Introduction: replaceability and the politics of the paradigm

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> My country needs me, and if I were not here, I would have to be invented. (Hortense Spillers 1987: 65)

What does it mean to be replaced, to have replaced someone or something, or to discover oneself to be replaceable? What are the practical and ethical consequences of the distinction between replacement and repair and, more broadly, what are the antinomies that structure the relationship between that which is considered replaceable and that which is deemed irreplaceable? The answers to these questions, this volume shows, register a generalized concern with replacement and replaceability that constellates a broad variety of contemporary cultural phenomena including relations to technology, ecology, and each other as gendered and racialized beings within a globalized space increasingly organized around principles of fungibility. Attending to the concept of replaceability, it argues, reveals structures of thought and feeling that, although variously inflected, link political, social, and aesthetic concerns at different scales and within different domains which together can be usefully considered as a distinctive affective terrain or structure of feeling.

This volume suggests something of the characteristics of this terrain by attending to areas of culture where questions of replaceability seem particularly evident and pronounced. Over the three thematic sections that comprise the body of the volume, this collection explores replaceability in relation to semiotics and the sign, within the operations of subjectification and subjugation, and in psychoanalytic accounts of the subject. Before raising the curtain on those texts our aim here is, by attending to an instance of the current political employment of the language of replacement, to offer a preliminary reflection on the urgency of better understanding the convolutions of this terrain.

In the Summer of 2021, American writer Lionel Shriver wrote a text titled "Would You Want London to be Overrun by Americans Like Me?" It was a thinly veiled exercise in Islamophobia which presented its readers with yet another iteration of the racist conspiracy popularized by the French ideologue Renaud Camus under the name the "great replacement theory". The "theory," that is, that the populations of white majority countries in Europe are in the process of being replaced by migrants from the Islamic world aided and abetted by "replaceist

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elites."[1] Published this time in the British right-of-center, but still mainstream magazine, *The Spectator*, Shriver's version of this theory began by quoting recent figures from the UK "think tank," Migration Watch, showing that "[m]ore than a third of UK births now involve at least one foreign-born parent [while] in parts of London, 80 percent of births are to foreign-born mothers." (Shriver 2021)[2] These statistics, she claimed, were evidence that the white British population – addressed as "you" in the title of her piece – would be driven out by the children of these "foreign-born mothers." Moreover, not only would the "you" be replaced by an imminent "them," but the ability to note and object to this great replacement, Shriver claimed, had already been displaced by a discourse of wokeness: "for the country's original inhabitants to confront becoming a minority in the UK (perhaps in the 2060s) with any hint of mournfulness, much less consternation, is now racist and beyond the pale. I submit: that proscription is socially and even biologically unnatural." (Shriver 2021)

The first thing to note about the "replacement" of the "great replacement theory" is that it is a term with a history, and that that history is one of euphemism. When F. Scott Fitzgerald put similarly racist sentiments into the mouth of the character Tom Buchanan in the *Great Gatsby* in 1925, his chosen term was "submergence": "[. . .] if we don't look out the white race will be – will be utterly submerged. [. . .] It's up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out or these other races will have control of things." (Fitzgerald 1925: 16) Buchanan's hesitation, "will be – will be utterly submerged," makes audible his struggle to find a word that will make the racism of his message palatable to his listeners. As a marker of that struggle, the move from "submergence" to "replacement" in this semantically charged terrain carries additional significance, for, as John Feffer points out, in

1 Rather than amplify the academic presence of Renaud Camus's text through citation or inclusion in our bibliography we will instead practice our own politics of replacement by listing in its place some of the scholarship around his specious "thesis": Eitan Azani et al., "The Development and Characterization of Far-Right Ideologies" (Azani et al. 2020); Eliah Bures, "Beachhead Or Refugium? the Rise and Dilemma of New Right Counterculture" (Bures 2020); Andreu Domingo, "From Replacement Migrations to the "Great Replacement": Demographic Reproduction and National Populism in Europe" (Domingo 2020); Jade Hutchinson, "Far-Right Terrorism; the Christchurch Attack and Potential Implications on the Asia Pacific Landscape" (Hutchinson 2019); A. James McAdams and Alejandro Castrillon, *Contemporary Far-Right Thinkers and the Future of Liberal Democracy* (McAdams and Castrillon 2022); Cécile Leconte, "The socio-political career of the expression 'the great replacement' among right-wing party networks in Germany: The case of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party" (Leconte 2019).

