



Reading Hurricane Katrina: Race, Class, and the Biopolitics of Disposability

Author(s): Henry A. Giroux

Source: *College Literature*, Summer, 2006, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Summer, 2006), pp. 171-196

Published by: The Johns Hopkins University Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25115372>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



The Johns Hopkins University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *College Literature*

JSTOR

Reading Hurricane Katrina: Race, Class, and the Biopolitics of Disposability

Henry A. Giroux

Emmett Till's body arrived home in Chicago in September 1955. White racists in Mississippi had tortured, mutilated, and killed the young 14-year-old African-American boy for whistling at a white woman. Determined to make visible the horribly mangled face and twisted body of the child as an expression of racial hatred and killing, Mamie Till, the boy's mother, insisted that the coffin, interred at the A.A. Ranier Funeral Parlor on the South Side of Chicago, be left open for four long days. While mainstream news organizations ignored the horrifying image, *Jet* magazine published an unedited photo of Till's face taken while he lay in his coffin. Shaila Dewan points out that "[m]utilated is the word most often used to describe the face of Emmett Till after his body was hauled out of the Tallahatchie river in Mississippi. Inhuman is more like it: melted, bloated, missing an eye,

*Henry A. Giroux currently holds the Global TV Network Chair Professorship at McMaster University in the English and Cultural Studies Department. His latest book **Stormy Weather: Katrina and the Politics of Disposability** (forthcoming) draws on a number of ideas and issues expressed in the essay printed here.*

swollen so large that its patch of wiry hair looks like that of a balding old man, not a handsome, brazen 14-year-old boy" (2005). Till had been castrated and shot in the head; his tongue had been cut out; and a blow from an ax had practically severed his nose from his face—all of this done to a teenage boy who came to bear the burden of the inheritance of slavery and the inhuman pathology that drives its racist imaginary. The photo not only made visible the violent effects of the racial state; they also fuelled massive public anger, especially among blacks, and helped to launch the Civil Rights Movement.

From the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement to the war in Vietnam, images of human suffering and violence provided the grounds for a charged political indignation and collective sense of moral outrage inflamed by the horrors of poverty, militarism, war, and racism—eventually mobilizing widespread opposition to these antidemocratic forces. Of course, the seeds of a vast conservative counter-revolution were already well underway as images of a previous era—"whites only" signs, segregated schools, segregated housing, and nonviolent resistance—gave way to a troubling iconography of cities aflame, mass rioting, and armed black youth who came to embody the very precepts of lawlessness, disorder, and criminality. Building on the reactionary rhetoric of Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan took office in 1980 with a trickle-down theory that would transform corporate America and a corresponding visual economy. The twin images of the young black male "gangsta" and his counterpart, the "welfare queen," became the primary vehicles for selling the American public on the need to dismantle the welfare state, ushering in an era of unprecedented deregulation, downsizing, privatization, and regressive taxation. The propaganda campaign was so successful that George H. W. Bush could launch his 1988 presidential bid with the image of Willie Horton, an African-American male convicted of rape and granted early release, and succeed in trouncing his opponent with little public outcry over the overtly racist nature of the campaign. By the beginning of the 1990s, global media consolidation, coupled with the outbreak of a new war that encouraged hyper-patriotism and a rigid nationalism, resulted in a tightly controlled visual landscape—managed both by the Pentagon and by corporate-owned networks—that delivered a paucity of images representative of the widespread systemic violence (Kellner 1972). Selectively informed and cynically inclined, American civic life became more sanitized, controlled, and regulated.

Hurricane Katrina may have reversed the self-imposed silence of the media and public numbness in the face of terrible suffering. Fifty years after the body of Emmett Till was plucked out of the mud-filled waters of the Tallahatchie River, another set of troubling visual representations has

emerged that both shocked and shamed the nation. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, grotesque images of bloated corpses floating in the rotting waters that flooded the streets of New Orleans circulated throughout the mainstream media. What first appeared to be a natural catastrophe soon degenerated into a social debacle as further images revealed, days after Katrina had passed over the Gulf Coast, hundreds of thousands of poor people, mostly blacks, some Latinos, many elderly, and a few white people, packed into the New Orleans Superdome and the city's convention center, stranded on rooftops, or isolated on patches of dry highway without any food, water, or any place to wash, urinate, or find relief from the scorching sun.¹ Weeks passed as the flood water gradually receded and the military gained control of the city, and more images of dead bodies surfaced in the national and global media. TV cameras rolled as bodies emerged from the flood waters while people stood by indifferently eating their lunch or occasionally snapping a photograph. Most of the bodies found "were 50 or older, people who tried to wait the hurricane out" (Frosch 2005, 1-4). Various media soon reported that over 154 bodies had been found in hospitals and nursing homes. The *New York Times* wrote that "the collapse of one of society's most basic covenants—to care for the helpless—suggests that the elderly and critically ill plummeted to the bottom of priority lists as calamity engulfed New Orleans (Jackson 2005). Dead people, mostly poor African-Americans, left uncollected in the streets, on porches, hospitals, nursing homes, in electric wheelchairs, and in collapsed houses prompted some people to claim that America had become like a "Third World country" while others argued that New Orleans resembled a "Third World Refugee Camp (Brooks 2005, 1-2). There were now, irrefutably, two Gulf crises. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) tried to do damage control by forbidding journalists to "accompany rescue boats as they went out to search for storm victims." As a bureau spokeswoman told Reuters News Agency, "We have requested that no photographs of the deceased be made by the media" (Neal 2005). But questions about responsibility and answerability would not go away. Even the dominant media for a short time rose to the occasion of posing tough questions about accountability to those in power in light of such egregious acts of incompetence and indifference. The images of dead bodies kept reappearing in New Orleans, refusing to go away. For many, the bodies of the poor, black, brown, elderly, and sick came to signify what the battered body of Emmett Till once unavoidably revealed, and America was forced to confront these disturbing images and the damning questions behind the images. The Hurricane Katrina disaster, like the Emmett Till affair, revealed a vulnerable and destitute segment of the nation's citizenry that conservatives not only refused to see but had spent the better

part of two decades demonizing. But like the incessant beating of Poe's tell-tale heart, cadavers have a way of insinuating themselves on consciousness, demanding answers to questions that aren't often asked. The body of Emmett Till symbolized overt white supremacy and state terrorism organized against the threat that black men (apparently of all sizes and ages) posed against white women. But the black bodies of the dead and walking wounded in New Orleans in 2005 revealed a different image of the racial state, a different modality of state terrorism, marked less by an overt form of white racism than by a highly mediated displacement of race as a central concept for understanding both Katrina and its place in the broader history of U.S. racism.² That is, while Till's body insisted upon a public recognition of the violence of white supremacy, the decaying black bodies floating in the waters of the Gulf Coast represented a return of race against the media and public insistence that this disaster was more about class than race, more about the shameful and growing presence of poverty, "the abject failure to provide aid to the most vulnerable" (Foner 2005, 8). Till's body allowed the racism that destroyed it to be made visible, to speak to the systemic character of American racial injustice. The bodies of the Katrina victims could not speak with the same directness to the state of American racist violence but they did reveal and shatter the conservative fiction of living in a color-blind society. The bodies of the Katrina victims laid bare the racial and class fault lines that mark an increasingly damaged and withering democracy and revealed the emergence of a new kind of politics, one in which entire populations are now considered disposable, an unnecessary burden on state coffers, and consigned to fend for themselves. At the same time, what happened in New Orleans also revealed some frightening signposts of those repressive features in American society, demanding that artists, public intellectuals, scholars, and other cultural workers take seriously what Angela Davis insists "are very clear signs of . . . impending fascist policies and practices," which not only construct an imaginary social environment for all of those populations rendered disposable but also exemplify a site and space "where democracy has lost its claims" (2005, 122, 124).

