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### Part 1 is the killing silence.

### Despite popular opposition and international outcry, the Bahraini monarchy has continued its harsh crackdown on the rights and safety of its citizens. State-sponsored negotiations and human rights investigations are nothing but hollow lip-service given the regime’s attempt to quell dissent with “collective punishment” in the form of deadly tear gas attacks.

Cunningham 8/5 [Finian, Global Research Correspondant and kicked out of Bahrain for his critical reporting, “US and British-Backed Bahrain Regime: the Use of ‘Toxic Terror’ in Collective Punishment,” Global Research, 8/5/2011, http://globalresearch.ca/PrintArticle.php?articleId=25909, AD: 9-3-11]JN

After more than five months of popular opposition to its autocratic rule, the US and British-backed unelected monarchy in Bahrain is deploying a new tactic of repression – toxic terror. Unable to thwart widespread calls for democratic freedom, the Western-backed Bahraini dictatorship is targeting vulnerable civilians – the young, elderly and infirmed – in a bid to crush the pro-democracy movement. Regime forces have launched a campaign of massive, indiscriminate firing of tear gas into villages and homes – with horrific effects. With thousands of canisters dispensed in the past fortnight alone, whole villages have become shrouded in toxic fumes on a daily basis. Five civilians, including women, physically disabled and a five-year-old boy, have died so far from suffocation resulting from regime forces firing tear gas canisters into homes. In such attacks, the dwellings quickly become thick with the acrid smoke released by these weapons. The elderly and weak cannot escape from the lethal exposure. In the last two weeks, state military forces have stepped up attacks on family homes in mainly Shia villages, which are seen as supportive of the pro-democracy movement. “This is a deliberate, systematic tactic of terrorising people,” says Nabeel Rajab, president of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. “This is not just a case of a few officers behaving randomly. We are seeing entire villages coming under sustained attack with thousands of gas canisters thrown into homes by uniformed riot police who ride into villages in Ministry of Interior jeeps. These deadly attacks could only be carried out on the orders of the regime’s rulers.” The Persian Gulf island kingdom, where the US Navy Fifth Fleet is based, is ruled by the Al Khalifa royal family headed by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. He is also the supreme commander of the Bahraini armed forces. The unelected Sunni regime, described by Washington and London as a key ally, has been in power since Bahrain was granted independence from Britain in 1971. The prime minister, 77-year-old Shaikh Khalid bin Salman Al Khalifa (uncle of the king) is the longest unelected premier in the world. Some 80 per cent of the unelected ministerial cabinet – appointed solely by the king – are members of the royal family, as are senior officers in the military forces. Inspired by the Arab Spring pro-democracy movements sweeping the Middle East and North Africa, Bahrain’s Shia majority population took to the streets on 14 February calling for democratic rights. The Shia – who represent 70 per cent of the national population – have long suffered political and economic discrimination under the Sunni dynasty. Both Washington and London backed a Saudi-led invasion force into Bahrain in mid-March to crush the peaceful protests. Since then, military from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have supported Bahraini forces in a brutal crackdown against pro-democracy protesters. The crackdown has resulted in some 40 civilians deaths, over 1,000 illegal detentions, torture of detainees and hundreds of show trial prosecutions held in military courts. Among those prosecuted are doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers and journalists, who have been charged with ludicrous crimes such as “inciting hatred against the rulers” and “subversion on behalf of a foreign enemy” (implying Iran). Some 2,500 workers, invariably from the Shia population, have also been sacked from their jobs. Sporting clubs, athletes and critical websites have been banned as part of the state crackdown. However, the wave of repression – condemned by international human rights groups – has failed to halt the pro-democracy movement. At a recent rally in Duraz and Saar, over 100,000 people turned out maintaining their demand for “self determination” [1]. This turn-out from a national population of only 600,000 is comparable with the heyday of massive popular mobilisations against the regime during February and March. “This shows that the repression by the regime and its allies has failed,” says Rajab. “They have not intimidated the people from demanding their democratic rights.” Rajab, who last month was awarded the Ion Ratiu Democracy Award by the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars for his human rights work, says that the inability to suppress calls for democratic change is why the Bahraini regime has now resorted to a new tactic of “collective punishment” of civilians. “Despite extrajudicial killings, mass incarcerations and routine torture, the regime realises that these methods have failed to defeat the popular opposition. Now they have moved to collective punishment by going into villages and terrorising people with deadly use of tear gas,” says Rajab. Many amateur videos attest to the use of this terror tactic by the Bahraini pro-state forces [2]. In one such attack, 47-year-old mother-of-two Zainab Hasan Al Jumaa died from asphyxiation [3]. The woman, who was disabled, could not escape from her home as it filled with tear gas. A week after Al Jumaa’s death, police forces returned to her village of Sitra on 22 July and repeated the attack on her home. In a video, adults are seen desperately trying to evacuate terrified young children from an upstairs room using ladders [4]. Four other people have died from similar intoxication in their homes. The most recent victim was Isa Ahmed Altaweel (59) who was buried on the first day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan that began on 1 August. The youngest victim was five-year-old Mohammed Farhan. He already suffered from a medical condition and died after tear gas pervaded his home in Sitra. The oldest was 71-year-old Isa Mohammed who died when his home in Ma’ameer came under a barrage of poisonous gas. Ironically, the rampant use of tear gas as a terror tactic comes more than a month after the Al Khalifa rulers declared an end of a state of emergency. This was supposedly meant to signal the scaling down of “security” measures, including the departure of Saudi and Emirati forces, to facilitate a “national dialogue” for political reforms. The US and British governments have hailed the regime’s alleged reform process as a positive step. But the pro-democracy movement in Bahrain has dismissed it as a cynical public relations exercise that has no intention of initiating meaningful democratic change. The recent appointment by King Hamad of an international committee of inquiry into “alleged human rights abuses” also falls into the category of hollow public relations. As one pro-democracy activist said: “How can a regime pretend to be serious about dialogue, democracy and human rights when it continues to kill and injure innocent civilians in their homes?” Bahraini security sources and independent witnesses have told Global Research that Saudi and Emirati military personnel continue to operate clandestinely in Bahrain alongside state police. The Saudi and Emirati military wear Bahraini Ministry of Interior uniforms and are involved in the tear gassing of civilian residences. Another sinister factor is the ongoing military occupation of hospitals by the Bahraini regime and its Gulf allies. Because of this, hundreds of people are not receiving medical treatment at hospitals, according to the humanitarian organisation Medecins Sans Frontieres. Victims of state violence are afraid to seek treatment because they are at risk of being arrested and tortured. Nabeel Rajab, whose own home has been attacked with tear gas on three occasions, says: “The regime is trying to terrorise people into not supporting the pro-democracy movement. But it is not succeeding. People are more united and more determined than ever to push for their democratic rights because they are angered and disgusted by the brutality of this regime.” That anger and disgust is also being directed at Western governments and mainstream news media. While the latter have been giving extensive coverage of alleged state violations in Libya and Syria, the evident crimes of the Western-backed Bahraini regime go largely unreported. The US and British governments give unswerving political support to the Al Khalifa monarchy, talking up “reform progress” by the regime. And, in contrast to Libya where Washington and London have championed an enclave of armed rebels against the popular Gaddafi government, the peaceful pro-democracy movement in Bahrain has received no support. Indeed, the American and British governments continue to supply the Bahraini regime with military weapons, including the tear gas that is now being used to suffocate and terrorise men, women and children in their homes. Global Research has seen spent canisters retrieved from homes that bear the manufacturer’s details. One such company is the oddly named Nonlethal Technologies, based in Homer City, PA, USA. When contacted, a spokesman for the company declined to make a comment on how its technology was being deployed lethally in Bahrain. The US arms trade with Bahrain is worth $200 million every year. On a per capita basis, that exceeds the US military supplies to Israel or Egypt. The British government also describes Bahrain as “an important market” for arms. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are another huge destination for American and British weaponry. According to the British government, export licences for weapons are granted on the basis that such arms “are not used for internal repression”. Washington also indulges in similar semantics. However, given the blatant use of tear gas by the Bahraini, Saudi and Emirati forces not just as a means of internal repression but as a weapon of full-frontal state terrorism, the US and British governments are clearly in breach of their own self-declared export licensing standards. Which makes one wonder what is the most toxic? Bahraini state terrorism or the putrefied cynicism of American and British foreign policy?

