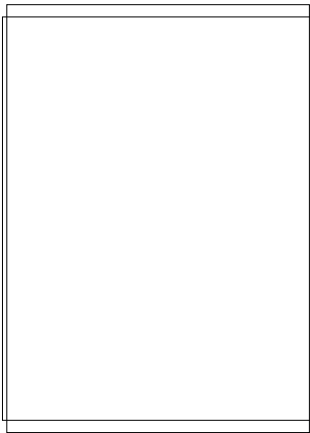
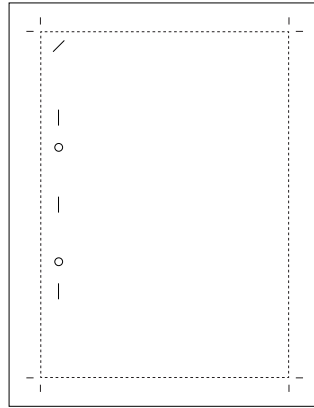


# printing & assembly instructions

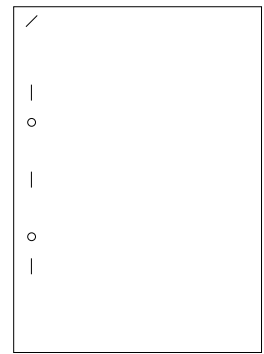
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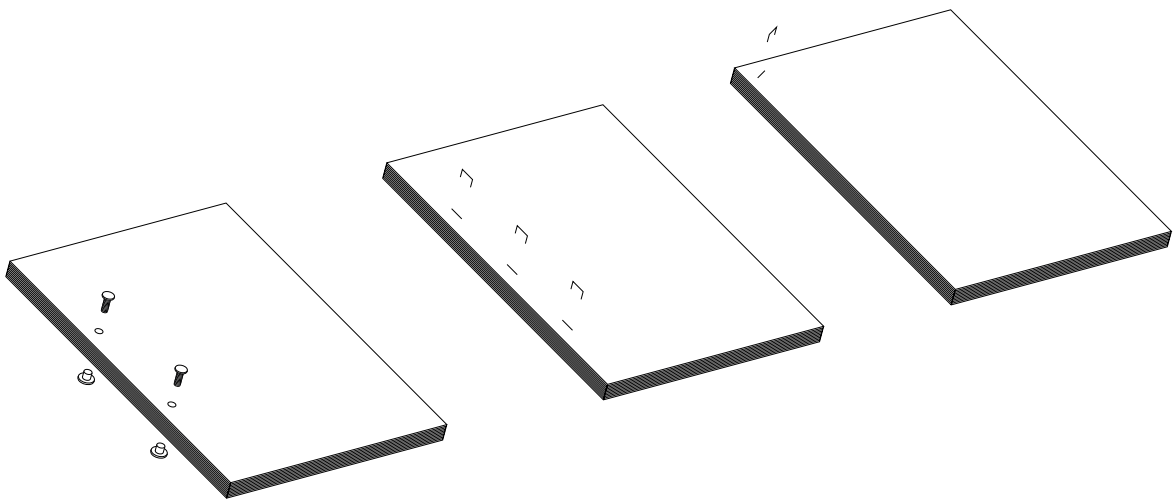
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(1) PAPER SIZE	use A4 (210 x 297 mm) or US Letter (215.9 x 279.4 mm)
(2) PRINTING AND TRIMMING	print in “actual size”. choose single sided printing. use crop marks to trim the edges of the paper
(3) BOOK SIZE AND GUIDE	final size should be 240 x 172 mm (9.44 x 6.77 in). use the other marks as a guide for binding
(4) BINDING	we suggest using screws or staples. a binder can be used for collecting multiple articles