Soon after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, the consequences of the long legacy of attacking big government and bleeding the social and public service sectors of the state became glaringly evident as did a government that displayed a "staggering indifference to human suffering" (Herbert 2005). Hurricane Katrina made it abundantly clear that only the government had the power, resources, and authority to address complex undertakings such as dealing with the totality of the economic, environmental, cultural,

and social destruction that impacted the Gulf Coast. Given the Bush administration's disdain for the legacy of the New Deal, important government agencies were viewed scornfully as oversized entitlement programs, stripped of their power, and served up as a dumping ground to provide lucrative administrative jobs for political hacks who were often unqualified to lead such agencies. Not only was FEMA downsized and placed under the Department of Homeland Security but its role in disaster planning and preparation was subordinated to the all-inclusive goal of fighting terrorists. While it was virtually impossible to miss the total failure of the government response in the aftermath of Katrina, what many people saw as incompetence or failed national leadership was more than that. Something more systemic and deep-rooted was revealed in the wake of Katrina—namely, that the state no longer provided a safety net for the poor, sick, elderly, and homeless. Instead, it had been transformed into a punishing institution intent on dismantling the welfare state and treating the homeless, unemployed, illiterate, and disabled as dispensable populations to be managed, criminalized, and made to disappear into prisons, ghettos, and the black hole of despair.

The Bush administration was not simply unprepared for Hurricane Katrina as it denied that the federal government alone had the resources to address catastrophic events; it actually felt no responsibility for the lives of poor blacks and others marginalized by poverty and relegated to the outskirts of society. Increasingly, the role of the state seems to be about engendering the financial rewards and privileges of only some members of society, while the welfare of those marginalized by race and class is now viewed with criminal contempt. The coupling of the market state with the racial state under George W. Bush means that policies are aggressively pursued to dismantle the welfare state, eliminate affirmative action, model urban public schools after prisons, aggressively pursue anti-immigrant policies, and incarcerate with impunity Arabs, Muslims, and poor youth of color. The central commitment of the new hyper-neoliberalism is now organized around the best way to remove or make invisible those individuals and groups who are either seen as a drain or stand in the way of market freedoms, free trade, consumerism, and the neoconservative dream of an American empire. This is what I call the *new biopolitics of disposability*: the poor, especially people of color, not only have to fend for themselves in the face of life's tragedies but are also supposed to do it without being seen by the dominant society. Excommunicated from the sphere of human concern, they have been rendered invisible, utterly disposable, and heir to that army of socially homeless that allegedly no longer existed in color-blind America.

How else to explain the cruel jokes and insults either implied or made explicit by Bush and his ideological allies in the aftermath of such massive

destruction and suffering? When it became obvious in the week following Katrina that thousands of the elderly, poor, and sick could not get out of New Orleans because they had no cars or money to take a taxi or any other form of transportation, or were sick and infirmed, the third-highest-ranking politician in Washington, Rick Santorum, stated in an interview “that people who did not heed evacuation warnings in the future may need to be penalized” (Hamill 2005). For Santorum, those who were trapped in the flood because of poverty, sickness, and lack of transportation had become an unwelcome reminder of the state of poverty and racism in the United States, and for that they should be punished. Their crime, it seems, was that a natural disaster made a social and politically embarrassing disaster visible to the world, and they just happened to be its victims. Commenting on facilities that had been set up for the poor in the Houston Astrodome in Texas, Bush’s mother and the wife of former President George H.W. Bush said in a National Public Radio interview, “So many of the people here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this is working very well for them” (“Barbara Bush” 2005). Other right-wing ideologues seeking to deflect criticism from the obscene incompetence and indifference of the Bush administration used a barely concealed racism to frame the events of Katrina. For example, Neil Boortz, a syndicated host on WFTL-AM in Florida stated that “a huge percentage” of those forced to leave New Orleans were “parasites, like ticks on a dog. They are coming to a community near you” (Norman 2005). On the September 13 broadcast of *The Radio Factor*, Fox News host Bill O’Reilly overtly indulged his own racism before millions of his viewers in claiming that poor black people in New Orleans were basically drug addicts who failed to evacuate the city because they would not have access to their fix (2005).

In one of the most blatant displays of racism underscoring the biopolitical “live free or die” agenda in Bush’s America, the dominant media increasingly framed the events that unfolded during and immediately after the hurricane by focusing on acts of crime, looting, rape, and murder, allegedly perpetrated by the black residents of New Orleans. In predictable fashion, politicians such as Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco issued an order allowing soldiers to shoot to kill looters in an effort to restore calm. Later inquiries revealed that almost all of these crimes did not take place. The philosopher, Slavoj Žižek, argued that “what motivated these stories were not facts, but racist prejudices, the satisfaction felt by those who would be able to say: ‘You see, Blacks really are like that, violent barbarians under the thin layer of civilization!’” (2005). It must be noted that there is more at stake here than the resurgence of old-style racism; there is the recognition that some groups have the power to protect themselves from such stereotypes and others do not, and

for those who do not—especially poor blacks—racist myths have a way of producing precise, if not deadly, material consequences. Given the public's preoccupation with violence and safety, crime and terror merge in the all-too-familiar equation of black culture with the culture of criminality, and images of poor blacks are made indistinguishable from images of crime and violence. Criminalizing black behavior and relying on punitive measures to solve social problems do more than legitimate a biopolitics defined increasingly by the authority of an expanding national security state under George W. Bush. They also legitimize a state in which the police and military, often operating behind closed doors, take on public functions that are not subject to public scrutiny (Bleifuss 2005, 22).³ This becomes particularly dangerous in a democracy when paramilitary or military organisations gain their legitimacy increasingly from an appeal to fear and terror, prompted largely by the presence of those racialized and class-specific groups considered both dangerous and disposable.

Within a few days after Katrina struck, New Orleans was under martial law occupied by nearly 65,000 U.S. military personnel. Cries of desperation and help were quickly redefined as the pleas of “refugees,” a designation that suggested an alien population lacking both citizenship and legal rights had inhabited the Gulf Coast. Images of thousands of desperate and poor blacks gave way to pictures of combat-ready troops and soldiers with mounted bayonets canvassing houses in order to remove stranded civilians. Embedded journalists now travelled with soldiers on Humvees, armoured carriers, and military helicopters in downtown USA. What had begun as a botched rescue operation by the federal government was transformed into a military operation. Given the government's propensity to view those who are poor and black with contempt, it was not surprising that the transformation of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast from disaster area to war zone occurred without any audible dissent from either the general public or the dominant media. New Orleans increasingly came to look like a city in Iraq as scores of private soldiers appeared on the scene—either on contract with the Department of Homeland Security or hired by wealthy elites to protect their private estates and businesses. Much like Iraq, the Gulf Coast became another recipient of deregulated market capitalism as soon as the flood waters began to recede. The fruits of privatization and an utter disregard for public values were all too visible in the use of private mercenaries and security companies hired to guard federal projects, often indulging in acts of violence that constituted a clear-cut case of vigilantism.

