aspect. At Sangatte, this politics is conditioned by the double im-

perative of security and humanitarianism, and is not concerned with persecution or eradication, as has been the case historically in many other camps. To maintain public order, immigrants must be withheld from the view of the local residents, but equally to protect the refugees they must be given food and shelter. Indeed, for the center to fulfill this dual function—order and protection—it had to be maintained in an extremely precarious position: this was not an accidental condition resulting from lack of means, but resulted from political reasons.

In essence, positing degrees (of exception) and differentiations (of function), as I attempt to do here, means resisting the pathos that the perennial existence of camps understandably generates.[37] More precisely, it means rejecting the principles of equivalence (everything is equal) and the logics of the indivisible (there is only one logic), and reiterating what Jacques Rancière calls the "democratic scandal."[38] And it means quite simply reminding ourselves of the complexity and ambiguity of reality: paraphrasing Stéphane Mallarmé, one could say that a paradigm never will abolish the real. This is the least that the social sciences can do when they contribute their studies to philosophical analysis. Moreover, in order to refine the analysis of camps further and test the thesis that they are all the same, it is worth drawing a last distinction among undesirable populations, between those who are assessed as suitable to be deported, whom the authorities attempt to turn back, as at Roissy airport in Paris, or at least to keep out of sight, as at Sangatte, and those consigned to extermination, whether their disappearance is physical, as at Auschwitz, or social, as at Guantánamo. This distinction forms the basis for different forms of exception and politics.

So was this caravansary the ultimate haven or the last camp? In answer to this question we can say that the Sangatte center may have been the last camp in contemporary France, but that it was also an ultimate haven where the minimalist hospitality related more to humanitarianism than to asylum—ironically, a refugee camp whose residents were not considered refugees.

The closure of the Sangatte center did not resolve the humanitarian problems any more than it did the security issues posed by the presence of refugees waiting to cross into England. Actually it deteriorated both. In the days that followed this event, immigrants took up residence on beaches and near the port, in makeshift shelters and tents, in warehouses and abandoned Second World War blockhouses. The police returned to their mode of operation from before the center was opened, but using new methods: local organizations accused them of "hunting" refugees, of "gassing" them (by using tear

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gas inside shelters), and "smoking them out" (by setting fire in blockhouses). An organization called Collectif After Sangatte was set up to bear witness to a situation very different from the preceding period, in two ways: on the one hand, the situation of the hundreds of refugees making their way to the beaches on a daily basis was much more precarious, but on the other it had become almost invisible in the public arena. A name was given to this novel reality: "the jungle."[39] Thus the history of the center, right up to its closure and the aftermath, offers precious insights into the moral and political attitude toward asylum in the contemporary world.

Seen from Europe, the contemporary world has become ever more polarized between North and South, with the gap between the two continuing to deepen. Even in the present context of economic crisis, the European Union remains a political space that is privileged in terms of civil peace, human rights, and social security (whatever one's views on the evolution of European policy). The linguistic and legal distinction between "residents of the European Union" and "foreigners" is becoming increasingly significant in the political imaginary of Europe, with the understanding that "foreigners" are those out of the European Union, but that the only "foreigners" who pose a problem are those from non-Western countries: the requirements for entry to and residence in European territory are different for Canadian citizens than for nationals of African states.

In this context, Europeans' privileged situation is perceived to be threatened by three types of insecurity. The first centers on public security, both external and internal. On one side, there is the external danger of terrorism that the attacks in Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005, respectively, concretized and that has been used to justify heightened border control, although less so than in North America. On the other, there is the internal threat represented by the children of immigrants who have often become citizens of European countries, and the riots in France during the fall of 2005 illustrated how explaining the disturbances in terms of immigration was used to justify still more restrictive immigration policies. The second dimension is social security. Immigration is seen as a threat to hard-won rights to jobs and education, unemployment benefits and pensions, medical insurance and family welfare benefits, regardless of experts' demonstrations of the often beneficial effects of demographic and financial contributions made by foreigners. The third concern has to do with identity security. Given little prominence until recently, it has crystallized around mistrust and even hostility toward Islam as a religion and Muslims as a group, and is manifested in the desire, most marked in Italy, the Netherlands, and France, to assert the continuity of a white, Christian Europe,

even going as far as proposing it as foundational in the preamble of the European constitution. The debate over Turkey's entry into the European Union has been largely underpinned by this question of identity. This triple threat to the security of Europe results in asylum policy being made subordinate to immigration policies, which are themselves conceived on this background of anxieties that has been consistently maintained by the far right and often the right, without much resistance from the left, for at least three decades. In this respect, France offers the example both of the high electoral capital held by the theme of the immigrant threat and of the porosity of party boundaries around these issues. The creation in 2007 by the newly elected president, Nicolas Sarkozy, of a ministry associating for the first time the words "immigration" and "national identity"[40] may be seen as a logical outcome of this process.

Given these conditions, the aim of policy makers is to restrict the coming of migrants as much as possible, even if they are in fact seeking asylum. For if globalization allows some people to free themselves of territorial restraint, and hence of borders, others conversely are confined to their territory or, when they seek to escape it, held back by impassable frontiers. In the area of Europe subject to the Schengen Agreement—that is, to a treaty authorizing free circulation within twenty-five countries—and to a lesser degree in the rest of the European Union, a series of legislative measures has made circulation of individuals increasingly easier.[41] But at the gates of Europe the difficulty of entering and the ease with which one can be expelled have continually augmented. Thus border control has been reinforced, particularly at airports, with always more sophisticated technologies of biometric identification, going as far as the requirement to produce genetic evidence of relationship (DNA tests), and data coordination, with the establishment of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Co-operation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (known as Frontex). At the same time, repressive measures aimed at more-efficient deportation of immigrants have been strengthened, notably with the passing in June 2008 of the "Return" directive, which allows individuals to be held in detention centers for up to eighteen months (rather than the thirty-two days until then permitted in France, which already represented a recent tripling of the legal maximum) and imposes a mandatory sanction of a five-year ban on residence (which did not previously exist in France except where explicitly decreed in a court judgment following conviction for a crime). This regulation is paradoxically all the more strict because the European space is also a space of the rule of law—and hence of rights, notably human rights. Should they forget, European

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institutions are reminded of it by nongovernmental organizations, lawyers' associations, and magistrates' unions, who defend the rights of those who are on European territory. Hence the efforts of European governments to reduce as much as possible the numbers of individuals entitled to claim these rights by keeping the borders closed. In order that the ideal of a land of human rights can be maintained, those applying to benefit from it must be as few as possible.

This limitation of the recourse to the law has resulted in a proliferation of extralegal structures. Waiting zones, which increasingly perform a filtering function upstream of asylum, are one example: picked up as they leave the plane, a growing number of foreigners are held in detention within airport premises while their case and, where appropriate, their request for asylum are examined. In France, they can claim the legal assistance of the Association nationale d'assistance aux frontières pour les étrangers (National Association for Border Assistance for Foreigners, ANAFÉ), the only support organization permitted to be present in the waiting zones, provided they access it before being deported. Thus France currently has sixty-five of these waiting zones, with an extraterritorial status that means applicants can be refused the possibility of asylum. In the Roissy zone alone, an area known as ZAPI 3, which is by far the largest, the yearly number of immigrants held rose from an average of five thousand in the mid-1990s to an average of more than twenty thousand since 2001; the rate of acceptance of applications for asylum plummeted over the same period from 60% in 1995 to 3% in 2003, before rising again.[42] But these mechanisms can only be a last resort, from the point of view of states, since they are costly and have a relative degree of public visibility because of the presence of organizations such as ANAFÉ. This explains why European governments develop convergent initiatives that aim to complete this filtering even further upstream, by establishing camps at Europe's borders—on the outermost fringes (as in Poland), in the most isolated regions (for example, some Greek islands) or the most enclosed zones (like the Spanish North African territories of Ceuta and Melilla), or even on the other side of the borders (in the east, in Albania and Croatia, and in the south, in Libya and Morocco).[43] At the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003, Britain presented a plan for externalizing control and detention, which involved establishing "transit processing centers" effectively designed on the model of the camp but concealed under a bureaucratic term.

Thus two strands to the overall logic of these structures may be identified. Governments are, of course, concerned with preventing migrants from arriving and dissuading potential migrants, but the structures are also

aimed at making this thankless task invisible, or even having it performed by others. This is indeed the problem facing European nations. As long as places like the Sangatte center exist, there is always the possibility of protest from nongovernmental organizations or even the risk that citizens of the host country will feel compassion toward the undesirables, seen as unfortunate rather than criminals. It is therefore essential to obscure the activity of mass rejection and selection as much as possible, either rather imperfectly in waiting zones or more efficiently in camps outside of European territory where the security operations can be performed. There are always of course some who will manage to surmount all these obstacles. These escapees will be recognized through humanitarian reason rather than right to asylum. In this regard, Sangatte provides precious evidence of a time when security and humanitarianism were still entangled.

However, the evidence is viewed as such essentially by us, Western spectators of the odyssey, for, in the journey of migrants seeking asylum, Sangatte represented no more than a parenthesis, as Michael Winterbottom's 2002 film *In This World* reminds us. When the young Afghan hero, who lives with his family in a refugee camp in Pakistan, embarks on a trip to Europe at his parents' instigation, he does so for economic reasons, because they believe that the youngest have to flee the situation they are in. His epic journey with his cousin through central Asia and the Middle East leads him from one danger to another and one smuggler to the next until he reaches Istanbul, where he boards a cargo ship, hidden in a container in which his cousin dies of suffocation, along with several companions. After traveling through Italy and France, he arrives in Sangatte where he stays briefly at the center before crossing to Britain. The film thus depicts a time when it was still possible to do so: seven years later, Philippe Lioret's 2009 film *Welcome* revealed a different reality—that of the jungle which has replaced the center and of a crossing that has become impossible.[44] But let us return to the young Afghan man. As a minor, he is granted a subsidiary protected status in Britain, which he knows he will lose when he reaches the age of eighteen, and he finds work illegally, as a kitchen porter, in a place he has little chance to leave before long because of his precarious juridical situation. Thus, in addition to reminding us, in the prologue filmed in Pakistan, how many more refugees there are in the developing world than in Western countries and how difficult the distinction between economic and political refugees remains, the film shows that ultimately, with or without asylum, the hospitality offered by the "British El Dorado" is merely the integration into the clandestine underclass. Sangatte was the last password to enter it.

9.   Hierarchies of Humanity

Intervening in International Conflicts

> Since man no longer believes that a God is guiding the destinies of the world as a whole, or that, despite all apparent twists, the path of mankind is leading somewhere glorious, men must set themselves ecumenical goals, embracing the whole earth.
>
> <div align="right">FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE, Human, All Too Human</div>

When the Czech president and the British prime minister described the NATO bombing of Kosovo, during spring 1999, as a humanitarian act, many analysts considered that a threshold had been crossed in the definition of just wars.[1] The subsequent Western army interventions in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 confirmed this impression, demonstrating that humanitarian language could be mobilized at the heart of military operations. This development manifested a phenomenon that had been emerging over the preceding two decades. Humanitarian action has in fact become a major modality and a dominant frame of reference for Western political intervention in scenes of misfortune throughout the world, whether they involve armed conflict or natural disasters, or their more or less direct consequences in the form of epidemics, famines, disability, or trauma.[2] Previously the prerogative of nongovernmental organizations and intergovernmental bodies, humanitarianism has also become a policy instituted at state level, with many countries implementing their own activities within this domain (for example, the Secretariat of State for Humanitarian Action in France, and the Overseas Development Administration in the United Kingdom). A form of governmentality that its supporters view as a substitute to the order of Cold War realpolitik is being deployed throughout the globe. The new language of humanitarianism produces a distinct intelligibility regarding world affairs and a particular form of collective experience. The way that armed interventions such as those in Somalia are justified and international crises like Darfur are qualified, how the part played by military peacekeepers in the massacre of Srebrenica is scrutinized and the management of refugee camps in the African Great Lakes region is examined, and ultimately our assessment of international policy itself, have

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been profoundly altered by the repertoire of images and actions supplied by the humanitarian movement.