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issue #001

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ANGELA MITROPOULOS

Lifeboat  
Capitalism,  
Catastrophism,  
Borders

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DISPATCHES JOURNAL

## 1. Category Storms

At the time of writing, Hurricane Florence is gathering off the coast of the Carolinas. A compulsory evacuation order has been issued. Those who could not make their way out of the path of surging waters due to the prohibitive costs of transport, incapacity, imprisonment, or some other form of confinement, or for whom taking shelter in public emergency facilities might precipitate deportation, have been left to survive a disaster defined as natural.<sup>1</sup> These compulsory evacuation orders are not the empowerment of movement. They are the stratified distributions of risk and loopholes of liability—the speech acts of a remarkable convergence of eschatology, government, and finance that defines the limits of insurability, and treats the contingent circumstances in which individuals find themselves as necessity, an inherent but fateful or fortunate property. In the wake of the devastation that took place in Puerto Rico a year ago, definitions of “natural disaster,” questions of causality, and the numbering and evaluation of the living and the dead are uppermost and controverted, as are questions about the infrastructures of care that filter emergency relief. The Trump Administration’s recent reallocation of funds—\$10 million from the budget of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); some \$30 million from the Coast Guard; and an estimated \$260 million from programs dedicated to HIV/AIDS prevention and cancer research—to finance the detention of a growing number of undocumented children and the activities of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are indicative of its definitions and management of risk. But infrastructure and the freedom of movement are integral to everyone’s survival of catastrophic events. Since these needs are indisputable, conservatives have increasingly rendered both the counting and knowledge of deaths “controversial” or deniable—as with the accounting of the thousands who have died in Puerto Rico the wake of Hurricane Maria.<sup>2</sup> A decade ago, writing of the *oiko*-political framing of responses to Hurricane Katrina, I suggested that storms disturb the earth’s surface, the geographies and architectures of what is given, and that they raise forgotten and buried histories of appropriation, their infrastructure and their limits.<sup>3</sup> It seemed to me then that while Hurricane Katrina had arguably contributed to the election of the first black president of the United States, it had also indicated the limits of that change. The following discussion revisits this argument by drawing attention to the trope of the lifeboat as an enclosed ecology—an *oikonomia*, or law of the household—that has accompanied the political resurgence of the Far Right, bearing in mind that “ecology” and “economy” are both derived from concepts of the



In this July 5, 2016, file photo, visitors pass outside the front of a replica Noah's Ark at the Ark Encounter theme park during a media preview day, in Williamstown, Ky. Kentucky's massive biblical attraction is opening a new exhibit that promotes the message of the Bible called "Why The Bible Is True." A ribbon cutting for the new display will be Friday, Feb. 24, 2017, at the Ark Encounter. (AP Photo/John Minchillo, File)

*oikos.*

Briefly, lifeboat capitalism is a theory of anthropological finitude that recalls Kant's aesthetics of racial types. Yet it imbues those (racial) categories with a teleological concept of divine origins, catastrophic ends, and, not least, a theory of selective salvation propounded as a moral economy of "natural limits." This is set within an eschatological narrative of the preservation-rebirth of a hierarchical eternal order through a "great tribulation." It is, in other words, a theory of the disorder of "proper places." It is counterrevolutionary and anti-evolutionary. On the one hand, it emphasizes an aesthetics of restoring property rights and entitlements, the hinge between a providential concept of economic liberalism (Smith) and one of apocalyptic conservatism (Malthus). On the other hand, it jettisons Darwin's ateleological understanding of the unpredictable implications and advantages of diverse attributes in changing circumstances by reinstating a teleology of ideal, eternal properties within an eschatological account of catastrophe, emphasizing instead the necessity of the "reproductive isolation" of those (racial) properties as a condition of salvation. As a consequence, lifeboat capitalism treats the weather as unknowable but providential, and environmental disasters as "natural," which is to say, as an implicit form of divine judgment or an "Act of God."

The Ark, of course, is a picture of salvation .... there is  
only one door.

—Ken Ham, "How Many Doors?"