Katrina lays bare what many people in the United States do not want to see: large numbers of poor black and brown people struggling to make ends meet, benefiting very little from a social system that makes it difficult to

obtain health insurance, child care, social assistance, cars, savings, and minimum-wage jobs if lucky, and instead offers to black and brown youth inadequate schools, poor public services, and no future, except a possible stint in the penitentiary. As Janet Pelz rightly insists, "These are the people the Republicans have been teaching us to disdain, if not hate, since President Reagan decried the moral laxness of the Welfare mom" (2005, 1-2). While Pelz's comments provide a crucial context for much of the death and devastation of Katrina, I think to more fully understand this calamity it is important to grasp how the confluence of race and poverty has become part of a new and more insidious set of forces based on a revised set of biopolitical commitments, which have largely denied the sanctity of human life for those populations rendered "at risk" by global neoliberal economies and have instead embraced an emergent security state founded on cultural homogeneity.

Within the last few decades, matters of state sovereignty in the new world order have been retheorized so as to provide a range of theoretical insights about the relationship between power and politics, the political nature of social and cultural life, and the merging of life and politics as a new form of biopolitics. While the notion of biopolitics differs significantly among its most prominent theorists, including Michel Foucault (1990, 1997), Giorgio Agamben (1998, 2002, 2003), and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2004), what these theorists share is an attempt to think through the convergence of life and politics, locating matters of "life and death within our ways of thinking about and imagining politics" (Dean 2004, 17). Within this discourse, politics is no longer understood exclusively through a disciplinary technology centered on the individual body—a body to be measured, surveilled, managed, and included in forecasts, surveys, and statistical projections. Biopolitics points to new relations of power that are more capacious, concerned not only with the body as an object of disciplinary techniques that render it "both useful and docile" but also with a body that needs to be "regularized," subject to those immaterial means of production that produce ways of life that enlarge the targets of control and regulation (Foucault 1997, 249). This shift in the workings of both sovereignty and power and the emergence of biopolitics are made clear by Foucault, for whom biopower replaces the power to dispense fear and death "with that of a power to foster life—or disallow it to the point of death. . . . [Biopower] is no longer a matter of bringing death into play in the field of sovereignty, but of distributing the living in the domain of value and utility. Its task is to take charge of life that needs a continuous regulatory and corrective mechanism" (Ojakangas 2005, 6). As Foucault insists, the logic of biopower is dialectical, productive, and positive

(1990, 136). Yet he also argues that biopolitics does not remove itself from “introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power’s control: the break between what must live and what must die” (1997, 255). Foucault believes that the death-function in the economy of biopolitics is justified primarily through a form of racism in which biopower “is bound up with the workings of a State that is obliged to use race, the elimination of races and the purification of the race, to exercise its sovereign power” (258).

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have both modified and extended Foucault’s notion of biopower, highlighting a mode of biopolitics in which immaterial labor such as ideas, knowledge, images, cooperation, affective relations, and forms of communication extend beyond the boundaries of the economic to produce not just material goods as “the means of social life, but social life itself. Immaterial production is biopolitical (2004b, 146). In this instance, power is extended to the educational force of the culture and to the various technologies, mechanisms, and social practices through which it reproduces various forms of social life. What is crucial to grasp in this rather generalized notion of biopolitics is that power remains a productive force, provides the grounds for both resistance and domination, and registers culture, society, and politics as a terrain of multiple and diverse struggles waged by numerous groups in a wide range of sites. For my purposes, the importance of both Foucault’s and Hardt and Negri’s work on biopolitics is that they move matters of culture, especially those aimed at “the production of information, communication, [and] social relations . . . to the center of politics itself” (Hardt and Negri 2004b, 334). Within these approaches, power expands its reach as a political force beyond the traditional scope and boundaries of the state and the registers of officially sanctioned modes of domination. Biopolitics now touches all aspects of social life and is the primary political and pedagogical force through which the creation and reproduction of new subjectivities takes place.

While biopolitics in Foucault and Hardt and Negri addresses the relations between politics and death, biopolitics in their views is less concerned with the primacy of death than with the production of life both as an individual and a social category. In Giorgio Agamben’s formulation, the new biopolitics is the deadly administration of what he calls “bare life,” and its ultimate incarnation is the Holocaust with its ominous specter of the concentration camp. In this formulation, the Nazi death camps become the primary exemplar of control, the new space of contemporary politics in which individuals are no longer viewed as citizens but are now seen as inmates, stripped of everything, including their right to live. The uniting of power and bare life, the reduction of the individual to *homo sacer*—the sacred man who under certain states of exception “may be killed and yet not sacrificed”—no

longer represents the far end of political life (1998, 8). That is, in this updated version of the ancient category of *homo sacer* is the human who stands beyond the confines of both human and divine law—"a human who can be killed without fear of punishment" (Bauman 2003, 133). According to Agamben, as modern states increasingly suspend their democratic structures, laws, and principles, the very nature of governance changes as "the rule of law is routinely displaced by the state of exception, or emergency, and people are increasingly subject to extra-judicial state violence" (Bull 2004, 3). The life unfit for life, unworthy of being lived, as the central category of *homo sacer*, is no longer marginal to sovereign power but is now central to its form of governance. State violence and totalitarian power, which, in the past, either were generally short-lived or existed on the fringe of politics and history, have now become the rule, rather than the exception, as life is more ruthlessly regulated and placed in the hands of military and state power.

In the current historical moment, as Catherine Mills points out, "all subjects are at least potentially if not actually abandoned by the law and exposed to violence as a constitutive condition of political existence" (2004, 47). Nicholas Mirzoeff has observed that all over the world there is a growing resentment of immigrants and refugees, matched by the emergence of detain-and-deport strategies and coupled with the rise of the camp as the key institution and social model of the new millennium. The "empire of camps," according to Mirzoeff, has become the "exemplary institution of a system of global capitalism that supports the West in its high consumption, low-price consumer lifestyle" (2005, 145). Zygmunt Bauman calls such camps "garrisons of extraterritoriality" and argues that they have become "the dumping grounds for the indisposed of and as yet unrecycled waste of the global frontier-land" (2003, 109). The regime of the camp has increasingly become a key index of modernity and the new world order. The connections among disposability, violence, and death have become common under modernity in those countries where the order of power has become necropolitical. For example, Rosa Linda Fregoso analyzes feminicide as a local expression of global violence against women in the region of the U.S./Mexico border where over one thousand women have been either murdered or disappeared, constituting what amounts to a "politics of gender extermination" (2006, 109). The politics of disposability and necropolitics not only generate widespread violence and ever expanding "garrisons of extraterritoriality" but also have taken on a powerful new significance as a foundation for political sovereignty. Biopolitical commitments to "let die" by abandoning citizens appear increasingly credible in light of the growing authoritarianism in the United States under the Bush administration (Giroux 2005).