### Just two weeks ago, a 14-year-old boy was struck in the head and killed by a tear gas canister fired into a crowd by Bahraini security forces. Yet, when Jake and I run Google News searches for updates on Bahrain, half of the articles are about soccer or racecars. Western media loves popular uprising when it occurs in “axis of evil” countries like Syria and Libya—but when the stability of a government which hosts a US navy base is put into question, Western media turns the other way.

John Glaser, “Ongoing US-Supported Repression in Bahrain,” Anti-War.com, 8/31/2011, <http://www.antiwar.com/blog/2011/08/31/ongoing-us-supported-repression-in-bahrain/>

One of the many unfortunate consequences of all the breaking news from the Obama administration’s war in Libya, is that many of the details that expose the contradictions of US empire get crowded out in the media. How many know, for example, that the Bahraini Arab Spring is still in full throttle with major protests almost every day? See this al Jazeera segment on a 14 year old boy [was] just killed when Bahraini security forces shot him in the head with a tear gas canister: According to the New York Times, the Bahraini government is denying its security forces were even involved in today’s crackdown in Sitra that resulted in this boy’s death. They are even offering “a reward of more than $26,000 for information about those responsible for his death.” The dead boy’s uncle, Isa Hassan, who was also at Wednesday’s morning march, described a small group of protesters assembling after morning prayers and then being confronted by the police, who fired tear gas at them from roughly 20 feet away. “They are supposed to lob the canisters of gas, not shoot them at people,” Mr. Hassan told The Associated Press. “Police used it as a weapon.” Surprisingly, the Times even notes the following: Activists say that because Bahraini government is a strategic ally of the United States — the Navy’s Fifth Fleet is based there — and of Saudi Arabia, the violent suppression of protests has not received the same attention from the international community as the brutal crackdowns in Syria and, before that, Libya. Even without the extended time on the tube taken up by Libya and Syria coverage, Western media is reluctant to cover the crimes of US allies and clients. What is absurd is that strategic concerns about “regional stability” (read: suppressing democracy in subservience to US demands) and supposed Iranian influence passes as legitimate justifications for the ongoing US support for repression in Bahrain.

### This concern for imperial presence over human rights is rooted in a neoliberal discourse of security, which drives military interventionism and sustained presence in the name of superior Western ideals. Constructions of the danger of Iran or Al-Qaeda are merely attempts to master the unknowable future and secure oil markets for capitalist accumulation.

John Morrisey, Department of Geography at National University of Ireland in Galway, “Closing the Neoliberal Gap: Risk and Regulation in the Long War of Securitization,” Antipode, Vol. 43, No. 3, 2011

The aleatory nature of the Middle East’s future has long been a key discursive touchstone of CENTCOM geopolitical discourse. Since its initiation in the early 1980s, the command’s strategy papers, mission statements and reports to Senate and House Armed Services Committees have implicitly touted it as the fundamental reason for its existence (Morrissey 2009b). In effect, it signed an aleatory contract to securitize the Middle East, and that contract has been legitimized at regular intervals by the discursive production of politically charged senses of risk, precarity and fear. And as Jennifer Hyndman (2007:361) reasons, such discourses have a particularly potent (geo)political power precisely because they neatly combine an “expression of vulnerability” with a “rationale for security measures”. They function to justify—indeed demand—practices of securitization. Various social theorists have explored in recent years how discourses of fear, insecurity and risk feature prominently and constitutively in everyday governmentalities and reproductions of the state (Bernstein 1996; Campbell 1992; Giddens 1999; Lupton 1999; Mythen and Walklate 2006). Ulrich’s Beck’s formulation of how modernity can be characterized as a “risk society” has been a particular source of reflection across various disciplines (Beck 1992, 1999; cf O’Malley 1999). And while Michel Foucault did not write extensively on risk, his work on governmentality has been especially influential in some of the most important recent theorizations of the subject (Braun 2008; Dean 1999; Foucault 1979, 1991, 2007; O’Malley 2004). In the context of the war on terror, “risk” has played a key role in the legitimization of state governmental and military strategies of securitization (Cooper 2008; Dillon 2008). Claudia Aradau and Rens VanMunster (2007:108), for instance, have shown how it is through the “perspective of risk management” that “securitization” is so seductively seen to function by “the deployment of technologies to manage dangerous irruptions in the future”. George W. Bush’s declaration of the war on terror in 2001 was predicated on specific notions of insecurity and risk management; and that war had already begun, of course, some years earlier when Bill Clinton dispatched bombing raids on Afghanistan and Iraq. In 1998, Clinton warned the world about the “risks of inaction”, which outweighed “the risks of action”; a key political rhetoric subsequently used by Bush in launching the pre-emptive strikes on Iraq in 2003 (Beck 2009; Heng 2006; O’Malley 2006). Five years later, Bush’s 2008 National Defense Strategy was concluded with a specific section entitled “Managing Risk”. Therein, “future challenges risk” is underlined along with other identified risks as a critical element to be planned for in the strategic projection of US foreign policy (US Department of Defense 2008:20–23). Military strategies of securitization from “future challenges risk” are justified additionally by neoliberal beliefs that securitization practices simultaneously function to “correct”, to “reconstruct”, to “close the gap” of global security, economic freedom and indeed civilization (Simmons and Manuel 2003; Knights 2006; O’Hanlon 2008; Kaplan 2009). This binary—neatly coupling the identification of risk with the idea that military reconstruction is necessary—results in a therapeutic and persuasive geopolitical argument about permanent interventionism. It is at this point that temporality becomes an important register. From its genesis, CENTCOM’s temporal gaze has been directed to emerging and future danger. Such a focus is militarily to be expected of course given that its theater engagement strategy has consistently entailed preemptive strategies of deterrence and containment (US Central Command 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2009). A logic of military preemption, in other words, has long been registered in CENTCOM circles. The logic of preemption has attracted considerable academic interest in recent years. Randy Martin’s (2007) Empire of Indifference usefully deploys the concept to theorize the dual political and economic calculus of risk that has featured so centrally in recent US military interventionism. Echoing Naomi Klein’s argument about event-based disaster capitalism, Martin places particular emphasis on the import of the “event”—and the risk of future events—and argues that preemption is the temporality of their securitization, “the future made present” (Martin 2007:18; Klein 2007). For Martin, when such temporality drives foreign policy, “[p]otential threats are actualized as demonstrations of the need for further intervention”. Melinda Cooper (2007) too has argued that US involvement in Iraq is based on a “mode of intervention that is curiously indifferent to its own ‘success’ or ‘failure’, since both eventualities open up a market of future risk opportunities where even hedges against risk can be traded for profit”. And as Deborah Cowen and Neil Smith (2009:42) point out, the everyday rationale for the US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan may well be pragmatic military geography, but viewed more broadly, both can be seen as “market war[s] par excellence” in which hundreds of corporations have “feasted at the trough” of billion-dollar contracts “committed to destruction and failed reconstruction”. For Cooper (2007), the war on terror has served to provoke a “certain unity of purpose amongst various denominations of militant Islamism, crystallizing alliances that would otherwise have lain dormant”, and the pre-emptive action on the part of the US military has “succeeded in generating ‘relations at a distance’ and risk opportunities where none existed before”. In other words, as Martin (2007:98) argues: Fighting terror unleashed it elsewhere, just as a well-placed put or call (sell or buy) of stock would send ripples of price volatility through the market. Drops in price can be hedged against, turned into derivatives, and sold for gain. The terror war converts both wins and losses into self-perpetuating gain. But the gain is only for the few of course, and while the argument is compelling in terms of capturing the mercenary impulses of security contract firms like Blackwater (Scahill 2007), it is perhaps a little too neat to encapsulate the multiple urges of CENTCOM strategists and planners. However, the notion of CENTCOM consciously signing up to a foundational aleatory contract to securitize the neoliberal gap in the Persian Gulf certainly bears up to scrutiny. One can arguably trace that aleatory contract back to the signing of the Roosevelt–Aziz pact in the immediate post-World War II period, which can be read as an early designation of the link between “economic” and “security” interests in advancing US hegemony in the Middle East (Painter 1986). In the 1970s, a series of “crises” solidified this link: oil supply disruptions; Saudi unease over Horn of Africa crises; the removal of the Shah in Iran; and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan. The Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) was created in October 1979 with “crisis management” as its foundational remit (and CENTCOM, of course, as permanent successor to the RDJTF, effectively took over the management of that ongoing crisis in 1983). In 1980, the Carter Doctrine—the geopolitical pre-scripting for CENTCOM’s initiation as a permanent regional command—posited the entire Middle East and Central Asia region as a vital strategic space for the global political economy: The region which is now threatened by Soviet troops in Afghanistan is of great strategic importance: it contains more than two-thirds of the world’s exportable oil. The Soviet effort to dominate Afghanistan has brought Soviet military forces to within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean and close to the Straits of Hormuz, a waterway through which most of the world’s oil must flow (US President Jimmy Carter 1980). President Carter emphasized the “potentially grave situation” in the Middle East and made the case for the necessity of “resolute action, not only for this year but for many years to come” (US President Jimmy Carter 1980).Hewas, in effect, sketching the idea of preemptivemilitary action and a “long war”. The opening salvo in that long war occurred with little media attention in the summer of 1987. The Iran–Iraq War was still raging and in what became known as “Operation Earnest Will” CENTCOM forces were forward deployed for their first major intervention; the operation would define the command’s role thereafter. The Reagan administration, fearing an escalation of regional economic volatility, ordered CENTCOM warships to protect Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf and ensure freedom of navigation by reflagging them with American ensigns. Such a clear-cut geoeconomic intervention, according to President Reagan, was to demonstrate “U.S. commitment to the flow of oil through the Gulf” (quoted in Klare 2004:4). And that commitment was considerable: at the height of what became known as the “Tanker War” in 1987, at least 48 US Navy combat vessels were operating on full alert in the Persian Gulf and northern Arabian Sea.6 Reagan’s successor, George Bush, continued Central Command’s neoliberal policing role in emphatically checking Iraqi regional ambition in 1991; in the Gulf War’s aftermath, he spoke of the command’s triumph in securing “global economic health” (Morrissey 2009b).After the war, a more permanent ground presence of CENTCOM forces in Saudi Arabia and a proactive weapons pre-positioning programme across the Arabian Peninsula signalled a new hands-on US deterrence policy to fulfil its policing role in the region. And this shift in command engagement strategy was confirmed by a number of CENTCOM-commissioned reports in the early 1990s (Lesser 1991; Pelletiere and Johnson II 1992). Stephen Pelletiere and Douglas Johnson’s Oil and the New World System: CENTCOM rethinks its Mission, for example, scripted the command’s role thus: [US Central Command] has a crucial mission to perform—guarding the flow of oil . . . In effect, CENTCOM must become the Gulf’s policemen, a function it will perform with mounting patrols (1992:v, 26). CENTCOM’s theater strategy of deterrence built strongly on well established military maxims honed during the Cold War. Deterrence continued to feature at the heart of US foreign policy in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and it comprised both a discursive production of defense and prevention rhetoric, and an active operational war-fighting strategy (Klein 1988, 1989). And as Bradley Klein (1994:5) points out, the “strategic violence” of deterrence does not “merely patrol the frontiers”, it “helps constitute them as well”. Klein’s reminder is important because Western “interventionary” violence has a long history of being incorporated into liberal discourse by the legitimization of aggression as “exceptional”, as “necessary”, as “allowable”. As Klein argues, Western imperial and geopolitical violence “draws upon a variety of discursive resources that are themselves widely construed as rational, plausible and acceptable”, and chief among these is “a series of apparent opposites” such as “domestic and foreign, inside and outside, order and anarchy, peace and war, us and them, good and bad, First World and Third World” (1994:5). And what Central Command’s discursive strategy does in identifying, on the one hand, senses of risk and volatility for the US and world economy, and justifying, on the other hand, practices of securitization and violence is to “provide a map for the negotiating of these dichotomies in such a way that Western society always winds up on the ‘good’ . . . side of the equation” (Klein 1994:5). In other words, CENTCOM’s risk-securitization discourse ultimately provides a persuasive linking of “risk” to “responsibility” (Giddens 1999); Western responsibility, that is, to intervene, to police and to use military force if necessary.

