# Resilience and Sovereignty in the Context of Contemporary Biopolitics

## RODRIGO DE LA FABIÁN

ABSTRACT   This essay offers a critical history, in the Foucauldian sense, of the contemporary hegemony of resilience as a new risk-management technology. Its hypothesis is that resilience is a new way of conjoining biopolitics with thanatopolitics or sovereign power. If, for Roberto Esposito, the paradigm of immunization explained this deadly linkage, resilience refers to a different biopolitical matrix, one that can no longer be understood in Esposito's terms. While the paradigm of immunization is staked on securing biopolitical bodies, resilience is a strategy for enhancing life itself. This shift, from protecting bodies to protecting life, is related to resilience's biopolitical matrix, which mediates between the molecular fiction of life and an ecological eschatology. The essay concludes, in the first place, that the discourse of resilience entails a naturalization and a seeming depoliticization of precarious forms of life—which must learn not to resist but to adapt to precarity. And, secondly, this essay concludes that, in the context of resilience, the sovereign's old right to kill is no longer invoked in the name of epistemic uncertainty (fear of the unpredictability of the future) but of ontological uncertainty: fear of the annihilation of the conditions of existence for certain life-forms.

KEYWORDS   resilience, biopolitics, neoliberalism, sovereignty.

## 1. Introduction

Since the 1990s, and especially since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the concept of resilience has pervaded risk-management rationalities, becoming a veritable "*lingua franca* of preparedness, adaptation and survivability."[1] It is a concept deployed in various fields, "ranging from biosecurity to community empowerment, from training in the US military to the raising of children able to meet the demands of the future."[2] It cuts across scales, coordinating the micro (the resilient individual) and the macro (resilient cities). It is common to the natural (resilient ecosystems) and the social (resilient communities), as well as the living and the non-living (resilient infrastructure).

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Nevertheless, the concept of resilience is not new. Etymologically, *resilience* derives from the Latin *resiliens*, which means "rebounding, recoiling," and the first modern use of the term occurs in the nineteenth century, when engineers used it to describe the elastic capacity of a material to recover from deformation and regain its original shape.[3] But it was during the second half of the twentieth century when researchers in two very different fields, psychology and ecology, began to use *resilience* in a broader sense.[4] In general, we can say that today the notion of resilience not only expresses the capacity to recover and survive—that is, to "bounce back" from—an unexpected accident. Resilience also names the capacity of an entity or system to "bounce forward," to flourish through adaptive change in response to trauma: "The aim is not simply recovery from disaster but the capacity to 'thrive.'"[5]

Since the nineteenth century, precaution, preparedness, and speculative pre-emption have been the attitudes promoted by liberal and neoliberal governmental-ities to allow subjects to cope with uncertain futures. As François Ewald has shown, the common factor among different liberal and neoliberal risk-management tech-nologies was that all of them supposed that risks were calculable and that, there-fore, people should cultivate a prudent attitude toward the future.[6] In other words, such risk-management technologies were negative and defensive, seeking to avoid disasters.[7]

But this classical *homo prudens* has little to do with the new *homo resiliens* that has emerged in recent decades. The main reason for this is that the resilient response does not cope with calculable risks, but with unimaginable futures marked by disasters that cannot be anticipated. If the boom in discourses of resilience came after September 11, this is precisely because that day's attacks confronted the US with something unimaginable. And as long as resilience assumes the impossibility of anticipating and avoiding future disasters, it is not a defensive strategy, but one that supposes that we will have to learn to live, and even thrive, with and through such disasters, recycling damage to create other resources.[8]

In a 2008 article titled "America the Resilient," Stephen Flynn analyzes the US response to the 9/11 attacks in the following terms:

> Building the resilience of American society would increase the nation's security by depriving Al-Qaeda and other terrorists of the fear dividend they hope to reap . . .
> Whereas increasing security measures is an inevitable answer to a society's fears, resilience rests on a foundation of confidence and optimism. It involves taking stock of what is truly precious and ensuring its durability in a way that would allow Americans to remain true to their ideals no matter what tempests the future may bring.[9]

These words indicate the specificity of resilient responses to disaster. Flynn dis-tinguishes between what he identifies as "security measures," which are violent

political actions triggered by fear, and resilience, which is a fearless, confident, and optimistic mode of response that seeks to "create a subjective and systematic state to enable each and all to live freely and with confidence in a world of potential risk."[10] In other words, the resilient response is a strategy for coping with unprecedented disasters by fostering a fearless attitude toward these events, exhorting us to "exploit the emergent opportunities that disorder invariably creates," to make "every threat a challenge and opportunity."[11] When policymakers engage in the discourse of resilience, "they do so in terms which aim explicitly at preventing humans from conceiving of danger as a phenomenon from which they might seek freedom and even, in contrast, as that to which they must now expose themselves."[12] This new rationality signals a break from liberal and neoliberal paradigms of governmentality in fostering not fear and prudence, but an optimistic outlook toward unavoidable and unforeseeable catastrophes.

In what follows, I perform a "critical history" of the concept of resilience. From a Foucauldian standpoint, critical history seeks to analyze the conditions of possibility "under which that which we take for truth and reality has been established."[13] It means "to think against the present," showing that what we consider to be solid and commonsensical is in fact arbitrary and contingent, enabling other ways of conceiving our present and imagining new future horizons.[14] To do so, a double strategy of analysis is needed: on one hand, it is necessary to perform a genealogy of how resilience emerges within, and distinguishes itself from, preexisting liberal and neoliberal risk-management technologies.[15] And, on the other hand, it is necessary to analyze and reconstruct, from the inside, this new resilient rationality— that is, its new way of problematizing and acting upon reality.

But critical history is not just a new way of describing certain facts. On the contrary, its main purpose is to show how those facts have crystallized as such. More than trying to understand what the resilience discourse says about reality, I seek to analyze the epistemic matrix that enables certain statements to be legitimately affirmed and the production of a common sense that problematizes reality in certain specific ways. I call this epistemic matrix an *onto-political fiction*, because it enables a semiotic architecture about who we are—its ontic dimension—and who can we expect to become—its political dimension. I invoke "fiction" not in the sense of something that is not real, but on the contrary, as the structure that organizes reality itself. In other words, the fictional supplement of reality guarantees its stability, and, at that the same time, shows its contingent and fragile status.

First, I will describe a securitarian onto-political fiction that prevails in liberalism and neoliberalism. This securitarian fiction is at play in Hobbes's Leviathan, as well as in Roberto Esposito's paradigm of immunization, which conjoins biopolitics with sovereign power. Secondly, I will show how a new, emergent onto-political fiction of resilience in the last few decades forces us to rethink the

paradigm of immunization. Thirdly, I will show how resilience, which mediates between a molecular fiction of life and an ecological eschatology, sanctions new biopolitical technologies for governing through the complexity of life. And, finally, I will critique the idea that resilience is a fearless response to danger, showing how a resilient biopolitics turns back into thanatopolitics, rearticulating itself with the old sovereign power and its right to kill.

## 2. Fear and Immunity: Securing Bodies

In the broader liberal tradition, from Hobbes onward, fear has been conceived of as the main affect of political life. Fear's prominence within liberal governmentality and the securitarian paradigm can be traced back to metaphors of the political body. Prior to Hobbes, during the Middle Ages, the monarchic institution distinguished between the perishable body of each mortal king and a body politic that remained unchanged through time and was maintained as the intangible corollary of the kingdom.[16] This metaphysical body was the divine guarantee of natural harmony and mirrored the micro-scale of the kingdom on the macro-scale of the universe: "every 'partial whole' had to be analogous to the 'universal whole.'"[17] Ruler and kingdom were understood as an organic whole, which presupposed a natural and harmonious "interrelation between this divinely ordained universal whole and its equally divinely ordained parts."[18] In this organic whole each part of the body politic had its natural place and function, the ruler being the head of the body.[19] The unity of the whole, the cooperation among its components, as well as the subordination of the parts of the body to its head, were guaranteed by God's laws.