One common interpretation of this new configuration tends to distinguish and contrast politics and humanitarianism, declaring that the latter is gradually replacing the former, or even announcing the advent of humanitarianism and the end of politics. "Humanitarianism is not a political issue, and it should remain apart from political maneuvering," asserts Rony Brauman, a former president of Médecins Sans Frontières.[3] Giorgio Agamben offers a still more radical version of this thesis, arguing that "the separation between humanitarianism and politics that we are experiencing today is the extreme phase of the separation of the rights of man from the rights of the citizen."[4] Yet one may doubt whether there exists, in our society or any other, a space devoid of politics or even a space outside politics. Everything suggests, on the contrary, that rather than becoming separate, humanitarianism and politics are tending to merge—in other words, humanitarianism is indeed a politics. In France particularly, three former presidents or vice presidents of Médecins Sans Frontières have been appointed ministers; several have been elected to political office, and others have become high-level civil servants—not only in the traditional aid sector but also in health and social welfare. Conversely, former ministers of social affairs or of health have become presidents of large organizations such as Action contre la faim (Action against Hunger) and the French Red Cross.[5] At the international level the process is even more marked: since the Rwandan genocide and the French army's belated Operation Turquoise, Western military action in scenes of disaster and conflict has been conducted under the banner of humanitarianism, and increasingly insistent efforts are being made to bring nongovernmental organizations on board. When they intervened in Kosovo and Iraq, the governments allied respectively within NATO and around the United States spoke of humanitarian emergency, thus confirming that the legitimacy of interventions had shifted from the legal realm (since they did not have the support of the United Nations) to the moral sphere—the defense of human rights and even, more restrictively and more specifically, of humanitarian law. We can speak of the humanitarianization of international crisis management and the parallel politicization of the nongovernmental humanitarian field. This evolution has been criticized by the humanitarian movement, which sees in it a loss of its moral purity or simply of its independence, but the larger implications for the politics of life are less clearly perceived: they nevertheless lie, as we shall now see, at the heart of the tensions that divide nongovernmental organizations.

On March 28, 2003, as on the last Friday of every month, the Administration Board of Médecins Sans Frontières met between 5.00 and 11.00 p.m., at the organization's headquarters on the first floor of a Parisian building situated near La Bastille. On that particular evening a heady atmosphere of anticipation and excitement reigned. There was the customary overview of the situation in a number of "missions" in various parts of the world, followed by a more in-depth examination, with discussion of various specific topics relating to the running of the organization and its activities. The construction of the "international movement"—the network of branches in twenty countries, six of which were actually in a position to conduct operations, which strives to ensure a coherence of identity and policy in the work of each national body beyond the specifics of local history and culture—was also discussed. The Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) was also addressed: this was a unique program initiated two years earlier in order to establish, in international collaboration with private foundations and public partners, an activity of research and development for drug treatments deemed unprofitable because of the poverty of the Third World patients who needed them.

The monthly meetings of the Administration Board are open to the public. All members of the organization can participate, including the staff. Usually, attendance gradually thins out as the evening wears on. But on that March 28, many stayed, waiting for the last item on the agenda. The subject was the state of operations in Iraq. Eight days earlier, U.S. and British troops had begun their bombardment of the country, ending the long run-up to a war that was declared in a climate of growing international tension and division. Médecins Sans Frontières had a complex history with the Iraqi state, having refused to aid earlier—even when the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) was publishing the most alarming statistics about the hundreds of thousands of children dying as a result of the international embargo—so as to avoid succumbing to what it considered to be the manipulation of international humanitarian sentiment by the criminal Baathist regime. Nevertheless, the organization decided, after long and difficult discussions on its Executive Committee, to maintain a team of six people in Baghdad during the onset of the war. According to the head of programs in Paris:[6]

> Intervening in a war zone is not easy. Six expatriate volunteers are working in one of the thirty-two hospitals in the city. Basic needs have been secured (stocks of water, food, drugs, sandbags), they keep travel to a minimum, and they are very careful to identify themselves to the two sides. But everyone is aware of the risk. After evaluating the

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situation in the field, a reduced team decided to stay. Analyzing the balance of risk and action, we felt our presence was appropriate.

Should the six members of Médecins Sans Frontières then remain there, given the danger they would face both from the Iraqi regime and its cornered military and from the American army and its rain of bombs, and given that their presence was likely to be of limited efficacy, considering the extensive Iraqi health care facilities available in Baghdad? Should the lives of aid workers be risked to save other lives among local populations? The discussion that arose around the presence of the team in Iraq was, by all accounts, the most intense debate the organization had seen in recent years. However, it skirted the most painful truth—the ontological inequality underlying this transaction in human lives, between those that are imperiled and those that are saved.

I take this scene as a starting point for raising the question of humanitarian action in terms of the politics of life that underlie it.[7] What I term politics of life are politics that bring into play differentiated meanings and values of human lives. These politics are distinct from biopolitics as defined by Michel Foucault, who analyzes the technologies applied rather than meanings and values, and who is interested more in populations than in lives.[8] Humanitarian action is indeed a biopolitics in the sense that it uses techniques of management of populations in setting up refugee camps, establishing protected aid corridors, making use of modes of communication around public testimony to abuses perpetrated, and conducting epidemiological studies of infectious diseases, malnutrition, trauma, and even violations of the laws of war. But humanitarian action is also a politics of life in the sense that, first, it takes as its object the saving of lives, which presupposes not only risking others but also selecting those that have priority for being saved (for example, when drug supplies are insufficient); and second, it champions causes publicly, which implies not only neglecting other ones but also constructing them by choosing the best way of representing the populations assisted (for instance, as victims rather than resistance fighters).

Biopolitics and politics of life are therefore neither superimposed on one another nor opposed to one another. This study focuses on the latter. In the politics of life, moral issues become central. What kind of life is at stake, explicitly or implicitly, in humanitarian intervention? This is the question that interests me here. My aim is not to take an overview or pronounce judgments,[9] but to enter as it were the heart of humanitarian activity, to analyze the consequences of choices made and practices implemented—in short, to follow humanitarian logic to its end.[10] I explore a

triple lifeline: that which runs between the sacrificeable lives of popula-tions and the freely sacrificed lives of aid workers; that which separates the sacred lives of Western soldiers from the sacrificeable lives of local civil-ians; and finally, that which distinguishes the valued lives of expatriate volunteers from the devalued lives of local staff. All three can have tragic consequences. Thus I attempt to identify the features of an ontological in-equality that contravenes the principle of common humanity defended by humanitarianism by producing implicit hierarchies. I do so by recourse to a traditional dramaturgical form with its unities of place, time, and action, returning to the scene that took place at the beginning of the Iraq War.

AN ETHICS IN ACTION

During the months leading up to the 2003 Iraq War, Médecins Sans Fron-tières, like many other humanitarian organizations, undertook "explor-atory missions" in Iraq and neighboring countries with the aim of predict-ing the consequences of military intervention, in terms both of injured and sick within Iraq and refugees outside the country.[11] In particular, deli-cate negotiations were conducted with the Iraqi Ministry of Health and the Red Crescent to establish an official framework for the mission so as to obtain the necessary work permits and ensure independent operation. The memo issued by Médecins Sans Frontières on March 11, 2003, makes reference to two proposals that were agreed to by both sides and gave the organization this mandate: assist in a hospital in the south of Baghdad, and take responsibility for the care of a potential twenty million displaced people. But in the days following the signing of this agreement, the Iraqi authorities proved unwilling to keep their side of the contract, forbidding the volunteers from entering hospitals to evaluate the health situation.

On March 18, U.S. president George W. Bush issued a solemn appeal to Saddam Hussein, calling on him to leave Iraq within forty-eight hours. As the last flights evacuating the expatriate staff of international agencies and nongovernmental organizations were leaving Baghdad, six members of Médecins Sans Frontières—including a surgeon, an anesthetist, and a general practitioner—decided to remain despite the imminent danger. This small group included one of the organization's most public figures, the president of the international movement. But they were not the only ones to have made that choice: in addition to the International Committee of the Red Cross, Première Urgence and Caritas maintained a reduced pres-ence. On March 20, U.S. and British troops launched their attack and the

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bombing of the Iraqi capital began. Intense and intermittent, it lasted several days, during which Médecins Sans Frontières' team in Baghdad had very little chance of leaving their hotel. Several bombs fell nearby, a brutal reminder of the reality and proximity of the danger. However, the hospital where they were supposed to work received only a handful of patients with minor injuries, for which they supplied some surgical equipment. The mission coordinator in Paris reported to the Administration Board: "At the moment the team feels that it is not very useful, but it is preparing for what may come."

This landscape of risk and uncertainty formed the backdrop for what the minutes of the March 28 Administration Board meeting call a "debate on the controversial decision to establish a team in Baghdad" within the French branch of the organization.[12] There was a lively discussion about the safety of the team, as there had been a few days earlier at the meeting of the Executive Committee, which had taken the decision to stay in Iraq. Conflicting opinions were expressed and deep divisions emerged as to whether it was justified to maintain a humanitarian presence in this context: the issues raised concerned both the evaluation of the danger and the anticipated efficacy of the intervention. As the president, who was himself in favor of the team staying, indicated, the stake was the same in every situation of humanitarian intervention: for those who are on site, once the conflict is under way, "there is no guaranteed emergency exit," he said, and this is one of "the occupational hazards of our profession." Remaining in a country at war, he suggested, always bore a cost, if not in actual human losses, then at least in terms of the possibility of casualties. Nevertheless, he concluded that "the level of risk we run in Baghdad does not seem any greater than in other places where we operate," pointing out that "we have many teams in danger zones." Some on the Administration Board were less sanguine about the peril to which the local team was exposed and its psychological capacity to deal with it. But the issue of security, which was highlighted in the debate, was obviously overshadowed by another, even more difficult, question: Why stay? If the risks were high, what was their justification? What use were members if they were confined to a dangerous place? It was the usefulness of the mission that generated the most heated exchanges.

Some argued that wherever in the world Médecins Sans Frontières volunteers exposed themselves to objective danger, they did so to bring "real, concrete assistance." In the case of Iraq, the potential contribution of a team of three medical doctors was obviously modest compared with the hundreds of health professionals working in the thirty-five hospitals in Bagh-

dad, or even, within the specific context of the team's activity, compared with the sixty physicians, surgeons, and anesthetists, with seventeen operating theaters, in the sole hospital where the team planned to offer assistance. Nevertheless, efficacy was the officially accepted justification for the decision to stay. According to the president: "The reason we have representatives in Baghdad is so that they can bring aid. That is the criterion on which we based our decision. We send teams when we think they can offer concrete help, not just in the name of an ideal. That needs to be stated clearly and unambiguously." Many, however, remained unconvinced, particularly given the small number of staff relative to the casualties that were anticipated. One long-standing member of the organization offered his own interpretation on this point, relativizing the efficacy but defending a principle: "It is part of our charter to be present in war zones. But war surgery itself is inefficient, because it saves only ten percent more people than if there were no intervention. The question therefore is, to be or not to be there? And my answer is: if we were not there, I would wonder why." Weighing the various arguments, one administrator underlined: "That's the nub of it—the constant dialogue between the principles in our charter and genuine efficacy. Some put more emphasis on the principles, others on efficacy; you often find that within the teams." Finally, as the atmosphere of the discussion became increasingly tense, a young member of the organization attempted some kind of synthesis between the logic of efficacy and that of principles: "It seems to me," he said, "that what Médecins Sans Frontières represents is an ethics in action. It's impossible to separate the two, and we are always aware of the limits of our activity. What is part of our principles is that each life saved counts, and that some actions save lives. I think that in Baghdad that space will emerge very soon." His diagnosis was probably correct, but not his prognosis: events would cruelly prove him wrong.