### Part 2 is autoimmunity.

### Democracy today perceives itself as ‘under attack,’ by dictators and terrorists like Iran and Al-Qaeda who want to destroy freedom in the name of nationalist fundamentalisms. However, as we see in the American silence on Bahraini authoritarianism, the Western response to these threats is to curtail the very freedoms and human rights it claims to defend. This essential ‘autoimmunity’ drives democracy to suicide in order to save itself.

Samir Haddad, PhD candidate in philosophy at Northwestern, “Derrida and Democracy at Risk,” Contretemps 4, September 2004, http://sydney.edu.au/contretemps/4september2004/haddad.pdf

Democracy today is at risk. At risk from its enemies, the so-called ‘enemies of freedomʼ—the dictators, terrorists, and religious fundamentalists who want to prevent democracy from coming to pass in certain regions of the world, and want to end its reign elsewhere, most notably in the West. This supposed truth is broadcast daily via the media, and constitutes the primary justification given by governments for the two most immediate and obvious consequences of the attacks of September 11. For both the military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the restrictions in personal liberties and rights (on the freedom of movement, the restrictions in immigration laws, and increased governmental and internal police powers) that have been imposed across the world, have taken place in the name of ‘securityʼ, in the name of defending democracy against its enemies. However, the threats to democracy do not only come from its others. For as is also claimed in the media with a much lesser, though not negligible, frequency, these governmental responses themselves also put democracy at risk. The invasion of Iraq took place in the face of what seemed to be majority opposition from the populations of the two countries who led it, and the restriction of personal freedom in the name of security can be seen to attack the very liberty upon which democracy is founded. One might claim that in such actions these governments are themselves harming democracy, perhaps even to an extent greater than any ‘terroristʼ could hope to achieve. Thus, while it is difficult to deny that democracy today is at risk, there is some question as to what are the sources of this danger. If one admits that at least one of these sources is ‘internalʼ (that at least part of the risk comes from democratic governments themselves), then one is left to wonder what this means for our understanding of democracy. Is there something inherent in democracy that leads it to put itself at risk? In his recent essay “La Raison du Plus Fort (Y a-t-il des États Voyous?),” Jacques Derrida answers this question in the affirmative.1 Derrida argues that democratic governments are putting democracy at risk. In doing so they are acting according to a possibility that is essential to the very concept of democracy itself. At the centre of this argument we find a relatively new term in Derridaʼs lexicon, “auto-immunity,” which describes the contradictory process in which a self puts a partial end to itself in order to live on. In the case of democracy, Derridaʼs claim is that we see this process at work precisely in those moments when democracy is under attack. For example, with respect to the restriction of personal liberties that followed September 11, Derrida argues that democracy is indeed attacking a part of itself, but it does so in the name of protecting itself, claiming that such restrictions are necessary for democracy as a whole to survive the external threats of rogue states or Al-Qaeda. Derridaʼs point is that this process of auto-immunity is not somehow extrinsic to democracy, something which we could avoid if we were just a bit more democratic. Rather, he argues that this logic is inescapable—democracy realizes itself, for better and for worse, according to a process of auto-immunity. Democracy is, therefore, essentially at risk, and the risk comes as much from itself as from its ‘enemiesʼ.

### Contemporary autoimmunity’s construction of liberal democratization as a transcendent ideal makes any sacrifice justifiable—this is the critical internal link to extinction.