On the other hand, for Thomas Hobbes, the body politic, or "the Leviathan," was no longer the expression of divine eternal harmony but an artificial entity resulting from a social contract:

> For by Art is created that great Leviathan called a Commonwealth, or State, (in latine Civitas) which is but an Artificiall Man; though of greater stature and strength than the Naturall, for whose protection and defence it was intended; and in which, the Soveraignty is an Artificiall Soul, as giving life and motion to the whole body.[20]

The "Artficiall Man" at the same time retains and overcomes the medieval metaphysics of the body politic. As Katherine Bootle Attie asserts, the medieval idea of the transcendental king's body survives in Hobbes's conception of the state: "The 'Artificiall Man' incorporates mortal individuals into a secular body that can live forever: the commonwealth."[21] Nevertheless, the Leviathan is not the immortal God of the Middle Ages, but a "mortal god."[22] In other words, the Leviathan is, at the same time, mortal and immortal—a sort of transcendental function of the social contract. What endangers the integrity of the body politic is the fact that

it is not only artificial, but also brutally contrary to human nature. Since humans do not have any kind of natural inclination toward gregarious life, the unity of the political body is built on exclusion. Thus, the mortality of Hobbes's Leviathan implies that its transcendental unity is permanently threatened by the savage's violent return.

The social contract is not enough to keep human nature at bay.[23] The mysterious force that holds the Leviathan together is nothing but metaphysical fear over protecting the sovereign's soul:

> Of all passions, that which inclineth men least to break the laws is fear. Nay, excepting some generous natures, it is the only thing (when there is appearance of profit or pleasure by breaking the laws) that makes men keep them.[24]

According to Foucault, to protect the metaphysical unity of its transcendental body, the sovereign has the right to kill.[25] This means that sovereign power is exercised over a metaphysical or imaginary territory as the right to appropriate goods, services, and, above all, subjects' lives. Sovereign technologies of domination are described by Foucault as negative ones, that is, as "mechanisms of exclusions": "disqualification, exile, rejection, deprivation, refusal, and incomprehension; that is to say, an entire arsenal of negative concepts or mechanisms of exclusion."[26] These mechanisms should protect the metaphysical integrity of the body politic, casting everything that could endanger it "out into a vague, external world beyond the town walls, beyond the limits of the community. As a result, two masses [are] constituted, each foreign to the other. And those cast out [are] cast out in the strict sense into outer darkness."[27] Fear against fear: fear of the power of the Leviathan; fear of the shapeless outer darkness against which the Leviathan protects the community and reproduces in turn a violent and terrifying sense of exteriority within its own body.

According to Foucault, a new kind of power emerges in the West during the eighteenth century. In his 1975–76 lectures, published as *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault introduces the concept of biopower to explain the historical limits of sovereignty, or what he calls the "sovereign *dispositif*."[28] If the latter was built upon the juridical right to kill and let live, biopower seeks to govern over and through life, making live and letting die.[29]

According to Foucault, this new kind of power targets both the politics of the human body—disciplinary power—and the biopolitics of the population.[30] So, it is not an exclusionary negative power, but an inclusionary and productive one. Through different technologies, it aims at managing and enabling certain forms of life. In this context, biopolitics no longer targets the transcendental body of the Leviathan, nor individual bodies, as discipline does, but the biological body of the

population, understood as the human "species body" "imbued with the mechanics of life."[31] In the biopolitical regime, a new securitarian technology of power arises, which governs through the "*milieu*"[32]—that is, through shaping the conditions of possibility for the life of the population to thrive:

> a technology which brings together the mass effects characteristic of a population, which tries to control the series of random events that can occur in a living mass, a technology which tries to predict the probability of those events (by modifying it, if necessary), or at least to compensate for their effects. This is a technology which aims to establish a sort of homeostasis, not by training individuals, but by achieving an overall equilibrium that protects the security of the whole from internal dangers.[33]

The population—the new body politic discovered during the eighteenth century—is no longer the metaphysical body of the Leviathan. Its regularities have to be discovered, by statistics and probabilistic thought, in the complex interaction among sociological, biological, psychological, and other events. The new biopolitical body is a homeostatic regularity. Moreover, it reconfigures the Self-Other dialectic of the old sovereign body politic. To the Leviathan, the Other was a terrifying and dark exteriority. That is, the Other was the radical asociality and incivility of the Hobbesian savage. By contrast, biopower is inclusive. Biopolitics has diagnosed the statistic and demographic regularities of the Hobbesian savage, shedding light onto the darkness, turning fear toward radical uncertainty into calculable risks. In other words, statistics and probability analysis enabled the possibility of imagining and anticipating the unpredictable otherness of the sovereign's body, turning fear of uncertainty into a stimulating risk calculation game.

The old sovereign technologies of law and fear do not seem to work to secure this new body politic. Variables on which populations depend are complex and escape "the sovereign's voluntarist and direct action in the form of the law."[34] It is in this context that new technologies of governmentality, which work through the *milieu*, gain legitimacy:

> So you can see that a completely different technique is emerging that is not getting subjects to obey the sovereign's will, but having a hold on things that seem far removed from the population, but which, through calculation, analysis, and reflection, one knows can really have an effect on it.[35]

Does this mean that the inclusionary and productive technologies of government have eradicated sovereign power? Has biopolitics, by means of calculation, statistical analysis, and a new imagination of the future, ended metaphysical fear? If so, then why—as Esposito observes of Foucault's analysis of the twentieth century—

has the heyday of biopolitics seen more destruction of life than ever before?[36] How could it be that in the twentieth century, totalitarianisms and technologies of massive destruction, in the name of protecting certain lives, have annihilated more lives than ever before? How is it that the power of life is exercised against life itself?

One answer that Foucault gives is that "racism" allows for the rearticulation of the sovereign and the securitarian *dispositif*. In the first place, says Foucault, racism introduces a discontinuity in the domain of life between those biopolitical bodies that must live and those who must die.[37] In other words, racism creates different collective and individual bodies, some of which must be protected while others are sacrificed. Second, Foucault continues, racism sustains a particular biopolitical grammar: "If you want to live, you must take lives, you must be able to kill."[38] So, racism brings the old sovereign right to kill and its exclusionary technologies together with biopolitics, by legitimating violence against certain lives in order to protect other bodies. The defense of this new biopolitical body is no longer mounted in the name of the old juridical rights, but in the name of protecting the life of the population to the detriment of others.[39]

It is also possible to assert that biopolitics has, at the same time, modified and retained features of the old sovereign body. Its sovereignty is no longer expressed in juridical terms, but through nationalist, racist, and other fictions of transcendental identity. In other words, in the context of biopolitics, the right to kill gains its legitimacy from the metaphysical fear of the *other* biopolitical bodies, which threaten to destroy the metaphysicality of a sovereign biopolitical body.

However, as Esposito has suggested, Foucault does not fully capture the specificity and complexity of the relationship between sovereign power and biopolitics, that is, of the deadly and disturbing reversal of an inclusive and productive biopolitics into a negative and exclusionary thanatopolitics—a politics centered on the right to kill in the name of protecting certain lives.[40] Is their relationship contingent, or is the reversal a tragic, immanent consequence of biopolitics?