Four days after this meeting, two of the six members who had remained in Baghdad, together with their driver, were taken by agents of the Iraqi intelligence service to an unidentified location. For more than one week there was no news of them. Médecins Sans Frontières refrained from describing them publicly as hostages or releasing their names to the press, in order to avoid any additional risk. Anxiety mounted within the organization, as Western troops approached, conditions in Baghdad grew increasingly unsafe, and finally the hospital where the team had hoped to work was looted, leaving the four volunteers who were still at liberty with no possibility of action. The coordinator of the Iraq mission in France deplored the absurdity of the situation in a memo dated April 10: "We have

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had to suspend our activities at the very moment when Baghdad's hospitals are overrun with casualties." After being held for nine days, the two volunteers and the driver were finally freed. Seventy-two hours later, U.S. and British troops occupied the center of Baghdad. Humanitarian aid poured in, especially from organizations that had accumulated staff and equipment on the other side of the border in expectation of refugees who never arrived. It seemed obvious that Médecins Sans Frontières was now able to reach its hospital and finally provide real assistance to the victims of the war, who were rapidly increasing in number.

On April 28, however the French branch of the organization made the decision to leave Iraq—before it had even started its humanitarian work. Having come to help "populations at risk," at a time when many had decided to remain out of a country deemed much too dangerous, the team was therefore leaving without having been able to intervene, just when most others, including the Belgian and Dutch branches, were choosing to return or to stay. This retreat was not understood by those who had taken serious risks during the bombing and found themselves summoned home just when serious needs were emerging. The French team thus left disillusioned. Meanwhile, in the Paris headquarters, the official position was to deride other aid organizations that, it was claimed, had been too ready to exaggerate the seriousness of the situation in order to sensitize their donors. "Desperately seeking humanitarian crisis," one former president of Médecins Sans Frontières and a desk coordinator commented ironically, in an article published a few months later. "No humanitarian crisis in Iraq," declared the president of the organization in a French daily newspaper.[13] These comments seemed to make little case of the other two branches of the organization that had remained.

Even among the French members, consensus did not exist. Bernard Calas, the head of the mission and one of the hostages, noted in the report produced for the organization's General Assembly in May 2003: "The French branch's decision to leave Baghdad seemed to me very hasty, and I think was based on debatable arguments constructed in order to justify the decision. As if the end of the war would automatically be followed by a period of reconstruction. Because we were unable to define this crisis, we dismissed it, without going further into the needs of the people and the alternatives of negotiation and speaking out. Ironically, you could say we've come full circle and owing to lack of foresight, our intervention was marked from beginning to end by hasty decisions." His analysis was severe, but it is true that by the end of this operation, even though it conformed to the spirit and letter of the organization's charter, which states that members

"provide assistance to populations in distress" and "understand the risks and dangers of the missions they carry out," Médecins Sans Frontières certainly did not appear to have had the efficacy invoked as the justification for maintaining a team in Baghdad, and in particular had not "saved lives" as they anticipated. But what merits attention, more than this relative "failure," which was in the end recognized as such,[14] are the emotions this mission aroused within the Executive Committee as well as the Administration Board.

THE SENSE OF SACRIFICE

If we accept the hypothesis that crisis in an institution erupts when a situation touches directly on its core principles, we then need to examine what underlies the conflict around the decision to remain in Iraq. In this confrontation between principles and efficacy, what is at stake is the very meaning of humanitarian medicine. The clash of arguments that paradoxically reinforces that final formulation of an "ethics in action" effectively opposes two figures of life: the life that is saved (that of the victims), and the life that is risked (that of the aid workers). Physically, there is no difference between them; philosophically, they are worlds apart. They bear witness to the dualism conceptualized by Giorgio Agamben and discussed earlier, between the bare life that is to be saved and the political life that is freely risked, between the *zoē* of "local populations" who can only passively await both bombs and humanitarian workers, fearing the former and mistrusting the latter, and the *bios* of those "citizens of the world," the aid workers who come, with courage and devotion, to render them assistance.[15] Recognizing the inequality between these lives at the level of their very meaning—even more than in terms of the objective threats they face—is not to question either the validity of a specific humanitarian action undertaken in the name of victims' rights, or the good faith of individual humanitarian actors who defend those rights. It is rather to attempt to understand the anthropological configuration in which the two are located—a configuration in which the sacred no longer resides in man as master of his existence, but in life itself. What it signifies is, for humanitarian actors, the freedom to sacrifice themselves for a just cause, and for local populations, the condition of being sacrificeable in the war. In contemporary societies this inequality is perhaps both the most ethically intolerable, in that it concerns the sense given to life, and the most morally tolerated, since it forms the basis for the principle of altruism.[16] And this is the truth that humanitarianism revealed in Iraq.

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Humanitarian politics presents itself as a resolute bias in favor of "victims." The world order as portrayed by this politics comprises the strong and the weak. Humanitarian workers operate in the space between the two, assisting the weak while denouncing the strong. They intervene in places "where life is not worth a dollar."[17] They focus on those considered at risk of physical disappearance and incapable of maintaining their own existence. Of course, not all "survival" situations, as these actors often describe them, are equally dramatic or involve the same risks to life, but the core of humanitarian action is indeed existence under threat. "Saving strangers"[18]— in other words, people one does not know—simply on the grounds of their common humanity is the supreme mission that humanitarian organizations undertake. Such an objective presupposes that victims are identified. This might appear simple, given the way we perceive conflicts or the way they are presented to us. It nevertheless involves a double elision.

First, in a war there may be victims on both sides, and often outside of either: the usual moral dichotomies, obviously based partly on political reality, on the contrary imagine a simplification of the world in which victims and their aggressors must be identifiable and namable: Biafrans, Tamils, Chechens, Kosovars, set against Nigerians, Sri Lankans, Russians, Serbs. Reality sometimes escapes these confines when, for example, Tamils massacre Sri Lankan farmers, Chechens abduct a European aid worker, or Albanian Kosovars become the persecutors of Serbian families who stayed in Kosovo. Second, depicting a group or a people as victims imposes a status on its members that they do not necessarily recognize as their own: the individuals represented as victims may regard themselves as combatants or militants, or as politically dominated and territorially expropriated, but will often bend to the category assigned to them, understanding its logics and anticipating its advantages. However local people consider themselves, this construction of victims is viewed by humanitarian organizations as both necessary, since it identifies the target of intervention, and sufficient, in that the perspective of the populations is never required. Nongovernmental organizations are nevertheless led to reflect when divergences of interpretation emerge between them, as happened in Darfur when some called for a military intervention to stop what they qualified as a genocide, whereas others interpreted the events as part of an internal conflict in which intervention would bring about more harm than good.

This dichotomic moral conception of the world and the role that aid workers should play within it can easily be set within the genealogy of "pastoral power" as Michel Foucault characterized it, in reference to the Hebrew and the Christian shepherds.[19] In the French philosopher's view,

what characterizes this power is first that it is exercised not over a territory but "over a flock," second that it presents itself as "fundamentally beneficent," and finally that it is "individualizing"—leading the shepherd to be "prepared to sacrifice himself for his flock." Similarly, the humanitarian power is exercised over a population that must be aided, essentially for the good of the collectivity, and even more specifically for the good of each individual. Here we clearly see that collective action toward the population (in a refugee camp, for example) is in no way opposed to the individual action that is the very substance of it (each life saved counts, it is argued). It is thus easy to understand that remaining in Baghdad meant feeling responsible in the abstract for a people under bombardment, but also concretely for the individuals that the aid workers could save, however few in number. This responsibility may not extend to sacrificing oneself, but at least to taking that risk. Hence the founding inequality of the humanitarian gesture resides in this asymmetry of lives, between those whose life is passively sacrificeable, because they are at the mercy of the bombs, and those whose life can be freely sacrificed, because they decided to stay. For the former, the gift can have no counter gift, since it is assumed that they can only receive: they are the beholden of the world. For the latter, the gift may even be the gift of the self—at least in theory.

Up to this point, on the scene of war, one protagonist is missing. I have presented the humanitarian agents standing beside the victims they assist. I now need to situate them in relation to the military powers involved in the conflict.

THE PRICE TO BE PAID

The representation of the protagonists offered by Jean-Hervé Bradol is probably the darkest. "Humanitarianism can make resistance to the elimination of one part of humanity into a way of life based on the satisfaction of unconditionally offering a person whose life is at risk the assistance that allows him to survive," he writes.[20] His moral geography of the world contrasts two continents—that of the "established political powers" whose function is "to decide on human sacrifice, to divide the governed between those who must live and those who may die." and that of the "humanitarian project," which has "taken the arbitrary and radical decision to try to help those that society sacrifices." The former derives from the "cannibal ideal," since "the edification of the international order always requires its quota of victims." The latter proceeds from a "subversive dimension,"

because "humanitarian aid is primarily addressed to those whose demand to live is confronted by the indifference or open hostility of others." This binary world therefore opposes a politics of death (that of criminal states) to a politics of life (that of humanitarian actors).[21] Thus defined entirely in moral terms, politics is a new war between an axis of good and an axis of evil. By a surprising paradox, at the very moment when some countries, first and foremost the United States, were throwing themselves into a moral crusade against their demonized enemies, some in nongovernmental organizations were adopting an equally Manichaean discourse. Yet this is less surprising than it appears, and while here the formulation is cast in radical terms, it still articulates a vision of the world that is broadly shared within the humanitarian sphere, at least among French organizations. Moreover, the language of sacrifice refers explicitly to the religious origins of pastoral power: condemning "human sacrifice" and saving "those that society sacrifices," to the extent of paying with one's person, reconnects with the tradition of both Abraham (the one who sacrifices) and Christ (the one who sacrifices himself). Beyond the rhetoric, there is in this representation of humanitarianism a sort of genealogical truth.

Without necessarily accepting the moral division of the world proposed by Médecins Sans Frontières' former president, one can understand the decision to stay in Baghdad and the risks it involved for the embedded team as a resistance to the way in which states at war treat the lives of their soldiers, their enemies, and even civilian populations. In this respect, the moral economies of the Western military leadership, influenced by the general evolution of the value attached to human life, underwent a profound change over the twentieth century: from the carnage of the First World War battlefields to the collective trauma of the Algerian war (for France), and above all Vietnam (for the United States), we have moved to maximum avoidance of military losses.[22] But the corollary of the "zero death" doctrine, as it has developed over the past twenty years in the West, and as it has been theorized by U.S. military experts, is the rhetoric of "collateral damage," which forms the necessary counterpoint. Reducing the risks on one's own side implies increasing them on the enemy's side, including—in conflicts putatively launched for the purposes of "liberating" or "protecting" populations—among civilians. This logic reached its apogee with the Nato bombing of Kosovo in 1999. Not only did the strategic choice of an aerial operation make it possible to limit losses among the Allied forces, at the expense of the human casualties that bombing often involves, but the tactical decision to have the aircraft fly at high altitude so they would be inaccessible to Serb antiaircraft defense necessarily entailed a reduced level of ballistic accuracy: aircraft

targeting errors killed more than five hundred civilians among the Kosovar populations the operation was supposed to protect, but not one pilot died.[23] Certainly, for the intervening powers these human losses were undesirable, but they were unavoidable in light of the military choices made.