2 For an immediate response to Shriver's provocation, see: Kenan Malik's "To be Truly British, the Country Needs to Stay Largely White. Really, Lionel Shriver?" (Malik 2021); and a Twitter thread from British journalist and commentator, Ash Sarkar (Sarkar 2021).

1925 Fitzgerald was using his character to lampoon theories popularized by, among others, Madison Grant whose *The Passing of the Great Race* (1916) was eagerly read and endorsed by Adolf Hitler (Feffer 2019). A century later the task of finding the right word to communicate a vision of a racial struggle-to-the-death after the genocidal horrors of the intervening years is even more freighted.

The history of euphemism in the "replacement" named in the "great replacement theory" is thus doubled: it replaces terms that themselves functioned as euphemisms for something that could not be directly named even in the 1920s. Consequently, great replacement rhetoric makes us wonder what it is about the concept of replacement that allows people to signify an imagined genocide, and in so doing supposedly replace the memory of historical and colonial genocides from which it derives its emotive force. In this respect, the most remarkable thing about Shriver's use of replacement tropes is that by the summer of 2021, they have become so unremarkable. That the discourse of ethnonationalism and arguments appealing to overtly racist theory, should nestle so comfortably within the pages of a mainstream magazine testifies to the power of replacement rhetoric to capture space within the public sphere of white majority countries in the global north since Camus's publication of his "theory" in 2011. The language of replacement, the appearance of Shriver's text shows, possesses the ability to infiltrate a liberal public sphere which, nominally at least, defines itself by its prohibition on racist discourse (Brown 2019).

Moreover, a close reading of this language reveals that tropes of substitution through inversion are critical to the rhetorical maneuvers deployed by the exponents of the great replacement theory. Most spectacular among these is the maneuver whereby ethnonationalism's own fascist genealogy is displaced onto a demonized Other; whereby intolerance of the Other becomes the defining attribute of the Other in the form of a Muslim imaginary which can be made to yield the figure of the "Islamo-fascist" or the "wolfish" immigrant (Hage 2017: 33–37). So too, it is the simultaneously subjugated and subjugating figure of the "foreign-born mother" who becomes a threat to the self-determination of Western(ized) women by virtue of her own subjugating subjugation. A similar process of substitution and replacement involves the use of "minority" and identity-based discourse to frame white populations (white Britons in Shriver's case) as threatened by forces unleashed by unregulated globalization. And finally, there is the familiar assertion that it is the ethnonationalist political right, in their promotion of intolerance as an Enlightenment value, that has replaced the left in the vanguard of progressive politics. This process of replacement as doubling takes on a distinctly uncanny aspect in the title of Shriver's piece – "Would you want London to be Overrun by Americans like me?" – where the rhetorical address invokes a "they" who are threatening precisely because they will, of course, want whatever

"you" have: to take "your" place in "your" country. However, this threatened displacement is, as such, also a replacement, and thanks to the treacherous non-specificity of the pronoun's referent, "they" are ultimately indistinguishable from the title's "you".

Shriver's text, moreover, serves as a reminder that this identitarian rhetoric of replacement is entirely and paradoxically dependent on the figure of absolute replaceability identified by Hortense Spillers in our epigraph: "if I were not here, I would have to be invented." (Spillers 1987: 65) In Shriver's text it is the replaceability of those "foreign-born mothers" that threatens the culture of white Britons whose lineages "in their homeland commonly go back hundreds of years" (Shriver 2021).[3] In other words, it is the imagined demographic inexhaustibility of an unplaced brown people, "their" threatening capacity to endlessly displace and replace themselves, that is contrasted with that of the white Briton as the product of centuries of breeding translated into culture as tradition. In her invocation of the "foreign-born mother" as the locus of a threat to the native-born Briton, Shriver thus reminds us that, as Spillers points out, ideas of the irreplaceable – meaning in this case, an identity derived from place and a historically grounded cultural tradition – require the constant reinvention of the Other not only as replaceable but as a figure of pure replaceability. For Spillers, it is the bodies of black people, and particularly, black women, first rendered fungible as chattels in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and then turned into the endless repetition of a handful of stereotypes, that serve this function as the foundation of a grammar of American exceptionalism. The same grammar of exceptionalism that ensures that the "foreign born mothers" invoked by Shriver will be understood to be unlike Shriver herself despite her article's conceit that an antipathy to tourists is equivalent to a hatred of immigrants.[4]