To fill what he considers to be a "semantic void" in Foucault's works, and to show that thanatopolitics and biopolitics "emerge as the two constituent elements of a single, indivisible whole that assumes meaning from their interrelation," Esposito proposes the concept of "immunity."[41] For the Italian philosopher, what characterizes the securitarian strategy of immunization is that it is not a frontal one, but rather a strategy of outflanking and neutralizing that which threatens to destroy the organic body. In other words, as with vaccines, to immunize a body implies not to reject or expel what endangers it, but to make the poison "somehow part of the body."[42] Immunizing life "is a negative [form] of the protection of life. It saves, insures, and preserves the organism, either individual or collective . . . but it does not do so directly, immediately, or frontally; on the contrary, it subjects the organism to a condition that simultaneously negates or reduces its power to

expand."[43] If sovereign power dreams of eliminating the Other that endangers its borders, the paradigm of immunity aims to secure borders by integrating a certain amount of the intruder within those borders. Immunity is not indemnity. Thus, the connection between biopolitics and thanatopolitics can be expressed with the following political grammar: "Sacrificing life to its preservation is the only way of containing the threat that menaces life."[44]

It is important to note that the use of poison—or *pharmakon*, because it is both an illness and its remedy—has nothing to do with any kind of mixing or confusion between the self and the intruder. The effectiveness of a vaccine, rather, presupposes that the distinction between self and other can be made. It is in the process of killing the inoculated weakened version of the other that the immune system becomes stronger. So, albeit with different strategies—whether it be the exclusion or inclusion of the Other—which work upon different kinds of bodies, the immunitary paradigm ultimately shares with sovereign power the aim of protecting the Self from the Other.[45]

For Esposito, both the illness and its remedy are nothing other than old Hobbesian fear:

> The modern state not only does not eliminate the fear from which it is originally generated but is founded precisely on fear, so that to make it the motor and the guarantee of the state's proper functioning means that the epoch that defines itself on the basis of the break with respect to the origin, namely modernity, carries within itself an indelible imprint of conflict and violence.[46]

Modern liberal and neoliberal states aim not at eradicating the indeterminate fear of the state of nature, but at making it safe. From Hobbes onward, to escape from the indeterminate fear of the state of nature, "men accept an amount of fear and indeed institute a second and certain fear with a covenant."[47] This second "certain" or "safe" fear is the result of rendering it calculable, anticipatable, and even profitable. In other words, the process of immunization, which introduces a weakened version of the old metaphysical fear into the body politic, seeks to turn fear into risk. Foucault claims that in this sense, the "psychological and cultural correlative[s]" of liberalism are fear and danger:

> The motto of liberalism is: "Live dangerously" . . . that is to say, individuals are constantly exposed to danger, or rather, they are conditioned to experience their situation, their life, their present, and their future as containing danger.[48]

The securitarian *dispositif* situates individuals within complex juridical, political, and economic contexts, which produce risky futures and make subjects personally

responsible for them, permanently forced to choose between freedom, fear, and security.[49]

If a threat comes from outside the political body and endangers the integrity of its metaphysical identity—national, racial, masculine, among others—then risk turns back into the old Hobbesian fear. It is at this precise moment that the sovereign's right to kill is invoked, and the violent response is not triggered by calculable risks, but by fear toward the shapeless uncertainty of the "outside," which endangers the supplementary metaphysical body politic. In fact, the immunity metaphor is used to naturalize fear toward the Other and to mystify the identity of the Self at all scales:

> When you are the ever-vigilant protector of the sacrosanct environment of a body, anything foreign that should dare to invade that environment must be idly detected and removed. However, finding certain invaders and recognizing them as foreign can be very difficult. . . . It can be as difficult for our immune system to detect foreignness as it would be for a Caucasian to pick out a particular Chinese interloper at a crowded ceremony in Peking's main square.[50]

As Esposito has shown, the old Hobbesian savage still lurks in our modern liberal societies, giving legitimacy to politics of death and exclusion. It is no longer the detritus of a juridical metaphysical body, but the terrifying remain of a metaphysical biopolitical body that confronts it with his own mortality.

In Esposito's account, there is another immune response: autoimmune disease. In this case, the need to protect the integrity of the body produces the unwanted side effect of turning it into a sacrificable victim, exposed to an overdose of the immunizing substance that exceeds the body's physiological threshold. In fact, for Esposito, the US response to the September 11 attacks—its waging of preemptive war—is the apotheosis of severe autoimmune disease.[51] In this context, national boundaries have been erased, and all nations constitute a global political body. War can no longer be waged in the name of peace, because this distinction presupposes that populations are distributed among different national bodies, some of which can be sacrificed for the protection of others. Thus, war is waged to prevent war, which means that peace is no longer the absence of war, but a permanent state of preemptive war, producing an autoimmune reaction and a permanent state of fear and hypervigilance. Taking the immunitary paradigm to the extreme, we can conclude that self-destruction is the last resort mobilized to reestablish the difference between the Self and the Other.

To summarize, immunity is premised on the same Hobbesian metaphysical fears and distinctions between Self and Other that define the securitarian *dispositif*. Therefore, the concept of "security" in the liberal and neoliberal securitarian

*dispositifs*, as O'Malley asserts, shares "the overriding characteristic of enactment-preparedness [and] remains passive, defensive, and negative, [with] the attempt to create 'freedom from.'"[52] As we have seen, this defensive strategy is built into the grammar of immunity—to protect certain forms of life one must sacrifice life—and has two modalities: risk management, which operates through an anticipatory imagination; and exclusion, which is triggered by the conversion of risk into fear and seeks to annihilate what endangers biopolitical identities.

This specific conception of life presupposes the need for certain normative parameters to maintain the contours of the metaphysical bio-body. In other words, life is framed by the body politic's transcendental normativity. Bodies must be protected from the excess of life—as in the autoimmune response—and life must be protected from itself by being kept within bodies. In the immunitary paradigm, the governance of bodies paradoxically enables the life to thrive by restraining its power to thrive. The site of truth of the securitarian *dispositif* is not life in itself, life as such, but the privileging of certain forms of life to the detriment of others. The effectiveness of securitarian technology has to be measured relative to its capacity to protect a metaphysical bio-body, rather than life in itself.

How, then, should we understand the fearless, resilient response to injury in the present? Have we escaped the deadly connection between biopolitics and thanatopolitics? Or, to ask a question alongside Patrick O'Malley, how can it be that resilience, without fostering new imaginations of the future, has turned uncertainty into "a liberal condition of freedom when it had become the enemy of Western, liberal security?"[53] To understand this turn, it is necessary to take into account the emergence, in the last few decades, of a new biopolitical matrix for the intelligibility of life and bodies, which I explore in the next section.

### 3. The Onto-Molecular Fiction of Life and Ecological Eschatology: Securing Life

Foucault shows that the modern concept of life that emerged at the end of the eighteenth century was enabled by the development of classical economics—especially Ricardo's conception of wealth and value as the expenditure, wearing, and wasting of human life—and modern biology—especially the work of Bichat and Couvier, who, for the first time in history, analyzed life itself, a departure from the work of the taxonomists of the classical period.[54] Life, in other words, became an object of knowledge in itself; knowledge could be produced in its name. Thus, in what follows I will analyze two scientific fields whose recent developments have created new onto-political fictions, which have radicalized the processes of detachment of life from bodies and are closely linked with the emergence of the fearless resilient rationality: molecular biology and ecology.

As Nikolas Rose has pointed out, biotechnological developments that have taken place since the 1960s—but especially since the 1990s—which seek to under-

stand life no longer at the molar level, but at the molecular one, are linked to the emergence of a new conception of life.[55] The molar onto-political fiction that took shape during the course of the nineteenth century imagines the body at the visible level of anatomy. At this scale, life is still "caged" within its bodily existence; it cannot freely circulate among bodies—organs are personal and defended by the immune system—and it is thought to require a set of homeostatic physiological parameters in order to thrive. By contrast, at the molecular scale, life is liberated from its bodily, organic existence, as well as from distinctions between self and other, freely circulating from one body to another, among different persons or species, or even between the organic and the inorganic. Rose writes:

> Molecularization strips tissues, proteins, molecules, and drugs of their specific affinities to a disease, to an organ, to an individual, to a species—and enables them to be regarded, in many respects, as manipulable and transferable elements or units, which can be delocalized—moved from place to place, from organism to organism, from disease to disease, from person to person.[56]

Moreover, at this level, the normative parameters in which life seemed to be confined disappear, because molecular interventions are no longer constrained by the normativity of a given vital order.[57] For example, at the level of stem cells or from a transgenetic point of view, bodies are no longer defined by the same stable, normative parameters that limit life's potentialities at the molar level. Bodies are instead plastic, malleable means for the expression of the surplus of life:

> What stem cell science seeks to produce is not the potential organism—nor even this or that particular type of differentiated cell—but rather biological promise itself in a state of nascent transformability. More precisely, it seeks to discover the cultural conditions under which the biological promise becomes self-regenerative, self-accumulative, and self-renewing. It wants to culture the ES [embryonic stem] cell in such a way that it is able to perpetually regenerate its own potentiality, in the form of a not-yet realized surplus of life.[58]