Although it was less efficient because it involved ground operations and especially the deployment of a substantial long-term presence, inevitably resulting in military losses, the Iraq War of 2003 gave a new twist, and above all an unprecedented breadth, to this doctrine. In addition to the fact that the massive bombardment that preceded and prepared for the invasion generated large numbers of casualties among Iraqis, including many civilians, the subsequent measures to ensure the security of U.S. and British troops resulted in widespread preventive use of firearms, again in order to reduce the risk of soldiers being killed. Only a few particularly bloody or tragic episodes were reported. However, discrepancies in mortality were huge. By October 2004, more than a year after military operations began, the army of occupation had suffered 1,000 deaths, versus the 100,000 estimated by a British epidemiological study of the Iraqi population. Two years later, in October 2006, Allied military losses numbered 2,925, while the same epidemiologists put the number of lives lost on the Iraqi side at 655,000, of which 601,000 were directly linked to violence, a third of them caused by the coalition forces.[24] These marked disparities, with deaths occurring exclusively among the military for the intervening forces and mainly among civilians in the Iraqi population, offer an a posteriori measure of the implicit politics of a differential valuing of human beings.

This politics was established before the event through the strategic choices made by senior military commanders, aimed at limiting the toll in lives of the coalition forces, even if that was at the price of a very high number of deaths among the local population. Arithmetically, the life of a Western soldier was worth two hundred times more than the life of an inhabitant of the country where the former was intervening in order to "liberate" or "protect" the latter: sacrificing the lives of several hundred local people was the condition for preserving the sacred life of one individual. This calculation would seem cynical had it not effectively been made for the purposes of estimating the compensation to be paid in the event of death: the "tariff" was set by insurance companies at $400,000 for a U.S. soldier killed at the front, while the U.S. government paid $2,500 for each Iraqi civilian killed in error.[25] Here the valuation is 160 times higher—not far from the previously estimated ratio for casualties.

There is, of course, rarely any public proof that this idea of the price to be paid is really behind the reasoning of those governing. This is what

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makes a statement by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright particularly remarkable. In a television interview in 2000, a journalist asked Albright if she thought the half million Iraqi children estimated by Unicef to have perished as a result of the economic blockade was an excessively high price to pay for exerting pressure on the Baathist regime: "This is a very hard choice but we think the price is worth it," she said.[26] We could in fact consider it a sort of moral progress, to use a phrase inherited from the Enlightenment, that during the 2003 Iraq War the counting of lives lost on both sides, and thus the calculation of the ratio of deaths, was even possible. By contrast, at the time of the First Gulf War, estimates of Iraqi deaths varied from a few thousand to several hundred thousand, but no serious attempt was made to arrive at a more precise number, either by the victorious Allied troops or by the defeated Iraqi regime. When no one counts deaths, it means that lives no longer count. The famous statement of General Tommy Franks, head of the coalition forces, in 2003—"We don't do body counts"—probably says more about the reality of distant conflicts than he himself realized at the time.[27] For even if, as I have noted, we have mortality figures from epidemiological studies, which are not beyond critique, there are no reliable government statistics that could not only provide a precise number of deaths but also—at least—give the deceased individuals a name.

Médecins Sans Frontières' decision to remain in Baghdad when the bombing was about to begin issues a challenge to this politics of lives that "don't count." By exposing themselves to danger, the team raised the question of the equality of lives in a concrete, immediate way: all lives apparently became equal again—that is, equally vulnerable for the Iraqis and for the humanitarian agents assisting them. The sacrifice to which they consented (risking being killed) shifted the radical inequality between the sacred life of those on one side (Western soldiers) and the sacrificed lives of those on the other (local civilians). By this heroic act, the humanitarian politics of life offered a striking counterpoint to the military politics of life. At least, that was the intention.

THE VALUE OF LIVES

In effect this equality did not long withstand the test of reality. The kidnapping during the first days of the coalition intervention forced the humanitarian ideal to face the harsh fact of the value of lives. The abduction of three members of the team paralyzed not only their three colleagues but also the entire organization, which initially halted all activity, and

then resolved to withdraw the mission. On the Iraqi side, not one life was saved; not even one injury was treated. Above all, it became clear that Médecins Sans Frontières could not countenance risking lives: when the danger moved from hypothetical to real, the intervention was suspended to avoid further risk to the abducted, and when they were released by the kidnappers, at a time when other aid organizations were just getting to work, the French branch of Médecins Sans Frontières left Iraq, arguing that the health situation was not after all great cause for concern and additionally the conditions of operation were not satisfactory.[28] In reality, the trauma of the abduction had highlighted the contradictions inherent in a declared policy of risking lives that could not be maintained in the face of real danger.

The Iraqi episode, which fortunately ended happily, is indicative of the fragility of humanitarian organizations regarding kidnapping. The only remarkable feature of it is that those within the organization had a difficult time articulating the simple truth that the lives of aid workers sent into the field are an absolute priority. This is understandable: after expending so much energy to demonstrate that the workers should stay despite the risk, it was not easy, particularly after the event, to admit that they were leaving the country because of the danger. More generally, the vulnerability to abduction, which has become routine in several parts of the world, influences the activities of aid organizations—a phenomenon that obviously extends beyond them and is also a serious concern for Western governments. A number of other Médecins Sans Frontières members have been kidnapped in recent years, and each time the result has been paralysis not only of the mission concerned but also of the entire organization. Whether it be in Colombia, Chechnya, Dagestan, Somalia, or the Democratic Republic of Congo, after each hostage taking, aid to the local population has been suspended and the organization has concentrated entirely on a single aim—saving the abducted colleague. Fortunately, this goal has been achieved in every case.

The paramount concern to protect the organization's own staff should be no surprise, particularly since the abducted members are almost always expatriates and have established friendships not only within the local teams but also in the European offices. Moreover, the protagonists in conflicts are well aware of the West's sensitivity to kidnapping, and in some regions of the world, especially central Asia, take cynical advantage of it, unconcerned about the difference between soldiers and aid workers, private security guards and foreign journalists, forcing governments and nongovernmental organizations into protracted and difficult negotiations in which the

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value of the lives of those who have been abducted is assessed and translated into cash terms. The case that most concerned Médecins Sans Frontières in recent years, that of Arjan Erkel, the Dutch head of mission in North Caucasus, offers a prime example. Only after twenty months in captivity, without any indication as to who had ordered the kidnapping, was he released following the payment of a 1 million euro ransom by the Dutch government, which then sought in vain to reclaim the money from the organization.[29] The publicity surrounding this transaction not only confirmed that money had been paid but also revealed the amount, and it therefore made clear the value that might be placed on the life of an aid worker—or more precisely, the life of an expatriate aid volunteer, for even among the members of these organizations, not all lives are of equal value.

The most common distinction Médecins Sans Frontières makes in its missions (like all foreign organizations, whether working in aid or development) is between "expatriates" and "nationals." Expatriates come mostly from Western countries (although recently efforts have been made to incorporate some from the Third World) and are members of the organization, while nationals come from the local community and are considered paid employees. To justify this difference in status, Médecins Sans Frontières has long asserted that while expatriates were committed to the humanitarian project, nationals simply needed a job—in other words, volunteers on one side, mercenaries on the other. But the argument was reversed when it came to negotiating pay scales. It was put to the local staff, who were on short-term contracts and sometimes even employed by the day, that the service they rendered to the local populations should be their real reward. By contrast, the financial situation was much better for expatriates whom, it was said, had to continue paying their house rents in Europe. There are many other disparities. Expatriates participate in the general assemblies and vote for their representatives, while nationals are kept outside of the organization's democratic process. In the field, authority rests with the expatriates, even when they are inexperienced volunteers working with experienced local professionals. Outside of work, the expatriates live together in accommodations provided by the organization and often separated off from the local community, whereas nationals return to their homes each evening.

This means of managing missions, with the categorization of staff on the basis of their origin, was until recently taken for granted in aid circles. Essentially, it was considered that the humanitarian venture involved well-intentioned men and women from Western countries devoting themselves to populations in peril but needing local assistance to perform their good

works, just as colonial administrators might have need of local chiefs—and anthropologists of informants. The nationals, who were never part of the central administrative staff or represented among the senior management, not only had no voice in the organization, but even remained invisible: no one in the headquarters of organizations knew them, because flight tickets were paid only for expatriates, and they were rarely taken into consideration in the field, not being involved or even consulted in decisions. It was only a decade ago, thirty years after the creation of Médecins Sans Frontières, that this discrimination, which obviously contradicted the organization's founding principles, began to pose problems and elicit criticism, partly because of the practical obstacles it presented to operation. Amanda Harvey, the head of human resources for the field teams, made rectifying the situation a priority:[30] "We have reached the limits of a system based on a corporatist 'expat' functioning that no longer corresponds to the reality of MSF today. The improvements we are able to bring will remain marginal unless we question our organization. How can your work in the field in Sudan be effective if you never ask the opinion of the Sudanese people?" Several projects for reform were therefore drawn up, but never implemented despite the repeated protests of local professionals who hoped they would at last be recognized.

Yet the disparity in status between expatriates and nationals has major practical consequences. As we have seen, there are differences in salary and above all in contractual terms, since nationals are often employed for short periods, even on a daily basis: moreover, the precariousness of these contracts is heightened by the fact that they are concluded in the missions and therefore at the discretion of expatriate staff. The vulnerability of local employees is accentuated still further by the very unequal levels of social protection afforded. While medical coverage for expatriates is equivalent to that provided under the French social security system, nationals often do not have insurance, and when they are sick, generally receive neither treatment nor sickness benefit. At the general assembly of 2000 this issue was finally raised and a motion was passed calling on Médecins Sans Frontières to provide health insurance to cover treatment and care for national employees with AIDS. This motion was a response to the disturbing paradox that while the organization championed the provision of antiretroviral drugs and criticized Western states and international bodies for their failure to address this issue, many in their own staff were being neglected.[31] It took a long time for the motion to be translated into action, and three years after it was passed, the president was still expressing concern about the problems of implementation.

The issue of the protection of national staff took on an even more tragic dimension in conflict situations, as unlike expatriates they had no institutional immunity. One study revealed that almost six of every ten deaths among aid workers over the past twenty years were of national staff, but this is a very substantial underestimate, because on the one hand, as we have seen, many of them are employed on a casual basis and therefore do not appear on staff lists, and on the other, in Rwanda, where there was a particularly high death rate among aid workers, few figures differentiating national staff are available.[32] In other words, even within humanitarian organizations—as in development and cooperation organizations too—distinctions are systematically instituted between foreign staff, almost always Western and white, and local employees. These distinctions relate not only to status, power, responsibilities, type of contract, salary level, and marks of esteem, but also to the protection of their lives, or their very survival, whether they were threatened by disease or war. Both the AIDS epidemic and the Rwandan genocide cruelly exposed these discriminations and their consequences.

Thus within the arena of humanitarianism itself, hierarchies of humanity were passively established, though rarely identified for what they were—a politics of life that, at moments of crisis, resulted in the constitution of two groups of individuals: those whose condition of expatriate protected the sacred character of their lives, and those who, because they belonged to the society receiving aid, were paradoxically excluded from this protection. For a long time, humanitarian workers, so preoccupied with saving "others," did not even realize that alongside them the national staff, perhaps too close to be considered as part of the otherness of victims but at the same time too distant to be deemed to belong to their humanitarian community, were not being afforded the same right to live for which the expatriates advocated in the international arena. But what they were blind to, the protagonists in conflicts had clearly seen. Their calculations took into account the fact that not all lives bore the same price. When they abducted aid workers, they knew that only foreigners had a substantial market value that they could negotiate fiercely, but also a political price that they would pay heavily for if they ended up killing their hostages. Their compatriots locally employed, by contrast, whose lives the abductors did not imagine could be valued in cash terms and whose death they realized would cost them nothing, were generally simply executed.