## 2. Arkaeology of Human Finitude

Ark Encounter is a creationist, evangelical theme park in the United States' Grant County, Kentucky. Owned by Answers in Genesis (AiG), it is part of a growing number of Christian cultural recreational facilities that blend evangelical tourism with "home crafts."<sup>4</sup> In many cases, these centers also furnish the supplementary materials of homeschooling, as in Hobby Lobby's craft stores, the proprietors of which were

involved in the construction of Ark Encounter and own the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC. As Susan and William Trollinger point out in their discussion of the Creation Museum in Kentucky—which is also owned by AiG—the key tenets of this evangelical culture industry are biblical literalism (or “inerrancy”), a premillennialist view of history, patriarchy, political conservatism, and creationism.<sup>5</sup> It is a culture industry engaged in what it understands as a Manichean, apocalyptic culture war.

Within the history of museology, Ark Encounter is not simply the burial chamber for dead objects, as Adorno once described the museum, though it includes artifacts and their purported replicas.<sup>6</sup> Nor is it quite Foucault’s precarious ship, the theorist’s romanticized counterpoint to the eternal, accumulating time of the mausoleum, which he characterized as a “heterotopia *par excellence*” that conveys men on an infinite ocean between colony, port, and brothel.<sup>7</sup> The line between piracy and plunder is thin. The Greens—the owners of Hobby Lobby Stores Inc. whose collection occupies three bays in Ark Encounter—were recently ordered by a court to return thousands of ancient artifacts that were found to have been smuggled out of Iraq.<sup>8</sup> Nor does the museum exactly tally with Hubert Damisch’s idealist, redemptive definition of architecture as Noah’s Ark.<sup>9</sup> At Ark Encounter, the imaging of purposeful structures through which some living creatures survive the end of the world is emphatically selective: “there is only one door.” Not all living things are destined to survive its teleological narrative—this being the entire point of its plot line. The construction of Ark Encounter is arguably one result of the process that Rosalind Krauss described as a shift in the organization of the museum from public patrimony to private dealing, though it is perhaps not entirely as Krauss had envisaged it.<sup>10</sup> The bare timber, naturalist aesthetics of Ark Encounter are directly at odds with corporate foyer Minimalism, barring the large-scale industrial engineering without which the museum could not have been built. This version of the “new museology” is both interactive process and product.<sup>11</sup> Its immersion in cultural difference is not exactly the trading in exoticism discussed by Natalie Alvarez.<sup>12</sup> It does not invite visitors to wonder or gawk at the strange, but rather to turn away from strangers, to step out of a material world perceived as increasingly too alien, too queer, and in catastrophic flux, and into a space of ideal, albeit mostly rustic and familiar, aesthetics. As Trollinger and Trollinger point out, salvation comes to those who cross its threshold, damnation to those who do not.<sup>13</sup> In other words, Foucault’s suggestion of a historical shift from the order of resemblance to that of infinitude here blends as the stark choice in a Neoplatonist, evangelical drama—the revelation of “the origin of pain and death, as well as God’s plan to end tragedy

forever,” and the proposition of the rebirth of ideal, eternal forms at an apocalyptic limit.<sup>14</sup>

Built with spruce and fir timbers from New Zealand, Ark Encounter’s main building is a colossal reconstruction of Noah’s Ark as described in the biblical story of the flood. At seven stories high and two hundred feet long, it is claimed to be the largest timber frame structure in the world. In line with “new museology,” it involves physical installations and interactive exhibitions that are built to be immersive and instructional—a sensuous, performative repository of biblical mythology.<sup>15</sup> Unlike most contemporary museums, and directly against the conventions of the natural history museum, it presents a “young earth,” anti-evolutionary theory. Offering not a metaphorical account of Genesis but rather its literal interpretation, Ark Encounter proposes that the universe, and all life on earth, was divinely created less than ten thousand years ago and over the course of six days. Inasmuch as museums are understood to be a reliable repository of knowledge, they facilitate the exercise of disciplinary power.<sup>16</sup> In the case of Ark Encounter, however, empiricism and the order of observable resemblances with which the objective sciences have been associated have shifted. In their stead is a self-described contentious aesthetics that parallels a Manichean view of premillennial conflict—one that alludes to empiricism (albeit as a sensuous aesthetics that scrambles causality, or any concept of objectivity, into a nostalgic palingenesis) and emphasizes a Neoplatonist understanding of transcendent eternal time and properties.

