Burning Our Boats

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As someone on the fringes of Australian literary studies, I am honored to be in this very distinguished company, but also feel a little apprehensive, perhaps a little bit unmoored. So I begin by offering some coordinates, partial and unreliable coordinates as they are, or interpretive markers, for what follows.

First, a scene from Michael Ondaatje's recent novel, *The Cat's Table*:

> Once, before I left Ceylon, I saw an ocean liner being burned at the far end of Colombo harbour. All afternoon I watched the blue acetylene cut into the flanks of the vessel. I realised the ship I was now on could also be cut into pieces. (38)
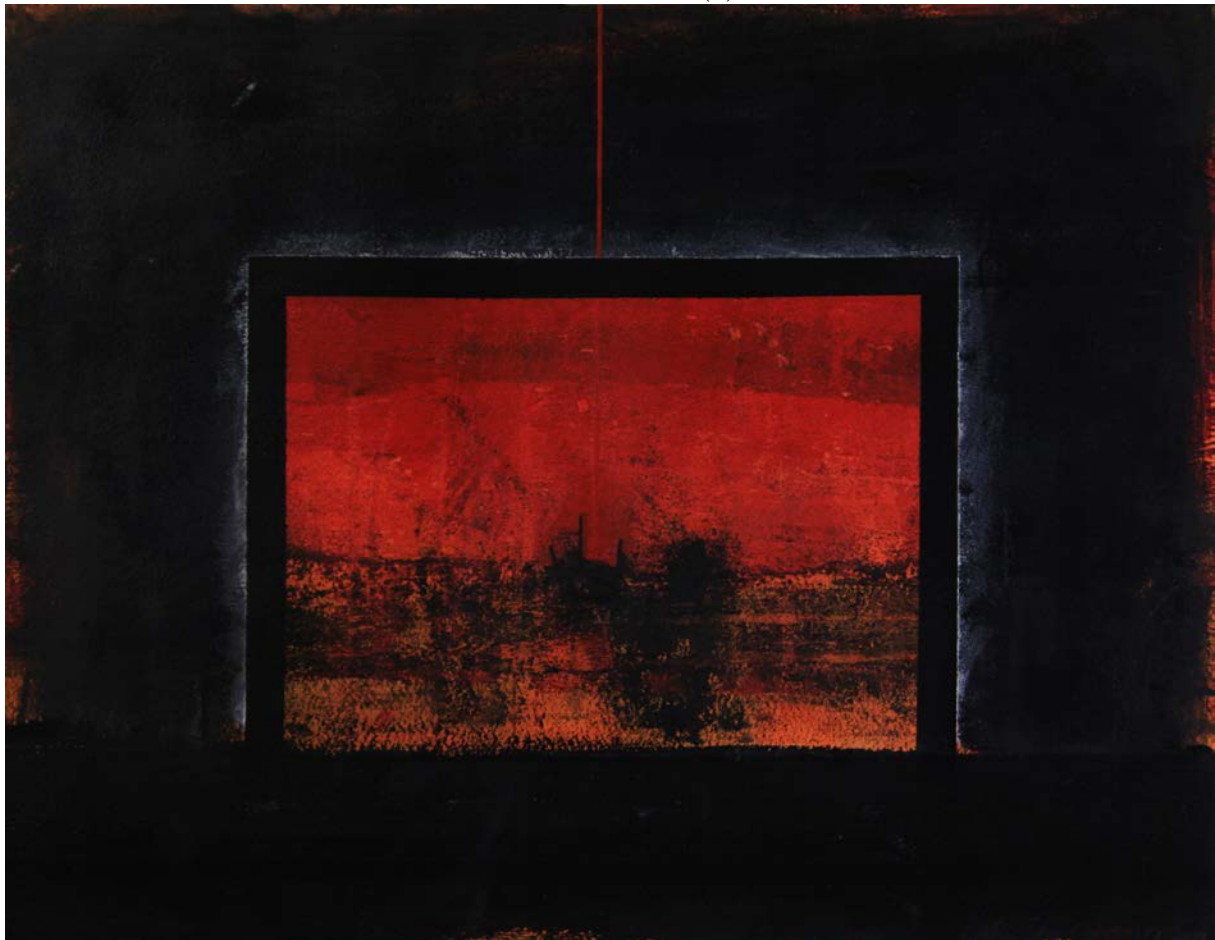
This image of a ship being incinerated, its flanks, like those of some living creature, eviscerated by deliberate blue flames, sets the scene for *The Cat's Table,* described by Ondaatje as a 'fiction of un-remembered autobiography' (Kumar). At one level this is the story of an eleven year-old boy, Michael, who is put on a boat from Colombo to England, not understanding much about why he is leaving, where he is going, or that this departure is forever. *The Cat's Table* is a tale of unexpected, often hidden and inexplicable violence; of mad dogs and misfits, and a shackled prisoner below deck; of sudden deaths and bodies overboard. Most of all, it is an inventory of uncertain landfalls and of arrivals that will always remain incomplete, unfulfilled.