If the appearance of Shriver's text can tell us something about the power of replaceability to muster and organize affect, and the power of tropes of replaceability to infiltrate liberal discourse, it is clear that the fears to which these tropes appeal, the fear of being replaced in someone's affections, in the workplace or in the cast of characters recognized in political and cultural discourse, is active within a far wider popular imaginary. The forces that threaten a sense of exceptionalism may be biologically, technologically, or culturally grounded, but they all

3 For the strategic significance of this reference to "foreign-born mothers" and Shriver's use of Migration Watch figures, see the research of Sophia Sidiqqui, "Racing the Nation: Towards a theory of reproductive racism" (Siddiqui 2021).

4 We should also note that Shriver's text plays on the familiar European accusation that critical race studies is a specifically American theoretical tradition that is replacing the critical theory developed by continental thinkers, thereby making Anti-Americanism a replacement for Anti-Blackness.

rely on a logic of replacement. So too, insofar as this dread of replacement is a dread of dispossession, its sources would seem susceptible to an economic analysis, after all replaceability is fundamental to a capitalist economy whose social mode of reproduction, as Marx and Engels point out, is dependent on maintaining an "industrial reserve army" or "relative surplus population" (Marx 1990: 781) that is made aware of its own replaceability. As such, if Camus's appeal to the fear of replacement is so successful in infiltrating the public sphere of late capitalist economies, perhaps one of the reasons for this success is because this fear is already structurally present in a public sphere founded on the precarity of labor. Consequently, to better understand the force of replacement rhetoric, it is instructive to consider how the dread of replaceability is actively managed in order to maintain a smooth-running economy. If we are to understand the power of Shriver's article, in other words, it is useful to begin by considering how replaceability is managed as an aspect of late capitalist, or neoliberal, governmentality.

In this respect it is significant that one of the rare exceptions to the expressions of negative affect evoked by talk of replaceability is to be found in the literature of human resources and career-management counselors. In management discourse replaceability is extolled as a virtue and presented as a means of aligning individual interest in self-advancement with the collective interest in the maximization of profits and efficiency. Thus against the assumption that the employee should strive to make themselves indispensable, online career counselor Lynda Weinman cautions "if you've created an environment . . . where you are irreplaceable, your manager might not be . . . so keen for you to progress to another department" (Weinman 2019) while colleague Joe Hyrkin urges career-minded employees to ensure that they make themselves replaceable: "If you're great at your job, it means you're replaceable, and that's a good thing. You should strive to be replaceable; it's how an organization grows." (Hyrkin 2018)

Hyrkin and Weinman remind us that the politics of replaceability are always a politics of position and their emphasis on the management of replacement captures the dynamic of alignment or misalignment between an individual and a collective. This dynamic of replaceability is imagined to underwrite the process of identity formation more generally, whether the collective in question be imagined as a company, institution, country, culture, or a "race." From the perspective of HR professionals, then, dread of replaceability suggests a misalignment between the interests of the individual and the collective, it registers a disturbance in the circuitry that, when functioning optimally, allows the individual to understand their own replaceability as a contribution to the collective from which they draw their identity.

Collective and individual: Replaceability and the forms of conflict

In more general terms, Hyrkin and Weinman also suggest one of the important ways in which the concept of replaceability works to identify a *form* of conflict that is manifest in scenes of conflict in multiple arenas and across multiple scales. As a form of conflict, the replaceability identified by Hyrkin and Weinman registers a tension between thinking from the perspective of the individual, intent on self-preservation, and from the perspective of a collective where replaceability of the individual is considered essential to continued functionality. The functionality of the collective, as a result, is implicitly portrayed as irreplaceable for the identity of the individual and becomes legible as a measure of value on the basis of which the quality of an individual's participation is appreciated. For a better understanding of the politics of participation at stake in this alignment of the individual with the collective, and its reliance on principles of replaceability, it is useful to turn to Jacques Rancière's distinction between politics and "police." Rancière describes this distinction succinctly thus:

> Politics is generally seen as the set of procedures whereby the aggregation and consent of collectivities is achieved, the organization of powers, the distribution of places and roles, and the systems for legitimizing this distribution. I propose to give this system of distribution and legitimization another name. I propose to call it *the police*. (Rancière 1999: 28)

