

## The Archive and Testimony

4.1 One evening in 1969, Emile Benveniste, Professor of Linguistics at the Collège de France, suffered an attack on a street in Paris. Without identification papers, he was not recognized. By the time he was identified, he had already suffered a complete and incurable aphasia that lasted until his death in 1972 and kept him from working in any way. In 1972, the journal *Semiotica* published his essay, "The Semiology of Language." At the end of this article, Benveniste outlines a research program that moves beyond Saussurian linguistics, one that was never realized. It is not surprising that the basis for this program lies in the theory of enunciation, which may well constitute Benveniste's most felicitous creation. The overcoming of Saussurian linguistics, he argues, is to be accomplished in two ways: the first, which is perfectly comprehensible, is by a semantics of discourse distinct from the theory of signification founded on the paradigm of the sign; the second, which interests us here, consists instead "in the translinguistic analysis of texts and works through the elaboration of a metasemantics that will be constructed on the basis of a semantics of enunciation" (Benveniste 1974: 65).

It is necessary to linger on the aporia implicit in this formulation. If enunciation, as we know, does not refer to the text of

what is uttered but to its taking place, if it is nothing other than language's pure reference to itself as actual discourse, in what sense is it possible to speak of a "semantics" of enunciation? To be sure, the isolation of the domain of enunciation first makes it possible to distinguish in a statement between what is said and its taking place. But does enunciation not then represent a non-semantic dimension precisely on account of this identification? It is certainly possible to define something like a meaning of the shifters "I," "you," "now," "here" (for example, "'I' means the one who utters the present speech in which 'I' is contained"); but this meaning is completely foreign to the lexical meaning of other linguistic signs. "I" is neither a notion nor a substance, and enunciation concerns not what is said in discourse but the pure fact that it is said, the event of language as such, which is by definition ephemeral. Like the philosophers' concept of Being, enunciation is what is most unique and concrete, since it refers to the absolutely singular and unrepeatable event of discourse in act; but at the same time, it is what is most vacuous and generic, since it is always repeated without its ever being possible to assign it any lexical reality.

What, from this perspective, can it mean to speak of a metasemantics founded on a semantics of enunciation? What did Benveniste glimpse before falling into aphasia?

4.2 In 1969, Michel Foucault also publishes *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, which formulates the method and program of his research through the foundation of a theory of statements (*énoncés*). Although Benveniste's name does not appear in the book and despite the fact that Foucault could not have known Benveniste's last articles, a secret thread ties Foucault's program to the one the linguist outlined. The incomparable novelty of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* consists in having explicitly taken as its object neither

sentences nor propositions but precisely "statements," that is, not the text of discourse but its taking place. Foucault was thus the first to comprehend the novel dimension of Benveniste's theory of enunciation, and he was the first then to make this dimension into an object of study. Foucault certainly recognized that this object is, in a certain sense, undefinable, that archaeology in no way delimits a particular linguistic area comparable to those assigned to the various disciplines of knowledge. Insofar as enunciation refers not to a text but to a pure event of language (in the terms of the Stoics, not to something said but to the sayable that remains unsaid in it), its territory cannot coincide with a definite level of linguistic analysis (the sentence, the proposition, illocutive acts, etc.), or with the specific domains examined by the sciences. Instead, it represents a function vertically present in all sciences and in all acts of speech. As Foucault writes, with lucid awareness of his method's ontological implications: "the statement is not therefore a structure...; it is a function of existence" (Foucault 1972: 86). In other words: enunciation is not a thing determined by real, definite properties; it is, rather, pure existence, the fact that a certain being — language — takes place. Given the system of the sciences and the many knowledges that, inside language, define meaningful sentences and more or less well formed discourses, archaeology claims as its territory the pure taking place of these propositions and discourses, that is, the *outside* of language, the brute fact of its existence.

In this way, Foucault's archaeology perfectly realizes Benveniste's program for a "metasemantics built on a semantics of enunciation." After having used a semantics of enunciation to distinguish the domain of statements from that of propositions, Foucault establishes a new point of view from which to investigate knowledges and disciplines, an *outside* that makes it possible

to reconsider the field of disciplinary discourses through a “meta-semantics”: archaeology.