> And now, all that held-back youth drives her forward. She lights out for whatever land will hide her until she is found. So that for now what she swims towards is just *somewhere*—to one of those ancient cities that was formed originally because of its existence on a delta or a reliable tide—to make a new life. As we too might do when we make our own landfall. (*Table* 281)

In the *we* of the final sentence the focus zooms out and upwards from the girl swimming steadily in the water to other bodies lighting out for some safer shore, some random silt of river sand or splintered outcrop on which to tread dry land. Casting out for an unknown European harbour, the girl Asunta is no Crusoe-figure, but the representative of a mass of dispersals, historical and contemporary. Her father, the prisoner, sinks down below, still shackled; whether he will succeed in freeing himself from his chains remains unknown. Indeed, we will never know the fate of either of these characters, whose voices are hardly heard in the text, though they are at the heart of this tale of uncertain landfall for those seeking to make the postcolonial voyage in, their awkward, illicit, asymmetrical returns, myriad minor counterpoints to the assured trajectories of the colonial voyage out. As Peter Hulme points out in a series of fine essays, these stories of enforced movement, the plunge into the oceans in their hopeful 'boat of one skin' (Hulme, 'Straits' 197) brush up against, but never quite meet the trope of the castaway that is so central to the English literary tradition.

One of the most plangent and evocative accounts I know of the dispersal from Sri Lanka is an essay by Amitav Ghosh, not a Lankan by birth, but one who spent his early school days there.

Perhaps this is why Ghosh can speak unselfconsciously of 'Serendib before the Fall' (1). His meditation on narratives of departure and arrival, exodus and dispersal, distinguishes between the forward-moving gaze of migrants arriving in North America and the lingering backwards gaze of Lankan writers such as Ondaatje and Shyam Selvadurai. In contrast to the trajectories of hopeful arrival that shape the narrative of exodus, Ghosh argues, are ateleological movements of dispersal, where no overarching historical or providential design, but a random and banal violence, sanctioned by the state, directs the wanderings of the dispersed: 'This is where recollection turns its back on history, for it is the burden of history to make sense of the past, while the memory of dispersal is haunted always by the essential inexplicability of what has come to pass; by the knowledge that there was nothing inevitable, nothing predestined about what has happened' (Ghosh 3). I am interested less in Ghosh's distinction between exodus and dispersal, the gaze of arrival and the backwards look of departure, than in his reflections on the abiding sense of loss and breakdown engendered by ateleological movements of dispersal, linked to the breakdown of the ethical relation between state and subject: a 'species of pain, exactly, that runs so poignantly through the literature that resulted from the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947' (4).

History of Ideas Series VI
Drawing 57/LVII *Departure* 2011
John Teschendorff (c)
Pencil/acrylic/enamel on Arches 300 gsm paper
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In Channa Wikremesekera's *In the Same Boat*, a tale of Lankan asylum seekers en route to Australia, the sight of a boat inexplicably in flames in the middle of the ocean invokes both the destruction of the ship of state and the plight of subjects left all at sea:

> What could be burning in the middle of the sea, somebody asked. . . . In a few minutes they could see the boat too, a blue fishing trawler drifting out on the sea with flames lazily licking the sides of what had been its cabin, as if it had all the time in the world to consume it. . . .

> Everyone kept looking as their boat passed the burning vessel, slowly, as if in slow motion. The smoke from the fire wafted around them, stinging their eyes and breath. On the deck of the blue trawler no one could be seen.