Humanitarian action by nongovernmental organizations, from the birth of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the emergence of the

movement inaugurated by Médecins Sans Frontières, has historically been constructed in response to the inhumanity of war, as a way of restoring the basic idea of humanity itself. Whether its origins are Christian, as among the charitable religious orders, or secular, as with the philanthropic societies, there are two aspects to this principle, which refer to the two senses of the word itself: humanity as mankind (an idea) and as humaneness (a sentiment). This paradigm, which is today broadly accepted, has been established in contrast to others that either institute natural distinctions between human beings (through the idea of race, for example) or promote indifference to distant others (particularly in the stoking of nationalist sentiment).

In contemporary conflicts, the military forces that intervene, in the name either of their country or of higher concerns (leaving aside the question of whether this often largely rhetorical distinction is real), do not reject the idea and sentiment of humanity in principle; however, their practice calls it into question. The discourse of their governments and their senior officers generally leads them to construct the enemy as a category of humanity sufficiently distant to be killed in large numbers and without compassion. The injustice of contemporary war no longer resides, as in earlier times, in carnage shared roughly equally between the opposing sides, but rather in the unequal value accorded to lives on the battlefield: the sacred life of the Western forces of intervention, in which each death is counted and honored, versus the sacrificeable life of not only the enemy troops but also their civilian populations, whose losses are hardly totted up and whose corpses sometimes end up in mass graves. In the face of these inhuman politics of life—inhuman in the sense that they run counter to both the idea and the sentiment of humanity—humanitarian organizations call for a politics of life that reestablishes solidarity between human beings and gives equal value to lives.

But this politics unwittingly introduces a dual sort of inequality—one relating to the people on whose behalf they intervene, and the other to the individuals with whom they work. First, at the very moment when it restores the equal value of all humans through a solidarity extending as far as potential sacrifice in the field, the humanitarian gesture in fact introduces a distinction between those whose lives may be risked (humanitarian workers) and those whose lives are actually at risk (the people on whose behalf they intervene). The former are political subjects actively committed to their aid mission, while the latter only have their recognition as victims passively subjected to the event. The relationship established between them is less one of solidarity than of obligation, in which the gift of

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life is at stake. This contract is not upheld, however, in the full extent of its implications, because when danger becomes real (through hostage taking, in particular), the mission is suspended. The abstract, and ultimately moral, distinction between political subjects and putative victims becomes a concrete, even physical inequality between those who may decide to leave and those who have no option but to stay. Second, at the point when humanitarian action is deployed in the field in the name of helping the most vulnerable, it fails to recognize the difference established within its organizations between those who come from far to render assistance (expatriate volunteers) and those who enable them to achieve this task (national staff): the former are deemed to be working out of devotion, the latter out of necessity. A contractual, financial, and political hierarchy, which is also a hierarchy of status, is established between them. The corollary of this is the different levels of protection from disease and danger, which institutes an inequality in the symbolic and therefore economic value of lives, which participants in conflict use to their advantage.

The first of these two inequalities is at some level inherent in humanitarian intervention: it points to the fact that not all lives are accorded the same value and that in the end it is possible to save lives only as long as there is no real risk to one's own. Ultimately, it does derive from the principle of our conception of the sacredness of human life, but like charity, this conception begins at home. The second inequality, however, is an unconscious form arising in humanitarian action: it reveals the truth of a hierarchy of lives that is usually hidden, but which is brought into the open with the realization that a local employee is just an auxiliary in an enterprise emanating from the West and thus cannot be part of this generous venture. It thereby articulates the basis of the humanitarian movement: an impulse of moral sentiments from the rich toward the poor countries, from a world at peace to a world at war. The two inequalities are bound together: the inequality between expatriates and nationals represents the manifestation within humanitarian organizations of the inequality between benefactors and victims. It would obviously be wrong to ignore the extent to which both these inequalities, far from being unique to humanitarian actors, are set within contemporary moral economies: the inequality of lives, often invisible, is one of their foundations.

Notes

1. Most particularly since Adam Smith, whose *Theory of the Moral Sentiments* (1759: 1–2), begins as follows: "How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it, except the pleasure of seeing it. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner." In his history of moral philosophy, John Rawls (2000) links Smith to Hutcheson, Shaftesbury, Butler, and Hume as belonging to a mainly Scottish "moral sense school."

2. The parable is recounted by Luke (10: 30–37). It is Jesus's response to an "expert in law" who asks, "Who is my neighbor?" In his study of "distant suffering," Luc Boltanski (1999 [1993]: 11) sees this scene as a paradigm that in his view is distinct from pity and compassion, and that he describes as "communitarian." Various translations of the gospels nevertheless state indifferently that the Samaritan "took pity on" the injured man or "was moved to compassion." Thus neither the identity of the Samaritan nor his involvement in an act of assistance justifies this distinction.

3. As proposed by Michel Foucault (1989: 154) in the summary of his lectures at the Collège de France of 1979–1980, titled "The Government of the Living": according to Foucault, this consists of the "techniques and procedures designed to direct the behavior of men," and he significantly speaks of "government of children, government of souls or consciences, government of a household, of the state or of oneself."

4. Inherited from the Enlightenment, and more specifically from the philanthropic societies of the late eighteenth century analyzed by Catherine Duprat (1993: xiv), who follows the definition offered by François-Vincent Toussaint in 1748: "By humanity I mean the interest that men take in the fate of their fellows in general, merely because they are men like them. This sentiment

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engraved in their hearts is responsible for the other social virtues and supposes them likewise imprinted." This text incorporates both the English terms to which the word "humanity" refers: "mankind" (the species) and "humaneness" (concern).

5. See Nicolas Sarkozy, "Discours pour la France qui souffre" [Speech for the France that suffers], December 18, 2006, http://www.u-m-p.org/site/index .php/s_informer/discours/nous_allons_faire_revivre_l_espoir, and, in the case of George W. Bush, "President Promotes Compassionate Conservatism," April 30, 2002, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/04/20020430-5. html (both consulted in February 2010).

6. See the amended version of the decree of November 2, 1945, on the conditions of entry and residence for foreigners in France, issued on November 25, 2004, particularly article 12b, paragraph 11, http://www.legislationline .org/legislation.php?tid=137&lid=2124&less=fals, and Tony Blair's speech in Chicago on April 22, 1999, where he defined what later came to be known as the "Blair doctrine" justifying armed intervention abroad, http://www.opende mocracy.net/globalization-institutions_government/article_1857.jsp   (both consulted in January 2009).

7. The most radical form of this affirmation of inequality of moral sentiments is found in Nietzsche, who does not distinguish between compassion and pity, and in whose view, as Gilles Deleuze (2003 [1962]: 141) notes, "pity is the love of life, but of the weak, sick, reactive life: it is militant, and announces the final victory of the poor, the suffering, the powerless and the small."

8. Myriam Revault d'Allonnes (2008: 17) finds a key to interpretation in Tocqueville's formula of "the equalization of conditions" and evokes a "democratic compassion."

9. The two phenomena—hostility on one side, resentment on the other— could be described in reference to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, or even more explicitly, to the version of the play rewritten by Aimé Césaire (1980 [1969]), as respectively the Prospero and the Caliban syndromes: "I pity you," says Prospero to Caliban; "And I hate you," Caliban replies (act 3, scene 5).

10. At least within the political space under consideration here or, as Martha Nussbaum (2001: 401) writes, in the relationship between "compassion and public life." I am not dealing here with compassion in the private sphere, as felt by a mother for the pain of her child, for example.

11. In the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, and their aftermath, and drawing on a discussion of the thinking of Emmanuel Levinas, Judith Butler (2004: xvii) proposes an ethics of precarious life "based upon an understanding of how easily human life is annulled." It is possible to expand this reflection beyond murderous physical violence by considering the vulnerability of lives and the way they are governed.

12. According to Alain Rey (2006 [1992]: 2898), "precarious is borrowed from the legal Latin *precaria*, 'obtained through prayer.' This signification, which implies an intervention from above and hence the absence of inevitability, results in the sense of 'unstable, passing.' " Consequently, "this legal term

describes something that is granted, something exercised only by concession, by a permission that can be rescinded by the person who granted it." In other words, from the etymology, *precarious* does not correspond to the static description of a condition, it involves a dynamic relation of social inequality.

13. Although we have studies of various aspects and moments in the history of humanitarianism, very few provide a synthetic vision in the *longue durée*. Michael Barnett's *Empire of Humanity* (2011) is an exception, going back to the antislavery and missionary movements in the nineteenth century.

14. This thesis is defended and illustrated by Charles Taylor in his *Sources of the Self* (1989: ix), which he describes as "an attempt to articulate and write a history of the modern identity."

15. A recent examination of the history of slavery and antislavery on a global scale, with a specific focus on Britain, France, and the United States, can be found in Seymour Drescher's *Abolition* (2009).

16. The deeper history of humanitarian intervention has been investigated in Gary Bass's *Freedom's Battle* (2008), which situates the roots of this political and military practice in the early nineteenth century.

17. The distinction between the two temporalities and my choice to focus on the recent transformation of humanitarianism proceed from a similar preoccupation as that of Samuel Moyn's *The Last Utopia* (2010), which insists on the rupture of the 1970s in the history of human rights and the singularity of the contemporary problematization of the issues in the public sphere.

18. It is impossible to present an exhaustive bibliography of the considerable literature on these questions. We can cite, in France, works by Pierre Bourdieu (1999), Luc Boltanski (1999), and Jean-François Laé (1996) for sociology, by Vincent de Gauléjac (1996) and Christophe Dejours (1998) for psychology; and in the United States, studies by Arthur Kleinman (1988), Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992), Paul Farmer (1992), and Philippe Bourgois (1995) for anthropology, and David Morris (1991), Cathy Caruth (1995), and Ruth Leys (2000) for literary studies. A partial analysis of this corpus appeared in an earlier review (Fassin 2004c).

19. I refer respectively to the 950-page volume *La Misère du monde* (Bourdieu 1999 [1993]) and the edited trilogy *Social Suffering* (Kleinman et al. 1997), *Violence and Subjectivity* (Das et al. 2000), and *Remaking a World* (Das et al. 2001). Significantly, in a concession to this current concern, the English edition of Pierre Bourdieu's *The Weight of the World* bears the subtitle *Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, thus using a lexicon absent from the French title but, as we will see, not from its subtext.

20. This language has entered the higher echelons of the French state, particularly (under the influence of sociologists representing very diverse schools of thought) the Commissariat Général du Plan (General Planning Commission), responsible for strategic planning (Fassin 1996). Although it is unlikely that the porosity between intellectual and political worlds is the same in both countries, a similar logic is noted in the United States, where the ethos of compassion has taken a foothold in political arenas (Berlant 2004).

21. There is a considerable body of literature on the construction of social problems (Schneider 1985). However, in my use of the concept of problematization I am aligning myself essentially with the view of Foucault (1994: 669–670) who, at the end of his life, came to see his entire philosophical work as relating to a succession of "problematizations" of the social world (around madness, the clinic, prisons, sexuality, etc.): "Problematization does not mean representation of a preexisting object, nor the creation by discourse of an object that does not exist. It is the totality of discursive or nondiscursive practices that introduces something into the play of true and false and constitutes it as an object for thought."

22. A concept proposed by the historian Edward Palmer Thompson (1971) and taken up by political scientist James Scott (1976) in his interpretation of popular uprisings, moral economies have been interpreted in various ways. Adopting but significantly reformulating these authors' acceptation to insist on the moral rather than economic dimension, I have proposed to view moral economies as "the production, dissemination, circulation and use of emotions and values, norms and obligations in the social space: they characterize a particular historical moment and in some cases a specific group" (Fassin 2009b: 1257).