In the hands of career guidance counselors, the concept of replaceability is, in Rancière's terms, preeminently a tool of the police, and works to prevent any questioning of the scope or ambit of the interests of individual or collective. To rise within an organization, one should recognize and maximize one's replaceability within that organization, should allow one's identity to be absorbed by the organization. However, the very need to make this call indicates that replaceability with its affective load of dread can function equally as a form of what Rancière describes as "politics." That is, as a force that disturbs the consensus around what counts as legitimate within a given system, or the count of what counts. One obvious direction in which to think such a politics of replaceability along these lines is in the need to police what counts as replaceable. The struggle to be recognized as a participant or stakeholder among those who are counted is, after all, written in the histories of suffrage and enfranchisement: Kafka's struggle that is, to appear before the law.

A vivid example of the politics built around this struggle to be counted, or to be recognized as replaceable, is provided by James R. Martel in his concept of "misinterpellation." What happens to the count of what counts when somebody

responds to a call that was never intended for them? Misinterpellation, Martel explains, is "about how people respond to perceived calls (calls to freedom, calls to sacrifice, calls to justice, calls to participation, calls to identity) that are not meant for them, and how the fact that they show up anyway can cause politically radical forms of subversion." (Martel 2017: 4) The "wrong" subject can turn up only because it perceives an equivalence which creates the possibility of substitution, a replace-ability, within the original "call" which had not previously been recognized. And it is a process to which Enlightenment discourse with its insistence on universality is particularly vulnerable: "It is precisely because liberalism not only dabbles in but utterly depends upon untruths, namely phantasms of authority and nature, reason, and orderliness, that it is highly vulnerable to misinterpellation." (Martel 2017: 5)

Martel points us to the example of Toussaint Louverture, who in "turning up" in response to the "Declaration of the Rights of Man the Citizen" and demanding the recognition of enslaved Haitians as belonging to the category "Man," utilizes the principle of replaceability-as-equality at the heart of Enlightenment universalist rhetoric to subvert Enlightenment norms. In "resisting Enlightenment with its own norms" (Martel 2017: 63) Toussaint Louverture exploits the replace-ability built into universalizing thought to claim recognition as one of the replaceable and thereby inaugurates a new realm of policing – firstly in the military repression of the revolution itself and then, as the work of Susan Buck-Morss has shown, in its erasure from intellectual history (Buck-Morss 2000).

However, if for Martel, Louverture illustrates the possibility of a politics arising from the foundational role of the principle of replaceability within the Enlightenment's insistence on, and identification with, universality, it is clear that Louverture also exemplifies the entirely different form of politics identified by Cedric J. Robinson as "the black radical tradition." Rather than reading Louverture as a figure whose demand to "stand before the law" reveals the power of replaceability to destabilize any recourse to universal principle, Robinson suggests we can also read that demand for recognition as obscuring an alternative tradition whose concept of "freedom" is orthogonal to that enacted in the revolutionary tradition of European liberalism (Robinson et al. 2020: 72). That is, rather than placing Louverture within a tradition of politics organized around a liberal conception of freedom, as "freedom to," Robinson reminds us that Louverture also belongs in that fugitive tradition of politics that takes the form of resistance, revolt, insurrection and flight, in which freedom means simply "freedom from". Freedom here means freedom from the terror and violence of Enlightenment; a tradition in which the protagonists are the unnamed women and men practicing a grammar of resistance that cannot be parsed within the political language of

Enlightenment and the series of charismatic leaders beloved of "revolutionary" history.[5]

Ross Chambers, Hortense Spillers and the politics of the paradigm

In helping us better appreciate what is at stake in the distinction between a politics originating in the struggle for recognition and a politics originating in the disruption of the principle of the count of what counts, we have found Ross Chambers's careful exploration of the notion of the "paradigmatic" in the context of queer theory particularly helpful. In an essay titled "Strategic Constructivism" (2002) Chambers distinguishes between the relation of elements within a paradigm (as one of replaceability) and the relation *between* paradigms, which is one of "alternativity". Thus, the paradigm of nouns is in a relation of alternativity to the paradigms of verbs and adjectives, for example. Within this family grouping of paradigms linked by their relations of alternativity there is always an occluded narrativizing principle that is produced by one paradigm having a tacit centralizing role, argues Chambers.