Thus, the molecular fiction understands and manipulates life as a shapeless surplus of infinite possibilities of becoming. This radically re-signifies trauma and disaster. If these once threatened the survival of bio-bodies, producing a metaphysical fear of identity's dissolution, in this new onto-molecular fiction, they have become necessary for life to thrive. As Stuart Kauffmann states, to survive and thrive, life should not be protected from danger; on the contrary, it must be exposed to it in a constant process of adaptive transformation, thriving at the edge of extinction.[59] The new "site of truth" is no longer the body, because what has to be secured is

molecular life as such. If, in the paradigm of immunization, an overdose was an unwanted consequence of an autoimmune response that put the bio-body at risk, in this new context, it becomes the condition for life to thrive:

> The very attempt to secure [life can . . .] have deleterious effects on it. The more you try to secure life, the more you thwart its ambitions, even to the point of eventually killing it. Security, then, is dangerous . . . paradoxically, because it defies the necessity of danger, preventing the necessary exposure to danger, without which the life of the neoliberal subject cannot grow and prosper.[60]

However, this resignification of fear, trauma, and disaster into something necessary for life to thrive represents only one dimension of resilience. Each time we speak of a resilient "nation" or of a resilient "individual," we are necessarily reintroducing a "certain element" that resilience is expected to protect and conserve through change. In other words, as I will show, resilience shares with ecological rationality the target of making somehow compatible molecular life's need to permanently dissolve any kind of body that constrains it with the need of preserving an ecosystem, or certain dimensions of a nation or of an individual, through radical change. Therefore, my hypothesis is that rather than completely eliminating the dimension of the body, it is necessary to question what kind of body resilience seeks to protect.

Since the 1970s, the ecological critique of capitalism has shown that economic growth depends on the preservation of life, and that, to preserve life, it should not be understood at the scale of differentiated micro-ecosystems but as one complex, worldwide system, also known as the "biosphere."[61] In other words, ecology, through the notion of a biosphere, once again links life to an environmental body, establishing certain preconditions so that it can thrive.

Accordingly, a new ecological eschatology is born, characterized by irreversible thresholds and boundaries within which life should be preserved, functioning as a new "site of truth" for economic development: "The environment is not a minor factor of production but rather is 'an envelope containing, provisioning, and sustaining the entire economy.'"[62] In this new context, it is the preservation of the biosphere, not life as such nor the population, which "must provide the rationalities according to which peoples are entitled to increase their prosperity."[63]

This new eschatology is characterized by its production of guilty subjects. In what some identify as the era of the Anthropocene, humanity is facing the effects of its past actions, and we have no future, because we have consumed it by crossing some critical "planetary boundaries." From this point of view, we are like the guilty living dead, because it is even possible that we have already triggered the sixth mass extinction on Earth.[64]

Nevertheless, the molecular scale challenges and even dissolves our notion of the biosphere:

> If it is ecology that has been most vocal in pronouncing the finitude of human life, the fragility of its dependence on the biosphere, and its consequent exposure to the dangers of ecological catastrophe, it is molecular biology which has been most powerful in expressing faith in the potential of the human to be able to go on living and thriving in a context of such finitude, vulnerability and potential catastrophe.[65]

At the molecular level, there are no limits to economic growth. In recent years, a new "bioeconomy," which does not exploit constituted forms of life but rather embraces life's creative processes in themselves, has come into view.[66] This means that productivity and the creation of surplus value have become isomorphic with the infinite capacity of molecular life to recreate and to regenerate itself. In their 1999 book *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*, Hawken, Lovins, and Lovins remind us that the word *resource* comes from the Latin *resurgere* which means "to rise again."[67] From their perspective, at the molecular level, it is possible to imagine not only a capitalist production that generates little waste, but also one in which the concept of waste is an illusion. In fact, at this scale, "waste" and "resource" are synonyms.[68]

Therefore, if the question raised by ecological rationality about the need for protecting the biosphere first emerged as a representation of the limits of capitalist production, when the same question is reinterpreted from the standpoint of the molecular fiction of life, that need becomes an ally of capitalist expansion. "Sustainable development" protects life from the excesses of economic rationality by codifying life processes in economic terms and by biologizing the means of production.

In this context, resilience has been an important mediator between molecular rationality and ecological eschatology. In his foundational paper "Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems," C. S. Holling distinguishes between the "stability of a system," understood as its ability to return to equilibrium after a disturbance, and "resilience," defined as the ability of a system to absorb changes and *still persist*: "Resilience determines the persistence of relationships within a system and is a measure of the ability of these systems to absorb changes of state variables, driving variables, and parameters, and still persist."[69]

Holling argues that a system not exposed to dramatic changes is stable but not resilient, while on the contrary a system permanently exposed to change is resilient but not stable. This means that a resilient system, in order to persist, must be exposed to events beyond its homeostatic equilibrium, reaching the edge of its own extinction.[70] In this sense, for Walker and Cooper, Holling's concept of resilience is

the "beginning of a major shift among ecologists away from the notion that there exists a 'balance of nature' to which life will return eventually if left to self-repair."[71] The rationality of resilience thus produces a counterintuitive conclusion and a mediation between ecological bodies and the molecular fiction of life: the idea that fundamental change is a prerequisite for the persistence of ecosystems.[72]

The onto-political fiction of resilience is based upon a tension. On the one hand, it seeks to enhance life by exposing bio-bodies to changes beyond their homeostatic parameters. But, on the other hand, a securitarian impulse prevails. Although resilience is not about the persistence of the metaphysical bio-body — and the spatial and imaginary demarcation between the Self and the Other — it is about producing and protecting a system of complex and dense interactions that can adapt and persist once those bodies are no longer recognizable. In other words, resilience is about the persistence of a set of abstract or symbolic mathematical relationships, which assure the plastic continuity of the system beyond trauma, and thus it indirectly frames the possible lives to be produced.[73] This mathematical identity offers a new kind of body to molecular life, a body which seems to be more respectful, "more friendly" in its need for perpetual expansion and in its creative powers. To be secure, this new plastic and adaptative body does not need to trust in any kind of prudent knowledge about the future. On the contrary, resilience assumes an ignorance about upcoming events, because it "does not require a precise capacity to predict the future, but only a qualitative capacity to devise systems that can absorb and accommodate future events in whatever unexpected form they may take."[74]

So, resilience can be considered a post-securitarian governmental technology in that it is no longer a defensive and negative way of protecting the imaginary Self against the Other.[75] Resilience's strategy is built upon a paradox: in aiming at protecting any kind of traditional metaphysical identity — resilient nation, resilient community, resilient individual, among others — it must expose those identities to their dissolution in order to unleash the plastic power, the complex set of interactions among different life support systems, which in return are the condition of possibility of those identities. So, rather than promising more *freedom from* danger — as the classical securitarian *dispositif* does — resilience promotes *freedom to* engage with dangers, accepting their inevitability.[76]

As Melinda Cooper points out, what is at play here is neither Agamben's state of exception nor Esposito's state of immunity.[77] Both presume the necessity of defending the sovereign's body from external intruders. The paradigm of immunization is appropriate for the analysis of certain forms of violence linked to the metaphysical fear of the "intruder," of the "allergen" — such as colonialism, eugenics, racism, and so on. By contrast, in the context of the resilient turn what endangers us is no longer an "intruder." In the first place, traumatic external agents are

not a real threat. On the contrary, what endangers life is any kind of metaphysical identity that prevents itself from unleashing the molecular adaptive powers in light of a traumatic experience. In fact, the metaphysical bio-body itself is what endangers life and therefore its own possibility of survival. And, in the second place, in the context of ecological eschatology, catastrophes do not inform us about the presence of any kind of intruder, but about our past actions. Thus, "disasters are internal to society and against [them] protection is not only difficult but may well be harmful."[78]

In what follows I will analyze, firstly, resilience's technologies of governmentality, and, secondly, resilience's link to contemporary sovereign power—that is, its reversal of a resilient biopolitics back into thanatopolitics.