It is certainly possible that Foucault thus merely dressed up old ontology, which had become unacceptable, in the modern garb of a new historical metadiscipline, thereby ironically proposing first philosophy not as a knowledge, but as an “archaeology” of all knowledges. But such an interpretation fails to recognize the novelty of Foucault’s method. What gives his inquiry its incomparable efficiency is its refusal to grasp the taking place of language through an “I,” a transcendental consciousness or, worse, an equally mythological psychosomatic “I.” Instead, Foucault decisively poses the question of how something like a subject, an “I,” or a consciousness can correspond to statements, to the pure taking place of language.

Insofar as the human sciences define themselves by establishing a linguistic stratum that corresponds to a certain level of meaningful discourse and linguistic analysis (the sentence, the proposition, the illocutive act, etc.), their subject is naively identified with the psychosomatic individual presumed to utter discourse. On the other hand, modern philosophy, which strips the transcendental subject of its anthropological and psychological attributes, reducing it to a pure “I speak,” is not fully aware of the transformation this reduction implies with respect to the experience of language; it does not recognize the fact that language is thereby displaced onto an asemantic level that can no longer be that of propositions. In truth, to take seriously the statement “I speak” is no longer to consider language as the communication of a meaning or a truth that originates in a responsible Subject. It is, rather, to conceive of discourse in its pure taking place and of the subject as “a nonexistence in whose emptiness the unending outpouring of language uninterruptedly continues” (Foucault 1998: 148). In language, enunciation marks a threshold between an

inside and an outside, its taking place as pure exteriority; and once the principal referent of study becomes statements, the subject is stripped of all substance, becoming a pure function or pure position. The subject, Foucault writes, “is a particular, vacant place that may in fact be filled by different individuals. . . . If a proposition, a sentence, a group of signs can be called ‘statement,’ it is not therefore because, one day, someone happened to speak them or put them into some concrete form of writing; it is because the position of the subject can be assigned. To describe a formulation *qua* statement does not consist in analyzing the relations between the author and what he says (or wanted to say, or said without wanting to); but in determining what position can and must be occupied by any individual if he is to be the subject of it” (Foucault 1972: 95–6).

In the same year, Foucault undertakes his critique of the notion of the author following these very same principles. His interest is not so much to note the author’s eclipse or to certify his death as to define the concept of the author as a simple specification of the subject-function whose necessity is anything but given: “We can easily imagine a culture where discourse would circulate without any need for an author. Discourses, whatever their status, form or value, and regardless of our manner of handling them, would unfold in the anonymity of a murmur” (Foucault 1998: 222, translation emended).

4.3 In his understandable concern to define archeology’s terrain with respect to other knowledges and domains, Foucault appears to have neglected—at least to a certain point—to consider the ethical implications of his theory of statements. Only in his last works, after having effaced and depsychologized the author, after having identified something like an ethics immanent to writing already in the bracketing of the question “Who is speaking?” did

Foucault begin to reflect on the consequences that his desubjectification and decomposition of the author implied for the subject. It is thus possible to say, in Benveniste's terms, that the metasemantics of disciplinary discourses ended by concealing the semantics of enunciation that had made it possible, and that the constitution of the system of statements as a positivity and historical a priori made it necessary to forget the erasure of the subject that was its presupposition. In this way, the just concern to do away with the false question "Who is speaking?" hindered the formulation of an entirely different and inevitable question: What happens in the living individual when he occupies the 'vacant place' of the subject, when he enters into a process of enunciation and discovers that "our reason is the difference of discourses, our history the difference of times, ourselves the difference of masks?" (Foucault 1972: 131). That is, once again, what does it mean to be subject to desubjectification? How can a subject give an account of its own ruin?