To illustrate this principle, we might stay with the paradigms that make up the family of grammaticality, for example, and point to a passage in Robin Wall Kimmer's book *Braiding Sweet-Grass*, where Kimmerer describes her struggle to learn the grammar of Pawatomi. This entails trying to understand how nouns, like "Saturday," can function as verbs. Her breakthrough comes when she suddenly becomes aware of the centralizing force exerted by the noun form within English grammaticality. Thinking about the Pawatomi verb "*wiikwegamaa*" – "to be a bay" – she has the epiphany that "[a] bay is a noun only if water is *dead.* When *bay* is a noun, it is defined by humans, trapped between its shores and contained by the word. But the verb *wiikwegamaa* – to *be* a bay – releases the water from bondage and lets it live." (Kimmerer 2013: 55) In this moment she discovers the principles that are what Chambers terms "paradigmatic" of two different language systems, and of two distinct ontologies. The *paradigmatic*, in the sense familiarized by Thomas Kuhn (Kuhn 2008 [1962]) is thus dependent on an implicit principle of centralization. It relies on the overdetermined role played by a particular paradigm in relation to the other paradigms to which it is related. Chambers

5 See also H.L.T. Quan, "Geniuses of Resistance: Feminist Consciousness and the Black Radical Tradition," (Quan 2005: 39–53) and Albert Toscano (Toscano 2021).

writes: "[t]he practice of power results in one structural element (for present purposes, one paradigm in a set) being promoted, by a kind of *coup de force*, to a position of centrality, even though as a purely formal entity, a structure cannot have a centre." (Chambers 2013: 174) A *coup de force* that means that all the now "excentric" elements of the structure are defined in relation to the center.

Chambers's distinction between the paradigm and the paradigmatic seems particularly useful in thinking the politics involved in the relations of replacement, replaceability and irreplaceability. If for, example, we were to compose a set of "rights" thought to be irreplaceable, and called them Human Rights, it is evident that the paradigm of human rights exists in a relation of alternativity to other paradigms – the paradigms of contextual rights, or customs – but also the paradigms defined in their alternativity to the Human, and hence to what counts as a Human – paradigms, in other words, which return us to Ranciére's count of who counts as having rights – the struggle to stand before the law.

In Chambers's account it is the function of the paradigm to police which aspect of its constituents functions to mark similarity and difference. Hence, in insisting on the points of similarity of the members of the same paradigm, and difference from members of other paradigms, the policing function of the paradigm also silently produces the paradigmatic, or principle governing Ranciére's distribution of the sensible. However, if replaceability is the principle of the paradigm itself, it is obvious that while the paradigm works to police what can and cannot be replaced – nouns for nouns, not nouns for verbs – the principle of replaceability is itself unmarked and remains outside the sphere of politics in Ranciére's sense. Thus, the epiphanic redistribution of the sensible experienced by Kimmerer in her realization of the paradigmatic force of nouns and verbs in English and Pawatomi respectively, relies on the principle of equivalence and replaceability. We have learned that nouns are verbs in Pawatomi, with world-altering consequences, but the principle of equivalence remains in place. It is for this reason that we return to Spillers' and consider how her account of radical fungibility can help us reframe the understanding of the politics of replaceability at work in Ranciére's account of the political.

Spillers, in her article "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," is also concerned with the policing function of the paradigm, specifically in how an American grammar of identity organized around the patronym breaks down as a consequence of the historical experience of African Americans. In the context of a patronymic paradigm which distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate members of the family set, the heir and the child born out of wedlock, Spillers speaks in the name of those Americans who are the descendants of enslaved people and as such, of those whose relationship to the patronymic grammar was violently severed from familial bonds by relations of ownership. The institution of Trans-Atlantic slavery

and its legacies, she points out, undoes the logic of the paradigm: the enslaved person no longer belongs to any configuration of the family, but instead, as a commodity among commodities, to the principle of fungibility – exchange and substitution – itself.

This radical fungibility ties being black to the polymorphous possibilities of commodity exchange as a result of which not even the categories of gender can remain stable – man and woman are dissolved in the category of the thing. Speaking from and about an historical experience of being made replaceable, Spillers confronts us with the instability inherent in the universalizing gesture of reason – the institution of the paradigm which names equality before the law as the conditions of replaceability. She demands instead that we attend to the violence performed by the principle of replaceability itself. In this she asks us to think about the ways in which the institution of chattel slavery, in turning people into things, disrupts not only the grammar of American identity but of the paradigm as the architecture of signification.