Ivan Callus, Head of the Department of English at the University of Malta and PhD in English from Cardiff, and Stefan Herbrechter, reader in Cultural Theory at Coventry University and PhD in English from Cardiff“The Latecoming of the Posthuman, Or, Why "We" Do the Apocalypse Differently, "Now."” Reconstruction, Vol. 4, No. 3, Summer 2004, http://reconstruction.eserver.org/043/callus.htm

<23> It needs to be said immediately that if "we" are starting to discuss endism differently it is because the apocalypse can be done so more unthinkably and incalculably now than was ever the case. The challenge of the nuclear that provided a focus for "No Apocalypse, Not Now" is one about which it is possible to be almost nostalgic in the context of all the circumstances that make the posthumanous so immediate to both experience and possibility: the biotechnology revolution and the various technologies for the prosthesization of the human, the prospect of engineered pandemics, worldwide virality that could be digital as well as organic, indeed all the processes that could conceivably operate according to the logic of autoimmunity, whereby "a living being, in quasi-suicidal fashion, 'itself' works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself against its 'own' immunity" (Derrida's emphasis) [26]. According to Derrida, "what is put at risk by this terrifying autoimmunitary logic is nothing less than the existence of the world, of the worldwide itself" (Derrida's emphasis; 98-99). This risk, whereby the human itself creates the conditions for that which might exceed it, doing so without simultaneously immunizing itself against the worst with any adequacy or proper foresight, is what makes the posthumanous the episteme of our time. Reflections upon it could therefore look like a processual rather than posthumous epitaph on the human. In that context, the (sur)passing of the human becomes less amenable to the protocols of poststructuralist counter-intuitiveness than may previously have been the case. Hence, to recast the famous reflections from the conclusion to Foucault's The Order of Things (1966), the posthumanous is an invention of very recent date, and what is therein discovered is that the erasability of the human is an all too immediate wager. <24> A grim scenario brings this point starkly home. It has to do with the fact that the worries of the Cold War, even the rigors of all previous wars, look -- and one hopes to be forgiven for saying this -- almost quaint beside the order and enormity of the posthumanous understood as the apocalyptic eventuality that is scripted by the various formulations of the autoimmunity contrived by the human. It is by no means certain, to follow Blanchot and Rapaport, that humanity will grow quite as blasé about the banality of the end as it had grown inured, through thanatopraxie and the various resources of the writing of the disaster, to Cold War menaces [27]. Quite simply, that is because it is possible to do the apocalypse more inventively now, and through all the inventions that have made previous technologies of the end obsolete and that will continue, in a paradoxical renewing of their ends, to do so. This, in fact, is itself a sign of the apocalyptic newness of the "now." Previous apocalyptic technologies have been obliterated by an accelerated logic of obsolescence, almost as if previous generations seem datedly exterminable, while "we" appear to be available to more designedly state-of-the-art (indeed practically "designer") endings which are potentially procurable by those -- and this where terrorism comes in -- undeterred by any détente. Consequently, the worst is not merely thinkable, but apprehensible as something on this side of improbability. In that apprehending the mannerisms of deconstructive, poststructuralist, or postmodernist logic, particularly their counter-intuitive temporalities and their reluctance to countenance straightforward projections of supersedence, seem to lack le bon ton. Indeed, there is no greater indication of the appositeness of a different tone and a different temporization of the posthumanous, and of the way in which even deconstruction finds itself driven to do the apocalypse differently now, than the following statement by Derrida: We are talking about a trauma, and thus an event, whose temporality proceeds neither from the now that is present nor from the present that is past but from an im-presentable to come (à venir). A weapon wounds and leaves forever open an unconscious scar; but this weapon is terrifying because it comes from the to-come, from the future, a future so radically to come that it resists even the grammar of the future anterior [emphasis added]. [28]

### Thus, Jake and I think that:

### The President of the United States of America should call for the Al Khalifa family to renounce their authority over Bahrain.

### Part 3 is democracy-to-come.

### The resolution has led us to think about our opinions and our roles within it. The question fits neatly within a bizarre teleological imperialism: The Arabs are rising! It’s Spring! America’s job is to make sure democracy makes it out okay. But, it also has a radical potential. Talking about Bahrain reminds us of the irony of America exporting freedom. We look less like a democracy and more like an empire, supporting dictators in the name of liberty. Our democracy isn’t all that good anyways. We’re real jerks sometimes. Thus, our aff is an attempt to let you think democracy in a different way. Not as something we have, but as a promise to come. When we point to dead protestors and America’s complicity, we call you to do democracy, to be just a little more like those fighting for freedom in places more totalitarian than ours—to offer help.

### So, this year doesn’t have to be another year of politics throwdowns, ridiculous terrorism scenarios, and the same Marx and Said arguments. We can do things differently, like this tag which is now four times too long. Our aff is a call to depth and nuance, to think about things differently, to care, to hope. Let this day be a day for democracy. Let this debate be a debate for democracy.

Rev. Dr. Rob Manning [professor of philosophy and religious studies at Quincy University, Unitarian Minister] “Call it a Day for Democracy: Thoughts on our Revolutionary Present for Jacques Derrida.” Its called a sermon. February 27, 2011 <http://uuquincy.org/talks/20110227.shtml>