23. The symbolic gesture made by Nicolas Sarkozy on May 17, 2007, offers a telling example of this development and its ambiguity: very shortly after his election as president of France, he organized a solemn ceremony at which the letter written by the young Resistance fighter Guy Môquet to his mother just before he was executed by the Gestapo in 1941 with twenty-six of his unfortunate companions was read out. Sarkozy announced that henceforth the reading of the letter would become compulsory in classrooms at the beginning of every school year. The first lines are well known: "My darling little mother, my adored little brother, my beloved little father, I am going to die!" It was through the pathos of this farewell that the French president chose to articulate the consensual voice of "national identity," devoting the new Ministry of Immigration to the celebration of this concept. When this controversial measure was implemented, the Réseau éducation sans frontières (Education without Borders Network, a French nongovernmental organization supporting illegal immigrant children and their parents) denounced the policy of expelling foreigners without residence rights implemented by this same ministry, stating: "If we are to be worthy of the 27 [Resistance fighters including Môquet] who died at Chateaubriant, we have to oppose the hounding of undocumented immigrants." See http://www.republique-des-lettres.fr/1644-nicolas-sarkozy.php, http://www.lepost.fr/article/2007/10/22/1040150_lecture-de-la-lettre-de-guy-moquet-resf-vs-dati.html, and Éric Fassin's article "Guy Môquet et le théâtre politique des émotions" [Guy Môquet and the political theater of emotions], *Mouvements,* October 21, 2007, http://www.mouvements.info/spip.php?article186 (all three consulted in February 2010).

24. The opposition between two publications by French moral philosophers that appeared in the same year clearly reveals this tension. Emmanuel

Renault's *Souffrances sociales* [Social suffering] (2008) offers an example of the first attitude: he documents the suffering produced by society and defends those who strive to relieve it. Extending the work of Christophe Dejours, he sees the "neoliberal" organization of labor as the source of this new "social pathology." In his view the historicity of the category and the politics that it mobilizes is without object. Myriam Revault d'Allonnes's *L'homme compassionel* [Compassionate man] (2008) illustrates the second stance. The author questions the routine adoption of the language of suffering, and following Hannah Arendt, sees the "politics of pity" as denaturing the sentiment of humanity, and "compassionate democracy" as a form of contemporary devotion in the public space. In her perspective, emotions form part of a political theater.

25. See Bourdieu (1999 [1993]: 4 and 614); in this book, the sociologist moves from an analysis of the social reproduction of inequality to a study of the "poverty of position," for the victims of which "the experience is no doubt all the more painful when the world in which they participate just enough to feel their relatively low standing is higher in social space overall," and he re-places the objectivation of objectivation, which was formerly the keystone of his method, with the subjectivation of subjectivities, following a "conversion of the way we look," described as a genuinely "benevolent disposition" to the "sufferings" of his informants.

26. See Boltanski (1999 [1993]: xiv and 179–182); after developing a distanced approach throughout the book, the sociologist significantly ends by unexpectedly bursting into the political arena in defense of humanitarianism and particularly of its hero Bernard Kouchner, who ironically became a few years later Nicolas Sarkozy's minister and was therefore associated with the French president's infamous policy against immigrants and the Roma. "Criticism is easy, but art is difficult," writes Boltanski. "It is therefore fitting to ask the critics what they want and what they propose. Those to whom we have referred do not tell us clearly." And for good measure, he does not hesitate to compare these critics of humanitarianism with "the young members of *Action française*" (a far-right movement of the 1930s in France) who, in another era, also denounced the excessive use of pity in the public space.

27. See the pioneering work of Larry Minear and Thomas Weiss (1992), Nicholas Wheeler (2000) on "humanitarian intervention in international society," and Mark Duffield (2001) on the "new humanitarianism in global governance," and the considerable literature published since.

28. Among those holding the formalist view, significant writings include Stanley Hoffmann's (1996) work on the "ethics of humanitarian intervention" and Hugo Slim's (2002) on "humanitarian philosophy": both propose ways of making so-called humanitarian intervention, particularly on the part of states, better—that is to say, essentially more legitimate. Representative examples of the critical position include the analyses of Anne Orford (1999) on "muscular humanitarianism" and Vanessa Pupavac (2001) on "therapeutic governance": the former sees the very principle of intervention without the sanction of

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international law as problematic, while the latter is interested in the mobiliza-
tion of psychiatric categories such as posttraumatic stress in the description of
violence and in the effects of the pathologization of victims of war.

29. With the help of Save the Children, political scientist Alex de Waal (2005
[1989]) has studied the famine in Darfur and the difficulties of intervening to
combat it. Reviewing her experience as head of mission for Médecins Sans
Frontières, Fiona Terry (2002) proposes in parallel an analysis of the paradoxes
of humanitarian action, particularly around the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda.

30. The anthology edited by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois
(2004) offers numerous revealing examples of the changes at work in North
American anthropology.

31. See Mariella Pandolfi's "Laboratory of Intervention" (2008). In a more
recent text (2010), she discusses the permanent state of emergency that is pre-
vailing in contemporary conflicts.

32. See Peter Redfield's "Doctors, Borders and Life in Crisis" (2005). In a
later essay (2010), he underlines the specificity of humanitarian intervention
in contexts of abandonment rather than war or disaster.

33. As Richard Rechtman and I (2009 [2007]) did in our study of trauma
when we explored the political uses of this category in the South of France
after an industrial disaster, in the Palestinian Territories during the Second
Intifada, and among asylum seekers soliciting a refugee status in Europe.

34. In a similar vein, Signe Howell (1997) brought together a series of case
studies of local moralities in the United Kingdom, Zimbabwe, Argentina,
Mexico, Mongolia, North Yemen, and Papua New Guinea.

35. Returning to the formula of the collection I edited with Alban Bensa
(2008) to show the epistemological but also ethical problems of the politics of
fieldwork today.

36. Introducing his seminar at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences
Sociales, Pierre Bourdieu, in his dialogue with Loïc Wacquant (1992: 220–
221), stated: "The *summum* of the art, in the social sciences, is, in my eyes, to
be capable of engaging very high 'theoretical' stakes by means of very precise
and often apparently very mundane, if not derisory, empirical objects." Using
the certificate of schooling as a basis for "studying the effects of the monopoly
of the state over the means of legitimate symbolic violence," he added: "What
counts, in reality, is the rigor of the *construction* of the object. The power of
a mode of thinking never manifests itself more clearly than in its capacity to
constitute socially insignificant objects into scientific objects."

CHAPTER 1

1. See the volume edited by Joëlle Affichard and Jean-Baptiste de Foucauld
(1992) for the Commissariat Général du Plan (General Planning Commission).
The expression "fracture sociale," adopted by Jacques Chirac, has been attrib-
uted to demographer Emmanuel Todd or to philosopher Marcel Gauchet, an-

33. As Michael Pollak (1990) writes in relation to the interviews he conducted with three women who escaped Nazi concentration and extermination camps.

34. In the chapter "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man" (Arendt 1951).

35. To use the phrase coined by Allen Feldman (1994: 407), who seeks to analyze how this massification is also constructed through the images disseminated by the media.

36. As Talal Asad (1997: 289) emphasizes, distinguishing clearly between the idea (which he does not agree with) that "civilization" has led to a decline in torture, and the idea (which he defends) that torture is declared "uncivilized," leading to the practice of it becoming secret.

37. This tragic story was publicized by Simone Fluhr, who supported the young man through the asylum request process and brought together all the elements of his application after his death: "En mémoire de Mr. Elanchelvan Rajendram," *Recueil Alexandries, Collections Reflets,* May 2007, http://terra.rezo.net/article572.html (consulted in February 2010).

CHAPTER 5

1. See "Un non-lieu pour des gens de non-droit" [A non-place for people with non-rights], report of a study carried out by the Comité catholique contre la faim et pour le développement (Catholic Committee against Hunger and for Development, CCFD), the Service oecuménique d'entraide (Ecumenical Service for Solidarity, CIMADE), the Groupe d'information et de soutien aux immigrés (Immigrant Information and Support Group, GISTI), the Syndicat des avocats de France (French Lawyers' Union, SAF), and the Syndicat de la magistrature (Magistrates' Union, SM) on October 12 and 13, 2000: "We describe it as a 'camp' rather than a 'center' because of the living conditions prevailing there and the uncertain legal status of this 'thing' which has no precedent other than the camps for Spanish Republicans in the late 1930s" (http://www.gisti.org/spip.php?article655, consulted in February 2010).

2. Sarkozy continued to refer back to this decision in the period that followed. Returning to Calais three years later, he declared: "Sangatte will hold a very important place in my life in government office." When he stood for election to the French presidency, he made the camp the symbol of his courageous stand on immigration control, stating at a press conference on December 11, 2006: "In 2002, the sinister Sangatte hangar was recognized throughout Europe as a symbol of the Jospin government's laxity and irresponsibility on immigration. There were two or three thousand migrants crammed in there, in conditions unworthy of our country, hoping to get to the United Kingdom." See http://discours.vie-publique.fr/notices/063004436.html (consulted in May 2011).

3. See, for example, "Fermer le camp ne résoudrait pas la question des réfugiés" [Closing the camp would not solve the refugee problem], *Le Monde,*

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May 30, 2002, and "Le camp de la Croix-Rouge doit fermer fin décembre" [Red Cross camp to close at the end of December], *Libération*, December 3, 2002.

4. I reconstructed it on the basis of interviews with local people and an analysis of the local press. See also "Des milliers de fantômes en camp" [A camp full of thousands of ghosts], summary of study visit by CCFD, Cimade, Gisti, SAF, and SM on October 12 and 13, 2000, http://www.gisti.org/spip.php?article654 (consulted in February 2010).

5. In his *Indo-European Language and Society*, Émile Benveniste (1973) explains his method: "The vocabulary of Indo-European institutions holds important problems, the terms of which have in some cases not yet been posed. They can be discerned through the revealing words of an institution whose traces can often only be glimpsed fleetingly in a given language."

6. In his seminar at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales of January 10, 1996, titled "The Foreigner Question" (Derrida 2000 [1997]: 53–54).

7. It is worth remembering that the rate of refugee status accepted by the Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et des Apatrides (French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons, Ofpra) fell from 95% in 1976 to 7.8% in 2006. For an analysis of the discourse of legal differentiation in the 1990s, see the collection *Les lois de l'inhospitalité* [The laws of inhospitality], which I coedited with Alain Morice and Catherine Quiminal (1997). For a discussion of the politics of legitimate discrimination in the first decade of the twenty-first century, see the collection edited by Claire Rodier and Emmanuel Terray (2008).

8. The empirical approach of this chapter involved an analysis of the press, a series of interviews, and an observation in the center of Sangatte, but it was also an endeavor to include the treatment of the issues at stake via cinematographic and performing arts.

9. For a study of Zapi 3 (Zone d'attente pour personnes en instance), the waiting zone for persons pending decision on their application for entry at Roissy where foreign arrivals holding documents not considered valid are held while their case is investigated in more depth and a decision is made, usually to send them back to their country, see Makaremi (2009).

10. Henri Courau, a Red Cross member at the time, who was studying for a doctorate in anthropology, expressed his disappointment in the July 2002 issue of *Forced Migration Review:* http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR14/fmr14.9.pdf (consulted in February 2010).

11. See *Dignity or Exploitation: The Choice Is in Your Hands*, International Organization for Migration, 8 pages, http://www.gisti.org/dossiers/sangatte/documents/index.html#dignity (consulted in February 2009).

12. For detailed statistics about the center, see the study based on the data from the Red Cross conducted by Romain Liagre and Frédéric Dumont (2005).