Given the Bush administration's use of illegal wiretaps, the holding of "detainees" illegally and indefinitely in prisons such as Guantanamo, the disappearance, kidnapping, and torture of alleged terrorists, and the ongoing suspension of civil liberties in the United States, Agamben's theory of biopolitics rightly alerts us to the dangers of a government in which the state of emergency becomes the fundamental structure of control over populations. While Agamben's claim that the concentration camp (as opposed to Foucault's panopticon) is now the model for constitutional states captures the contrariness of biopolitical commitments that have less to do with preserving life than with reproducing violence and death, its totalitarian logic is too narrow and fails in the end to recognize that the threat of violence, bare life, and death is not the only form of biopower in contemporary life. The dialectics of life and death, visibility and invisibility, and privilege and lack in social existence that now constitute the biopolitics of modernity have to be understood in terms of their complexities, specificities, and diverse social formations. For instance, the diverse ways in which the current articulation of biopower in the United States works to render some groups disposable and to privilege others within a permanent state of emergency need to be specified. Indeed, any viable rendering of contemporary biopolitics must address more specifically how biopower attempts not just to produce and control life in general, as Hardt and Negri insist, or to reduce all inhabitants of the increasing militarized state to the dystopian space of the "death camp," as Agamben argues, but also to privilege *some* lives over others. The ongoing tragedy of pain and suffering wrought by the Bush administration's response to Hurricane Katrina reveals a biopolitical agenda in which the logic of disposability and the politics of death are inscribed differently in the order of contemporary power—structured largely around wretched and broad-based racial and class inequalities.

I want to further this position by arguing that neoliberalism, privatization, and militarism have become the dominant biopolitics of the mid-twentieth-century social state and that the coupling of a market fundamentalism and contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of capital accumulation, violence, and disposability, especially under the Bush administration, has produced a new and dangerous version of biopolitics.⁴ While the murder of Emmett Till suggests that a biopolitics structured around the intersection of race and class inequalities, on the one hand, and state violence, on the other, has long existed, the new version of biopolitics adds a distinctively different and more dangerous register. The new biopolitics not only includes state-sanctioned violence but also relegates entire populations to spaces of invisibility and disposability. As William DiFazio points out, "the state has been so weakened over decades of privatization that it . . . increas-

ingly fails to provide health care, housing, retirement benefits and education to a massive percentage of its population" (2006, 87). While the social contract has been suspended in varying degrees since the 1970s, under the Bush Administration it has been virtually abandoned. Under such circumstances, the state no longer feels obligated to take measures that prevent hardship, suffering, and death. The state no longer protects its own disadvantaged citizens—they are already seen as dead within a transnational economic and political framework. Specific populations now occupy a globalized space of ruthless politics in which the categories of "citizen" and "democratic representation," once integral to national politics, are no longer recognized. In the past, people who were marginalized by class and race could at least expect a modicum of support from the government, either because of the persistence of a drastically reduced social contract or because they still had some value as part of a reserve army of unemployed labour. That is no longer true. This new form of biopolitics is conditioned by a permanent state of class and racial exception in which "vast populations are subject to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead" (Mbembe 2003, 40), largely invisible in the global media, or, when disruptively present, defined as redundant, pathological, and dangerous. Within this wasteland of death and disposability, whole populations are relegated to what Zygmunt Bauman calls "social homelessness" (2004, 13). While the rich and middle classes in the United States maintain lifestyles produced through vast inequalities of symbolic and material capital, the "free market" provides neither social protection and security nor hope to those who are poor, sick, elderly, and marginalized by race and class. Given the increasing perilous state of the those who are poor and dispossessed in America, it is crucial to reexamine how biopower functions within global neoliberalism and the simultaneous rise of security states organized around cultural (and racial) homogeneity. This task is made all the more urgent by the destruction, politics, and death that followed Hurricane Katrina.

In a May 25, 2001 interview, Grover Norquist, head of the right-wing group Americans for Tax Reform, told National Public Radio's Mara Liasson: "I don't want to abolish government. I simply want to reduce it to the size where I can drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the bathtub" (Qtd. in Hertmann 2005). As a radical right-wing activist and practical strategist, Norquist has been enormously instrumental and successful in shaping tax policies designed to "starve the beast," a metaphor for policies designed to drive up deficits by cutting taxes, especially for the rich, in order to paralyze government and dry up funds for many federal programs that offer pro-

tection for children, the elderly, and the poor. Norquist saw his efforts pay off when thousands of people, most of them poor and black, drowned in the basin of New Orleans and upwards of one million were displaced. Under such circumstances, a decades-long official policy of *benign* neglect became *malign* neglect, largely rationalized through a market fundamentalism in which the self-interested striving of individuals becomes the cornerstone of both freedom and democracy. This is a politics that wages war against any viable notion of the democratic social. And as Lawrence Grossberg points out, “The free market in neoliberalism is fundamentally an argument against politics, or at least against a politics that attempts to govern society in social rather than economic terms” (117).

The neoliberal efforts to shrink big government and public services must be understood both in terms of those who bore the brunt of such efforts in New Orleans and in terms of the subsequent inability of the government to deal adequately with Hurricane Katrina. Reducing the federal government’s ability to respond to social problems is a decisive element of neoliberal policymaking, as was echoed in a *Wall Street Journal* editorial that argued without irony that taxes should be raised for low-income individuals and families, not to make more money available to the federal government for addressing their needs but to rectify the possibility that they “might not be feeling a proper hatred for the government” (Qtd. in Krugman 2002, 31). If the poor can be used as pawns in this logic to further the political attack on big government, it seems reasonable to assume that those in the Bush administration who hold such a position would refrain from using big government as quickly as possible to save the very lives of such groups, as was evident in the aftermath of Katrina. The vilification of the social state and big government—really an attack on non-military aspects of government—has translated into a steep decline of tax revenues, a massive increase in military spending, and the growing immiseration of poor Americans and people of color. Under the Bush administration, Census Bureau figures reveal that “since 1999, the income of the poorest fifth of Americans has dropped 8.7 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars . . . [and in 2005] 1.1 million were added to the 36 million already on the poverty rolls” (Scheer 2005). While the number of Americans living below the poverty line is comparable to the combined populations of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, and Arkansas, the Bush administration chose to make in the 2006 budget \$70 billion in new tax cuts for the rich while slashing programs that benefit the least fortunate (Legum et al 2005). Similarly, the projected \$2.7 trillion budget for 2007 includes a \$4.9 billion reduction in health funds for senior citizens (Medicare) and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program; a \$17 million cut in aid for child-support enforcement; cutbacks in funds for low-income people with disabili-

ities; major reductions in child-care and development block grants; major defunding for housing for low-income elderly; and an unprecedented roll-back in student aid. In addition, the 2007 budget calls for another \$70 billion dollars in tax cuts most beneficial to the rich and provides for a huge increase in military spending for the war in Iraq (Weisman 2006, A10).

While President Bush endlessly argues for the economic benefits of his tax cuts, he callously omits the fact that 13 million children are living in poverty in the United States, “4.5 million more than when Bush was first inaugurated” (Scheer 2005). And New Orleans had the third highest rate of children living in poverty in the United States (Legum et al 2005). The illiteracy rate in New Orleans before the flood struck was 40 percent; the embarrassingly ill-equipped public school system was one of the most underfunded in the nation. Nearly 19 percent of Louisiana residents lacked health insurance, putting the state near the bottom for the percentage of people without health insurance. Robert Scheer, a journalist and social critic, estimated that one-third of the 150,000 people living in dire poverty in Louisiana were elderly, left exposed to the flooding in areas most damaged by Katrina (2005). It gets worse. In an ironic twist of fate, one day after Katrina hit New Orleans, the U.S. Census Bureau released two important reports on poverty, indicating that “Mississippi (with a 21.6 percent poverty rate) and Louisiana (19.4 percent) are the nation’s poorest states, and that New Orleans (with a 23.2 percent poverty rate) is the 12th poorest city in the nation. [Moreover,] New Orleans is not only one of the nation’s poorest cities, but its poor people are among the most concentrated in poverty ghettos. Housing discrimination and the location of government-subsidized housing have contributed to the city’s economic and racial segregation” (Dreier 2005). Under neoliberal capitalism, the attack on politically responsible government has only been matched by an equally harsh attack on social provisions and safety nets for the poor. And in spite of the massive failures of market-driven neoliberal policies—extending from a soaring \$420 billion budget deficit to the underfunding of schools, public health, community policing, and environmental protection programs—the reigning right-wing orthodoxy of the Bush administration continues to “give precedence to private financial gain and market determinism over human lives and broad public values” (Greider 2005).

