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## Introduction

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## Introduction

### Cristina Beltrán and Kennan Ferguson

Trauma, fortification, humans and machines, the grammar of myth and memory, the limits of state power, and the excitement and anguish of embodiment. This issue of *Theory & Event* (Volume 22, Number 4) takes up questions of sovereignty and the unconscious, exploring how visions of individual and territorial mastery continue to struggle against alternative accounts of nonsovereign forms of social organization and governance.

In “Nuclear Sovereignty,” Michael Hart returns to the threat of nuclear war, which in the latter half of the 20th Century was held to be the primary issue of international politics: a logic which, taken to its underlying conclusions, would likely eradicate humanity. Where, Hardt asks, has this perception gone? As the focus of international politics has shifted to other issues, such as global climate change, the threat of nuclear war remains, its likelihood perhaps even intensified by the lack of recognition of its possibility. Only by attending to the conditions which make it likely, namely the continuing dedication to state sovereignty and capitalism, can we begin to undercut the hold that nuclear weapons have on our world.

“The Myth of What We Can Take In: Global Migration and the ‘Receptive Capacity of the Nation-State’” similarly investigates the psychic hold of international politics. Michelle Ty draws on Freud to explore the affinities between psychoanalytic accounts of fortification and contemporary depictions of migrants as uncontrollable natural phenomenon—a flood whose tidal force “must” be stemmed before it engulfs and overwhelms the European nation-state. Exploring the claim that the nation-state has a “receptive capacity” that is both objective and finite, Ty draws on Freud’s account of receptivity in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* to make visible how such mythopoetic conceptions of Life and survival become susceptible to fascist appropriation.

In a different critique of the sovereign imaginary, Jason Parry’s “An Underwater World of Walls: Machine Sensing, Maritime Sovereignty, and the Aesthetics of Undersea Surveillance,” turns to the simultaneous emergence of militarized maritime borders and undersea surveillance systems. Arguing that the pursuit of maritime sovereignty is a fundamentally aesthetic phenomenon, Parry’s account of hydrophones fixed to the ocean floor allows us to consider not only the wea-

ponization of sound and how the edges of the ocean are being fortified, but also how forms of machine sensing might also create new ways of averting ecological catastrophe by mobilizing technology in ways that recognize oceans as sovereign subjects.

Sovereignty's symbolic structures and dynamics make demands on humans even in the unconsciousness. Through a speculative and philosophical account of sleep, Jon Goldberg-Hiller explores the experiences of collective life. "Is There a Right to Sleep" argues for an acknowledgment of sleep as socially organized and dependent on a collective sense of care and community. Goldberg-Hiller suggests that extending the right to sleep interpellates an inconceivable legal subject—a subject who might help us rethink the possibilities inherent in all bodies, sleeping and awake.

But humans do not have the only bodies in political organizations; cyborgs, too, may soon make up collective society. Turning to *Blade Runner*, *Blade Runner 2049*, and *Westworld*, Benjamin Schrader examines the role of identity and memory in humans and replicants alike. In these renditions of the near future, the experience of trauma -- the disruption of the allegedly smooth functioning of memory, applies equally to soldiers (e.g., PTSD) and robotic humans. Investigating the interruptions and eruptions of memory, "Cyborgian Self-Awareness: Trauma and Memory in *Blade Runner* and *Westworld*" highlights the mechanisms by which states organize our collective identities, while also opening opportunities for the radical reconfiguration of politics.

Offering an alternative to popular media accounts regarding sexual harassment and violence against women, Rosemary Overell's "More than a Hashtag" examines the affective transformations of power the hashtag seeks to index. Exploring the continual references to #MeToo as part of a new global movement of feminists, Overell approaches this discourse of "excitement" through a Lacanian account of *jouissance* powerfully connected to *anguish*. For Overell, such anguished and excited affects regarding the "not-enoughness" of #MeToo speaks to the impossibility of any signifier to grapple fully with the "truth" of the sexual relation. At the same time, such moments of excess and the unsayable have the potential to undo the power of the male Subject.

In "Creating a City to Resist the State: The Seattle General Strike of 1919," Kathy Ferguson follows the logics of imaging politics independently of governmentality, or of proceduralism writ large. The concept of a general strike—one in which all have a part, and the entire polity is conceptualized along class lines—should not depend on a singular organizational component. When workers found themselves simultaneously engaging in two different labor conceptualizations ("two-card" workers, in this case both the American Federation of Labor and the International Workers of the World), this neither limited their reach nor their impact, but instead allowed a capacious notion of

labor with both radical and strategic effects. These dueling but contemporaneous ideals, she argues, allowed for the creation of a new world.

This issue's symposium, organized by Kieran Aarons, investigates the work of Furio Jesi, the Italian theorist of politics and mythology. In it, contributors Giorgio Agamben, Andrea Cavalletti, Enrico Manera, Ricardo Noronha, Alberto Toscano, and Aarons analyze the implications and potential insights of his work. The symposium also includes three previously untranslated pieces by Jesi himself.

Issue 22.4 concludes with four book reviews: Osman Balkan reviews James Martel's *Unburied Bodies: Subversive Corpses and the Authority of the Dead*. Katherine A. Gordy reviews Jimmy Casas Klausen's *Fugitive Rousseau: Slavery, Primitivism and Political Freedom* and Yves Winter's *Machiavelli and the Orders of Violence*. Fred Lee reviews Daniel Martinez HoSang and Joseph E. Lowndes' *Producers, Parasites, Patriots: Race and the New Right-Wing Politics of Precarity*. And Jack Jin Gary Lee reviews Jeffrey S. Kahn's *Islands of Sovereignty: Haitian Migration and the Borders of Empire*.