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«Homeland» and Resilience : Immunitas, Katechon, and Uncanny, and Traumas Displacement

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A capacity characterizing individuals, groups, systems and materials, “resilience” has become a buzzword with multiple valences resonating in policy statements and scholarly articles, and bearing on a number of political, economic, environmental, and cultural issues. Resilience connotes durability and elasticity: the ability to withstand and to bounce back. To be resilient is to have a way of responding to stress. Unlike resistance, whose connotations are stoutness and stability, resilience has a dynamic quality. First associated with engineering, resilience is also invoked in psychology, where it communicates the sense that the self does not simply weather infelicitous circumstances but adapts to them by inscribing itself anew. In medicine, resilience is at the very core of the body’s immune system. In ecology, it came to describe an ecosystem’s ability to withstand a stress factor, as well as its ability to regain a state of equilibrium following a change which the system has been prompted to undergo.¹ Resilience is also linked to sustainability, especially where the renewability of resources is concerned – though resilience underscores a system’s internal self-organization while sustainability is more suggestive of factors external to that system (Folke *et al.* 440). In ecology and elsewhere, resilience is linked to systems theory because it is conceived as a feedback loop, which implies interrelatedness between a system and its environment, and between the system and its constitutive parts. The concept of resilience is used in cultural studies to compare the social and cultural resilience of different groups (Ungar). In the context of economics, legal studies, and human geography, one speaks of the resilience of specific industries or forms of property holding and their relationship to the ecosystem and to other factors (Adger). In matters of policy, one examines the resilience of communities in the context of local, national and regional security. As one group of authors puts it, “resilience is fast becoming *the* organizing principle in contemporary political life” (Brassett *et al.* 222).

In interpreting the TV series *Homeland* (2011–), this paper speculatively places resilience alongside certain other concepts. One is trauma, a Freudian term which Dominic LaCapra links to working through the memory of a disruptive experience. Another is Freud’s notion of the uncanny, whose connotations of the familiar and the secretive form a conceptual feedback loop in its own right. A comparison between resilience, trauma, and the uncanny suggests the possibility of trauma’s partial conceptual displacement by resilience. Another pertinent notion is Roberto Esposito’s *immunitas*, a term that refers to the analogy between the body’s immune system and the body politic. Esposito contends that *immunitas* and *communitas* are interdependent, inviting a comparison with resilience as a feedback mechanism. Yet another concept is the *katechon*. This enigmatic term occurs in a letter by Paul, where it stands for that which keeps the apocalypse at bay, thereby also delaying the coming of the eternal kingdom.² Introduced to political theory by Carl Schmitt, *katechon* is analogous to a system’s adaptability to stress. It is invoked by Esposito and by Paolo Virno, who sees the multitude as *katechon*. Resilience in *Homeland* is

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1 A well-known example are the two general states of aquatic basins: clear waters and turbid waters, the latter often allowing for the growth of toxic algae. A water basin, such as a lake, is an ecosystem capable of withstanding stress factors prompting a shift from clear to turbid. In some circumstances, a water basin having turned turbid may be prompted to return to the clear state. (Gunderson 428–9).

2 “And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way” (2 Thesallonians 2: 6–7).

thus discussed with reference to concepts pertinent to psychoanalytic and to political theory. This discussion suggests that displacing trauma with resilience is partly analogous to Virno's identifying the multitude as *katechon*. The analogy, enacted in *Homeland*, appears to complicate the immediately available reading of the series as nationalistic propaganda.

***Homeland* and resilience**

Launched on Showtime in 2011, *Homeland* is a political thriller created by Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon, loosely based on the Israeli series *Hatufim*. The series *Homeland* is set against the backdrop of the recent US wars in the Middle East and the so-called "War on Terror". Its protagonists are spies and, as portrayed in *Homeland*, the CIA and its acolytes are endowed with extraordinary prerogatives to protect the nation against terrorist attacks. The show appears to legitimize such special powers as those introduced by the USA PATRIOT Act. It thus performs a pedagogical and even propagandistic function, perhaps especially for its American audience. Notably, this affirmative message has met with digital-era resistance when an episode of *Homeland* was hacked and Arabic graffiti were added that read "*Homeland* is racist" and "*Homeland* is a joke and it didn't make us laugh" (Voon).