To think with replaceability, then, is to trouble and be troubled by an incoherence in the legibility of the political subject. Within the politics of replaceability elaborated from Rancière, Martel and Chambers, an idea of replaceability inflected towards (radical) equality takes the form of a struggle to make a claim upon the universal. From Spillers, however, we learn that any radical potential within replaceability as the assertion of equality is undone by the violence that makes the same principle of equality-as-equivalence the basis of fungibility. Where Rancière, Martel, and Chambers read in the violence of replacement the possibility of expanding the field of application of Enlightenment values, for Spillers the principle of exchange that aligns the experience of the enslaved with the commodity form prohibits such expansion from the start. Instead, in Spillers's understanding, attention to the logic of fungibility becomes a way of separating subjectivity and being from the humanist discourses that find their roots in the disavowed truth of Enlightenment: the colonies, the plantation system, and The Middle Passage. The disavowed truth that is, not only of enslavement and genocide, but also of fungibility.

The affective terrain marked out by the generalized concern with replaceability thus forms, we want to suggest, around a faultline between two types of politics. The first is concerned with the dread of replacement, hoping to draw on the logic of replacement for overcoming this dread and implicitly disavowing forms of fungibility understood as social death. The second type of political reasoning has been developed mainly within and in relation to Black studies and is attentive to the generative powers of a radical fungibility to untether being from liberal humanist structures of autonomy. This includes work by, in addition to Spillers herself, Saidiya Hartman (*Scenes of Subjection*), Tiffany Lethabo King (*Black*

Shoals), C. Riley Snorton (*Black on Both Sides*) and Zakiyyah Iman Jackson (*Becoming Human*).[6]

Replaceability and the testimony of the perpetrator

To double back over the ground covered so far in this preliminary survey of the politics of replaceability, we have sought to convey an impression of how the affective terrain generated around talk of replaceability is a terrain troubled by its own incoherence – how replaceability in Rancièrian terms at once performs a policing function by asserting principles of equivalence but also has the potential to disrupt that policing function by challenging the count of what counts. Ross Chambers's account of the paradigm and the paradigmatic, then, offers a model for refining that model, and like Rancière, offers some prospect of renewal within the contradictions of replacement. That prospect of renewal, of new political forms occluded by the distribution of the sensible encoded in ideas of the replaceable, founders however, in Hortense Spillers' invocation of chattel slavery as the expression of the violence that ties replaceability to the logic of the commodity form and the principle of absolute fungibility. Each of the articles collected here stays with that trouble in one way or another, but we have found Sara Magno's contribution to this collection particularly powerful in helping us think about how this political and theoretical incoherence informs the specific questions of replaceability raised by Shriver's racist "theories" of replacement.

In her contribution Magno invites us to consider the complex relations between replaceability and irreplaceability with regard to witness testimony. Returning to Jacques Derrida's insistence that "the witness is someone whose experience is 'in principle singular and irreplaceable'," Magno notes that while the irreplaceability of the testimony of the witness as survivor has become apparent in the wake of the Holo-

6 See Shanon Winnubst for further reflection on thinking the entanglements of Anti-Blackness and neo-liberal governmentality: "Objectified into cargo, black bodies are stripped of all access, past and future, to the domestic scene that anchors the colonial-patriarchal system of binary gender. Tethered directly to this un-gendering of black flesh that is the stain of blackness, fungibility has subsequently become a touchstone and consistent trope for a great deal of contemporary black feminist theory. However, unlike the totalizing critique of Afropessimists, these theorists work to intensify the categories of fungibility and multiply the paths and iterations it might travel, especially gender. Driven by a radical commitment to survival, these black feminist theorists explore fungibility wherever it takes them, moving into the open-ended spaces of possibility wherever, however, and whenever they emerge." (Winnubst 2020).

caust, the same is not true of the testimony of perpetrators (Magno this volume). Focusing on Salomé Lamas's documentary film *No Man's Land*, in which the Portuguese filmmaker interviews a mercenary, José Paulo Rodrigues Sobral de Figueiredo, who gives "detailed accounts of his involvement as a hired killer for special military forces during the Portuguese Colonial War" (Magno this volume), she examines the implications of the fact that the testimony of perpetrators is typically treated with mistrust and in need of verification, even when, as in the case of Lamas's film, the perpetrator recounts without remorse or compunction the details of their acts. The refusal to recognize the irreplaceability of such testimony, Magno argues, renders the perpetrator "an ambiguous figure who lives outside of historical records" (this volume). Our inability to accord the testimony of the perpetrator with evidential and moral force perpetuates the atrocity to which he testifies, for it is precisely in the mercenary's indifference to those that he has killed – who did not survive their own replaceability – that we can witness the violence of replaceability itself.