The Bush administration’s ideological hostility towards the essential role that government should play in providing social services and crucial infrastructure was particularly devastating for New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Prior to 9/11, the Federal Emergency Management Agency listed a hurricane strike on New Orleans as one of the three most likely catastrophic disasters facing America. The *Houston Chronicle* wrote in

December 2001 that “[t]he New Orleans hurricane scenario may be the deadliest of all” (Krugman 2005). And yet the Bush administration consistently denied repeated requests for funds by the New Orleans Army Corps of Engineers. Ignoring such requests, the Bush administration cut the Army Corps’ funding by more than a half-billion dollars in its 2002 budget, leaving unfinished the construction for the levees that eventually burst. And in spite of repeated warnings far in advance by experts that the existing levees could not withstand a Category 4 hurricane, the Bush administration in 2004 rejected the Southeast Louisiana Urban Flood Control Project’s request for \$100 million, offering instead a measly \$16.5 million. Huge tax cuts for the rich and massive cuts in much-needed programs continued unabated in the Bush administration, all the while putting the lives of thousands of poor people in the Gulf Basin in jeopardy. As David Sirota has reported, this disastrous underfunding of efforts to build the levee infrastructure, coupled with even more tax cuts for the rich and less revenue for the states, continued right up to the time that Hurricane Katrina struck, making it almost impossible for governments in the Gulf region either to protect their citizens from the impact of a major hurricane or to develop the resources necessary for an adequate emergency response plan in the event of a flood.

President Bush did not address questions about the lack of proper funding for the levees. Instead, he played dumb and in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary came up with one of the most incredulous sound bites of his career: “I don’t think anyone anticipated the breach of the levees (Rich 2005, 10).⁵ In fact, Bush was briefed the day before Katrina hit and emphatically warned by a number of disaster officials that the levees could be breached—a position Bush of course later denied (Husu and Weeks 2006, A1). Much of the press viewed Bush’s remarks about the levees as indicative of a president who was simply clueless and indifferent to any information that did not conform to his own budget-busting, anti-big government ideology. But such political and moral indifference is linked less to the narrow mindedness and rigidity of Bush’s character than it is to a broader set of biopolitical commitments at work in a global system that increasingly dictates who lives and who dies in the context of a rabid neoliberalism and a morally bankrupt neoconservatism.⁶ But it is more than this still. The government’s failure to respond quickly to the black poor on the Gulf Coast can be related to a deeper set of memories of racial injustice and violence, memories that suggest a link between an apartheid past and the present intensification of its utter disregard for populations now considered disposable.

Biopower in its current shape has produced a new form of biopolitics marked by a cleansed visual and social landscape in which the poor, the elderly, the infirm, and criminalized populations all share a common fate of disappearing from public view. Rendered invisible in deindustrialized communities far removed from the suburbs, barred from the tourist-laden sections of major cities, locked into understaffed nursing homes, interned in bulging prisons built in remote farm communities, hidden in decaying schools in rundown neighborhoods that bear the look of Third World slums, populations of poor black and brown citizens exist outside of the view of most Americans. They have become the waste-products of the American Dream, if not of modernity itself. The disposable populations serve as an unwelcome reminder that the once vaunted social state no longer exists, the living dead now an apt personification of the death of the social contract in the United States. Having fallen through the large rents in America's social safety nets, they reflect a governmental agenda bent on attacking the poor rather than attacking poverty. That they are largely poor and black undermines the nation's commitment to color-blind ideology. Race remains the "major reason America treats its poor more harshly than any other advanced country" (Krugman 2005, A27). One of the worst storms in our history shamed us into seeing the plight of poor blacks and other minorities. In less than forty-eight hours, Katrina ruptured the pristine image of America as a largely, white middle-class country modeled after a Disney theme park.

Underneath neoliberalism's corporate ethic and market-based fundamentalism, the idea of democracy is disappearing and with it the spaces in which democracy is produced and nurtured. Democratic values, identities, and social relations along with public spaces, the common good, and the obligations of civic responsibility are slowly being overtaken by a market-based notion of freedom and civic indifference in which it becomes more difficult to translate private woes into social issues and collective action or to insist on a language of the public good. The upshot to the evisceration of all notions of sociality is a sense of total abandonment, resulting in fear, anxiety, and insecurity over one's future. The presence of the racialized poor, their needs, and vulnerabilities—now visible—becomes unbearable. All solutions as a result now focus on shoring up a diminished sense of safety, carefully nurtured by a renewed faith in all things military.

Militaristic values and military solutions are profoundly influencing every aspect of American life, ranging from foreign and domestic policy to the shaping of popular culture and the organization of public schools.⁷ Faith in democratic governance and cultural pluralism increasingly gives way to military-style uniformity, discipline, and authority coupled with a powerful

nationalism and a stifling patriotic correctness, all of which undermine the force of a genuine democracy by claiming that the average citizen does not have the knowledge or authority to see, engage, resist, protest, or make dominant power accountable.⁸

Lost public spaces and public culture have been replaced with what Nicholas Mirzoeff calls the modern anti-spectacle. According to Mirzoeff, “the modern anti-spectacle now dictates that there is nothing to see and that instead one must keep moving, keep circulating and keep consuming” (2005, 16). Non-stop images coupled with a manufactured culture of fear strip citizens of their visual agency and potential to act as engaged social participants. The visual subject has been reduced to the life-long consumer, always on the go looking for new goods and promising discounts, all the while travelling in spaces that suggest that public space is largely white and middle-class, free of both unproductive consumers and those individuals marked by the trap-pings of race, poverty, dependence, and disability.

Under the logic of modernization, neoliberalism, and militarization, the category “waste” includes no longer simply material goods but also human beings, particularly those rendered redundant in the new global economy, that is, those who are no longer capable of making a living, who are unable to consume goods, and who depend upon others for the most basic needs (Bauman 2000, 2003, 2004). Defined primarily through the combined discourses of character, personal responsibility, and cultural homogeneity, entire populations expelled from the benefits of the marketplace are reified as products without any value to be disposed of as “leftovers in the most radical and effective way: we make them invisible by not looking and unthinkable by not thinking (2004, 27). Even when young black and brown youth try to escape the biopolitics of disposability by joining the military, the seduction of economic security is quickly negated by the horror of senseless violence compounded daily in the streets, roads, and battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan and made concrete in the form of body bags, mangled bodies, and amputated limbs—rarely to be seen in the narrow ocular vision of the dominant media.