While the show promotes American patriotism in ways some find objectionable, the CIA's portrayal is far from monolithic. Instead, the Agency and its associates form a complex ecosystem of both institutional and personal interdependencies in which loyalty and betrayal intertwine, no longer mutually exclusive. The plot of *Homeland* thus revolves around resilience understood as a feedback loop, even if the concept is not literally stated in the script.

The show's central figure is Carrie Mathison (Claire Danes), an exceptionally gifted special agent whose brilliance is intractably interwoven with her bipolar disorder. Carrie, ever adapting to shifting circumstances, epitomizes resilience in the psychological sense. Aided by her medication, but also drawing on her remarkable mental resources, she transcends her mental handicap by transforming it into exceptional analytical strength. Because she herself undergoes changes which are more extreme than is typical for most people, Carrie is capable of seeing how others think and what they are trying to do. In bursts of manic activity, she spends long hours and even days staring at her case notes, second-guessing the enemy's intentions, and disambiguating double identities. She correctly conjectures that Nicolas Brody (Damian Lewis), a US marine who spent several years in Al-Qaeda's captivity and is being hailed as a hero upon his return home, has in fact been turned by the enemy. Strikingly, she also grasps that Brody's capacity for resilience means he can be turned again. In a plot development which further complicates her characterization, she begins to obsess over Brody and strikes up an affair with him. Eventually, she divides her loyalty between the CIA and her lover, enlisting him as an agent working for the US, sending him back to the Middle East, and then maneuvering him and others in such a way as to betray neither her country nor Brody, so long at least as such diffuseness proves possible.

Carrie capably manages stimuli that would likely be disruptive for anyone with a more static psychology. Her character, including her bipolar disorder, illustrates that resilience is a dynamic method of responding to unsettling impulses, both internal, such as Carrie's character traits and her medical condition, and external, such as the effects of the drugs she takes and her many

challenging, overlapping professional and personal entanglements. Indeed, her condition makes problematic a neat distinction between the world inside her head and the world around her. However, this confusion in no way diminishes her practical effectiveness, and at times enhances it. Carrie is akin to a complex feedback loop, and thus an epitome of resilience.

The CIA itself is portrayed as a dynamic system characterized by resilience. On the one hand, Carrie and her boss Saul Berenson (Mandy Patinkin) often struggle with the rigidity of their institution; on the other, with Saul's rise to the position of managing director, a more complex portrayal of the Agency emerges. The CIA is shown to be a duplicitous player in both national and international politics. When the rationale for its very existence is put in question after a major security breach resulting in a shocking terrorist attack on its headquarters, Saul responds to this political threat by dissembling. This is strikingly reflected in his complicated relationship with Carrie, as their mutual loyalty and his seeming betrayal intertwine. Even though Saul blackballs Carrie in a Congressional committee hearing and cuts her loose, they both regard this act as a mere tactical move despite profoundly adverse consequences to Carrie. Conversely, Carrie subsequently disobeys Saul's explicit orders to abandon him to his kidnappers, putting at risk the entire US policy in the Middle East so as to save his life. Her call seems motivated as much by her personal loyalty to Saul as by her desire to influence the intelligence community by bringing him back. Brody's relationship to Saul partly mimics Carrie's when Brody moves ahead with a daring assassination plan while ignoring Saul's explicit orders to abandon the mission as too dangerous. Saul is led at last to sacrifice Brody, not unlike he has sacrificed Carrie at an earlier point in the story – a decision which Carrie once again appears to accept. All three characters' actions are motivated by their complicated mutual relations and by the constantly shifting political and military circumstances to which they are responding.

Familiar tropes revised

As this plot summary suggests, *Homeland* regurgitates well-established tropes, including madness as the root and public face of genius (Carrie), conversion as determining political identification and identity (Brody), and the mask of transparency worn by those in power even as they engage in behind-the-scenes shenanigans (Saul). Indeed, *Homeland* brings these tropes to a kind of logical limit: Carrie's insanity and her genius become indistinguishable, Brody's political loyalties are ultimately a matter of conjecture, and Saul's motives remain opaque despite the pretence of straightforward honesty. Thus perverted, these familiar tropes acquire an almost illegible complexity. The confounding interdependencies both within and between individual and institutional subjects, much like the many irresolvable questions posed by the plot, point to a feedback-based logic undergirding both the motivation behind a particular action and its consequences. This rendering of complexity is clearly paradigmatic for the show's representation of reality. By the same token, resilience as the formal and thematic dominant of *Homeland* may be variously located by the viewer in individual characters, institutional entities, and a range of couplings and alliances between individuals, institutions, and between individuals and institutions. There is a close affinity between the series' portrayal of resilience and its means of building suspense: the pathos of resilience is what makes *Homeland* an engaging political thriller.