Beyond estimates of the meaning and measure of its “cubits” and costs, the Kentucky ark is a theory of populations. Derived from the Genesis passages of the bible, it presents an antediluvian historiography of the human population of the earth (“when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them”) that purports to explain the divine origins of human mortality: “The end of all flesh.” By this account, human finitude is the result of God’s catastrophic judgment on improper desires. Before Genesis, according to the *Scofield Reference Bible*, the “sons of God” are immortal and angelic, there are no “female angels,” and “marriage is unknown.” After the flood of God’s judgment on apostasy, men become mortal, all living things are divided into male and female, and the recorded genealogy and begetting of the faithful commences along with the institution of heterosexual marriage.<sup>17</sup> Because Genesis mentions the appearance of a rainbow at the end of the flooding rains, the structure at Ark Encounter is lit up with a spectrum in the evening.

The point, as AiG founder Ken Ham puts it, is “a reminder God will never again judge the wickedness of man with a global Flood—next time the world will be judged by fire,” and therefore “Christians need to take back the rainbow” from its use as a queer pride flag.<sup>18</sup>

The growth of a dedicated evangelical culture industry has been made possible by government support and financial preferment, such as the tax exemptions and avoidance available to religious or apostolic associations, corporations, and their donors. Additional rebates from Kentucky state taxes were also issued to AiG—around \$18 million in tax incentives—after a feasibility study done prior to the ark’s construction found that it was likely to increase tourism. The study was commissioned by Governor of Kentucky Matt Bevin, a member of what is estimated to be the fourth-largest Evangelical church in the United States.

Ark Encounter represents part of a broader effort to render an alternative account of rising waters. The pivotal theme of Ark Encounter, put simply, is the redemptive power of the private, patriarchal, and self-sufficient household. Two by two, living creatures are offered salvation in the form of a return to a ranked arrangement and binary sexual differentiation. Their impending apocalyptic destruction in the catastrophic flood of God’s judgement is thus averted by reinstating the proper order of patriarchal and divine authority, as well as heterosexual marriage. This suggestion of a universal, eternal classification of all living things draws on the Linnaean *scala naturae*, or “great chain of being,” but its overwhelming obsession in the present is the decline of the patriarchal chain of being that scales from every family, through the nation, and ultimately up to God, here understood as the absolute father. “Why has the Lord raised up creation science organizations worldwide?” Ham asks. “When we look at the United States and other countries today,” he answers, “we see increases in homosexuality, support for abortion on demand, disobedience to those in authority, people who do not want to work, pornography, the abandonment of marriage and modest clothing, to name but a few examples.”<sup>19</sup> Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc., moreover, is perhaps better known outside of Evangelical circles as the successful plaintiff in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, the landmark “corporate personhood” case that struck down the non-discriminatory reproductive healthcare mandate of the Affordable Care Act in 2014.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. The Disorder of Things



The emphasis on aesthetics that engineers physical installations such as Ark Encounter is a making-real of the idea of an absolute, hierarchical order of properties through the senses. It gives rise to a Manichean aesthetics of discrimination, which is understood as a moral economy, the stuff of so-called “religious freedom” legislation and legal cases. It is not the theology that led to the groundbreaking 1987 report *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States*.<sup>21</sup> Nor is it a theology of care extended to those who struggle to make a life in circumstances not of their choosing. To the contrary, it re-imagines unlivable conditions—those that result from rising temperatures, the devastation of hurricanes and rising waters, and the patterned distribution of environmental racism—as a consequence of the providential, unknowable workings of cruel judgment on a world deemed fallen and disobedient. Along with an epistemology that insists on limited human knowledge—conceived as the sin of trespass upon divine omniscience and purpose; the basis of arguments that climate science and policies usurp God’s authority—this eschatological understanding of population forms the pivotal contemporary aesthetics of anthropological finitude that informs white evangelical theology. It is a theory of populations that interprets the story of Noah’s Ark in the Genesis passages of the Bible as a tacit genealogy of “a chosen people.”