## 4. The Biopolitics of Resilience: Governing Through the Complexity of Life

Resilience is a risk-management rationality and a technology for governing life, but how does it work? How, exactly, does resilience govern?

In our contemporary world, different rationalities of resilience coexist. On one hand, Chandler characterizes what he identifies as "liberal" resilience.[79] This first-generation resilience corresponds to a subject-based understanding of inner capacities or strengths for survival that foster "the bounce-back ability." This definition of resilience shares the liberal, modern distinction between subject and object, and it is a goal-oriented rationality that seeks to anticipate and shape the future. In other words, liberal resilience is continuous with a securitarian *dispositif*, one whose main objective is to protect certain bodies—individual, national, and so on—guaranteeing their survival beyond adversity. On the other hand, Chandler shows that there is another "post-liberal" conception of resilience that challenges the modern faith in our capacity to anticipate and avoid dangers; this second conception recasts resilience as an interactive process of relational adaptation between the subject and the object: "The subject [of post-liberal resilience] does not survive merely through its own 'inner' resources; the subject survives and thrives on the basis of its ability to adapt or dynamically relate to its socioecological environment."[80]

"Post-liberal" does not mean "post-neoliberal." In fact, in many respects, one can consider resilience as a radical neoliberal rationality.[81] As Patrick O'Malley asserts, "In the mythology of resilience, may the neoliberal dream of freedom in uncertainty be imagined into existence in the 21st century."[82] Resilience is ultimately a strategy to protect and govern through "the complexity of life"—understood as the result of heterogeneous interactions among all kinds of systems, living and non-living, human and non-human—in the context of radical uncertainty.

The concept of the "complexity of life" is not self-evident. It erases some traditional limits that for centuries have organized our way of understanding reality.

Indeed, this concept blurs the boundaries between the human and the non-human, as well as between the living and the non-living. For example, contemporary discourses on resilience no longer consider human action to be artificial and external to natural ecological systems; rather these discourses understand the socioecological system as functioning as a whole.[83] When it comes to the distinction between living and non-living things, the perspective of resilience likewise tends to erase traditional boundaries. For example, in the context of homeland security, resilience has been used to think about resistance to unexpected, dramatic events affecting critical infrastructure, understood as "the framework of physical structures and cyber information networks that provides a continual flow of information, goods, and services essential to the defense and economic security of the US."[84] In this context, resilience implies reliance on the capacity of those physical systems to spring back to life and survive catastrophic damage without human interference. It is as if the objects of critical infrastructure "take on a life of their own."[85]

Regarding the radical uncertainty in which resilience is embedded, it is important to distinguish it from another kind of incertitude linked to the traditional liberal and neoliberal motto of embracing risks. The latter is rooted in the complexity of the free market, which represents an *epistemological* limit for the economic agent, because there is no intelligence able to anticipate or predict it. This epistemic incertitude is, at the same time, a source of danger and the only possibility of profit.

By contrast, the complexity of life that underwrites resilience does not represent an epistemic uncertainty but an *ontological* one. For Chandler, complex life has two main characteristics.[86] First, it is self-regulating: through a permanent process of intercommunication and adaptation to emergent situations, it produces order out of chaos. Second, it is creative: full of immanent and unforeseeable possibilities of becoming. So, interactions among complex systems produce a de-substantialized onto-political fiction, that is, a new conception of being which is always open to new ways of becoming.[87] The future is no longer imaginable from the standpoint of life's complexity because it entails changing the normative parameters that, in the present, seem to be reality's unavoidable conditions of possibility. In fact, one main criticism of ecological eschatology is that it assumes that the current normative parameters of capital production will remain the same in the future, without considering that, at a molecular level, production necessarily implies modifying those parameters. The molecular fiction of life blurs the ecological imagination of catastrophe not by promising more benign images of the future, but by opening the future to unimaginable possibilities.

This shift toward unimaginable futures implies, in the first place, that any intelligence that seeks to enhance resilience must accept its inability to intentionally shape the future. And, second, it implies that *homo resiliens* cannot trust that

any central intelligence would have the capacity to organize the right response when confronted with unexpected threats. In the face of radical uncertainty, resilience does not seek to transform it into a calculable risk; on the contrary, it shows the limits of that predictive strategy, and instead fosters an optimistic and confident attitude toward uncertainty. This kind of biopolitics, rather than statistics, demography, or probabilistic calculus, is more concerned with promoting resilient lives "able to exist on the edge of survivability, and adapted to uncertainty and surprise; a life that has abandoned trying to know the future and its associated prudentialism."[88] Instead of relying on central intelligence, *homo resiliens* trusts in immanent, spontaneous, emergent responses, produced by complex interactions among the different registers of human life: socioecological systems, communicational systems, systems of goods exchange, and so on. Therefore, the governing strategies of post-liberal resilience are historically situated "micro-knowledges" and "micro-tactics" of adaptation to change, which cannot be centrally organized or coordinated.[89]

As a fundamentally headless strategy, post-liberal resilience can be considered a critique, on one hand, of the human agency at the heart of neoliberal governmentality. As Douglas C. North has pointed out, although the "reality" of a political-economic system is never known to anyone, humans nevertheless have no option but to construct elaborate beliefs about the nature of that "reality" in order to try to shape their future.[90] On the other hand, post-liberal resilience addresses an internal tension in neoliberal governmentality between governance and the neoliberal desire—as Foucault might say—"not to govern too much."[91] By redefining the subject-object relationship not as linear but as circular, it fulfills neoliberalism's ideological fantasy of a headless society. The politics of resilience are a radical critique of instrumental, future-oriented, modern rationality. In fact, these politics can be considered a form of "retro-politics," because in the Anthropocene, present events inform the subject not about the future, but about the unforeseeable effects of what she has done before, inaugurating an ethic of permanent self-reflexivity and perpetual adaptation to emergent situations.[92] From this point of view, avoiding disasters is not only impossible but problematic, because it prevents subjects from learning new adaptive strategies from the past. The survival strategy of *homo resiliens* becomes isomorphic with the need for traumatic changes in his or her life. Trying to avoid disasters would be the equivalent of trying to control price variations under a traditional free market; governing oneself as a resilient subject re-signifies trauma as the most valuable source of information.

The subject cannot govern *over* the complexity of life, but *through it*, because she is fully embedded in it, always interpreting signs from the past, trying to adapt through situated micro-tactics and micro-knowledges, trusting in life's molecular power to produce new orders. As Lentzos and Rose have shown, resilience

is a strategy "for reconciling liberty and security without destroying the intensi-fied and extended mobility, flow and circulation of persons and things on which contemporary freedom is seen to depend."[93] As long as unexpected events do not interfere with the interconnectedness of these various systems, resilience guaran-tees that complex life can extract surplus value from any disaster. Consequently, resilience discourse does not seek to shape an external environment—natural, social, or individual—through goal-oriented rationality. "Instead, agency resur-faces in terms of making (constant) changes on inner life through learning from exposure to the contingencies of ontological complexities."[94]

The resilient response to terrorist attacks, ecological disasters, and economic breakdowns has nothing to do with the promise of a safer future; instead it has to do with the resignification of the concept of disaster itself. If contingent events are no longer encounters with an external threat but processes through which the complexity of life redefines its homeostatic normative parameters, and if what has to be secured is life's adaptability, then a disaster is nothing other than an oppor-tunity to learn about past decisions and to thrive through the creation of new bodies.[95]

It is important to remember Flynn's hypothesis that a fearless, resilient US response to the September 11 attacks allows Americans to remain true to their ide-als no matter what the future might bring to them.[96] This suggests that a fearless response is not only couched in the unlimited capacities of life's bodiless complex-ity, but also in the possibility of conserving and protecting something through it. Is it not true, then, that the concept of resilience implies a paradoxical codependence between change, openness, and vulnerability, on the one hand, and protection, invulnerability, and survival, on the other? For example, in the US *National Strat-egy for Homeland Security*, we read: "Ultimately, response, recovery, and rebuilding efforts are tightly intertwined, each tapping into the resilience of the American spirit and our determination to endure and become stronger in the face of adver-sity."[97] How should we understand the intertwining of resilience and a nation's stra-tegic determination to endure and become stronger? How to understand, in this context, "the American spirit"? How is it possible that resilience, which is supposed to be absolutely blind to the results of its strategy, is meant to be used, preemp-tively and strategically, as a defensive method to protect and consolidate some-thing? What would that something be?