Resilience and trauma

In keeping with the genre conventions of the thriller, *Homeland* is focused on exigencies in the present. Trauma, understood to be a past event which defies assimilation into the normal flow of events and whose negative consequences are felt in the present, is explicitly thematized in the series. For example, Brody's flashbacks to his captivity include scenes of people being tortured and killed. In another development, the CIA's predicament following the bombing of its offices suggests that the institution as a whole, as well as its members, may be suffering from traumatizing consequences of this lethal attack. And yet, just as the CIA responds to the challenge by employing uniquely pragmatic means, so Brody is shown as having adapted to the conditions of his imprisonment: he has learned Arabic, converted to Islam, and become a teacher of English to the son of an Al-Qaeda leader. There is little focus on his working through the trauma.³ When these flashbacks to his captivity occur, Brody remains focused on developments in the present. This mode of response, like that of the CIA, which is entirely consistent with the conventions of the thriller, represents also a shift away from a focus on trauma and toward resilience.

Resilience bears a non-obvious relation to trauma. The latter concept originated with psychoanalysis in the context of the First World War and then rose to academic prominence because of its importance to Holocaust studies. As a painful past disruption that exerts a potentially destructive influence in the present, trauma is both located in the past and not containable in it. Trauma's persistence in the present is illustrated by such concepts as survivors' guilt and second-generation trauma, which are characterized not only by their rootedness in the past but equally by immediate psychic pressure. The emphasis in trauma on unrelenting stress, rather than only on an event in the past, is implied in the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The condition is conceived as a quasi-permanent state, synonymous with persistent distress: beyond the need to work through trauma by way of therapeutic recollection and conceptual reframing, there is the even more immediate need to address the persistent distress trauma causes in the present. Emphasis thus shifts to ongoing mental and physical pain as traumatizing, that is, as overwhelming and disabling the subject regardless of the possible relationship between this condition and an event in the past. A comparison suggests itself with Walter Benjamin's image of the modern individual as constantly paring the intrusion of unwelcome stimuli in the form of ubiquitous noise and visual oversaturation.

And yet, trauma's conceptual thrust entails its rootedness in a past event. This meaning is reinforced in comparisons drawn between past and present events to suggest the latter's traumatizing character. One might say, for example, that the Holocaust is reiterated in other, more recent genocides. That such comparisons may have merit does not guarantee their helpfulness, however. It is not always useful to see events in the present as reiterating past events or as determined by them. Jacques Rancière points out in his comments on what he calls the ethical turn in aesthetics and politics that excessive reliance on framings in terms of past trauma can have the effect of disabling action in the present: "With the ethical turn... history becomes ordered according

3 By contrast to *Homeland*, the Israeli series *Hatufim* (*Prisoners of War* aka. *In the Hands of the Enemy*, literally: *Abductees*, 2009–2012), on which *Homeland* is based, explicitly foregrounds the therapeutic process, especially in its portrayal of returning veterans and former prisoners of war.

to a cut in time made by a radical event that is no longer in front of us but already behind us... the already endured catastrophe from which only a god could save us" (201). In some instances, it may be more efficacious to cope with the present challenges as they are determined by the more immediate exigencies specific to them. The point is not to deny the reality of trauma, or to negate the value of working through traumatic experience, but to keep the term's excessive application from obscuring other strategies.

Excessive emphasis on past trauma also runs the intellectual risk of nostalgia. A focus on a past traumatic event as the likely cause of present traumatizing distress is especially problematic when it puts forth an even more distant past prior to the traumatic event that is somehow distress-free. In this case, the call to work through the trauma may imply that the subject should be returned to an antediluvian state of innocence. However, such idyllic past may itself be a myth, provoking the illusion of a time without politics and without the need for resilience. Such nostalgia may bring momentary emotional relief but is unlikely to promote a clear understanding of either the past or the present.