With the social state in retreat and the rapacious dynamics of neoliberalism, unchecked by government regulations, the public and private policies of investing in the public good are dismissed as bad business, just as the notion of protecting people from the dire misfortunes of poverty, sickness, or the random blows of fate is viewed as an act of bad faith. Weakness is now a sin, punishable by social exclusion. This is especially true for those racial groups and immigrant populations who have always been at risk economically and politically. Increasingly, such groups have become part of an ever-growing army of the impoverished and disenfranchised—removed from the prospect of a decent job, productive education, adequate health care, accept-

able child care services, and satisfactory shelter. As the state is transformed into the primary agent of terror and corporate concerns displace democratic values, dominant “power is measured by the speed with which responsibilities can be escaped” (Qtd. in Fearn 2006, 30). With its pathological disdain for social values and public life and its celebration of an unbridled individualism and acquisitiveness, the Bush administration does more than undermine the nature of social obligation and civic responsibility; it also sends a message to those populations who are poor and black—society neither wants, cares about, or needs you (Bauman 1999, 68–69). Katrina revealed with startling and disturbing clarity who these individuals are: African-Americans who occupy the poorest sections of New Orleans, those ghettoized frontier-zones created by racism coupled with economic inequality. Cut out of any long term goals and a decent vision of the future, these are the populations, as Zygmunt Bauman points out, who have been rendered redundant and disposable in the age of neoliberal global capitalism.

Katrina reveals that we are living in dark times. The shadow of authoritarianism remains after the storm clouds and hurricane winds have passed, offering a glimpse of its wreckage and terror. The politics of a disaster that affected Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi is about more than government incompetence, militarization, socio-economic polarization, environmental disaster, and political scandal. Hurricane Katrina broke through the visual blackout of poverty and the pernicious ideology of color-blindness to reveal the government's role in fostering the dire conditions of largely poor African-Americans, who were bearing the hardships incurred by the full wrath of the indifference and violence at work in the racist, neoliberal state. Global neoliberalism and its victims now occupy a space shaped by authoritarian politics, the terrors inflicted by a police state, and a logic of disposability that removes them from government social provisions and the discourse and privileges of citizenship. One of the most obvious lessons of Katrina—that race and racism still matter in America—is fully operational through a biopolitics in which “sovereignty resides in the power and capacity to dictate who may live and who may die” (Mbembe 11–12). Those poor minorities of color and class, unable to contribute to the prevailing consumerist ethic, are vanishing into the sinkhole of poverty in desolate and abandoned enclaves of decaying cities, neighborhoods, and rural spaces, or in America's ever-expanding prison empire. Under the Bush regime, a biopolitics driven by the waste machine of what Zygmunt Bauman defines as “liquid modernity” registers a new and brutal racism as part of the emergence of a contemporary and savage authoritarianism.

Any viable attempt to challenge the biopolitical project that now shapes American life and culture must do more than unearth the powerful antidemocratic forces that now govern American economics, politics, education, media, and culture; it must also deepen possibilities of individual and collective struggles by fighting for the rebuilding of civil society and the creation of a vast network of democratic public spheres such as schools and the alternative media in order to develop new models of individual and social agency that can expand and deepen the reality of democratic public life. This is a call for a diverse “radical party,” following Stanley Aronowitz’s exhortation, a party that prioritizes democracy as a global task, views hope as a precondition for political engagement, gives primacy to making the political more pedagogical, and understands the importance of the totality of the struggle as it informs and articulates within and across a wide range of sites and sectors of everyday life—domestically and globally. Democratically minded citizens and social movements must return to the crucial issue of how race, class, power, and inequality in America contribute to the suffering and hardships experienced daily by the poor, people of color, and working- and middle-class people. The fight for equality offers new challenges in the process of constructing a politics that directly addresses poverty, class domination, and a resurgent racism. Such a politics would take seriously what it means to struggle pedagogically and politically over both ideas and material relations of power as they affect diverse individuals and groups at the level of daily life. Such struggles would combine a democratically energized cultural politics of resistance and hope with a politics aimed at offering workers a living wage and all citizens a guaranteed standard of living, one that provides a decent education, housing, and health care to all residents of the United States.

Biopolitics is not just about the reduction of selected elements of the population to the necessities of bare life or worse; it is also potentially about enhancing life by linking hope and a new vision to the struggle for reclaiming the social, providing a language capable of translating individual issues into public considerations, and recognizing that in the age of the new media the terrain of culture is one of the most important pedagogical spheres through which to challenge the most basic precepts of the new authoritarianism. The waste machine of modernity, as Bauman points out, must be challenged within a new understanding of environmental justice, human rights, and democratic politics (2000, 15). Negative globalization with its attachment to the mutually enforcing modalities of militarism and racial segregation must be exposed and dismantled. And this demands new forms of resistance that are both more global and differentiated. But if these struggles are going to emerge, especially in the United States, then we need a politics and pedagogy of hope, one that takes seriously Hannah Arendt’s call to use the

public realm to throw light on the “dark times” that threaten to extinguish the very idea of democracy. Against the tyranny of market fundamentalism, religious dogmatism, unchecked militarism, and ideological claims to certainty, an emancipatory biopolitics must enlist education as a crucial force in the struggle over democratic identities, spaces, and ideals.

Central to the biopolitics of disposability is the recognition that abiding powerlessness atrophies the public imagination and leads to political paralysis. Consequently, its policies avidly attack critical education at all levels of cultural production in an all-out effort to undermine critical thought, imagination, and substantive agency. To significantly confront the force of a biopolitics in the service of the new authoritarianism, intellectuals, artists, and others in various cultural sites—from schools to higher education to the media—will have to rethink what it means to secure the conditions for critical education both within and outside of the schools. In the context of formal schooling, this means fighting against the corporatization, commercialism, and privatization of public schools. Higher education has to be defended in the same terms. Against the biopolitics of racial exclusion, the university should be a principal site where dialogue, negotiation, mutual understanding, and respect provide the knowledge and experience for students to develop a shared space for affirming differences while simultaneously learning those shared values necessary for an inclusive democratic society. Similarly, both public and higher education must address with new courage the history of American slavery, the enduring legacy of racism in the United States, and its interface with both political nationalism and the enduring market and religious fundamentalisms at work in contemporary society. Similarly, racism must be not be reduced to a private matter, a case of individual prejudice removed from the dictates of state violence and the broader realm of politics, and left to matters of “taste, preference, and ultimately, of consumer, or lifestyle choice” (Gilroy 2005, 146–47). What must be instituted and fought for in higher education is a critical and anti-racist pedagogy that unsettles, stirs up human consciousness, “breeds dissatisfaction with the level of both freedom and democracy achieved thus far,” and inextricably connects the fates of freedom, democracy, and critical education (Bauman 2003, 14).

Hannah Arendt once argued that “the public realm has lost the power of illumination,” and one result is that more and more people “have retreated from the world and their obligations within it” (1955, 4). The public realm is not merely a space where the political, social, economic, and cultural interconnect; it is also the pre-eminent space of public pedagogy—that is, a space where subjectivities are shaped, public commitments are formed, and choices are made. As sites of cultural politics and public pedagogy, public spaces offer a unique opportunity for critically engaged citizens, young people, aca-

demics, teachers, and various intellectuals to engage in pedagogical struggles that provide the conditions for social empowerment. Such struggles can be waged through the new media, films, publications, radio interviews, and a range of other forms of cultural production. It is especially crucial, as Mark Poster has argued, that scholars, teachers, public intellectuals, artists, and cultural theorists take on the challenge of understanding how the new media technologies construct subjects differently with multiple forms of literacy that engage a range of intellectual capacities (2001). This also means deploying new technologies of communication such as the Internet, camcorder, and cell phone in political and pedagogically strategic ways to build protracted struggles and reclaim the promise of a democracy that insists on racial, gender, and economic equality. The new technoculture is a powerful pedagogical tool that needs to be used, on the one hand, in the struggle against both dominant media and the hegemonic ideologies they produce, circulate, and legitimate, and, on the other hand, as a valuable tool in treating men and women as agents of change, mindful of the consequences of their actions, and utterly capable of pursuing truly egalitarian models of democracy.