> How could it have happened, someone asked, softly, almost fearfully. No one answered. (Wickremesekera 41)

II

In beginning with Ondaatje, I have already signalled a certain methodology, a means of proceeding that is a writing of fragments; of odd angles and flashes, allusive, scattered, as they address the epic subjects of history, war, migration and diaspora. *The English Patient,* with its autobiographical annotations and interleaved supplements to the foundational text of Herodotus's *Histories*, is exemplary of this fictional method. My second fragment is from Stuart Hall. This time not even a complete sentence, but a direction, pointing towards the theoretico-political location of this essay: '. . . *at the unstable point where the "unspeakable" stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture*' (Hall, 'Minimal Selves' 115). In his essay on Avtar Brah, Hall comes closest to outlining the practice of what he calls diasporic reasoning, and to naming the diasporic as itself an interpretive frame. Hall speaks of a figure that emerges at the political, historical and theoretical conjuncture of the diasporic. It is, perhaps, a figure in the carpet (remembering that Hall began life as a Jamesian, and wrote a PhD on Henry James that he never completed); but it is also a figure of history; that is, a figure that is always a doubled inscription, broken, incomplete ('Cartographies' 100).

The figure in my address today, a broken and irrecuperable figure, is that of the burning boat, the swirls of its fiery inscriptions across the sea and the sky. It is a doubled figure, at once historical and symbolic, looking both back and forwards: at the boats that are in flames before us, behind us and around us as I speak; the boats we fire ourselves as we set sail as migrants and refugees; or the boats we torch from the safety of the shore in order to destroy the safe passages of other lives, and terminate their possibilities of arrival. In tracking the smoke and cinders of this dispersed, sometimes barely perceptible, figure of the burning boat, I take a cue also from Francois Debrix and Alexander Barder who propose a form of 'disjointed unfolding' in the face of sovereignties of violent excess (130).

I think of the boats our government wants to buy from Indonesia in order to carry out its policy of preemptive burning. This is an advance on the burning of boats on which asylum seekers arrive, which has long been a practice of Australian policy, as has the burning of the boats of Indonesian fishers caught on the wrong side of the shifting border (Balint). This is the routine 'torching rite,' as one journalist describes it, of Australian sovereignty (Hernandez). There are, too, the pyres we set ablaze in other ways at points of embarkation or in mid-ocean, to avert landfall on these (already excised) shores (Perera, 'Evidence'). There is

a violent excess in this determination to prevent refugees making landfall on a shore that has been already eliminated by law, from which the landing ground has been cut away underfoot. I will return to this excess, this overkill of violence. Still, despite, or because of, this very excess, this *overkilling*, the traces of those lost bodies and eviscerated, burning boats remain in our hair and nostrils. We taste them as grit and ashes in our mouths.

And the stench of our own burning bodies, our boats, our homes, our places, that clings to so many of us. Lankans speak of Black July 1983, more than 30 years ago, when clouds of thick smoke smothered Tamil houses and living bodies were set afire for the lack of a particular consonant when they pronounced an everyday word (*bucket*, for example, or *window*); or for the pattern of an earring half-hidden under a woman's hair. The sight of a certain kind of earring, like the ones my mother and aunties used to wear, will raise the hair on my arms to this day.

Those conflagrations of Black July marked for many of us the beginning of the war and initiated the dispersals and diasporas that still continue. Although I did not directly experience the pogroms of 1983, and didn't come to Australia as a refugee, the drifts of Black July washed me here, to where I am today. While I was writing this in mid-2014, a new outbreak of fires has been burning in Lanka, in a series of pogroms directed at Muslims this time, while on the streets protesters hold up signs insisting 'we don't want another Black July' (*Daily Mail*, 'EU alarmed'; Peiris). It is against the backdrop of such present and past conflagrations, the flames of arrival and dispersal, that I trace the discontinuous, sometimes equivocal, double inscription of the burning boat, as it appears here and there across various registers, symbolic and literal, most particularly in the contours of a shifting and violent borderscape that has Australia at its epicentre.