Resilience and the uncanny

Freud's concept of the uncanny provides another model with which to think about the persistence of distress. To experience the uncanny is to have the sense that something familiar appears strange to the point of being unrecognizable, provoking considerable discomfort. The effect is conceptually linked to psychic trauma because trauma causes the conscious mind to protect itself by shutting out information or emotion through the mechanism of repression, possibly yielding an uncanny sense. But an uncanny sense may likewise arise from a superstition or a coincidence, as Freud demonstrates (949). It is akin to a riddle, which creates cognitive and sometimes emotional discomfort. In the first place, then, the uncanny arises in response to a cognitive complication experienced in the present. Like any effective riddle, it simultaneously demands a solution and prevents us from reaching it. It provokes a feedback response insofar as we go back and forth, trying out possible answers. This feedback loop mechanism arguably makes the uncanny an aesthetic equivalent of resilience.

Uncanny is one word with which to describe *Homeland*. The show puts forth a world of political intrigue that many viewers understand to be behind the façade of any government but that they may feel uneasy about because witnessing duplicity can be overwhelming. Moreover, *Homeland* brings home the official world's astonishingly tenuous status, a prospect that may justifiably make one nervous. Not only do political machinations turn out to be necessary despite being objectionable but the likelihood of their failing and the dismal consequences of such failure raise the stakes to exorbitant levels. Rooting for characters they distrust for their duplicity and their betrayals, viewers may experience emotional discomfort and cognitive confusion. The show's troubling opacity about characters' motives and about the precise significance of some plot developments contributes to the uncanny effect – as do such character traits as Carrie's extraordinary analytical abilities and Brody's astounding capacity to adapt.

Analogy with the immune system and the body politic

The uncanny is partly analogous to the immune system, itself virtually synonymous with resilience. The immune system's purpose is to either contain or expel that which it identifies as alien. At first glance, the uncanny and the immune system may seem vastly different because the uncanny mistakes something familiar for something unfamiliar, whereas the immune system copes with the factually alien. However, a well-known paradox of the immune system highlights its similarity to the uncanny. The paradox is that the immune system can only protect against that which it recognizes: the immune system cannot protect against that which is completely alien but only against that which is at least somewhat familiar. That which the immune system brands as alien or strange—whatever, in keeping with its procedures, it recognizes as something to be contained or expelled—must also be familiar enough to be recognized in the first place. Therefore, the central question about the immune system is why it does not act against itself, and against the organism which it protects, as in fact happens in auto-immunological illness. Much as in the case of the uncanny, the riddle here is how to separate out that which is being protected from that which the immune system is protecting against, the familiar from the alien—the familiar from the alien that may be disguised as familiar, but equally, the familiar, which may be disguised as alien, from the actually alien, which must be at least somewhat familiar to be recognized in the first place.

In *Immunitas*, Roberto Esposito applies the discourse of immunology to political theory. The self-constitution of the community depends on sorting out who belongs to it and who does not. The same paradox besets the political community as does the immune system: how can it be known who belongs and who does not if the very determination depends on familiarity with the unfamiliar? Esposito argues that the concepts *immunitas* and *communitas* are mutually co-dependent even though their definitions rely on wholly divergent conceptual figures (100–101). Where *immunitas* is limiting and exclusive, *communitas* is expansive and inclusive. For the borders of *communitas* to be policed, however, *communitas* must be given a content. This double requirement results in the interplay of mental images of the sacred core as either plenitude or emptiness, on the one hand, and of a perpetually finessed borderline whose tightness is synonymous with porosity, on the other. Both *communitas* and *immunitas* are thus aporetic concepts.

The relevance of Esposito's deconstructionist reading of *immunitas* and *communitas* to *Homeland* lies precisely in the difficulty of disentangling who belongs to the community. Brody is effectively a double agent, persuaded by Carrie to turn against those who turned him. But if being turned and then being turned again are possible, how can anyone know anymore whose side Brody is on? Can Brody himself know the answer? Another such blurring occurs with Brody making a secret of his conversion to Islam upon returning to the US. He hides a copy of the Quran and a prayer rug in his garage, where he clandestinely performs his devotional rites. Brody keeps his newfound faith under cover lest it point to his political allegiance to Al-Qaeda, though of course his religious identification and his political allegiance are not synonymous and remain unrelated in any essential way. This plot development illustrates the problematic character of *immunitas* as it grapples with shifting

definitions of who belongs and why. Moreover, the series invites an analogy between Brody's secret prayers and Saul's equally private prayer over the bodies of victims of the terrorist bombing of the CIA headquarters, for which Brody is framed. Although Judaism is obviously far more integrated within the American imagery than Islam, the Mourner's Kaddish uttered by Saul sounds almost as alien—as un-Christian, and perhaps as un-American—as do the verses spoken by Brody.⁴ More generally, and in a manner analogous to Esposito's discussion of *communitas* and *immunitas*, the distribution of religious and ethnic affiliations among the Americans in *Homeland*—also with Saul being married to Mira Berenson (Sarita Choudhury), who at one point leaves him to move to New Delhi—suggests how difficult it is to put forth a common American identity or to delineate its outer boundary. This diversity may be read as both a challenge to American resilience and as its very mechanism.