The promise of a better world cannot be found in modes of authority that lack a vision of social justice, renounce the promise of democracy, and reject the dream of a better future, offering instead of dreams the pale assurance of protection from the nightmare of an all-embracing terrorism. Against this stripped-down legitimization of authority is the promise of public spheres, which in their diverse forms, sites, and content offer pedagogical and political possibilities for strengthening the social bonds of democracy, new spaces within which to cultivate the capacities for critical modes of individual and social agency, and crucial opportunities to form alliances to collectively struggle for a biopolitics that expands the scope of vision, operations of democracy, and the range of democratic institutions—that is, a biopolitics that fights against the terrors of totalitarianism. Such spheres are about more than legal rights guaranteeing freedom of speech; they are also sites that demand a certain kind of citizen informed by particular forms of education, a citizen whose education provides the essential conditions for democratic public spheres to flourish. Cornelius Castoriadis, the great philosopher of democracy, argues that if public space is not to be experienced not as a private affair, but as a vibrant sphere in which people learn how to participate in and shape public life, then it must be shaped through an education that provides the decisive traits of courage, responsibility, and shame, all of which connect the fate of each individual to the fate of others, the planet, and global democracy (1991, 81–123). In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the biopolitical calculus of massive power differentials and iniquitous market relations put the scourge of poverty and racism on full display. To confront

the biopolitics of disposability, we need to recognize the dark times in which we live and offer up a vision of hope that creates the conditions for multiple collective and global struggles that refuse to use politics as an act of war and markets as the measure of democracy. Making human beings superfluous is the essence of totalitarianism, and democracy is the antidote in urgent need of being reclaimed. Katrina should keep the hope of such a struggle alive for quite some time because for many of us the images of those floating bodies serve as an desperate reminder of what it means when justice, as the lifeblood of democracy, becomes cold and indifferent in the face of death.

Notes

¹ It is worth noting how the media coverage of the war in Iraq and Hurricane Katrina differ when viewed from the contrasting perspectives of a “natural catastrophe” and the ensuing man-made “social debacle”. Labeled as a natural disaster, Katrina initially seemed removed from the political realm and social criticism until it had become clear in the aftermath of the tragedy that matters of race and class had to be addressed. The “natural” aspect of the disaster opened the door for media coverage of a domestic tragedy that could articulate dissent in a way that the state-manufactured war coverage could not. In other words, natural catastrophes are not supposed to be politicized in themselves; it was only in the aftermath that racial and class politics emerged that enabled the media and the public to criticize the negligence and incompetence of the government, and, because the event occurred on domestic soil, the government had less control over the way the media constructed the event, particularly in invoking issues related to poverty, race, and inequality. I want to thank Grace Pollock for this insight.

² For a brilliant analysis of the racial state, see Goldberg (2001).

³ Eric Klinenberg in an interview in *In These Times* points out that “Beginning with the Crime Bill in 1994, all levels of government have delegated traditional social service responsibilities to paramilitary or military organizations—responsibilities that in many cases they are poorly suited to handle. . . . [Moreover] they are often designed to operate behind closed doors, and much of the work they do is classified and not subject to public scrutiny” (Bleifuss 2005, 22).

⁴ There are a number of important works on the politics of neoliberalism. I have found the following particularly useful: Anatole Anton, Milton Fisk, and Nancy Holmstrom, eds., *Not for Sale: In Defense of Public Goods* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000); Zygmunt Bauman, *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor* (London: Polity, 1998); Ulrich Beck, *Individualization* (London: Sage, 2002); Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (New York: The New Press, 1998); Pierre Bourdieu, “The Essence of Neoliberalism,” *Le Monde Diplomatique* (December 1998), online: <http://www.en.monde-diplomatique.fr/1998/12/08bourdieu>; Pierre Bourdieu, *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market 2*, trans. Loic Wacquant (New York: The New Press, 2003); Noam Chomsky, *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and the Global Order* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1999); Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism* (Durham: Duke

University Press, 2000); Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003); Henry A. Giroux, *The Terror of Neoliberalism* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004); David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Doug Henwood, *After the New Economy* (New York: The New Press, 2003); Colin Leys, *Market Driven Politics* (London: Verso, 2001); Randy Martin, *Financialization of Daily Life* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002); Neil Smith, *The Endgame of Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Alain Touraine, *Beyond Neoliberalism* (London: Polity Press, 2001).

⁵ Frank Rich notes the revealing similarity between George W. Bush's "I don't think anyone anticipated the breach of levees" and Condoleezza Rice's post-9/11 claim "I don't think anybody could have predicted that these people could take an air plane and slam it into the World Trade Center." See Rich (2005, 10).

⁶ This is not an argument being made only by critics on the Left. Francis Fukuyama, one of the stars of the neoconservative movement, has recently jumped ship and argued in the *New York Times* that neoconservatism increasingly resembles Leninism and that "as both a political symbol and body of thought, it has evolved into something he can no longer support" (Fukuyama 2006).

⁷ See, for example, Gabbard and Saltman (2003) and Beger, (2002, 119-30.)

⁸ See Kohn (2003, 165-92) and Lutz, (2002, 723-35).

Works Cited

- "Barbara Bush Calls Evacuees Better Off." 2005. *New York Times*, 7 September. (Online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/07/national/nationalspecial/07barbara.html?ex=1140498000&en=61560581b40ea782&ei=5070>.)
- Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 2002. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Cambridge: Zone Books.
- Anton, Anatole, Milton Fisk, and Nancy Holmstrom, eds. 2000. *Not for Sale: In Defense of Public Goods*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Arendt, Hannah. 1955. *Men in Dark Times*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Barry, Dan. 2005. "Macabre Reminder: The Corpse on Union Street," *New York Times*, 08 September, 1-3. (Online: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C02EEDD1331F93AA3575AC0A9639C8B63>.)
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2000. *Liquid Modernity*. London: Polity.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 1998. *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*. London: Polity.
- . 1999. *In Search of Politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 2003. *Liquid Love*. London: Polity Press.
- . 2004. *Wasted Lives*. London: Polity Press.
- Beck, Ulrich. 2002. *Individualization*. London: Sage.
- Beger, Randall R. 2002. "Expansion of Police Power in Public Schools and the Vanishing Rights of Students," *Social Justice* 29.1-2: 119-30.