The political-economic theology of lifeboat capitalism aligns with economic liberalism and neoliberalism in all but one crucial and consequential respect: the idea of “the natural order and course of things”—Adam Smith’s pervasive turn of phrase—instead becomes a nostalgic aesthetics of the disorder of this world.<sup>22</sup> Its corollary is an ontological and anthropological understanding of precariousness that treats uncertainty as if it were part of the human condition, as opposed to a historical result of human action.<sup>23</sup>

There is, however, no concept of disorder or chaos that does not presuppose either a lost order or one that might be restored. Indeed, in an effort to counter mainline Christian acceptance of anthropogenic explanations of climate change, in 2010, the Cornwall Alliance issued *An Evangelical Declaration on Global Warming*. The statement described the earth in much the same way that Smith, and later Friedrich Hayek, understood the self-regulating economy: as the product of “God’s intelligent design and infinite power,” and therefore, “robust, resilient, self-regulating and *self-correcting*.”<sup>24</sup> Smith’s economic liberalism turned on a view of the natural inclinations of men, whose variable desires and preferences were harmonized by the invisible,

providential hand of God.

In the wake of the revolutions in France and the French colonies, the concept of a tendency toward equilibrium gave way to one of apocalyptic judgment. In the eighteenth-century writings of Thomas Robert Malthus, for example, the Protestant cleric insisted on the coercive regulation of sex and the elimination of parish welfare, so that the habits and conduct of the poor might be turned into properly productive and reproductive pursuits. Today, the Cornwall Alliance similarly argues that any measures intended to alleviate environmental and social problems will have perverse and catastrophic results. Climate science, and even more so action around climate change, is thereby envisaged as a form of disobedience to God's grace and the purportedly natural order of things. For instance, members of the Cornwall Alliance "deny that Earth and its ecosystems are the fragile and unstable products of chance, and particularly that Earth's climate system is vulnerable to dangerous alteration because of minuscule changes in atmospheric chemistry." Within this theory of "God's intelligent design and infinite power," chance, uncertainty, and, not least, catastrophe are understood as the necessary, divinely ordained conditions that give rise to the circumstance of "natural liberty" as the scene of "personal responsibility," a personal choice between sin and redemption. The assumption that is shattered between Smith's providential hand and Malthus's cruel fist is that Smith's hand was only capable of guiding the diverse preferences of property-owning men. Today, with the expansion of civil, economic, and political rights, conservatives perceive disobedience everywhere—an insubordination imagined by Far Right conspiracy theories as the dark unseen hand of disorder.

...with this very "principle of population," struck the  
hour of the Protestant parsons.

—Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1.

#### 4. Insecurity, Extraterritoriality, National-Populism



KHALED SABSABI  
*Fuck Off We're Full (installation view), 2009*

In his histories of economic liberalism and neoliberalism, Foucault placed a great deal of importance on the concept of population—far more than he did that of biopolitics, for which he is possibly better known. His 1977–78 lectures on security, territory, and population focus on what he described as “the genesis of a political knowledge that put the notion of population and the mechanisms for ensuring its regulation at the center of its concerns.”<sup>25</sup> Yet, given that Foucault discussed population at some length over many years, his treatment of Malthus is extraordinarily brief.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, given the importance of Malthusian and neo-Malthusian views to the politics of the Far Right, Foucault’s suggestion that the concept of population brings about a shift away from coercion, the decline of a territorial state, and, not least, a diminution in the influence of pastoral power and ecclesiastical authority is no less remarkable and debatable.<sup>27</sup>