Paradoxical blurrings of identities and boundaries are not only a matter of religious or ethnic affinities but pertain also to the concept of citizenship. When Carrie is questioned by a Congressional committee on irregularities within the CIA, she is reminded that she has permitted herself to be stripped of some of her civil rights when she signed up with the Agency. As someone responsible for national security, she has been given access to information and tools which ordinary Americans do not have. But a precondition of this special access has been that she has had to forfeit some of the same freedoms she set out to protect. The requirement extends the paradox of *immunitas* and of its relationship to *communitas*. For the sake of communal resilience, Carrie, whose job it is to keep the political community intact, must herself be excluded from it by signing away her (supposedly inalienable) rights, which define who belongs to the community. The series introduces this paradoxical exception precisely at the point where the protection of rights is most ostensibly at stake. Esposito's discussion of *immunitas* and the manner in which this concept is reflected in *Homeland* illustrate that resilience, insofar as it is analogous to the immune system and the body politic, is ridden with unavoidable contradiction.

Katechon

Esposito's *Immunitas* includes a chapter on *katechon* (52–79), an enigmatic term used in Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians. In keeping with the theological tradition, *katechon* is one who restrains or withholds, which is to say that *katechon* prevents the forces of evil from taking over. But *katechon* is not unequivocally on the side of good because, in restraining evil, it withholds Armageddon, the final showdown between good and evil, thus keeping at bay the coming of God's undivided rule. And so *katechon* is a form of compromise, similar to a safety valve which keeps a system from running entirely off course at the cost of curbing its capacity for achieving a desirable result. The role of *katechon* was ascribed to various historical entities, for example, to the Holy Roman Empire by Carl Schmitt, who also interprets *katechon* as institutions of the republic (*The Nomos of the Earth...* 59–62). The American system of checks and balances is a good example of *katechon* in this sense: division of powers is designed to limit abuse but it can make governing less efficient and more preoccupied with its own procedures.

4 The poignancy of the slippage between Judaism and Islam, illustrated with Brody's and Saul's prayers, is heightened by *Homeland* being based on an Israeli series.

The republican *katechon* results in the kind of paradoxes characteristic of the immunological processes in the physical body and in the body politic. The logic is apparent in the way that Carrie's rights are curtailed in exchange for her special prerogatives and for the sake of the rights of others being all the better protected. It is also observable in the manner that both the CIA and individual protagonists perform commendable acts by committing all manner of infraction. Espionage, diplomacy, and international relations in general are presented as a game in which gains and losses are secondary to the overall object of keeping the political game in motion, as an alternative to outright conflict.

Paolo Virno on biopolitics and the state of exception

The paradoxical combination of precariousness and special powers, characteristic of Carrie's situation vis-à-vis her rights, is describable as state of exception. The notion is important to biopolitics, a discursive field to which Esposito's *immunitas* also pertains.⁵ Giorgio Agamben's commentary on state of exception is particularly well known; the term is broadly understood as the sovereign's response to conditions that threaten his sovereignty. Paolo Virno also addresses state of exception in the context of biopolitics. He sees it as an overcoming of the divide between the state of nature and the civil state, which he respectively describes as the realm of hard fact and the realm of linguistic order. The related term "state of emergency" spells out the common legitimization for the state of exception because it puts forth the intrusion of natural fact upon the linguistic fact of the law in a manner rendering the law ineffectual. This dispensation of "exception" in the face of "emergency" is in the first place biopolitical insofar as it pertains to some exigency pertinent to bodies, e.g., a natural disaster, an epidemiological threat, a terrorist attack, a military contingency, a crisis related to the supply of food or drinking water, and so on—a crisis affecting bodies may occur naturally or it may be brought about by someone's doing. Either way, the civil state is suspended and its protocols are supplanted by rule based in exception, allowing the crisis to be more effectively dealt with. As a part of this process, a new legal and political order may be installed to resolve the crisis or to prevent its recurrence.