13. Following this incident, even Eurotunnel, the company running the Channel Tunnel, called for the Sangatte center to be closed. See Rebecca Pave-

ley, "500 Immigrants Storm Chunnel," *MailOnline,* http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-91930/500-immigrants-storm-Chunnel.html (consulted in February 2010).

14. In her book on Haiti, Erica Caple James (2010) gives a gripping account of the insecure conditions in Port-au-Prince and the indefinable boundary between civil and political violence.

15. Ofpra's annual report of activities for 2001 notes: "Applications from Haitians, which have increased by 45%, constitute the third largest proportion of asylum seekers. Of 2,713 cases logged, 324 came from the Cayenne Prefecture in French Guyana [a territory where many Haitians fleeing their country try to find refuge]. In view of the remoteness of this office and the consistently high number of applications (which were given priority), Ofpra organized a two-week mission to examine cases in June 2001, backed up by video interviews and a second series of video interviews in September. These interviews showed that the requests for asylum were largely unfounded under the terms of the Geneva Convention, since they related essentially to the general lack of security but also to economic difficulties." It is likely that Marie's account was interpreted in terms of general lack of security and economic hardship. Moreover, rape is a crime known to be virtually impossible to prove very long after the event—although the subsequent development of this case tragically offers a corrective to that assumption (http://www.ofpra.gouv.fr/documents/OFPRA_Rapport_2001.pdf, consulted in February 2010).

16. As demonstrated by the memo drawn up by Françoise Galabru, technical adviser at the Department for Population and Migration, on the impact of Article 12a11 of the ordinance of November 2, 1945, amended by the law of 1998 relating to the entry and residence of foreigners in France, a year after it was introduced. See unpublished and untitled document, Department for Population and Migration, June 26, 2000, 10 pages.

17. See the report by the French Senate Enquiry Committee, which includes minutes of the hearings organized during 1998: http://www.senat.fr/rap/l97-47021/l97-47021_mono.html (consulted in February 2010).

18. In *Homo Sacer* (1998 [1995]: 4), Agamben interprets Aristotle's uses of *bios* and *zoē* to make this distinction foundational of his theory of biopolitics. Reformulating Michel Foucault's concept, he writes that "the entry of *zoē* into the sphere of the *polis*—the politicization of bare life as such—constitutes the decisive event of modernity and signals a radical transformation of the political-philosophical categories of classical thought."

19. This story is recounted in an article I wrote on the "social condition" of immigrants with AIDS (2001): it represents an ideal-type of the figure of the "legitimate body."

20. The concept of "biological citizenship," introduced by Adriana Petryna (2002) in relation to the victims of the Chernobyl explosion who were given social rights provided they could demonstrate the pathological consequences

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of the accident, is useful in thinking about the situation of the sick given resi-
dence rights on the sole basis of their diseased body, as long as we do not lose
sight of the fact that ultimately—and ironically—what is acquired is a social
citizenship.

21. Quotations from Bertrand Delanoë and Philippe Seguin, at that time
respectively Socialist and Conservative candidates for the mayoralty of Paris.
Opposite—and hence more expected—opinions were of course voiced; for ex-
ample, by the former right-wing minister of the interior Charles Pasqua, who
pejoratively qualified the Cambodians as "economic refugees" and said that to
welcome them would "open the floodgates." Conversely, Marie-Georges Buf-
fet, general secretary of the Communist Party, expressed sympathy for "these
people driven by poverty and lack of status." All quotations from articles in *Le
Monde* on February 18, 19, 20, 21, and 23, 2001.

22. The poll was conducted by Conseil sondage analyses (CSA) on Febru-
ary 21 and 22, 2001: http://www.csa.eu/multimedia/data/sondages/data2001/
opi20010221a.htm (consulted in May 2011).

23. The dramatic developments of this contemporary Exodus have been
recounted by Solenn de Royer (2002).

24. See Pierre Georges, "Épuration clandestine?" [Purging the illegals?],
Le Monde, February 22, 2001. See also the opinion column by Nathalie Ferré,
then chair of GISTI, "Europe et l'exil" [Europe and exile], *L'Humanité,* Febru-
ary 23, 2001.

25. See "Droit d'asile" [Right to asylum], editorial, *Le Monde,* February
22, 2001: "In terms of government responsibility, the concern expressed by
the Prime Minister and other Socialist ministers was no doubt legitimate. But
it could not hide their inability to find the words of humanity and generosity
one would have expected in such a situation. The discourse on the refusal to
accept all the misery of the world is one thing. The instinctive reaction when
this misery is suddenly presented in the flesh, with the terrible image of the
shipwrecked ship and its human cargo, is another." Thus instincts are mingled
with emotion.

26. Quoting John Hope Simpson, Arendt (1951) also emphasizes that despite
all efforts to draw legal distinctions between the two categories, "in practice, all
refugees are stateless."

27. One Iranian actor in the company explained: "We committed ourselves
to testify for the refugees. They are always in my mind as we are improvising."
Another, Russian, said: "Here I've seen the living history of the world today
emerge through the body, the gaze, the soul. The actors reconstituted the refu-
gees' accounts with love. Sometimes I can't act any more, I'm so moved by the
testimony. The boundary between real world and theater disappears for me."
See "Le Théâtre du Soleil porte la voix des réfugiés" [The Théâtre du Soleil car-
ries the voice of refugees], *Le Monde,* April 1, 2003.

28. In Australia, however, the distinction was emphasized and the treat-
ment of the survivors of the *East Sea* contrasted with the rejection of the pas-

sengers on the *Tampa*. Former prime minister Malcolm Fraser declared in 2001, at a conference at the University of Perth: "Recently, when 1,000 Kurdish refugees were beached on the southern French coast, we saw a French Minister moving to the place to see that the refugees were properly treated. . . . It was a humane and sympathetic approach. The refugees were treated with dignity and esteem. On Australia's record of recent times, our reaction would have been very different." See http://www.safecom.org.au/detention. htm (consulted in February 2010).

29. Significantly, Smaïn Laacher, author of the only monograph on Sangatte (2002), referred to it as a "center" in his book, which resulted from a study funded by the Red Cross in 2001, and as a "camp" in the title of his lecture for the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in 2003. His vocabulary was more prudent in front of his funders than with human rights activists.

30. This route of investigation has been the subject of an illuminating exploration by Marc Bernardot and Isabelle Deguines: "The whole collective memory of the village of Sangatte seems to be called into question. The village archives have been neglected and are incomplete. Do the inhabitants of Sangatte have something to forget? One might well wonder, for although it has not been mentioned in interviews with residents or in the very many articles devoted to the center, Sangatte has already been home to a camp, but a Nazi camp, in 1942. . . . One cannot help thinking that the installation of the Red Cross center on the same sea front, opposite the farm that served as the Nazi camp, must have contributed to reviving ghosts and old wounds." See "Cohabiter à Sangatte" [Cohabiting in Sangatte], *Plein Droit*, 2003, 58, http://www.gisti.org/doc/plein-droit/58/cohabiter.html (consulted in February 2010). There is a parallel that can be drawn with the disappearance of all traces of the infamous Second World War French transit camp portrayed in Arnaud des Pallières's 1997 film *Drancy Avenir*, in which a history student seeks out this invisible and forgotten site of memory.

31. The pioneering studies by Liisa Malkki (1995) and Jennifer Hyndman (2000), on refugee camps in Tanzania and Kenya, respectively, come to mind.

32. This structural analysis is not, for Peschanski (2002: 97), contradictory with historical and political differentiations between Republican, Nazi, Vichy, and Liberation camps.

33. It is developed in *Homo Sacer* (1998 [1995]: 166 and 174), where he reviews the genealogy of camps from those set up by the Spanish in Cuba in 1896 and the British in South Africa in 1901.

34. In an attempt to clarify his position and discard some misunderstandings, Giorgio Agamben (2009) published a short piece to answer the question, "What is a paradigm?" stating that the parallels he had drawn did not mean to be historiographical accounts. However, most of his followers have been more literal in their interpretation of the continuity between the various forms of camps.

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35. Agier (2004). Although in this article Agier assimilates the different forms of internment, his primary aim is to show the continued presence of a political life in these camps where refugees appear reduced to bare life.

36. At the end of *Homo Sacer* (1998: 188) Agamben asserts: "There is no return from the camps to classical politics." And at the beginning of *State of Exception* (2005: 4), he writes in relation to the Guantánamo detainees: "The only thing to which it could possibly be compared is the legal situation of the Jews in the Nazi *Lager*, who, along with their citizenship, had lost every legal identity."

37. In his book on camps, Marc Bernardot (2008: 119) takes a similar approach, distinguishing camps where the aim is repression from those whose function is principally to protect.

38. In *Hatred of Democracy* (2006: 51 and 27), Rancière asserts: "The democratic scandal simply consists in revealing this: there will never be, under the name of politics, a single principle of the community." He also criticizes the " 'democratic' equivalence of everything" that permits "all phenomena to be placed on one and the same plane in being related to one and the same cause."

39. See in particular "La préfecture dément que des policiers aient arrosé d'essence un blockhaus servant d'abri aux migrants près de Sangatte" [The prefect's office denies that police sprayed gasoline over a pillbox in which migrants were sheltering near Sangatte], *Le Monde*, November 26, 2002, and the testimonies of members of Collectif after Sangatte, particularly in the field journal, where the entry for April 28, 2006, begins: "Last night we weren't gassed" (http://after.sangatte.free.fr/article.php3?id_article=7, consulted in February 2010).

40. For this superposition and confusion of internal boundaries and external borders, see the book I edited on the "new frontiers of French society" (Fassin 2010a), as well as the two volumes published without author under the title *Cette France-là* (2009 and 2010).

41. As Zygmunt Bauman (1998: 18) notes: "Rather than homogenizing the human condition, the technological annulment of temporal/spatial distances tends to polarize."

42. See the article by Olivier Clochard, Antoine Decourcelle, and Chloé Intrand on waiting zones (2003), and the statistics relating to foreigners at the border published by ANAFÉ in November 2008: http://www.anafe.org/down load/generalites/stats-za-nov2008.pdf (consulted in February 2010).

43. See the article by Olivier Clochard, Yvan Gastaut, and Ralph Schor on camps for foreigners (2004) and Claire Rodier's paper "Les camps d'étrangers, nouvel outil de la politique migratoire en Europe" [Camps for foreigners: A new tool of immigration policy in Europe], September 2003, http://www.mig reurop.org/article205.html (consulted in February 2010).

44. At the 2003 Berlin Film Festival, *In This World* was awarded the Golden Bear, the Peace Prize, and the Jury Prize. In spite of these awards, however, it

CHAPTER 9

1. According to the president of Médecins du Monde, "Never, before the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's aerial intervention in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, had the level of confusion between war and humanitarianism been so evident. The fact that a man as respectable as Václav Havel could assert that 'the air attacks, the bombs are not promoting a material interest; they are exclusively humanitarian in character' (*Le Monde,* April 29, 1999) reveals the extent of this confusion." See Jackie Mamou, "Au nom de l'humanitaire" [In the name of humanitarianism], *Le Monde Diplomatique,* June 1999. Other heads of state, notably Tony Blair, made use of the same argument. In this regard the evolution from the conception of the war in Bosnia (Pugh 1998) to the vision of the intervention in Kosovo (Woodward 2001) should be noted.

2. For an analysis of this expansion of humanitarianism on military terrains, see the collective book I coedited on contemporary states of emergency (Fassin and Pandolfi 2010).

3. Pointing to the reemergence of nongovernmental humanitarianism during the 1970s and 1980s, at a time when communism's star was waning, Brauman (2000 [1995]) even sees in this new configuration a sort of historical fluid mechanics: "It's as if, during these periods when the ideological tide is going out, humanitarian action comes to occupy the space left vacant by politics."