The Californian ecologist Garrett Hardin, one of Malthus’s most ardent supporters and a white supremacist, rose to a controversial prominence a decade prior to Foucault’s lectures with the publication of “The Tragedy of the Commons” in 1968.<sup>28</sup> Along with bestsellers such as Paul R. Ehrlich’s *The Population Bomb*, Rachel Carson’s *The Silent Spring*, and the Club of Rome’s publication *Limits to Growth*, Hardin’s writings were an index of the enormous resurgence of Malthusian—or neo-Malthusian—population theory that began in the late 1960s and continues into the present. Indeed, the immense popularity of these neo-Malthusian writings on “overpopulation” was the immediate backdrop of Foucault’s lectures on population. In the same year that Foucault gave those lectures, Hardin published “Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor,” an infamous essay in which he analogized the US to a lifeboat and argued that unless immigration from so-called Third World countries was prohibited, an economic and ecological cataclysm would ensue.<sup>29</sup>

What distinguishes neo-Malthusianism from Malthus is the foregrounding of controls on the movements of populations across the borders that did not exist in Malthus’s time. Malthus’s chief obsession was the “drain” on parish welfare by those who had moved from rural areas to cities and larger towns, and who, by his view, had too many children outside marriage contracts to ensure the privatization of each child’s welfare. According to Malthus, if the poor were not forced into productive labor, and households were not the means of private fortune and misfortune, then a biblical catastrophe would ensue—preceded by the wealthy’s depletion of property. Neo-Malthusianism elaborated on this cautionary tale by drawing an analogy between national borders and the Malthusian concept of “natural limits.” That concept of limits

abstractly encodes the use of given resources as necessary and eternal, but whose disparate environmental impacts are by no means equivalent to another, and on that basis, derives a concept of “overpopulation” that treats population size as the crucial variable in a theory of resource use. Neo-Malthusianism redefined borders as those natural limits or barriers to “overpopulation,” envisaging an apocalyptic conflict over presumably limited resources between migration (migrants) and the births-to-deaths ratio (citizens). In this account, migration is treated as an unnatural, improper method of growth in the size of a population, whereas the birth and death of citizens is regarded as a divinely ordained variable. For more than a decade, Hardin was involved with the white supremacist, anti-immigrant group the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) much of that time as a member of its board as well as the Social Contract Press, a white nationalist publisher.<sup>30</sup> As it happens, the Trump administration includes a number of people with long-standing ties to FAIR, among them Jeff Sessions, Kris Kobach, Kellyanne Conway, and Stephen Miller, and the ombudsman of US Citizenship and Immigration Services was an executive director of FAIR for around a decade. Current White House policy on migration has been dictated largely by a slate of proposals outlined by FAIR in November 2016 at the National Press Club in Washington, DC.<sup>31</sup> When Hardin made migration controls a central feature of his argument for population control, he borrowed the trope of the lifeboat from the Pentecostal revivalism and apostolic evangelism of Dwight L. Moody. Moody’s thinking—within which uncertainty is re-described as the condition of readying for salvation from a fallen world and as preparation for the catastrophic end of days—has been influential in US-American Evangelicalism. In one of his more famous sermons, he characterized his apostolic mission as follows: “I look on this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, ‘Moody, save as many as you can.’”<sup>32</sup>

The neo-Malthusian tendency to emphasize isolation has its corollary in the history of evolutionary theory, wherein the concept of population has long been a euphemism for the regulation of desires. When Georges Buffon claimed, in the eighteenth century, that attraction and repulsion are the two primordial forces of nature and thus explanatory of population delineation (speciation), reproduction, and variation, he provided the pivotal antecedent for population theory, within which aesthetics are also understood to be determinative and explanatory.<sup>33</sup> Buffon contended that the Linnaean orders of resemblance that gave rise to “genera, orders, and classes exist only in our imagination.”<sup>34</sup> Darwin similarly concluded “that genera are merely artificial