State of exception thus reenacts what Walter Benjamin and Jacques Derrida call the violence of law, meaning the foundational violence which institutes the law. However, Agamben and Virno see the present-day prevalence of the state of exception as distinguished by its would-be permanence. Unlike the notion that the law is based on a foundational act of violence, an idea potentially triggering an association with the psychoanalytic category of trauma which results from a past event, the permanent state of exception is more akin to continuing distress related to cognitive dissonance, as the category of the uncanny suggests. State of exception denotes a manner of dealing with distress ("emergency") that simultaneously causes distress due to the suspension of existing law and the necessarily arbitrary generation of new laws.

5 Biopolitics is founded with Michel Foucault's lectures titled "Society Must Be Defended" in the mid-1970s. His discussion focuses on sovereignty as based on the principle of "making live and letting die," in contrast to the classic notion of sovereign power as "letting live and making die" (247).

A further analogy emerges between state of exception and *immunitas*, the latter akin to a permanent state of exception because it is always facing new crises, prompting it to identify foreign agents ever in need of being eliminated or contained. This is tantamount to positing that *immunitas* is constantly in the process of being founded – that it is always redefining itself. The logic of this continuous self-(re)definition is akin to the feedback information loop, which is to say that *immunitas*—whether in the body’s immune system or the body politic—both acts on the objects it identifies as alien and readjusts its procedures based on the result. Such feedback mechanism is a practical, if approximate, solution to the logical contradiction pointed out above, wherein the ability to recognize alien elements depends on their being recognizable at all, and hence on their being already familiar. A similar feedback loop between responding to hard fact and finding an adequate method of governance is foundational for state of exception, which is ridden by its own paradox due to governance being deemed simultaneously necessary and untenable under previously established principles. As a paradigm underlying both the state of exception and *immunitas*, resilience is a mechanism based on continuous readjustment between a system and its environment; that is, between a set of procedures that are always linguistic at heart and the extralinguistic fact to which they are responding.

These analogies further suggest that both *immunitas* and state of exception entail a balancing act preventing them from becoming runaway systems destined for self-destruction. In the case of *immunitas*, the runaway scenario involves a response to the threatening presence of alien elements that would eliminate them along with anything and everything else, thus rendering the immune system destructive instead of protective. In the case of the state of exception, adequate response to factual circumstances risks setting up a totalizing regime that would be devoid of legitimacy. In both contexts, resilience entails the ability to implement a stabilizing, self-limiting procedure.

The question which therefore arises is one about the precise relation between *katechon* and the state of exception (and likewise between *katechon* and *immunitas*), as a matter of achieving resilience. Although a state of exception is introduced to address an existing or impending imbalance, and is thus readable as *katechon*, it also contravenes, and may altogether eliminate, some pre-existing *katechon*, such as a constitutional system of checks and balances. Indeed, as soon as the state of exception is denounced as resulting in the sovereign’s unlimited power, in scope or in temporal terms, it becomes the opposite of *katechon*. By analogy to *immunitas* and to resilience, such elimination of *katechon* must result in the collapse of immunity and a radical diminishment of resilience, even if its original purpose has been to build them up.

Multitude as *katechon*

In such convoluted circumstances, what is a body to do? Virno begins to respond to this question by establishing a necessary connection between the state of exception and multitude. The term “multitude” originated with Machiavelli, was reiterated by Spinoza and by Hobbes, in however different ways, and was invoked more recently by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. Virno argues that the subject of biopolitics, as biopolitics is practiced in a state of exception, is no longer the *demos* but multitude. Where *demos* presupposes a sense of unity based on consensual respect for legal principles

(civil state), state of exception invokes hard facts to banish people from any such consensual space, turning them into a multitude. The state of exception and multitude thus arise jointly in an exigency which blurs the line between the state of nature and the civil state: multitude is a by-product of the state of exception, and the state of exception is unthinkable without the emergence of multitude. Like *demos*, multitude occupies a common space, but that space is unstructured where the space of the *demos* was symbolically structured. In a Biblical reference to Israel after its escape from Egypt, Virno compares multitude's inherent polyvocality, unbound by a common principle, to murmurings in the desert (22–24).