## 5. Protecting the Resilient Body: Thanatopolitics and Sovereignty

For Rose and Lentzos, resilient responses should be considered "postsocial strat-egies for governing [because] the imagined territory on which they act is not that of society but of community."[98] They suggest that global problems are governed at

the micro level of communities, and resilient responses likewise seek to strengthen and instrumentalize "bonds of community, allegiance and affinity."[99]

The classical distinction between the social and the communitarian body conceives of the former as a contractual bond among heterogeneous individuals, while the latter is an organic whole, composed of people who share a naturalized identity, centered on traits such as common race, filiation, or territory.[100] Rose identifies three main characteristics of the passage from the social to the community. The first is the "de-totalization" of the imagined territory.[101] The social, says Rose, posits a single space or territory and a single matrix of solidarity between individuals. By contrast, communities—religious, ecological, gay, and so forth—are localized, heterogeneous, and multiple, and each presupposes a different matrix of solidarity among its members. Second, continues Rose, "the social [is] an order of collective being and collective responsibilities and obligations," in which personal responsibility is always intertwined with non-elective social determinations, such as class, family background, and so forth.[102] Meanwhile in the communitarian context, social determinations no longer work as a governing responsibility for individuals, who become autonomous actors with localized and specific moral ties to their chosen communities. Third and finally, if both the social and the community entail forms of identification, community bonds are experienced as being "less 'remote,' more 'direct,' . . . not [occurring] in the 'artificial' political space of society."[103] Thus governing "through community" implies the instrumentalization of the micro-moral debts and micro-personal allegiances by which bonds to community are constructed.[104]

Rose and Lentzos consider resilient strategies as technologies of governing through "natural" community bonds, which imply that local, embedded, adaptive responses to contingencies are always better than ones via centralized intelligence.[105] What is new about resilience is, first, that it does not depend on the instrumentalization of fear to ensure the cohesion of the communitarian body. Rather, resilience sets to work the heterogeneous affects, knowledges, and moral ties that circulate through the naturalized identity traits that create the community. And, second, resilience does not seek to immunize the communitarian body. On the contrary, the resilient community willingly puts itself in danger and even sacrifices its metaphysical bio-body to produce an eclectic assemblage of heterogeneous molecular elements—ecological, technological, biological, social, and so on—in order to survive and thrive. Although this is similar to an autoimmune response because the different forms of capital—knowledges, affects, moral ties—of bio-identity are instrumentalized in order to erode it, resilience is not aimed at protecting the integrity of the bio-body, as the paradigm of immunization is. On the contrary, it problematizes that aspiration, showing that hardened

metaphysical bio-identities are part of the problem, not the solution: "Closed, protected, or even reluctant, communities have to be opened-up to risk and contingency, so that they are free to reinvent themselves anew as leaner and more agile versions of their bloated selves."[106]

In order to be resilient, a community must be de-immunized, governing itself through a biopolitical matrix of intelligibility as a molecule within a larger socioecological assemblage. In other words, the resilient response must create the political conditions to "liberate" those communities from any centralized agency, so that they are able to govern themselves, learning from their past, producing new adaptive micro-knowledges and micro-tactics, and understanding their community as a molecule embedded in other systems on which their survival and thriving depends. Their efforts to govern themselves do not directly seek to protect the integrity of the community, but to enhance life support systems, with the hope that, as a side effect, they can survive and eventually thrive. In this context, international policies "neither seek to exercise hegemonic control and direction, nor do they seek to ignore and disengage from the problems. Instead, the problems themselves are reinterpreted as enabling and creating opportunities."[107]

However, this strategy of governing through communitarian bio-bodies, far from being seen as a recognition of those communities' intrinsic abilities to cope with trauma, should be considered as a performative political process of depoliticization and of the active precarization of their conditions of life. In contrast with the project of modernity and of biopolitics as analyzed by Foucault—which aimed at protecting and enhancing the population through a logic of immunization—resilience is indicative of a "remedial abandonment." "Only life that is exposed to environmental uncertainty can properly develop the desirable attributes of foresight, enterprise, and self-reliance," skills that are needed for surviving and thriving through trauma.[108] In other words, the instrumentalization of communitarian bonds enables resilience to re-signify the cruel abandonment of people that live under precarious conditions as a form of remedy. And it does this with two strategies: by fetishizing the knowledge embedded in those communities as the best way of facing adversity, and through a rhetoric empowering local communities as a source of moral dignity against any central intelligence that could tell them what to do.

Indeed, a political grammar linking biopolitics and thanatopolitics emerges: if a certain bio-body wants to survive, it must accept the imperative to naturalize and depoliticize its own precariousness, and to de-immunize itself toward trauma, in order to unleash the adaptive and regenerative powers of the complex life and the symbolic body. In other words, the thanatopolitical strategy of the "active abandonment" of communities, as a resilient remedial strategy, is a performative act of naturalization and depoliticization of their reality. Resilience confuses the vulnerability of molecular life as an ontological precondition for thriving with the political

production of vulnerable lives, which must learn to reinterpret their precariousness as a new kind of capital and to pathologize any political aspiration to security and protection.

For example, as Neocleus has shown, on the International Monetary Fund's website, there are almost two thousand documents containing references to resilience.[109] Governing poor communities with a resilient rationality means dematerializing and depoliticizing their reality, understanding it instead as an emergent, complex phenomenon, against which one cannot resist, but to which one must adapt with the use of the embedded micro-knowledges and micro-tactics inculcated by poverty. Such remedial abandonment also implies that those communities have to accept that their vulnerabilities are not politically contingent facts, produced by economic inequality, but ontological conditions, expressions of the complexity of life itself. Ecological, terrorist, economic, and gender vulnerabilities have become realities that are re-signified as opportunities to thrive.[110] Any political claims that might threaten to change the conditions of possibility of those lives and any demands for justice are, from this perspective, merely expressions of the old liberal hubris, a useless effort to reanimate the fantasy of the intelligent agent.

Thus, resilience's narrative of survival and bouncing forward perpetuates the acceptance and naturalization of an imposed, contingent mode of existence, preventing the rejection of its cultural, economic, and ecological conditions of possibility. The Global South's resilient subjects have been totally depoliticized and forced/induced to accept the "imperative not to resist or secure themselves from the dangers they face."[111]

Remedial abandonment indirectly converts biopolitics into thanatopolitics—but a new thanatopolitics that is not necessarily premised on fear. This thanatopolitics seeks to protect precarious lives by paradoxically exposing such lives to their precarization. In other words, it does not aim at directly protecting what has to be protected—precarious lives and political bodies—but rather safeguards the "algorithmic body" of the twenty-first century's sovereign: the complex patterns of relationships among different systems, which guarantee the identity of the body politic beyond trauma. In this sense, resilience does not seek to liberate the molecular power of life against sovereign power; on the contrary, it is a strategy for reinstalling sovereign power in the context of the onto-molecular fiction of life.