III

The borderscape is a concept I have developed in more detail elsewhere to describe a protean, changeable geography of punishment and lethal force (Perera, 'Pacific Zone'). The borderscape encompasses the ocean as a very particular type of theatre, that of 'on-water matters,' as described by the (then) Minister of Immigration (Bourke). This on-water realm is both a material and a floating space. In some ways *on-water* corresponds to a space of exception in the sense developed by Giorgio Agamben, it is the unlocalisable location within which what may happen relies not on any law, but on the goodwill or otherwise of those invested with sovereign authority over that space. 'On-water' as a space both within and outside the law is swathed in a very public shroud of secrecy: 'On-water' belongs in the realms of what Khaled Ramadan refers to as the 'chamber of public secrets' the secrets we know yet must not know; *move on, nothing to see here, nothing to remark*. At the same time, *on-water* is a chamber of horrors that houses the bodies and bones of the drowned and disappeared.

The Borderscape moves between land and sea, traversing national borders. In geopolitical and territorial terms, the Australian borderscape now stretches from Nauru and PNG in the Pacific, with their offshore detention camps, to the Indian Ocean, with Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka all within its reaches. In July 2014, and again in early 2015 (dates are often unspecified) asylum boats were intercepted in international waters, their passengers interned, held incommunicado *on-water* (ABC 'Australian authorities'; *SMH*, 'Four asylum seekers'). Cambodia is another of the region's economically and politically vulnerable states to be annexed into the ever-expanding borderscape, where a system of diffused and outsourced

sovereignties is deployed to violently block refugee bodies, while buffering and insulating Australia from their contaminating presence. Like its impoverished Pacific counterparts, Papua New Guinea and Nauru, Cambodia has been recruited as an agent of Australia's multi-billion dollar trafficking in refugee bodies; mapped as a way-station in the vicious ecology within which both impoverished post-colonies and refugees are caught, as neoliberal investments in economic rationalism, security and disaster capitalism mesh with an ideological infrastructure of sovereignty and expansionism, as well as, most critically, with an implicit but overwhelming raciocultural supremacism.

An assemblage of states, agencies, officials, laws and extralegal practices ensures that refugee bodies ensnared in the borderscape are available to be trafficked and transported, incarcerated and deported, drowned and sunk, or held in legal limbo until they reach the limits of their endurance; where they are refouled into the hands of the very state they are fleeing or, in what seems to be the ultimate demonstration of the sovereign power to dispense life and death as it sees fit, they are dispatched into the unknown, forcibly strapped into unsinkable lifeboats: the very image of a living death. The journalist Fran Kelly, interviewing Minister Eric Abetz about the boatloads of asylum seekers whose existence the government would neither confirm nor deny, protested 'But Australia doesn't just disappear people' (Doherty). In respect of the asylum seekers loaded at gunpoint onto unsinkable lifeboats, that is precisely what the state seeks to do: to wipe these figures from the horizon.

In this spectacle of the lifeboat perversely redeployed as a vehicle of erasure and elimination from the horizon I see embodied what Debrix and Barder term 'agonal sovereignty.' They describe this as a form of sovereignty

> in which the traditional modern or biopolitical distinctions between life and death, preserving human bodies and sacrificing them, or law-creating and law-maintaining order on the one hand, and unbounded violence, on the other, are no longer operative . . . Rather, agonal sovereignty . . . evokes the real (or virtual) pulverization of these two prior political logics and, in fact, reveals their indistinctness in the face of endless scenes of immanent terror, emergent violence and unsaturated horror. (21)

Agonal sovereignty is a 'configuration of power and force' characterised by 'an ontopolitics of devastation of being' and is marked by 'a certain horror,' as theorised by Adriana Cavarero in her book *Horrorism* (Debrix and Barder 21, 24).

I want to propose that the ensemble of practices of violence in the borderscape that I have started to outline exceeds the theoretical frameworks that many of us who have been trying to understand these forms of violence have worked with for many years: frameworks of sovereign terror, of biopolitics and necropolitics, and of exception.[1] Perhaps this is why some of us have experienced a sense of shocked speechlessness or helplessness before the battery of new practices of violence, the sense of unabashed excess and indeed unconcealed relish and elation, with which they are expounded.