Virno is interested in how the state of exception, implemented by the sovereign to exercise biopower, posits a potential biopolitical alternative which stems from the multitude's murmurings in the desert. To this end, he reconsiders *katechon*. His discussion of the state of exception first suggests that that state can itself be understood as *katechon* when it prevents a disaster or a final showdown from taking place, but also because, in doing so, it may prevent a superior solution from being adopted. Second, Virno dispenses with Schmitt's assumption that *katechon* is necessarily synonymous with institutions of the republic and suggests instead that *katechon* may also reside in a multitude. With this step, *katechon* is given emancipatory potential: rather than *katechon* containing murmurings in the desert, those murmurings can now serve as *katechon* (62–65).

Virno posits that the multitude can balance out the sovereign's special powers in a state of exception. Moreover, multitude can self-organize in ways that will prevent a deterioration into chaos, which is to say that multitude can be its own *katechon*, capable of assuming a self-regulating function. This is perhaps increasingly observed in contemporary societies—for example, in grassroots political activism and in market niches that remain unregulated or only partially regulated—where such developments are conceptualized not only as actions undertaken by individuals but also as forms of sociality that transverse other, existing organizational forms.

Multitude in *Homeland*

In *Homeland*, the sense of *katechon* arising from anarchic impulses and processes is illustrated by the way Carrie and Brody are portrayed as unlikely heroes and in the extremely unbureaucratic way in which Saul runs the CIA. Of course, these portrayals coincide to a degree with much-hailed American individualism; characters like Carrie, Brody and Saul, who keep going off on frolics of their own, end up saving the day precisely because that they break away from institutional frames. However, besides seeing these characters as individual agents, we may also see them as forming self-appointed teams, akin to emerging social cells. We may think of these characters, whose constitutional rights are in question or have been suspended, as being effective because they collaborate outside the usual institutional constraints. This prospect, which *Homeland* enables, turns it into a portrayal of the multitude as *katechon*, insofar as these self-appointed groupings of not-quite-citizens manage to forestall military conflict and prevent acts of terrorism, as well as adequately self-regulate.

Ultimately, *Homeland* occupies the middle ground between the sovereign's self-redefinition and legitimization via the state of exception and the more

directly anarchic notion of the multitude as *katechon*. Or rather, the show incessantly oscillates between these solutions, suggesting that they form a kind of feedback loop. The multitude as *katechon* in *Homeland* is neither easily distinguished from the bearers of sovereign privilege nor does it emerge in the complete absence of the civil state. Instead, it exists in the interstitial spaces where extraneous hard facts render that state temporarily ineffective even though it has claimed exceptional powers for itself. *Homeland* thus advocates resilience as a multilayered response to security threats to the nation. It legitimizes the state of exception not solely by pointing to material exigencies exceeding the civil state's normal capabilities, which require the sovereign to assume special powers; it does so equally by suggesting that the multitude's emergence, which the state of exception inevitably prompts, results in additional resilience. Moreover, the multitude's emancipatory and even partly anarchic potential is shown to be consistent with individual freedoms and with the freedom to associate, which are foundational for American democracy, even though this potential plays itself out in a qualified legal void rather than in the realm of constitutionally protected rights. While the logic is aporetic, the message sent by *Homeland* focuses on the pragmatic. Rather than contemplate its own paradoxicality, *Homeland* foregrounds the logic of the feedback loop by identifying it in figures of resilience: in the interdependence between constitutional rights and their protection, whether by formal or anarchic means, and in the interdependence of the efficacy of governance and its legitimization.

A political thriller, *Homeland* persuasively puts forth the transition from trauma as a concept invested in the past to the uncanny as the sense that the present moment is a riddle in need of solving. This transition, enacted in the name of resilience as a matter of state security, is accompanied by a more discreetly given but no less significant, and indeed partly analogous, transition from the state of exception as a manifestation of the aporetic *immunitas* and of its reliance on the mechanism of *katechon* to the more overtly anarchic *katechon* embodied by the multitude that emerges with the state of exception. The analogy lies precisely in the absence, in Virno's image of the *katechon*, of past foundational violence, synonymous with trauma and requisite for the legitimization of the sovereign and his law. Such privileged, and privileging, traumatic violence is displaced by the self-regulating resilience of a multitude composed of not-quite-citizens that arises in uncanny response to the no less uncanny, because it is seemingly permanent, state of exception. This is not to say that the exigency to which the state of exception responds is never violent, nor that the sovereign's response to this exigency, or the multitude's response to that response, is free of violence. However, these instances of violence are not yet obscured by the passing of time and the form of this violence is not yet canonized as law. In consequence, there is a democratizing promise to the latter transition, however entangled it is with resilience conceived as a matter of state security.

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