Ultimately, since there is still something to protect, metaphysical fear has not disappeared in the resilient turn. The fear and the violent response legitimized by the immunitary paradigm were triggered when the metaphysical bio-body was endangered. Now things are different. Because resilience re-signifies trauma, turning it into an opportunity, it fosters a more confident and optimistic perspective. However, a new metaphysical fear has emerged, triggered by dangers toward the complex systems that guarantee the possibility of "bouncing forward" beyond

trauma. Thus, as Mark Duffield asserts, the new fear, or "ecological terror," presupposes that life-support systems have a latency and a dual use: they are the plastic and adaptive conditions for the persistence of certain lives and, at the same time, they can always be "*weaponized*," destroying the abstract algorithm that guarantees the metaphysical identity of the system.[112] This new kind of metaphysical fear is a Sadean one, because it does not directly endanger a constituted form of life, but life's regenerative powers. In the "System of Pope Pius VI" from volume 4 of *The Story of Juliette*, the Marquis de Sade writes:

> Nature wants atrocities and magnitude in crimes; the more our destructions are of this type, the more they will be agreeable to it. To be of even greater service to nature, one should seek to prevent the regeneration of the body that we bury. Murder only takes the first life of the individual whom we strike down; we should also seek to take his second life, if we are to be even more useful to nature. For nature wants annihilation; it is beyond our capacity to achieve the scale of destruction it desires.[113]

The first order of death is the murder of the metaphysical bio-body, a death which is part of the natural cycle of corruption and regeneration; while the second absolute death—environmental terror—is the destruction of the natural cycle itself. In other words, it is the annihilation of the symbolic algorithm, the last organizing principle that molecular life can tolerate without being caged in external normative parameters.[114] In this sense, disaster management has "shifted from saving lives to supporting livelihoods."[115] Contemporary disaster management technologies seek to protect the new symbolic body of the sovereign, in the name of which one can still kill. In fact, this thanatotic possibility undergirds wars which aim at destroying life's conditions of possibility rather than constituted forms of life: total war targets "climate regimes, vital urban infrastructures, ecological systems, and social networks, together with the neurological and cellular processes that collectively support life and make it possible."[116]

Resilience is not for everyone. Elites around the world exempt themselves from its biopolitical paradox—that is, "to protect the imaginary body one must sacrifice it to its symbolic conditions of existence"—securing their lives in the utopia of the bunker.[117] In fact, if we take a look at the world in which we are living, one of its more salient characteristics is that global or transnational rationalities—ecology, economy, among others—coexist with a revival of the medieval walled city. The US, Israel, and India, among others, are building or have built walls to protect themselves. If, by the end of World War II, there were seven border walls, and by the time the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, there were fifteen, then today there are at least seventy-seven walls or fences around the world.[118]

The bunker utopia phenomenon is about more than just using physical walls to prevent migrant circulation. It comprises not only strongholds, defended zones,

and physical walls, but also visual recognition technologies, class barriers—such as social prestige and lifestyles—and economic barriers to demarcate inside-outside boundaries in spaces physical and symbolic. Shopping malls, different kinds of gated communities, private clubs, humanitarian green zones, for example, are part of the utopia of the bunker, providing economic, cultural, and political protection to the elites in the context of global uncertainty and environmental terror. Moreover, among those protected islands, there are secure national and international corridors and bypasses which guarantee the safe circulation of elites. Instead of creating isolated islands of safety, this process of bunkerization creates a transnational archipelago of interconnected secured spaces, which guarantee personal and financial mobility for elites.[119]

Nevertheless, this utopia of the bunker has an historical specificity which distinguishes it from other walled-city fantasies. What lurks outside the walls is no longer epistemic uncertainty—difficulty in anticipating the future, as in the securitarian *dispositif*—but ontological uncertainty. New secluded zones are not built to *protect* a given territory, but to *create* one, because the aim of the bunker "is to give those inside the hermetically sealed zone a feeling of safety, territorial definition and a representation of high security."[120] The bunker does not protect something valuable; it creates value by producing a differentiated territory. So, it is mainly about producing ontological confidence through the creation of new bounded territories, achieving the ideological fantasy of political, economic, and cultural independence from the outside world. Thus, in the global context, where precarious lives are actively abandoned as resilient subjects, "bunkers provide sites of private consumption and protection for political, economic and cultural elites. They represent a secure organizational form [through] which experiments in the resilience of others can be orchestrated."[121]

Thus, the onto-political fiction of resilience preserves the cruel bond between biopolitics and thanatopolitics. If the only chance that bio-bodies have for survival is to be exposed to trauma, to the possibility of their dissolution, then cruel practices of the remedial abandonment of impoverished communities are legitimized. On the other hand, ontological or environmental fear, produced by molecular power in order to dissolve any kind of constituted form of life, is linked with the exclusionary practice of the bunker and can trigger violent strategies which seek to destroy the algorithmic conditions of possibility of certain lives. It seems that, as long as there is a metaphysical body to protect, constituted forms of life are sacrificed in its name.

## 6. Conclusion

If one concept has proven to be resilient throughout Western history, it is the concept of sovereignty. From its naturalized medieval version, through Hobbes's artificial body politic and the bio-bodies of the population, to its role in the

de-territorialized algorithm of resilience, the specter of the king's metaphysical body still circulates among us. And, as long as this specter persists, the tragic connection between biopolitics and thanatopolitics is inevitable. Any critique of this deadly political grammar is also a critique of the imaginary and symbolic metaphysical unity of the body politic as a necessary precondition for a good life.

A radical critique of sovereign power must seek not to eliminate the notion of bodies but to imagine and produce other, non-sovereign forms of life: the body as shelter; the body as the possibility of affect and of being affected—that is, as the possibility of collective political action; the body as a set of open, unfinished identities; the body as a qualified form of good or bad life. In short, we have to imagine and foster new kinds of non-sovereign corporalities, which can shelter and protect lives and still be open to the joy of creating new assemblages. Not as the result of a heroic act of renouncing identity, but as the consequence of greater cultural, economic, and ecological justice. Instead of asking people to adapt and sacrifice themselves to preserve their conditions of possibility, the conditions of possibility must be held to account for the protection and thriving of vulnerable lives.

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**RODRIGO DE LA FABIÁN** is a psychologist, psychoanalyst, and doctor in fundamental psychopathology and psychoanalysis at the Université Paris Diderot. He is associate professor and director of the master's program in psychology, theory, and clinical psychoanalysis in the Department of Psychology of the Universidad Diego Portales (UDP), Santiago, Chile. He is a member of the International Society of Psychoanalysis and Philosophy, of the research program History and Critical Theories of the Psy Knowledges (UDP), and of the multidisciplinary academic network Popular Psychology, Self-Help Cultures, and the Happiness Industry. His main research fields are psychoanalysis and political theory, psy knowledges and therapeutic cultures, and neoliberal governmentality and contemporary biopolitics.

**Notes**

1. Since the 1990s, see Welsh, "Resilience"; Coaffee and Fussey, "Constructing Resilience." Since September 11, 2001, see Walker and Cooper, "Genealogies"; and Neocleus, "Resisting Resilience." On "*lingua franca*," see Duffield, "Challenging Environments," 480.
2. Rose and Lentzos, "Making US Resilient," 35.
3. On "rebounding, recoiling," see Garcia-Dia et al., "Concept Analysis"; Lentzos and Rose, "Governing Insecurity"; Ponis and Koronis, "Supply Chain Resilience."
4. Manyena, "Concept"; Walker and Cooper, "Genealogies"; Garcia-Dia et al., "Concept Analysis"; Rose and Lentzos, "Making US Resilient."
5. Corry, "From Defense"; Howell, "Resilience as Enhancement." On "the aim," see O'Malley, "Uncertain Governance," 189.
6. Ewald, "Filosofia de la Precaución"; Ewald, "Return."
7. Corry, "From Defense."
8. Brassett, Croft, and Vaughan-Williams, "Introduction," 223; James, *Resilience*, 7.