I have wanted us for the last few weeks to talk together as a community about the amazing time we are living through right now, this great day for freedom and democracy. We are living in a great day for democracy, as the demands for freedom and democracy have swept powerfully across North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Democratic movement have arisen and shaken and transformed the Arab and Muslim world, beginning with Tunisia and Egypt and extending to Bahrain and Yemen and Jordan and now Libya. In the last month or so, why we have been preoccupied with the winter and with snow, the world changed and 2011 became not just another year but a year of revolution. Not just another year but a revolutionary year, like 1776 and 1789 and 1848 and 1917 and1989. For the last month or so Dana, my Romanian wife, and I have been watching the world change on our TV right in front of our eyes and watching this great day for democracy happen and this year become a year of revolution. This has been an interesting experience for both of us because for one thing we were in Egypt together in 2006 and more importantly we know our life together and Sebastian's very existence are in a certain sense effects of revolution, of that earlier revolutionary period when communism collapsed and which we associate with the revolutionary year of 1989. Certainly Dana's life has been shaped by the revolution beginning in 1989, and as Americans we are all products of and heirs to our own great revolution. Dana and I are married and we have our beautiful little son together of course, but at the same time Dana remains a Romanian and I of course am an American. Now most of the time those two national identities really don't matter, but sometimes the differences pronounce themselves very clearly, show up distinctly like a black dog in the snow. We had one of those times when Dana and I were walking down the street together in Cairo in December of 2006. We were talking together and walking by an elementary school just as the school was letting the kids out and when those kids saw me they all ran to me and circled around me saying American! American! Hello American! Our country is so central to the world. American products, American culture, American music, American corporations are everywhere. In Giza, just outside Cairo, the Sphinx looks out across the street, at the Burger King and Kentucky Fried Chicken. America constantly advances upon the rest of the world and permeates it. When America advances itself on the world and permeates it, it always at the same time advances itself as the great example of freedom and democracy, as the most advanced democracy in the world. My life with Dana is also a product of that American tendency to advance itself as the most advanced democracy in the world since we met when I was a Fulbright professor sent by our American government as an ambassador of our advanced democracy out to the new and fledgling democracy of Romania. Now this tendency of our American culture and our American culture to advance itself as the advanced point of freedom and democracy is not without a certain self destroying irony, as Dana and I know only too well. After all, we both know our entire marriage thus far has been made possible by the progressive policies of Romania's and not America's democracy. We knew we could live together here for two years without either one of us having to give up our jobs because once she had Sebastian she would get a guaranteed and protected maternity leave from her job and some financial support from the government to replace her salary for 2 years. Now if democracy is about empowering people and helping them live freely, I'd have to say it is the Romanian democracy that has helped us do that. Our greatest and most advanced American democracy has finally advanced to the point that we do have protected parental leave when you have a baby, for 6 weeks without any financial support. Another example of how our American tendency to advance ourselves as the most advanced democracy includes a certain self destroying irony is the topic that has dominated our country and our cultural debate during the three years that Dana has lived in America: health care. This is probably the most perplexing thing about America to Dana. Surely any democratic government which empowers its people and helps them live freely would provide basic health care to all its citizens. Romania is a poor country compared to the U.S., but all of its citizens have health care; no one has to keep a job they hate because they are afraid of losing their health care; no one fears being financially ruined because they got ill and had to be hospitalized for a long time. I'm sure Dana and lots of other people wonder how a country that doesn't even do this for its citizens can even call itself a democracy, let alone advance itself as the greatest, most advanced democracy in the world. These are great and exciting days for democracy and all democracy lovers around the world. It's exciting to see the democracy movements sweep across the Arab world from one country to another. I am very excited about this as an American. We are a revolutionary people; our country was born out of our own revolution and I am sure as Americans we are all happy to see more freedom and democracy in Arab societies. America does constantly advance ourselves as the most advanced democracy in the world and we would be happy to welcome Tunisia and Egypt and Libya and other nations in the region to join with us in the great club of free and democratic societies. Of course as we American have watched these revolutions happen and as we hope these countries may become like us, places of freedom and democracy, we have also had to deal with the self destroying irony of our own claims to be the great democracy on the earth. This is also what is happening today, during this time when we celebrate the fact that this seems to be a great day for democracy. We celebrate the overthrow of Mubarak in Egypt and hope for freedom and democracy for millions of Egyptians, but at the same time we become more aware of how our own country has supported Mubarak all these years, provided him with the money and the military capacity to suppress democratic protest in Egypt throughout the entire lives of al those 20-something protesters in the streets of Cairo and Alexandria. We see that when Mubarak's thugs attacked the crowds of nonviolent protesters in Cairo the tear gas canisters they used to do this were made in the U.S. and provided by our government. We as Americans learn about the fact that our government has provided Mubarak with more than a billion dollars of military aid every year for decades. We learn that the man our wonderful American media has called President Mubarak all these years hasn't really been a president but really a dictator that we have supported. We learn about the state of emergency Mubarak proclaimed that enabled him to suspend basic human rights temporarily, a favorite trick played by Hitler and other dictators the world over. Mubarak's temporary state of emergency has lasted for 31 years, but he was still strongly supported by us. As Americans, we know our government now is in the peculiar position of condemning the same person we have strongly supported for more than thirty years. Of course our American support of Mubarak in Egypt is just the beginning of what we confront today, this great day for democracy, just one way in which we are confronted with the self destroying irony of our own claims to be the greatest democracy on the earth. In Bahrain the Shiite majority is ruled by a despotic Sunni royal family, which of course is supported by us and is a key ally for us because of our important naval base there. The democratic protesters in Bahrain a couple weeks ago were camped out in the central square and sleeping when the King sent attack helicopters to shoot at them, helicopters provided of course by the United States. If these democratic movements continue to sweep across the Arab world and there are huge throngs of protesters in the central urban areas of Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, what is going to happen then? We have provided the rulers of all three vital countries with very destructive military capacity without any concern for how these rulers suppress democratic movements in their countries as long as the oil flows. So what happens if their populations join the democratic wave that is sweeping across the region and hit the streets in protest? Is King Hussein going to allow democratic protest in Jordan? Is the Saudi royal family going to simply accept throngs of young demonstrators protesting in the central squares of the cities, or are they going to use the military weapons we have provided them all these years to wipe them out and destroy democratic movements in their countries? What are we going to do then, and how will Americans feel when we see medieval Arab rulers we have supported all these years use the military weapons we have provided them to wipe our their own young people who just want to live freely, like we do, with a job, and the internet, and the right to vote? Will Americans, the great freedom and democracy loving people of the earth, will we be shocked and outraged by that, or will most Americans be more angered and more shocked by 5 dollar a gallon gas? All this is either happening today, this great day for freedom and democracy, or it promises to happen, is appearing as possibility, perhaps even as an inevitability, on the horizon. So much is happening today and today is one of those days when it is very different whether you think this day through the identity of a Romanian or through the identity of an American. As Americans we have so much to think about today, so much more than the rising price of gasoline. Everything that is happening today in Egypt and in Bahrain and in Jordan and everything that promises to happen in Kuwait and even Saudi Arabia confronts us as Americans in an absolutely unique way. All of it, all of it that is happening today and all of it that may happen tomorrow, forces us as Americans to think about our own American democracy, about our own tendency to advance ourselves always as the great example of freedom and democracy, and about all the ways those claims always come with a self destroying irony. For us, for Americans, everything that is happening today brings with it both a tremendous hope for the future and a tremendous weight, the weight at least of responsibility, and perhaps even of guilt. What is inescapable and unavoidable today for all Americans is to think about our own democracy, about the health, the vibrancy, perhaps even the very existence of our own democracy. We can see on our TV sets the youthful protesters in Egypt and Bahrain and Libya and Tunisia and elsewhere making revolutions happen, making 2011 a revolutionary year, making this day a day for democracy. But as much as we Americans like to think of ourselves as the great democracy and as much as we advance ourselves as the great example of freedom and democracy, do these young protesters in Egypt or Bahrain or elsewhere see us and see America that way, or do they see America as a great barrier to the their own desires for true freedom and real democracy? That is the great question that comes to us today, to all Americans, from so many places in the Arab world all at once, today, this great day for democracy. As I have been watching the revolutions happen as an American with Dana and Sebastian, I have been thinking about democracy and about these two contemporary philosophers, Jacques Derrida and Cornel West. Partly because I have been with Dana I have been thinking about that other year of revolutions, 1989, and the interview with Derrida back then, in that other revolutionary period, the interview he titled Call it a Day for Democracy, in which he tries to get us to think about the 2 possible meanings of that phrase at the same time. With all the revolutions happening at the time, says Derrida, we have to call it a day for democracy, but we also have to think about all the forces that threaten real democracy and cause us in despair to say we might as well call it a day for democracy. This is in a way exactly what the American philosopher Cornel West did a few years ago when, in the depths of the despair of the Bush administration, he basically said we have to call it a day for democracy in America. West argued in Democracy Matters that contemporary America is not a democracy. It is an empire. Our government serves the interests not of the people but of powerful elites, financial interests, corporations, and what Eisenhower called the "military-industrial complex." West argues that we should get used to saying not our American democracy but the American Empire, that this would be a more honest and realistic way of understanding ourselves. We are, West says, an empire with what he calls various sources of democratic energy threatened but still alive and sometimes even kicking. Does that sound too pessimistic to you or just about right, pretty much spot on in terms of where we are today in America? Did we at some point along the way call it a day for democracy in America and learn instead to appreciate the benefits of empire, the most important of which has been of course cheap gasoline for our cars? Jacques Derrida gives us what is perhaps a more optimistic way of thinking about ourselves and democracy. Derrida tries over and over again to get us to think differently. Our problem is that we think democracy in the wrong way. We think of it as something that either is or isn't, that we are or are not a democracy. Democracy, says Derrida, should be thought of as something that is always to come. Democracy has the structure of a promise and is something to always be sought after and worked toward. If we think democracy as always to come, then we don't think we have arrived, and we don't think of ourselves as an advanced democracy, and we don't advance on the rest of the world bragging about ourselves as a democracy. Democracy as Derrida gets us to think it, is always something of the future, something we need to move toward but without ever thinking that we have arrived there, ever made ourselves a true democracy. Democracy understood as something to come forces us to think about what policies and actions take us farther away from democracy and which ones take us closer to democracy, without ever actually arriving there. The young people who have formed these revolutionary movements in Tunisia and Egypt and Libya and elsewhere are inspired by the messianic promise of something called democracy. They have risked their lives and some have lost their lives to make this a day for democracy. Right here in our own small, sacred place thousands of miles away from them, we honor them, mourn with them, and celebrate with them. Even if we ourselves live in the American Empire, we are part of the democratic energy within that empire. We too, just like the youth of the Arab world, are inspired and energized by the dream of democracy, by the promise that lives within that word. Let us all be even more inspired and even more energized by everything our brothers and sisters in the Arab world have done, are doing, and will do to make this day a great day for democracy.

### In particular, we should call for the end of the al-Khalifa regime.

Nishapuri 11

[Abdul, Founder/Editor of Let Us Build Pakistan (LUBP), February 20th, “An open letter to President Obama: People of Bahrain need your help,” <http://criticalppp.com/archives/40445>, AD: 9-5-11]JN