combinations made for convenience,” since the essential property that distinguishes a species is “undiscoverable.”<sup>35</sup> Where these theorists suggested that an order characterized by resemblance is not observable (as Kant would otherwise insist), by contrast, the so-called Modern Synthesis of the 1930s–40s “rediscovered” a mechanism of typification in the operations of the border, and segregation as a mechanism of selection—an inclination laid bare by the emphasis given by Ernst Mayr and Theodosius Dobzhansky to mechanisms of “reproductive isolation.”<sup>36</sup> The concept of reproductive isolation borrowed from and gave credence to a renascent racial-national segregationist aesthetics of supposedly unique categorical properties that emerged in the 1930s. By that view, the border materializes as a racial aesthetics of repulsion and attraction within modern evolutionary theory. The classical Linnaean hierarchy of living things arranged by a spurious resemblance did not, as Foucault suggested in *The Order of Things*, give way to a continuous scale, so much as it recoiled as a concept of (racial) qualification by way of a neo-Kantian anthropology of finitude and aesthetic judgment.<sup>37</sup> Through the dualism of finite and infinite worlds, it became possible to plunge statistical categories, and their boundaries and variations, back into a providential, eschatological narrative—one made apparent in the “born again” narrative of “Make America Great Again.”

## 5. Wallbuilders and Gatekeepers

Four decades after the publication of Hardin’s “Lifeboat Ethics,” Donald Trump’s senior policy advisor, Stephen Miller, addressed a set of proposed restrictions to migration along similar lines of thought. The restrictions were necessary, Miller insisted, because “common sense” observed that “some companies want to bring in more unskilled labor [is] because they know that it drives down wages and reduces labor costs.” Where was the evidence for this narrative? “The facts,” Miller added, “speak for themselves. At some point, we’re accountable to reality.” When asked by reporters to identify which of these “facts which speak for themselves,” Miller responded, “I think the most recent study I would point to is the study from George Borjas that he just did about the Mariel boatlift.”<sup>38</sup>

Borjas’s book is titled *Heaven’s Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy*.<sup>39, 40</sup> As it happens, his study is one of the few that purports to have found evidence that migration has a negative impact on the incomes and employment levels of local workers. The Mariel boatlift refers to a period of some six months in 1980, during



GEORGE SANCHEZ-CALDERÓN

Found Object lost out at sea : The raft of Cuban exile attempting to make safe haven in the U.S. 1993 / Exhibited at the Franklin Furnace Archive as part of "El Museo de Los Balseros" an exhibit by George Sánchez-Calderon, 1996.

which, in the back and forth between governments over the filter that is the border between the two states, around 125,000 people made their way from the port town of Mariel in Cuba to Miami, Florida by boat.<sup>41</sup> Because it can be plausibly distinguished as a punctual event in the otherwise complex variations of a narrow set of statistical frequencies and their categorical comparison—the boats, the nation, income cohorts—the boatlift has been seen by social scientists and labor market economists as approximating near-perfect experimental conditions for testing hypotheses regarding the impact of migration on income and employment. As Michael Clemens and Jennifer Hunt point out, however, the decline in the incomes of local workers that Borjas claimed to have discovered can instead be traced to a change in the method and scope of his statistical analysis—not, that is, the movement of people across borders, but rather a modification in statistical techniques.<sup>42</sup>

The “lifeboat” analogy of national properties in apocalyptic circumstances, according to which discrimination is rationalized as a mechanism of conditional salvation, is neither narrow nor fringe. Since the late 1960s, conservative white Evangelicals have become the most significant and dependable political constituency of the Republican Party, and in particular, the Trump presidency. Given this constituency, lifeboat theology, and a great deal of pseudo-science that imbues statistical categories with eschatological meaning, has become an undeniable feature of conservative policy arguments. As Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee has argued, the nineteenth-century British Empire’s treatment of “natural disasters” in the colonies may well be a predecessor to the contemporary triangulation of disasters, social inequality, and cultural forms.<sup>43</sup> Yet the naturalization of disaster and the trope of the lifeboat have a broader history in the effort to retrieve a purportedly underlying or transcendent order from its perceived disarray—that is, the simultaneous instability and effort to restore the idea of proper places and properties, without which the circuit of capital and contract remains perilously open in all respects, and impossible to assign to a definitive owner.<sup>44</sup>

Foucault looms large in the discussion here, given the importance he attached to the concept of population. However, his claim of epistemic shifts and historical epochs—generally read as a theory of biopolitics—is doubtful. Especially questionable are his suggestions that the order of resemblance is distinct from an anthropology of finitude (even though Kantian anthropology begins with, and arguably invented, a geo-aesthetics of race), and the neglect of Malthusianism (and neo-Malthusianism) that accompanies his claim that the “government of souls” (that is, Christian



Neoplatonism) and *oikonomia* (the “law of the household”) have been left behind in some archaic past.