9.   Flynn, "America."
10.  Lentzos and Rose, "Governing Insecurity," 243.
11.  Duffield, "Challenging Environments," 480; O'Malley, "From Risk," 62.
12.  Evans and Reid, *Resilient Life*, 57.
13.  Rose, *Inventing Ourselves*, 18.
14.  Rose, *Inventing Ourselves*, 18.
15.  Restrepo, "Cuestiones."
16.  "Although [the king] has, or takes, the land in his natural Body, yet to this natural Body is conjoined his Body politic, which contains his royal Estate and Dignity," Plowden, 1816, quoted in Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 9.
17.  Chroust, "Corporate Idea," 429.
18.  Chroust, "Corporate Idea," 424.
19.  "A truly effective unity of any body politic or social organism depends on the true and harmonious interrelation or coherence (*coherentia*) of all these members among themselves and with their head." Chroust, "Corporate Idea," 428.
20.  Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 7.
21.  Attie, "Re-membering," 502. "But forasmuch as we speak here of a body politic, instituted for the perpetual benefit and defence of them that make it; which therefore men desire should last for ever, I will omit to speak of those that be temporary, and consider those that be for ever." Hobbes, "Elements," 111.
22.  Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 106.
23.  "And covenants, without the sword, are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all." Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 103.
24.  Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 183.
25.  "The sovereign exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing; he evidenced his power over life only through the death he was capable of requiring. The right which was formulated as the 'power of life and death' was in reality the right to *take* life or *let* live." Foucault, *History*, 136.
26.  Foucault, *Abnormal*, 44.
27.  Foucault, *Abnormal*, 43.
28.  Foucault, *Society*.
29.  Foucault, *Society*, 247.
30.  Foucault, *History*.
31.  Foucault, *History*, 139. "The social 'body' ceased to be a simple juridico-political metaphor (like the one in the Leviathan) and became a biological reality and a field for medical intervention." Foucault, "Dangerous Individual," 134.
32.  Foucault, *Security*, 20–21.
33.  Foucault, *Society*, 249.
34.  Foucault, *Security*, 71.
35.  Foucault, *Security*, 71.
36.  Esposito, *Bíos*.
37.  Foucault, *Society*, 254.
38.  Foucault, *Society*, 255.
39.  "Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital.

It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies-and the race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men to be killed." Foucault, *History*, 137.

40. Esposito, *Bíos*, 38–44.
41. Esposito, *Bíos*, 45.
42. Esposito, *Immunitas*, 8.
43. Esposito, *Immunitas*, 46.
44. Esposito, *Communitas*, 33.
45. "Distinguishing structures of 'self' from 'nonself' is one of the very fundamental processes in biology and a property of the immune system. . . . Anything not actively recognized as self is considered as nonself and will be labeled for destruction (opsonophagocytosis or direct killing)." Meri, "Self-Nonself Discrimination by the Complement System," 2418.
46. Esposito, *Communitas*, 25.
47. Esposito, *Communitas*, 24.
48. Foucault, *Birth*, 67, 66.
49. Ewald, "Filosofía," "Return"; Baker and Simon, *Embracing Risk*; San Martín, "El riesgo."
50. Dwyer, *Body at War*, 29, quoted in Martin, "Toward an Anthropology," 414–15.
51. Esposito, *Bíos*, 147–48.
52. O'Malley, "Uncertain Governance," 187.
53. O'Malley, "Uncertain Governance," 192.
54. Foucault, *Order*, 280, 177.
55. Rose, *Politics*; Rose, "Molecular Biopolitics."
56. Rose, *Politics*, 15.
57. Rose, *Politics*, 14.
58. Cooper, *Life*, 140.
59. Kauffmann, *Investigations*.
60. Evans and Reid, *Resilient Life*, 58.
61. Cooper, *Life*, 17.
62. On the "site of truth," see Rockström et al., "Planetary Boundaries"; on "the environment," see Hawken, Lovins, and Lovins, *Natural Capitalism*, 9.
63. Evans and Reid, *Resilient Life*," 32–33.
64. Barnosky et al., "Has the Earth's Sixth Mass Extinction Already Arrived?"
65. Evans and Reid, *Resilient Life*, 60–61.
66. OECD, *Bioeconomy*.
67. Hawken, Lovins, and Lovins, *Natural Capitalism*, 146.
68. "Eliminating the very idea of waste . . . can be accomplished by redesigning industrial systems on biological lines that change the nature of industrial processes and materials, enabling the constant reuse of materials in continuous closed cycles, and often the elimination of toxicity." Hawken, Lovins, and Lovins, *Natural Capitalism*, 10.
69. Holling, "Resilience," 17.
70. Duffield, "Total War," 762.
71. Walker and Cooper, "Genealogies," 145.
72. Walker et al., "Resilience"; Folke et al., "Resilience Thinking."
73. Walker et al., "Resilience."
74. Holling, "Resilience," 21.
75. De La Fabián and Sepúlveda, "Gubernamentalidad neoliberal."
76. Duffield, "How Did We?," 56.

77. Cooper, *Life*, 62–63.

78. Duffield, "How Did We?," 55.

79. Chandler, *Resilience*, 5.

80. Chandler, *Resilience*, 7.

81. Walker and Cooper, "Genealogies"; Schmidt, "Intuitively Neoliberal?"; Nelson, "Resilience."

82. O'Malley, "Uncertain Governance," 192.

83. Schmidt, "Intuitively Neoliberal?"

84. DHS, *National Plan*, 1.

85. Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams, "Resilience," 371.

86. Chandler, *Resilience*, 20.

87. Chandler, *Resilience*, 64.

88. Duffield, "Environmental Terror," 13.

89. Chandler, *Resilience*, 41.

90. North, *Institutions*; North, *Understanding the Process*, quoted in Schmidt, "Intuitively Neoliberal?," 413. North writes in *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*, "Hayek was certainly correct that our knowledge is always fragmentary at best and his pioneering study in cognitive science provided the foundation for accounting for our imperfect understanding. But Hayek failed to understand that we have no choice but to undertake social engineering" (162), quoted in Chandler, *Resilience*, 95.

91. Foucault, *Birth*, 13.

92. On "retro-politics," see Chandler, *Resilience*, 189.

93. Lentzos and Rose, "Governing Insecurity," 246.

94. Schmidt, "Intuitively Neoliberal?," 404.

95. "Resilience-thinking thereby continually works on the basis of the reality of complex life revealing itself to us. Every event—from road accidents to crime, from terrorist outrages to global warming—can be reinterpreted as a sign of emergence; as a sign of social and material interconnections which need to be governed differently." Chandler, *Resilience*, 203.

96. Flynn, "America the Resilient."

97. HSC, *National Strategy*, 31.

98. Rose and Lentzos, "Making US Resilient," 42.

99. Rose and Lentzos, "Making US Resilient," 42. This redefinition of the scale to be governed can be traced back to the 1980s, when Amartya Sen started to understand famine not as a macro-economic phenomenon, but as a micro-economic question of individual choice-making (Chandler, "Development").

100. Tönnies, *Community*.

101. Rose, "Death of the Social?," 333.

102. Rose, "Death of the Social?," 333.

103. Rose, "Death of the Social?," 334.

104. Rose, "Death of the Social?," 332.

105. Rose and Lentzos, "Making US Reslient."

106. Duffield, "How Did We Become Unprepared?," 56–57.

107. Chandler and Coaffee, "Introduction," 6.

108. Duffield, "Total War," 763.

109. Neocleus, "Resisting Resilience."

110. For example, Bracke identifies a *postfeminist resilience*, that is women who have overcome structural inequalities without questioning them, transforming their life in a sort of

epic example for other women: "Stop complaining, if I overcame, you can too." Bracke, "Bouncing Back."

111. Evans and Reid, *Resilient Life*, 42.
112. Duffield, "Environmental Terror," 7; "The vectors of environmental terror are the air, water, urban infrastructures, cellular processes and ecological systems that sustain life and make it possible. Terrorism violently exposes the latency of seemingly benign environmental functions and knowledge-producing systems. It transforms taken-for granted natural mediums, topographic landscapes, engineered infrastructures and even tools of social and biological analysis, not only into menacing surfaces of surprise and potential catastrophe, but into usable weapons themselves."
113. Sade, *Juliette*, quoted in Lacan, *Seminar*, 210–11.
114. Keenan, *Question*, 116.
115. Duffield, "How Did We Become Unprepared?," 56.
116. Duffield, "Total War," 757.
117. "Elites themselves are moving in a different direction. They are withdrawing from the post-security and post-political landscapes of permanent emergency; they are occupying and staking-out the world's proliferating privately secured gated-complexes and cultural walled-gardens." Duffield, "Challenging Environments," 57.
118. Hjelmgaard, "From 7 to 77."
119. Duffield, "Environmental Terror," 23.
120. Coaffee and Murakami, "Security," 505.
121. Duffield, "Environmental Terror," 19.

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