Dear Mr. President, In one of your recent addresses to international audience, you pledged that America’s “commitment—our responsibility—is to stand up for those rights that should be universal to all human beings”. The commitment you made is rooted in the founding principles of your country, echoed in the Declaration of Independence, which states that all men and women around the world are endowed with the right to “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” These founding principles are undeniable truths that have guided the United States, since its inception, on a path toward justice and universal rights for all people. We call upon you, Mr. President—as the leader of this country and a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate—to wholeheartedly pursue these ends in your dealings with the popular uprising for democracy in Bahrain. Mr. President, It is a known fact that because of its strategic and short-term interests, the United States has often aligned itself with repressive autocrats in the Middle East right from Egypt to Saudi Arabia and from Bahrain to Jordan. The current uprising in Bahrain presents a test of America’s commitments to the American and universal values of human rights, freedom and democracy. Therefore we, the undersigned, academics and researchers, teachers and students, lawyers and traders, women and men, young and old, U.S. citizens, Bahraini citizens, call upon you to use all the powers of your office to stand unequivocally behind the Bahraini People’s Movement, withdraw US support from King Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah’s security state, and establish 2011 as a watershed in US relations with the peoples of the Middle East. All we want is freedom, free and fair elections, a representative government, equality of women and men, equality of Muslims and non-Muslims, equality of Shia and Sunni, and a responsible government in Bahrain. These basic rights cannot be achieved without moving to replace the current regime, and the transition process must include real representation from the pro-democracy movement. While it is not the role of any other country to determine Bahrain’s leaders, the Bahraini people’s right to self-government has been obstructed by a military and intelligence apparatus that is trained and funded by Washington and London, fiercely loyal to the current King, and inimical to popular sovereignty. The current Prime Minister, an uncle of the King, widely known as Manama’s renditions czar, provides a constant reminder of American complicity in the Bahraini repression — as do the helicopters flying over the Pearl Square and the tanks that stood passively while the dictators forces killed peaceful protesters freely. It is imperative that your administration rescind support from all Bahraini security forces opposing democracy and civilian control. Compared to the U.S., Bahrain is a tiny nation with a population of 1 million, almost half of them foreign workers. The tiny island is home for 6,000 members of the U.S. Fifth Fleet. Bahrain’s military numbers about 9,000 personnel who remain totally dependent on the U.S. and U.K. for their training and equipment. If there is any single country on this planet where the U.S. can constructively help the local people in achieving their aim of democracy without a single bullet fired, it is Bahrain. Mr. President, Accordingly, we kindly ask you to use your strategic and political influence forcing King Hamad Khalifah to resign, the current government be replaced by an interim civilian council representing proportionate number of Shias, Sunnis and Christians who will oversee a free and fair election in the next three months. We kindly ask that you leverage American power in the United Nations Security Council to demand from Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay to send special envoys to Bahrain on a fact-finding mission to investigate the regime’s human rights abuses particularly against the 80% Shia majority who remain oppressed and discriminated against. Specifically, we call for the UN to inspect the condition of prisoners, investigate the claims of torture or other cruel and unusual treatment, and meet with members of the rights groups and lawyers concerning restrictions on their ability to defend their clients. During the past years the regime has systematically increased its violations of numerous articles within its own constitution that guarantee the right of freedom of speech and assembly. The demonstrators have called for democratic regime change, not a US-facilitated transition to another despot, nor any intervention by the neighbouring dictator kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We urge you to help ensure that their demands are met, their rights are honored, and the Bahraini kingdom and its security apparatus ceases its attacks on journalists and peaceful protesters. In the end, we would like to emphasize the importance for America of being seen as an advocate for human rights for all peoples in all parts of the world. Throughout the years, the vast majority of Bahraini people have expressed their utmost respect for Americans. We encourage you to stand on the side of the people in their time of difficulty by focusing on human rights and democracy in our motherland. With Utmost Respect, Citizens of Bahrain and the U.S.A.

### We have an incalculable obligation to speak for the subjects of oppression whose voices are not presently heard in contemporary discourse. Even if it is practically ineffective, our call for emancipation through the law must be made on behalf of the infinite responsibility which we all experience.

Colin Perrin, PhD in Law and Philosophy from the University of Kent, held research positions at the University of New South Wales and the University of Durham, 2004, Social and Legal Studies, Vol. 13, No. 1

Explicitly it is a matter of ‘speaking for those who . . . can no longer speak for themselves’ and in this respect of attesting to their suffering or dying because they cannot do so. Their suffering takes place ‘in secret’ and ‘after dark’, in ‘remote cells’ and above all in silence. And so language is required in order to ‘expose’ this violence and this suffering that without it would remain hidden and would continue to take place in silence. How though can one speak for the other without effacing his or her otherness, without silencing his or her silence in a speech that would take the other’s place and in which, therefore, it would be as if the other had not been silenced at all? While the implication here is that one could only do justice – or at least avoid doing this injustice – to the other by not speaking, by keeping silent and thereby keeping the other’s place, it is exactly because the other cannot represent his or herself that here one is called upon to speak. But since this is not the call for an articulate or ‘fine-sounding’ response, again: what is the nature of this demand for language and of the language it demands? These questions, I suggest, can be addressed and answered via a consideration of what Maurice Blanchot (1986) calls ‘the disaster’. Here, I am forced to simplify his account which concerns the fact that the disaster cannot present ‘itself’. The disaster ruins its own possibility for – like silence – it refutes or negates ‘itself’ as it ruins – or silences – the very terms in which it could be or be represented as a disaster. The disaster is so destructive that it destroys any trace of its occurrence. This is the immeasurable or incalculable extent of its disastrousness and it is for this reason that one cannot say or even decide that ‘there is’ the disaster. As Blanchot (1981) says of death: ‘when we die, we leave behind not only the world but also death . . . it is the loss of the person, the annihilation of the being; and so it is also the loss of death’ (p. 55). But what in this respect Blanchot goes on to call ‘the impossibility of dying’ – the impossibility of experiencing, or of being the subject of, one’s own death – is also true of a suffering that he says is less something ‘I’ go through than something that goes through ‘me’: ‘Suffering is suffering when one can no longer suffer it’ (Blanchot, 1993: 44). Above all therefore the disaster is so overwhelming that there can be no attesting to it. To present it or to represent it is to efface the very disastrousness that makes it a disaster. Thought, experience, language: all are inadequate to the disaster. How then can one bear witness to it? Or as Blanchot (1986) asks: ‘How can thought be made the keeper of the Holocaust where all was lost, including guardian thought?’ (p. 47, emphasis removed). For Blanchot, this ‘thought’ of the disaster does not produce a resignation to the impossibility of presentation or representation. Rather it imposes a demand or an obligation insofar as it ‘exposes us to a certain idea of passivity’ (Blanchot, 1986: 3). But this passivity bears the ruin and self-ruin that characterize the disaster. Its being is similarly impossible and so it is to this impossibility, to the idea of a ‘self-refuting’ passivity, that the disaster exposes ‘us’. I will come back to this. But now I want to indicate the relevance of this thought for the obligation to calculate that Derrida traces to the incalculability of justice, as well as for the relativist or postmodernist idea of difference indicated at the very beginning of my discussion. It is also a certain idea of ‘passivity’ that Derrida (2002a) takes up in the name of what he calls an ‘incalculable and giving [donatrice] idea of justice’ (p. 257); an idea of justice that implies the sense in which ‘being just’ means being just or responsive or true to something in its difference or its singularity. 12 Again I will have to simplify Derrida’s argument which concerns the impossible realization of this idea in a decision that, as ‘finite’, would always interrupt or cut into the infinite calculation that justice requires (p. 255).13 Such a decision is for this reason always violent. But while it is never just, it is, for Derrida, nevertheless necessary. There is, he says, and here after Pascal, no justice before law: ‘Justice isn’t justice, it is not achieved, if it does not have the force to be “enforced”; a powerless justice is not justice’ (p. 238). ‘It is necessary then to combine justice and force’ and in accordance with this necessity ‘justice demands, as justice, recourse to force’ (p. 239, emphasis added). Derrida’s claim, therefore – and here it recalls the argument that silence requires language if it is to ‘be’ – is that justice can only come into ‘being’ in law, and as it is enforced by law. According to this force, law or the decision cannot be just. But what Derrida discerns here is a command to calculate or to decide that is – now recalling the fact that for Amnesty International the other can no longer speak for him or herself – ‘founded’ upon the fact that justice cannot present ‘itself’, that it cannot be ‘itself’, before or outside of law. Restated, Derrida’s argument here is that the ‘difference’ in the name of which (an extreme) relativism would reject human rights is, before any calculation, beyond its determination even as difference. ‘Difference’ appears as difference only if it has already been calculated, only if it has already been determined and so at the same time violated in its ‘difference’. Again, without this determination, without this decision, difference could not appear at all. And so it is according to this ‘decision’ – a decision that is as violent as it is necessary, as excessive as it is unavoidable – that relativism must also calculate; or, more precisely, it must have already calculated. Without law there can be no justice. And so one has to decide; one has to speak. Why? I am already at the most crucial point of Derrida’s argument: ‘Abandoned to itself, the incalculable and giving [donatrice] idea of justice is always very close to the bad, even to the worst’ (Derrida, 2002a: 257). To begin to explain this point, I return to Blanchot’s thought of the disaster: for the insight of this thought consists in the fact that as the disaster ruins its own possibility, so its occurrence, its presence, would be unverifiable. There would be no difference between its presence and its absence. And it is this unverifiability that Amnesty International invokes as the impossibility of interpreting or representing the difference between ‘one’ absence or silence and ‘another’. ‘You’ve probably never heard of the Marsh Arabs before. You probably never will again’; ‘Kids. You can never find them when you want them’. And so on. In this undecidable absence or silence, it is impossible to tell whether the disaster has, or has not, taken place. Again, it is impossible to tell the difference between its presence and its absence and it is because of this impossibility, I suggest, that in not speaking or deciding one comes very close to ‘the worst’. In this passivity, in this attempt to respond or do justice to the disastrousness of the disaster, one’s silence would constitute a ‘killing silence’ in the sense that it would be ‘complicit’ with the disaster (in its unverifiability). What Amnesty International refers to as ‘the silence of good people’ is, for them, ‘the deadliest enemy’ for this reason: exactly because it cannot be told apart from that non-response which reflects a lack of concern with the other’s suffering or with his or her death, and which results from a failure or a refusal to have been or felt touched by it.14 Unheard, ‘the silence of good people’ remains indistinguishable from a ‘silence’ – or more precisely an absence of silence – that does not ‘expose’ the other’s suffering and thereby allows it to continue in silence. For as Derrida (2002a) says, it is in its proximity to the worst that the incalculable and giving idea of justice can ‘always be reappropriated by the most perverse calculation’ (p. 257). In ‘silence’, silence cannot be heard at all. Or, after Blanchot, the passivity of this ‘silence’ would be so passive that it would be unable to bear witness to anything, even to its own passivity. Exposed to this idea of passivity, passivity exposes ‘us’ to its demand: for as Blanchot (1986) says, ‘passivity is a task’ (p. 27). It is only in speech or in writing that the ‘justice’ of one response can be distinguished from the injustice of none. And, against Scarry’s characterization, the language demanded by Amnesty International may be understood on this ‘basis’: already acknowledging its own inadequacy and its own imprecision, it is – recalling Derrida – the language to which silence, as silence, must have recourse.