4. Seeing humanitarianism, insofar as it distances itself from the figure of the nation-state, as a form of renunciation of politics, Agamben (1998 [1995]) adds that the image of the refugee has become "the most significant sign of bare life in our era," and the refugee the "biopolitical paradigm."

5. The most high-profile example is that of Bernard Kouchner, cofounder of Médecins Sans Frontières and then of Médecins du Monde, who became secretary of state for humanitarian action, minister of health, and eventually minister of foreign affairs in the governments respectively of Michel Rocard, Edith Cresson, and Pierre Bérégovoy, under the presidency of François Mitterrand, and in that of Lionel Jospin, under the presidency of Jacques Chirac, and finally in the government of François Fillon, under the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy, following a two-year interlude as head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. But Claude Malhuret and Xavier Emmanuelli also became secretaries of state, in the governments of Jacques Chirac and Alain Juppé, respectively (the tropism toward right-wing of humanitarian workers turning to politics is worth noting). Conversely, Georgina Dufoix and subsequently Jean-François Mattéi, ministers in the governments of Pierre Mauroy and Jean-Pierre Raffarin, respectively, became presidents of the French Red Cross. These are just a few examples of the circulation between the humanitarian and political worlds typically encountered in the French context (Fassin 2007a).

6. See "Guerre en Irak: MSF soigné les civils sous les bombes à Bagdad," interview with Dr. Pierre Salignon by Dr. Michel Janssens, *Impact Médecine,* April 4, 2003.

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7. This study is grounded on interviews, document analysis, and observant participation, by which I mean the type of knowledge acquired via my collaboration with several nongovernmental organizations, including Médecins Sans Frontières, of which I was administrator, then vice president between 1999 and 2003.

8. According to Foucault (1979 [1976]), biopower, or power over life, is made up of two processes of normalization: "anatamo-politics," or the discipline of the body, and "biopolitics," the regulation of populations. I have analyzed how, remarkably given the etymology of the word, biopolitics is not fundamentally a politics of life (Fassin 2006 and 2009a).

9. In this respect I subscribe to Peter Redfield's (2005: 330) formula that the work of the anthropologist is not "to unveil and denounce untruths and violations" of humanitarian organizations, but I believe it is to get as close as possible to their work and issues, including contradictions and aporia (Fassin 2011b).

10. I plan to do this using a methodology combining participant observation, reviewing my experience of membership of Médecins Sans Frontières' Administration Board, via interviews of members within the organization, supplemented by document analysis. This study obviously delimits a particular section of the humanitarian arena, set in a specifically French history (Dauvin and Siméant 2002); the debates were no doubt posed in sometimes quite different terms in other national contexts.

11. See, for example, *Reflections on the US Military's Provision of Assistance During and Immediately After Conflict with Iraq*, Médecins Sans Frontières, February 18, 2003, 7 pages.

12. See *Procès verbal de la reunion du Conseil d'administration du vendredi 28 mars 2003* [Minutes of the meeting of the Administration Board, March 28, 2003]. These monthly sessions are always recorded and later transcribed and summarized. Whereas the Executive Committee is composed of salaried directors and runs the daily life of the organization as well as making most of the important decisions for operations, the Administration Board consists of volunteers who, meeting only once a month and not involved day after day in the issues the organization is facing, discuss and define general political lines. The singularity of Médecins Sans Frontières—unique in the French world of nongovernmental organizations—is that the same person chairs both groups: the president, who is elected and salaried.

13. The comments by Rony Brauman and Pierre Salignon (2003), and the interview with Jean-Hervé Bradol in *Le Figaro* of March 24, 2003, contrast with the much more dramatic analysis offered by the United Nations and Médecins du Monde at the same point. See, for example, "L'Irak en plein chaos" [Iraq in total chaos] in the September 2003 issue of Médecins du Monde's donor journal, which refers to an "alarming situation." The French press had taken a similar line, *Le Monde* referring to a "humanitarian crisis" (April 19, 2003) and *L'Humanité* to a "humanitarian disaster" (May 6, 2003).

14. Pierre Salignon, the head of Médecins Sans Frontières' program in Iraq, stated in an interview with *Le Monde* on May 9, 2003: "Those who attempted to carry out independent humanitarian action encountered enormous difficulties, and in the end we failed."

15. This theoretical model (Agamben 1998 [1995]) has been discussed earlier. I have tried elsewhere (2010b) to show the interest and indicate the limits of this paradigm.

16. The double paradox of intolerables derives from the fact that on the one hand they appear to be eternal values, when in fact they are historical constructions, and on the other they are given as moral absolutes, when in fact tolerance of the intolerable is a routine phenomenon (Fassin 2005).

17. As Laurence Hugues put it in Médecins Sans Frontières' internal journal: "Liberia, là où la vie ne vaut pas une guinée," *Messages*, 2003, 124: 3–4.

18. To use Nicholas Wheeler's (2000) felicitous phrase.

19. "Pastoral power" appears in several texts and lectures toward the end of Foucault's life, particularly in the 1977–1978 lectures at the Collège de France titled *Security, Territory, Population* (2007 [2004]: 114–190).

20. He adds: "On this condition, victories over this politics of the worst, by definition always temporary and partial, are possible" (Bradol 2003).

21. This binarism is seriously challenged when the military kills in the name of humanitarianism, as in Somalia (Razack 2004).

22. In reality we should probably also invoke another comparative perspective by introducing the colonial wars (Le Cour Grandmaison 2005). While in the two world wars the cost in human lives was extremely high, this was true on both sides. It was in the colonial wars that the devalorization of human lives was established as a politics of massacre (as Hannah Arendt recalls, citing the examples of the Boxer Rebellion in China, the massacres of Arabs in the Middle East, and the extermination of the Herero in Southwest Africa, among others). The essential difference from the contemporary period is that the slaughter is no longer justified in terms of the enemy's inferiority or inhumanity, but rather as the price that has to be paid in order to obtain the desired outcome.

23. Michael Ignatieff (2000) offered an analysis of this military doctrine, calling it a "new American way of war." In fact this model is used in all military interventions conducted by Western powers, which can no longer "allow themselves" deaths among their ranks, for fear of losing the support of "public opinion."

24. The official count of coalition losses is given at http://icasualties.org/oif. The British epidemiological studies were published in one of the most highly regarded international medical journals: Les Roberts et al., "Mortality Before and After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: Cluster Sample Survey," *Lancet*, 2004, 364 (9448): 1857–1864; Gilbert Burnham et al., "Mortality Before and After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: A Cross-sectional Cluster Sample Survey," *Lancet*, 2006, 368 (9545): 1421–1428. A detailed report, *The Human Cost of*

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the War in Iraq: A Mortality Study, 2002–2005, by the same authors, appears at http://web.mit.edu/CIS/pdf/Human_Cost_of_War.pdf (all sites consulted in February 2010).

25. The analysis was made by historian Andrew Bacevich, in a forum at Boston University. See Bacevich, "What's an Iraqi Life Worth," *Washington Post,* July 9, 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/07/AR2006070701155_pf.html (consulted in February 2010).

26. Her undersecretary of state, James Rubin, insisted that one should avoid being too idealistic and that we live in a "real world." See John Pilger, "Squeezed to Death," *Guardian,* March 4, 2000, http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2000/mar/04/weekend7.weekend9 (consulted in February 2010).

27. Some media and nongovernmental organizations have tried to produce body counts. See "Counting the Civilian Cost in Iraq," *BBC News,* June 6, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3672298.stm (consulted in February 2010).

28. In his 2003 report as president of Médecins Sans Frontières, Jean-Hervé Bradol downplayed the seriousness of the crisis following the fall of Baghdad in comparison with tragedies in other parts of the world: "The situation was not catastrophic. I have just been talking about Angola, Congo, North Korea, Chechnya, and the difference between serious problems, which are present in Iraq, and catastrophic situations, is clear. Overall, Iraq represented a minor emergency intervention for us."

29. To hide the fact that a ransom had been paid, the Russian security services organized a spectacular fake release, but by asking for the money to be reimbursed the Dutch government publicly revealed the conditions of the release. The latter lost its case against Médecins Sans Frontières, as well as the appeal it subsequently lodged against that ruling. For an analysis of the legal and political implications of this case, see Philippe Ryfman's article "L'action humanitaire en procès" [Humanitarian action on trial], in *Messages,* July–August 2005.

30. In the August 2003 special issue of Médecins Sans Frontières' internal journal *DazibAG,* Harvey highlighted the paradox of relying exclusively on a shifting expatriate staff and neglecting a loyal national contingent: "The turnover for an expatriate member of staff is approximately 2.5 per year. We lack relevance because we rely on people we don't keep in the field for long enough. One of the major advantages of national staff is that they have a degree of distance from operations and ensure continuity of activity. When expatriates leave, national staff remain."

31. "Six Months after Barcelona, Promises Not Kept" was the title of a special report published in 2002 as a supplement to the internal journal *Messages,* referring to the International AIDS Conference that had taken place a few months earlier. It was made up of accounts and testimonies that highlighted by contrast Médecins Sans Frontières' activities throughout the world. Six months later, the president's report admitted that treatment was not usually provided to the local staff suffering from AIDS.

32. Between 1985 and 1998, 375 deaths of United Nations and nongovern-mental organization personnel were recorded, one-third of them during the Rwandan genocide: 67% of the deaths were intentional, generally by shooting, and 58% were of local staff, including 13% drivers and 12% security staff. See the article by Mani Sheik et al., "Deaths among Humanitarian Workers," *British Medical Journal,* 2000, 321: 166–168. However, according to Jean-Hervé Bradol, who at the time was head of Médecins Sans Frontières' mission in Rwanda and there witnessed the murder of some of his Tutsi colleagues: "If you asked the humanitarian organizations for the list of their staff who died in the genocide, 90% of them would be unable to provide it. That gives an idea of what was done or not done to help people when they really needed help." See the special report "Le génocide des Tutsis du Rwanda: Une abjection pour l'humanité, un échec pour les humanitaires" [The Tutsi genocide in Rwanda: A source of shame for humanity, a failure for humanitarians] in the journal *Humanitaire: Enjeux, pratiques, débats,* 2004, 10: 12–28.

CONCLUSION

1. On Durkheim's moral sociology, see his 1924 text on the moral fact (1974) and on Weber's distinction between academic and political vocations, see his 1919 lectures (2008). Franz Boas, the founder of anthropology in the United States and father of the theory of culturalism, mobilized his discipline to fight against racial theories: his public stand against some of his colleagues who had secretly collaborated with the U.S. Army during the First World War resulted in him becoming the only member ever to have been expelled from the American Anthropological Association—which he had founded.

2. The distinction between natural and social sciences, affirms Elias (1987 [1956]), lies in the fact that, in contrast with the former, the latter are produced by humans studying humans, thus challenging the classical epistemological distinction between object and subject. But rather than being a mere obstacle to objectivity, this unique position of the sociologist or anthropologist can be viewed as a heuristic tension between an unavoidable involvement and a necessary detachment.

3. And Foucault (2003: 48) adds: "In what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints?"

4. In *The Company of Critics* (1988: xix), Walzer argues "against the claim that moral principles are necessarily external to the world of everyday experience, waiting *out there* to be discovered by detached and dispassionate philosophers. In fact, it seems to me, the everyday world is a moral world, and we would do better to study its internal rules, maxims, conventions, and ideals, rather than to detach ourselves from it in search of a universal and transcendent standpoint." Thus he stands for a criticism of "insiders."

5. Useful here is the distinction proposed by Thomas Bénatouïl (1999) between the two great theoretical paradigms of the sociology of unveiling, Marxian

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