- Bleifuss, Jeff. 2005. "Disasters: Natural and Social." *In These Times*, 24 October, 22.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1998a. *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market*. New York: The New Press.
- . 1998b. "The Essence of Neoliberalism." *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December. (Online: <http://www.en.monde-diplomatique.fr/1998/12/08bourdieu>.)
- . 2003. *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market 2*. Trans. Loic Wacquant. New York: The New Press.
- Brooks, Rosa. 2005. "Our Homegrown Third World," *Los Angeles Times*, 7 September, 1–2. (Online: <http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/views05/0907-24.htm>.)
- Bull, Malcolm. 2004. "State Don't Really Mind their Citizens Dying (Provided They Don't All Do It at Once): They Just Don't Like Anyone Else to Kill Them," *London Review of Books*, 16 December, 3.
- Castoriadis, Cornelius. 1991. "The Greek Polis and the Creation of Democracy." In *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy: Essays in Political Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1999. *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and the Global Order*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff. 2000. *Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Davis, Angela. 2005. *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons, and Torture*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Dean, Mitchell. 2004. "Four Theses on the Powers of Life and Death," *Contretemps* 5 (December): 17.
- Dewan, Shaila. 2005. "How Photos Became an Icon of the Civil rights Movement," *New York Times* 28 August. (Online: <http://www.wehaitians.com/how%20photos%20became%20icon%20of%20civil%20rights%20movement.html>.)
- DiFazio, William. 2006. "Katrina and President George W. Bush Forever," *Situations* 1.2 (2006): 87.
- Douglas Kellner, Douglas. 1992. *The Persian Gulf TV War*. Boulder: Westview.
- Dreier, Peter. 2005. "Katrina in Perspective: The Disaster Raises Key Questions About the Role of Government in American Society," *Dissent Magazine* (Summer). (Online: www.dissentmagazine.org/menutest/articles/su05/dreier.htm.)
- Duggan, Lisa. 2003. *The Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Fearn, Nicholas. 2006. "NS Profile: Zygmunt Bauman." *New Statesman*, 16 January, 30.
- Foner, Eric. 2005. "Bread, Roses, and the Flood." *The Nation*, 3 October, 8.
- Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books.
- . 1997. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College De France 1975-1976*. New York: Picador.
- Fregoso, Rosa Linda. 2006. "'We Want Them Alive': The Politics and Culture of Human Rights." *Social Identities* 12.2 (March): 109.

- Frosch, Dan. 2005. "Back from the Dead," *ALTWeeklies.com*, 28 September, 1–3. (Online: [http://www.altweeklies.com/gyrobase/AltWeeklies/Story?oid= oid%3A151104.](http://www.altweeklies.com/gyrobase/AltWeeklies/Story?oid=oid%3A151104))
- Fukuyama, Francis. 2006. "After Neoconservatism," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 19 February. (Online: [http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/19/magazine/neo.html?_r=1&oref=slogin.](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/02/19/magazine/neo.html?_r=1&oref=slogin))
- Gabbard David A., and Kenneth Saltman, eds. 2003. *Education as Enforcement*. New York: Routledge.
- Gilroy, Paul. 2005. *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Giorgio Agamben, Girogio. 2003. *State of Exception*. Trans. Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Giroux, Henry A. 2004. *The Terror of Neoliberalism*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.
- . 2005. *Against the New Authoritarianism*. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing.
- Goldberg, David Theo. 2001. *The Racial State*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Greider, William. 2005. "Defining a New 'New Deal,'" *The Nation*, 21 September. (Online: [http://www.alternet.org/module/printversion/25745.](http://www.alternet.org/module/printversion/25745))
- Grossberg, Lawrence. 2005. "Caught in the Crossfire: Kids, Politics, and America's Future."
- Hamill, Sean D. 2005. "Santorum Retreats on Evacuation Penalty Remarks," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 7 September. (Online: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/05250/566844.stm>.)
- Hardt Michael, and Antonio Negri. 2004a. *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- . 2004b. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin.
- Hartmann, Thom. 2005. "You Can't Govern if You Don't Believe in Government," *Common Dreams News Center*, 6 September. (Online: [http://www.common-dreams.org/views05/0906-21.htm.](http://www.common-dreams.org/views05/0906-21.htm))
- Harvey, David. 2003. *The New Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Henwood, Doug. 2003. *After the New Economy*. New York: The New Press.
- Herbert, Bob. 2005. "A Failure of Leadership" *New York Times*, 5 September. (Online: [http:// www.truthout.org/docs_2005/090505X.shtml.](http://www.truthout.org/docs_2005/090505X.shtml))
- Husu Spenser S., and Linton Weeks. 2006. "Video Shows Bush Being Warned on Katrina," *Washington Post*, 2 March, A01.
- Jackson, Derrick Z. 2005. "Healthcare Swept Away," *Boston Globe*, 21 September (Online: [http://www.boston.com.](http://www.boston.com))
- Klinenberg, Eric. 2005. *In These Times*, 24 October, 22.
- Kohn, Richard H. 2003. "Using the Military at Home: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," *Chicago Journal of International Law* 94.1 (Spring): 165–92.
- Krugman, Paul. 2002. "Hey Lucky Duckies." *New York Times*, 3 December, 31.
- . 2005a. "A Can't-Do Government," *New York Times*, 2 September. (Online: [http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0902-22.htm.](http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0902-22.htm))
- . 2005b. "Tragedy in Black and White," *New York Times*, 19 September, A27.

- Legum, Judd, et. al. 2005. "Budget: After Katrina, More of The Same," *Think Progress.Org* 21 October, 9. (Online: <http://www.americanprogressaction.org/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=klLWJcP7H&b=914257&ct=1520271>.)
- Legum, Judd, et. al. 2005. "Poverty: A Close Look at 'The Other America,'" *Think Progress.Org*, 19 September. (Online: <http://www.americanprogressaction.org/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=klLWJcP7H&b=914257&ct=1428461>.)
- Leys, Colin. 2001. *Market Driven Politics*. London: Verso.
- Lutz, Catherine. 2002. "Making War at Home in the United States: Militarization and the Current Crisis," *American Anthropologist* 104.3: 723-35.
- Martin, Randy. 2002. *Financialization of Daily Life*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Mbembe, Achille. 2003. "Necropolitics." Trans. Libby Meintjes. *Public Culture* 15.1: 40.
- Mills, Catherine. 2004. "Agamben's Messianic Biopolitics: Biopolitics, Abandonment and Happy Life," *Contretemps* 5 (December): 47.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas. 2005. *Watching Babylon: The War in Iraq and Global Visual Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Neal, Terry M. 2005. "Hiding Bodies Won't Hide the Truth," *Washington Post* 8 September. (Online: <http://www.washingtonpost.com>.)
- Norman, Bob. 2005. "Savage Station," *Miami New Times*, 22 September. (Online: www.miaminewtimes.com/Issues/2005-09-022/news/metro4.html.)
- Ojakangas, Mika. 2005. "Impossible Dialogue on Bio-Power: Agamben and Foucault," *Foucault Studies* 2 (May): 6.
- Pelz, Janet. 2005. "The Poor Shamed Us Into Seeing Them." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 19 September, 1-2. (Online: <http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/views05/0919-26.htm>.)
- Poster, Mark. 2001. *What's the Matter with the Internet?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Rich, Rich. 2005. "Fallujah Floods the Superdome," *New York Times*, 4 September, 10.
- Scheer, Robert. 2005a. "Does Bush Finally See Poor People," *CommonDreams*, 20 September. (Online: <http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0920-28.htm>.)
- . 2005b. "Rotten Fruit of the 'Reagan Revolution,'" *Robert Scheer.com*, 6 September. (Online: <http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0906-23.htm>.)
- Scheer, Robert. 2005. "The Real Costs of a Culture of Greed," *AlterNet*, 6 September, 2. (Online: <http://www.alternet.org/module/printversion/25095>.)
- Smith, Neil. 2005. *The Endgame of Globalization*. New York: Routledge.
- Touraine, Alain. 2001. *Beyond Neoliberalism*. London: Polity Press.
- Weisman, Jonathan. 2006. "Budget Plan Assumes Too Much, Demands Too Little." *Washington Post*, 7 February, A10.
- Zizek, Slavoj. 2005. "The Subject Supposed to Loot and Rape: Reality and Fantasy in New Orleans." *In These Times*, 20 October. (Online: www.inthesetimes.com/site/main/article/2361/.)