### Our refusal of the totalizing drive for fixity which has prioritized geopolitics over human rights deconstructs the political as such. This critical ethos is more important than the particular decision itself.

Alex Thomson, lecturer in English at the University of Glasgow, Deconstruction and Democracy, 2005, p. 196-197

The affirmation of this kind of analysis would need to be articulated with whatever directly strategic interventions are possible: for example either the affirmation of particular cosmopolitan or internationalist treaties and organizations, or their critique. The task of thought would be to judge as best one can which moment is most propitious for either. I have shown that Derrida’s comments on hospitality, the cosmopolitical and international law are consistent with this proposition. Such work would mean translating deconstruction not only from one institutional context to another, or showing deconstruction to be already at work there, but from one national or state context to another, and from one philosophical idiom to another. But in addition to its more familiar form as intellectual genealogy, a negotiation with the tradition of inherited political concepts, I have suggested that deconstruction might also be the model for a mode of political analysis, which would be concerned with the political event as a combination of a set of depoliticizing tendencies, which together testify to the possibility of a repoliticization. This is a project which exceeds the scope of this book. It also remains essentially ambiguous, and highly susceptible to the necessary and inevitable institutionalization of deconstruction which Derrida describes in his paper ‘Some statements and truisms ...’, and which can itself be understood as more or less equivalent to what I have designated as depoliticization. Such analyses would have to develop out of the events themselves, rather than approaching a particular political problem with a predetermined deconstructive grid to lay over it. Derrida’s insistence that deconstruction is what happens, that deconstruction is democracy, means not only that deconstruction can be considered as a political practice. It must lead us not only to see deconstruction as politics, but politics as deconstruction. Indeed, a deconstructive account of politics might focus not so much on what deconstruction has to say about politics, as on what politics has to tell us about deconstruction. The structure I have set out in this chapter is well described in these remarks: All that a deconstructive point of view tries to show, is that since conventions, institutions and consensus are stabilizations, this means they are stabilizations of something essentially unstable and chaotic. Thus it becomes necessary to stabilize precisely because stability is not natural; it is because there is instability, that stabilization is necessary; it is because there is chaos that there is a need for stability. Now this chaos and instability, which is fundamental, founding and irreducible, is at once naturally the worst against which we struggle with laws, rules, conventions, politics and provisional hegemony, but at the same it is a chance, a chance to change, to destabilize. If there were continual stability, there would be no need for politics, and it is to the extent that stability is not natural, essential or substantial, that politics exists and ethics is possible. Chaos is at once a risk and a chance, and it is here that the possible and the impossible cross each other. [DAP 83-4] In this context we can understand depoliticization as the effect of a stabilization in the political field. ‘Chaos and instability’ becomes another name for what Derrida calls ‘democracy-to-come’ and ‘justice’ elsewhere. Depoliticizing stabilizations of this field of forces are necessary; but until we think chaos itself as fundamental, no kind of political thought will be able to grasp the 'chance to change’ or destabilize. This is what deconstruction offers to political theory, and it depends directly on the apparent refusal to repoliticize, to introduce a new ontology of politics. Deconstruction is apparently both the most radical and the most ascetic alternative to such theories as those of Schmitt and Benjamin, by seeking to discover a revolutionary potential in the everyday, to discern the possibility of destabilization attested to in the maintenance of the law, and to put into question political theory as in and of itself depoliticizing. Yet Derrida insists that repoliticization only has a chance if a decision could be thought without criteria, without rules or any defined or expected outcome. In the vocabulary of his essay 'Psyche: Inventions of the Other’, ‘the only possible invention is the invention of the impossible’ but ‘an invention of the impossible is impossible [.. .] It is in this paradoxical predicament that a deconstruction gets under way [qu'est engagée]’ [PSY 60 / 59]. But this is not to resign ourselves to just anything happening. As Derrida argues in ‘Force of Law’, ‘incalculable justice requires us to calculate’ [POL 28 / 61]. This calculation will not be without risk, but even in the worst circumstances, ‘there is no ethico-political decision or gesture without what [Derrida] would call a “Yes” to emancipation' [DAP 82].

### Subjectivity takes on meaning only through a responsible relation to alterity; there are no impacts without the Other.

Amit Pinchevski, PhD candidate in the Graduate Program in Communications at McGill University, Montreal, “Freedom from Speech (or the Silent Demand),” Diacritics 31.2, Summer 2001