As Barder and Debrix write: 'biopolitical frames of representability are epistemological frames that render intelligible practices of power and violence in terms of preservation of life, a preservation of life that sometimes entails the possibility of taking away the lives or destroying the bodies of others (unworthy bodies or lives)' (120). A number of theorists have suggested that these Foucauldian biopolitical frameworks need to be extended to account for

particularly excessive and horrific forms of violence. Mbembe's 'necropolitics,' Barder and Debrix's 'agonal sovereignty' and Cavarero's 'horrorism' all may be seen as attempts to theorise this excess of sovereign violence, in both historical and contemporary contexts. In the face of a growing sense of the inadequacy of my existing theoretical lexicon to comprehend the violence of the borderscape, I turn to Cavarero's theorisation of horrorism, as a form of sovereignty characterised by its sheer excess of violence: a violence that is designed to immobilise and paralyse. Where terror is mobile, and sets us in motion, Cavarero writes, horror stops us in our tracks; it arrests us with its spectacular violence; transfixes us by the sight of its severed and bloody Gorgon head (Cavarero 14). Horrorism is characterised by the sheer, useless excess, even exuberance, of its violence; its overkill. Its favored mode is the visual, and the symbolic: *stop the boats!* There is, Barder and Debrix pint out, 'a daring, challenging, defiant and reactive aspect to horror and horrific violence': indeed a 'recreational' aspect (35). The logo of Australia's proposed Border Force, a parallel paramilitary controlling all border operations from 2015, exemplifies this defiant, daring aspect. On social media, memes drawing from sources including the pirate flag to science fiction have illuminated the sinister yet recreational, even playful, overtones of this Border Force.[2] This recreational or pleasurable, defiant and daring violence is what we might identify in the public performances of the then Immigration Minister, Scott Morrison, and Prime Minister Tony Abbott.

The targets of this type of sovereignty of excess are no longer 'human subjects, citizens, selves'—life, humanity, species—but 'body parts, fragments of lives, bits and pieces of singular human experience and . . . their always readily reopened wounds and scars.' This is a form of sovereignty that seeks to 'dismantle' and disjoint and that 'indiscriminately mutilates bodies as much as it arbitrarily traumatizes minds and psyches,' operating across cognitive and sensory registers (Debrix and Barder 22).

The determination to exercise sovereign power to 'dismantle,' 'mutilate' and traumatise its targets is most clearly evidenced in the aptly named 'No Advantage' policy adopted towards illegalised boat arrivals and implemented through the offshore detention camps on Nauru and Manus Island. Mark Isaacs, a young Australian who served a series of rotations as a contracted Salvation Army support worker at Nauru's Topside camp in 2012, provides one of the most sustained accounts of the brutalising regime operative in off-shore detention in his book, *The Undesirables.* Together with sporadic reports from inmates who manage to circumvent the control of communications with the outside world, Isaacs's narrative of his experiences on Nauru allows an insight into the daily workings of the 'No Advantage' policy. Isaacs remarks that for the inmates of Nauru:

> Despite the long and arduous forms of their escape from murderous and war-torn countries . . . detention marks the longest and most treacherous part of their flight for freedom. There were no bombs in Nauru, no guns, no indiscriminate murders. Just waiting, boredom, insomnia, self-harm, suicide attempts, uncertainty . . . second-guessing, yearning and fear, fear, fear. Their enemies were themselves, their own minds. (320)

Numerous accounts of life on Australia's offshore camps on Manus Island and Nauru attest to the effectiveness of the tactic of turning the detainees' own minds into their enemies, breaking them both bodily and psychologically. A painfully long record of mental breakdown, self-harm and suicide attempts has been documented. Conditions in the camps are ripe for rape, sexual violence and other forms of abuse to break out among detainees, and for the

perpetration of abuse by guards. These forms of abuse are allowed to continue despite reports by whistle blowers (Marks; Isaacs 79–80). Despite its being ostensibly aimed at saving asylum seekers from drowning at sea, it is impossible not to see the regime of transportation to Pacific holding camps as one that *deliberately* places refugee lives in harm's way. Whereas people smugglers have no interest in intentionally harming the passengers they ferry to Australia, the state's trafficking of refugees across borders to detain them in Pacific camps is one that aims to cause them the greatest possible distress, and knowingly exposes them to higher probabilities of risk, trauma, violence and abuse. Indeed, it might be said, the Australian government's own business model of trafficking depends, not merely on the principle of 'No Advantage' but on the extent of its ability to inflict maximum disadvantage, through the psychological and physical dismantling of its targets, that is, a policy of overkilling. As Isaacs astutely observed during his term on Nauru, the state's rhetoric of protecting lives just 'didn't fit' with the reality that the policy's success depended on the exercise of calculated cruelty (83). He asks: 'How much good could we do in a camp designed to treat men poorly, under a policy whose goal was to give these men "no advantage"?' (83).