As such, Magno encourages us to ask, what happens if we treat the "great replacement" rhetoric, neither as a perversion of liberal principles, nor as an expression of the intolerance that lies at the heart of liberal tolerance,[7] but as the testimony of the witness as perpetrator. What happens if, instead of regarding it as an aberration that mimics and perverts the modes of Enlightenment reason, we hear it as a confession, as full in its own way as that of De Figuereido? For after all, Camus's "theory" presents a recognizable vision of how the liberal order is encountered by those outside its borders. It describes the mindset of the regime that polices the frontiers of the global North – frontiers among whose many forms of atrocity is the invocation of a boundless elsewhere from which no testimony can emerge and which consequently, can leave no witnesses.

To hear the great replacement "theory" as the testimony of the perpetrator, we realize, means returning to its use of euphemism and recognizing the substitution of replacement for subjugation or "genocide" as the true content of the rhetoric. The importance of great replacement rhetoric is that it specifies that type of violence that is done here and describes it not in terms of the "genocidal" that it also becomes, but as the violence of replaceability that produces the human as commodity from the perspective of the perpetrator. For, as Hartman points out, the distinction between "replacement" and "genocide," lies in both the specificity of the experience of being made fungible – a medium of pure exchange – undergone by African Americans and the birth of the commodity form: "[u]nlike the concentration camp, the gulag, and the killing field, which had as their intended end the extermination of a population, the Atlantic trade created millions of corp-

7 See, for example Slavoj Žižek's "Intolerance as an Ideological Category" (Žižek 2008).

ses, but as a corollary to the making of commodities." (Hartman 1997: 31) It is in the fact that replacement is *not* genocide that the power of the great replacement rhetoric as testimony resides, for in speaking of replacement rather than genocide, it describes with great precision how replacement functions to make waste of human life. Or, in other words, replacement as a euphemism for genocide, which simultaneously preserves and dissolves the fantasy of race as a coherent locus of collective identity, allows us to hear in the great replacement thesis the testimony of the perpetrator which, in aligning human life with the commodity form, fuses their horizon in the category of waste.

It is this alignment that is so horrifically captured by Ghassan Hage when he writes of the "remarkable similarity [. . .] in the language describing the increasingly threatening agglomerations of plastic waste floating in the oceans and Muslim asylum seekers floating around in those same oceans." (Hage 2017: 48–49)[8] As Hage points out in his discussion of the language of the "wolfish" immigrant – the immigrant who threatens to consume the host, the immigrant whose intolerance threatens the host's tolerance – both the Muslim migrant and sea of plastic pose a problem of governability: or in other words, the power of liberal orders to replace. As such he alerts us to the fact that within this rhetoric, irreplaceability returns not as that which is too precious to be replaced, but that which will not be replaced, which refuses to be disposed of. The Muslim asylum seeker and the sea of plastic both confront liberal regimes with the failure of their power to govern, their power to reconcile the interests of individual and collective.

Thinking with replaceability, then, enables us to distinguish between the violence of genocide and the violence of making disposable, between the camp and the border. It alerts us to the need to recognize alongside the irreplaceability of the testimony of the witness as survivor, that of the witness as perpetrator whose truth is precisely the making replaceable of human life. But thinking with replaceability also enables us to reflect on the dread of replaceability as a crisis of the irreplaceable. A crisis that returns to confront liberal regimes with the limits of their own managerial practices, their *inability* to make replaceable and the consequent inevitability of a confrontation with the irreplaceable – whether in the form of people fleeing scenes of environmental and economic devastation, or the refractory materials which in their persistence confront the endless fungibility of globalization with the finitude of the planetary. It is within this nexus of concerns that the chapters of this volume explore the intricate entanglements of the replaceable and the irreplaceable.

8 We want to thank Wayne Modest for pointing us to Hage's image in his opening talk at the "Matters of Care Conference," April 16, 2021: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAGNwksD-SQ

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