Criticisms of his historical schema notwithstanding, Foucault offered an important counterpoint to the understanding of borders discussed here, which is in practice accomplished by delegating authority over the movements of people to a complex, extraterritorial, and geopolitical assemblage of governmental, corporate, and non-governmental agencies. Rather than assign the power over life and death to seemingly neutral political-economic measures and decisions, in an interview in 1979 on the treatment of refugees from Vietnam, Foucault instead argued that “[n]o discussion on the general balance of power between countries of the world, and no argument about the political and economic difficulties that come with aid to refugees can justify states abandoning those human beings at the gates of death.”<sup>45</sup> Speaking in 1984 at the launch of an initiative to send a ship to escort people fleeing from South East Asia by boat, Foucault elaborated on this point:

Who appointed us, then? No one. And that is precisely what constitutes our right ... After all, we are all members of the community of the governed, and thereby obliged to show mutual solidarity. We must reject the division of labour so often proposed to us: individuals can get indignant and talk; governments will reflect and act ... Experience shows that one can and must refuse the theatrical role of pure and simple indignation that is proposed to us.<sup>46</sup>

What Foucault described as the “gates of death” is also the “door” to an arkaeology of human finitude, one in which a metaphysical concept of posthumous life—a necropolitics, as Achille Mbembe might say—is both premised on and facilitative of the selective, catastrophic destruction of living things.

- 1 Yoosun Park and Joshua Miller, "The Social Ecology of Hurricane Katrina: Re-Writing the Discourse of 'Natural' Disasters," *Smith College Studies in Social Work* 76, no. 3 (2006): 9–24; Gregory Squires and Chester Hartman, *There Is No Such Thing as a Natural Disaster: Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
- 2 Lynn R. Goldman, "We Calculated the Deaths from Hurricane Maria. Politics Played No Role," *Washington Post*, September 15, 2018, sec. Opinions. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/we-calculated-the-deaths-from-hurricane-maria-politics-played-no-role/>
- 3 Angela Mitropoulos, "Oikopolitics, and Storms," *The Global South* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 69.
- 4 Similar sites include The Holy Land Experience in Orlando, Florida and the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky.
- 5 Susan L. Trollinger and William Vance Trollinger, Jr., *Righting America at the Creation Museum* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), 2.
- 6 Theodor W. Adorno, "Valery Proust Museum," in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel Weber and Sherry Weber (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), 175.
- 7 Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 27.
- 8 Emily Cochrane, "Iraqi Artifacts Once Bought by Hobby Lobby Will Return Home," *New York Times*, May 2, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/02/us/politics/iraq-artifacts-hobby-lobby-ice.html>
- 9 Hubert Damisch, *Noah's Ark: Essays on Architecture*, ed. Anthony Vidler, trans. Julie Rose (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016).
- 10 Rosalind Krauss, "The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum," *October* 54 (Autumn 1990): 3–17.
- 11 Susan Bennett, *Theatre and Museums* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
- 12 Natalie Alvarez, *Immersion in Cultural Difference: Tourism, War, Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018).
- 13 Trollinger and Trollinger, *Righting America*, 231.
- 14 "Why the Bible Is True," *Ark Encounter*, accessed September 14, 2018, <https://arkencounter.com/bible-true/>.
- 15 Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and Education: Purpose, Pedagogy, Performance* (London: Routledge, 2007).
- 16 Ka Tat Nixon Chen, "The Disciplinary Power of Museums," *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity* 3, no. 4 (July 2013): 407–10.

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