'No Advantage' here equates to a defiantly pitiless regime of punishment, calculated to break the bodies and spirits of the inmates. Isaacs book is a litany of these broken lives, with Topside Camp revealed as a regime of 'men hiding under blankets in darkened rooms' (292–93). As such it corresponds closely to the concept of a sovereignty based on agony, characterised by 'an ontopolitics of devastation' and pulverisation of being and marked, to return to Cavarero's term, by 'a certain horror' and an undoing and dismembering of the figural unity of those it attacks (Debrix and Barder 24; Cavarero 15).

IV

In discussing the 'No Advantage' policy as an exemplar of a sovereignty of violent excess and horror, I don't mean to imply that this mode of sovereignty is confined to Australia's offshore camps alone. Although the borderscape is a material geography of oceans, coastlines and spaces of indeterminate sovereignty such as offshore camps, the border at the same time operates through bodies and invisible lines of demarcation, and through technologies of isolation, abandonment, exclusion. The Temporary Protection Visa and Community Detention are two such technologies (Pugliese 2004, 2005). Didier Bigo, among others, has theorised the ban as an extension of the border that selectively and violently operates on target bodies outside the demarcations of the space of exception ('Detention of Foreigners').

One such space where the border was horrifically in operation was on a recent Saturday morning in Newtown. There's probably a Newtown in every state of Australia. This one is in Geelong, Victoria. Established in 1858, it speaks of a familiar wish-fulfilment: new home, fresh start, second chance: the blank slate of colonial settlement, with its not so casual obliteration of the old. And here is the kind of street we all recognise, with houses and unit blocks mixed together; neat gardens, fences. Over there is one of those ubiquitous orange blocks of flats; the brick a little weathered and worn, but still uneasy on the eye. Against the known harshness of that orange, suddenly, there's a flare of different a hue to be seen. According to an account in the *Age* newspaper, 'a ball of fire' is running down the street. Over by the postboxes, the burning body stops and tears desperately at its clothes. 'A handful of people gather around, stunned and staring at this groaning man in his underwear, his hair scorched and skin peeling.' Some of them recognize him as Leo Seemanpillai, a 29 year-old Tamil asylum seeker from Lanka on a bridging visa. They summon the paramedics, but it is

too late. To quote again from the *Age's* unrelenting description, 'Leo . . . had what are known as "full thickness" burns to 90 percent of his body. His internal system was shunting blood and fluid to the affected areas—90 percent of his frame—but without strong skin to hold back the flow, his body simply wept' (Marshall, 'Despair').

A burning body weeps its loss of skin; seeking to compensate for the shock of its brutal exposure, it rushes blood and fluids, frantically, to every agonised membrane and tissue. But, missing the protective casing of skin, the vital fluids leak and overflow uselessly as they attempt in vain to assuage what has been irretrievably torn open and scored by fire. The charred and peeling body is one large, all-consuming wound, a boundless seeping and weeping, wordlessly crying out its unbearable pain. Over the next twenty four hours, Leo Seemanpillai's flayed and harrowed body continued to weep its raw agony, suspended between life and death, while his few undamaged organs were harvested, according to his prior request. (Leo was a regular blood donor, a volunteer at the local church.)

In a series of unforgettable essays, Joseph Pugliese writes of the 'corporeal poetics' by which refugees seek to 'reclaim and resignify their bodies,' bodies that have been 'misappropriated' and 'instrumentalised' by the state through various forms of symbolic and material violence ('Subcutaneous Law' 27–28). There is now an unbearable litany of these names—Shanaz Kayani, Habib Wahedy, Vuillame Tanginoa—attached to these instances of corporeal poetics. The 'ritualised legal violence' practised against refugees' bodies 'produces ritualised extra-legal violence' as, through these corporeal poetics of suffering and death, refugees 'attempt to transliterate law from its linguistic and discursive register to its corporeal articulation and effects, thereby rendering visible its orders of violence' ('Subcutaneous Law' 32)

A month before Leo's death, on the docks in Balmain, in inner Sydney, another Tamil man finished his shift, then poured petrol over himself and also drank some just to make sure. According to the account in the *Saturday Paper*, 'In the shipyard beside the water he lit himself up.' In the backpack next to him were a farewell note and a letter of rejection from the Immigration Department (McKenzie-Murray, 'Burning protests'). He burned 70 percent of his body, but was saved from death by doctors. A third man, in Dandenong, Vic, was more recently prevented by his housemates from attempted self-immolation.