In order to reencounter the Other’s side of the freedom to speak, it is necessary to recognize that the ontological structure of being-with is precisely what overshadows the Other’s side of this practice. Levinas’s contention is radical: one is first in relation with the Other and only later a self. Subjectivity is essentially response-able, or as Buber contends, the first word one says is “You” rather than “Me.” The Other appears before the rise of the self, before its history, before the self is its own—the Other is “prehistorical,” before the origin of the self. And before here does not merely refer to temporality. As Richard Cohen suggests, this ethical relation is better than being, better than ontology [8], better because it does not meet social structures, power, calculations, and reason on the same plane; it transcends and precedes them. The culs-de-sac to which the ontological situation of being-with the Other leads confront one with the realization that ethical relation comes before knowledge of what is: “The grounds for ethics cannot be found in the self’s being; neither can they be found in the self’s knowledge . . . [ethics] is secondary to nothing: neither to being, nor to the knowledge of being. It resides before and outside them” [Bauman, Effacing the Face 16]. I am therefore always already in communication with the Other; I am concerned with the Other before I am concerned with myself, I am a tympanum before I am a speaker, I am for-the-Other before I am for-myself. Thus, subjectivity is ethical: I am responsible not despite the fact that I have emerged as a self, but because I am a self. Responsibility for the Other— always as the ability to respond to his or her call—is the fundamental structure of subjectivity. Ethics comes second to nothing, not even to freedom, for I cannot will the freedom of the Other from my own freedom. If ethics, as described by Levinas, is indeed “First Philosophy,” I am first responsible and only later free: The freedom of another could never begin in my freedom, that is, abide in the same present, be contemporary, be representable to me. The responsibility for the other cannot have begun with my commitment, in my decision. The unlimited responsibility in which I find myself comes from the hither side of my freedom, from a “prior to every memory.” . . . The responsibility for the other is the null-site of subjectivity, where the privilege of the question “Where?” no longer holds. The time of the said and of essence there lets the pre-original saying be heard, answers to transcendence. [OBBE 10] The realm of ethical discourse is in the for-the-Other, in a realm beyond ontology, from which discourse reaches out to the Other. The realm of being for-the-Other is where speech breaks from its Ulyssian circle—it does not return to its origin; instead, it leaves its sender and is forbidden from returning and reinstating it. Speech here is already a response, an address free from rhetoric: it unfolds itself for-the-Other, and regardless of the actual content delivered, its first word is “Welcome.” But if a speaker is never alone, if I am always already situated within a concrete and fundamental back-ground (literally, a ground that was there before the speech began), my right to speak for-my-self must imply a certain heedlessness of anterior calls. My freedom of speech is possible only at the expense of my response-ability and by choosing to speak for-my-self rather than to respond to the Other. Thus once speaking for-myself, my speech has already cut itself off from the fundamental back-ground of responsibility. Yet, if indeed it has done so, has it not left something when breaking out? Has it not left the traces of its defection, or at least, the traces with which it had attempted to efface the traces of its defection? In what sense can this speech ever be free? Wouldn’t it be henceforth a fugitive speech under the cloak of freedom? In being true to the ethical schema in which the Other is the locus of regard, should it not be concluded that speech is never “free,” but rather mustered from its anterior responsibilities? Following this schema, when I speak for-my-self, I am already not responding for-the-Other; my speech conveys my agenda and already reveals my ulterior motive. A so-called free speech consequently unfolds an alibi: I speak because I have the right to do so, because my calls did not meet any answers, because I want to say something, because I have a goal in speaking, and so on. Yet no matter what the reason is, I am not responsible for-the-Other anymore, and for that I owe an explanation. The right to speak and to be heard assures me that “all is quiet,” that I am not called, that I am entitled to have a say. However, this right was not endowed by the Other: s/he may be still calling. So while putting forth my case, my speech already blemishes me beyond my control: everything I say for-my-self reverberates my defection. It can now be admitted that freedom of speech, to paraphrase Levinas, is a difficult freedom: a freedom realized only in relation to what resides outside the active speaker who is always already situated within a context of alterity which is calling, imploring a response. Responsibility comes before freedom: it presides even if one does not recognize its authority or if one does not know how to respond. The practice of the freedom of speech—along with its politics, rights, and regulations—emerges out of this fundamental responsibility, or rather, from the split, or the différance, of responsibility and free speech. It is here where the speaker can become a witness.

### Our argument is not that the 1AC ends injustice or solves auto-immunity; these traces of democracy are its condition of possibility. Regardless, responsibility demands that we deploy institutions like the state and human rights for the emancipation of the other in particular circumstances, even if they remain limited or ineffective.

Alex Thomson, lecturer in English at the University of Glasgow, Deconstruction and Democracy, 2005, p. 194-195

Such a strategy might be linked directly to the notion of emancipation, as we can see from some of Derrida’s most suggestive and explicit comments on repoliticization, made in ‘Force of Law': Politicization [. . .] is interminable even if it cannot and should not ever be total. To keep this from being a truism or a triviality, we must recognise in it the following consequence: each advance in politicization obliges one to reconsider, and so to reinterpret the very foundations of law such as they had previously been calculated or delimited. This was true for example in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, in the abolition of slavery, in all the emancipatory battles that remain and will have to remain in progress, everywhere in the world, for men and for women. Nothing seems to me less outdated than this emancipatory appeal. [FoL 28 / 62] Discussing these comments in his 'Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism’, Derrida is somewhat concerned by Simon Critchley’s surprise at them. He reiterates his position: I believe there is an enormous amount to do today for emancipation, in all domains and areas of the world and society. Even if I would not wish to inscribe the discourse of emancipation into a teleology, a metaphysics, an eschatology or even a classical messianism, I none the less believe that there is no ethico-political decision or gesture without what I would call a ‘Yes’ to emancipation. [DAP 82] Taken together these statements confirm the suggestions I have been making. By emancipation we might also understand repoliticization; however, every individual emancipatory step must itself also be a relative depoliticization, which must in turn require yet more repoliticization, further emancipation. This is why the notion of a code of human rights is problematic for deconstruction, since it claims the form of a universal and natural set of values, rather than leaving itself open to negotiation, challenge and political revision. This in no way negates the emancipatory effects of such a code, in specific struggles, but remains open to the possibility of struggles in which the idea of human rights would no longer be progressive. If more politicization or emancipation is the object of deconstruction, the difficulty comes in trying to formulate a politics or a political demand which could achieve such an end, without immediately resigning oneself to the depoliticizing tradition of teleology, eschatology and metaphysics. However, no political theory can supply the solution to this question without falling foul of one of these traditional traps. Not only can there be no adequate theory of this politicization; if there is politicization at all, we will be unable to recognize it until after the fact. Only when the law has been cast into doubt by the arrival or event of something unpredictable can emancipation be seen to have taken place. The challenge Derrida poses through the exemplary political practice of deconstruction is of thinking and acting politically in a way you judge to be the most open to this event of emancipation, even while you attempt not to prejudge the issue.

### Finally, contingent deployments of sovereignty can be productive.

Jacques Derrida, Directeur d’Etudes at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, and Professor of Philosophy, French and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine, 2004, For What Tomorrow? A Dialogue With Elisabeth Roudinesco, p. 91-92

J.D.: A moment ago you spoke of regicide as the necessity of an ex­ception, in sum. Well, yes, one can refer provisionally to Carl Schmitt (whatever one may think of him, his arguments are always useful for prob­lematizing the “political” or the “juridical”; I examined this question in Pol­itics of Friendship). He says in effect that a sovereign is defined by his capacity to decide the exception. Sovereign is he who effectively decides the exception. The revolutionaries decided that at that moment that it was nec­essary to suspend justice and—in order to establish the law [droit] and to give the Revolution its rights—to suspend the rule of law [l’Etat de droit]. Schmitt also gives this definition of sovereignty: to have the right to sus­pend the law, or the rule of law, the constitutional state. Without this cate­gory of exception, we cannot understand the concept of sovereignty. Today, the great question is indeed, everywhere, that of sovereignty. Omnipresent in our discourses and in our axioms, under its own name or another, liter­ally or figuratively, this concept has a theological origin: the true sovereign is God. The concept of this authority or of this power was transferred to the monarch, said to have a “divine right.” Sovereignty was then delegated to the people, in the form of democracy, or to the nation, with the same the­ological attributes as those attributed to the king and to God. Today, wher­ever the word “sovereignty” is spoken, this heritage remains undeniable, whatever internal differentiation one may recognize in it. How do we deal with this? Here we return to the question of heritage with which we began. It is necessary to deconstruct the concept of sover­eignty, never to forget its theological filiation and to be ready to call this fil­iation into question wherever we discern its effects. This supposes an in­flexible critique of the logic of the state and of the nation-state. And yet—hence the enormous responsibility of the citizen and of the heir in general, in certain situations—the state, in its actual form, can resist cer­tain forces that I consider the most threatening. What I here call “responsibility” is what dictates the decision to be sometimes for the sovereign state and sometimes against it, for its deconstruction (“theoretical and practical,” as one used to say) according to the singularity of the contexts and the stakes. There is no relativism in this, no renunciation of the injunction to “think” and to deconstruct the heritage. This aporia is in truth the very condition of decision and responsibility—if there is any. I am thinking for example of the incoherent but organized coalition of international capitalist forces that, in the name of neoliberalism or the market,31 are taking hold of the world in conditions such as the “state” form; this is what can still resist the most. For the moment. But it is neces­sary to reinvent the conditions of resistance. Once again, I would say that according to the situations, I am an antisovereignist or a sovereignist—and I vindicate the right to be antisovereignist at certain times and a sovereignist at others. No one can make me respond to this question as though it were a matter of pressing a button on some old-fashioned machine. There are cases in which I would support a logic of the state, but I ask to examine each situation before making any statement. It is also necessary to recognize that by requiring someone to be not unconditionally sovereignist but rather soyvereignist only under certain conditions, one is already calling into question the principle of sovereignty. Deconstruction begins there. It demands a dif­ficult dissociation, almost impossible but indispensable, between uncondi­tionality (justice without power) and sovereignty (right, power, or potency). Deconstruction is on the side of unconditionaliry, even when it seems im­possible, and not sovereignty, even when it seems possible.