Some commentators argue that such acts are misidentified as 'self-harm'—rather they are an extension and material expression of the harms inflicted *by the state* on the bodies of refugees. It was terror at the prospect of forcible deportation and dread of what awaited him should he be sent to Lanka that so possessed Leo that he made the decision to turn himself into a living pyre rather than face that fate. His friend, Cathy Bond, his Australian mum as he called her, was unshakable in the conviction that it was the fear of deportation that motivated Leo. 'He knew what being returned to Sri Lanka meant for him . . . He spoke of nothing else but his terror of being returned' (Mills, 'More questions'). To burn himself to death was to ensure the impossibility of a yet more agonising fate, to choose the certainty of no-return. Leo was burning his boats.

'Confronted with horrifying sights, facts, descriptions, or sentiments that are beyond thought,' Debrix and Barder note, the temptation is to 'rally around the mark of the human, around human life, or around the idea of human integrity or identity' (130). Leo's death offers no such comforting possibilities. It is a death marked by a certain horror. Like the parents of Reza Barathi, hacked to death inside the Manus Island detention centre by an employee of an Australian agency in March 2013, Leo's parents were refused visas to attend his funeral. They

watched his funeral via video link from the refugee camp at Abdullapuram, South India, where they have lived for the last thirty years. Yet the ban on Leo and his nearest and dearest did have its limits. It stopped just short of his eyes, kidneys and other vital parts. While the state has extended its maximal energies to expelling Leo Seemanpillai from these shores, it was pleased to allow one, at least, of his wishes: his eyes, a lung, both kidneys and his liver have severally achieved legal status after his death (Marshall, 'Despair'). Implanted in no fewer than five authorised Australian subjects, these dismembered body parts of Leo Seemanpillai have achieved naturalisation within those borders from which he so dreaded expulsion that he chose to immolate himself instead.

V

What are the possibilities of responding to these transfixing and immobilsing effects of a sovereign violence of excess, overkill and horror; to avoid paralysis before the dismembering gaze of the Gorgon? One of the tactics that Debrix and Barder propose is a tactics of mirroring its own excess, a reflecting that aims not to recover or remake the bodies and lives unmade by an excess of sovereign violence, but to respond to dismembering violence by 'an ethic of inventorying the scattered.' The ethic of inventorying the scattered works through 'being dispersed, by tracking some body parts, bits of flesh, ashes and other human and non-human remains.' As it cannot wish to 'return to the violence that reduces the human to ashes to be dispersed by the wind,' the ethic of inventorying the scattered is 'a disjointed unfolding' that does not claim to be thorough, exhaustive, logical, linear, or even constructive. As distinct from modes such as testimony or bearing witness, the ethic of inventorying the scattered offers 'openness as a counterpoint to horror's gaping hole or wound.' 'It resists the drive to reconstruct the body of life, even a body beyond the body, or a life beyond life' but 'enables an opening, a space to rethink relations between what is alive and what is not, and perhaps, just as crucially, between what may be alive or always subject to death.' At best, an ethic of inventorying the scattered 'offers a few terms, a few concepts, a few signposts along the way to draw our attention to that which has been pulverized . . . It resists the all too common impulse to closure in the face of horror' (130).

> *. . . the violence that reduces the human to ashes to be dispersed by the wind*
>   (Debrix and Barder 130)

> *Above ground, massacre and race*
> *A heart silenced.*
> *The tongue removed.*
> *The human merged into burning tire*
> *Mud glaring back into a stare.*
>   (Ondaatje, 'Buried' 1998, 8)

NOTES

[1] On biopolitics, see Foucault 2003; on necropolitics, Mbembe 2003, and on exception see Agamben 1997.
[2] Tony Kevin is one commentator alarmed by the framework of permanent emergency that underpins the creation of Borderforce as a 'powerful paramilitary force with its own ideology, training and rank structure, answering only to the immigration minister, and apparently with no legal or constitutional checks and balances inside itself' (2014).

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