This omission — if it is an omission — obviously does not correspond to a forgetfulness or an incapacity on Foucault's part; it involves a difficulty implicit in the very concept of a semantics of enunciation. Insofar as it inheres not in the text of the statement, but rather in its taking place — insofar as it concerns not something said, but a pure saying — a semantics of enunciation cannot constitute either a text or a discipline. The subject of enunciation, whose dispersion founds the possibility of a metasemantics of knowledges and constitutes statements in a positive system, maintains itself not in a content of meaning but in an event of language; this is why it cannot take itself as an object, stating itself. There can thus be no archaeology of the subject in the sense in which there is an archaeology of knowledges.

Does this mean that the one who occupies the vacant place of the subject is destined to be forever obscured and that the author

must lose himself fully in the anonymous murmur of "What does it matter who is speaking"? In Foucault's work, there is perhaps only one text in which this difficulty thematically comes to light, in which the darkness of the subject momentarily appears in all its splendor. This text is "The Life of Infamous Men," which was originally conceived as a preface to an anthology of archival documents, registers of internment or *lettres de cachet*. In the very moment in which it marks them with infamy, the encounter with power reveals human existences that would otherwise have left no traces of themselves. What momentarily shines through these laconic statements are not the biographical events of personal histories, as suggested by the pathos-laden emphasis of a certain oral history, but rather the luminous trail of a different history. What suddenly comes to light is not the memory of an oppressed existence, but the silent flame of an immemorable *ēthos* — not the subject's face, but rather the disjunction between the living being and the speaking being that marks its empty place. Here life subsists only in the infamy in which it existed; here a name lives solely in the disgrace that covered it. And something in this disgrace bears witness to life beyond all biography.

4.4 Foucault gives the name "archive" to the positive dimension that corresponds to the plane of enunciation, "the general system of the formation and transformation of statements" (Foucault 1972: 130). How are we to conceive of this dimension, if it corresponds neither to the archive in the strict sense — that is, the storehouse that catalogs the traces of what has been said, to consign them to future memory — nor to the Babelic library that gathers the dust of statements and allows for their resurrection under the historian's gaze?

As the set of rules that define the events of discourse, the archive is situated between *langue*, as the system of construction

of possible sentences — that is, of possibilities of speaking — and the *corpus* that unites the set of what has been said, the things actually uttered or written. The archive is thus the mass of the non-semantic inscribed in every meaningful discourse as a function of its enunciation; it is the dark margin encircling and limiting every concrete act of speech. Between the obsessive memory of tradition, which knows only what has been said, and the exaggerated thoughtlessness of oblivion, which cares only for what was never said, the archive is the unsaid or sayable inscribed in everything said by virtue of being enunciated; it is the fragment of memory that is always forgotten in the act of saying “I.” It is in this “historical a priori,” suspended between *langue* and *parole*, that Foucault establishes his construction site and founds archaeology as “the general theme of a description that questions the already-said at the level of its existence” (*ibid.*: 131) — that is, as the system of relations between the unsaid and the said in every act of speech, between the enunciative function and the discourse in which it exerts itself, between the outside and the inside of language.

Let us now attempt to repeat Foucault’s operation, sliding it toward language (*langue*), thus displacing the site that he had established between *langue* and the acts of speech, to relocate it in the difference between language (*langue*) and archive: that is, not between discourse and its taking place, between what is said and the enunciation that exerts itself in it, but rather between *langue* and its taking place, between a pure possibility of speaking and its existence as such. If enunciation in some way lies suspended between *langue* and *parole*, it will then be a matter of considering statements not from the point of view of actual discourse, but rather from that of language (*langue*); it will be a question of looking from the site of enunciation not toward an act of speech, but toward *langue* as such: that is, of articulating an

inside and an outside not only in the plane of language and actual discourse, but also in the plane of language as potentiality of speech.

In opposition to the *archive*, which designates the system of relations between the unsaid and the said, we give the name *testimony* to the system of relations between the inside and the outside of *langue*, between the sayable and the unsayable in every language — that is, between a potentiality of speech and its existence, between a possibility and an impossibility of speech. To think a potentiality in act *as potentiality*, to think enunciation on the plane of *langue* is to inscribe a caesura in possibility, a caesura that divides it into a possibility and an impossibility, into a potentiality and an impotentiality; and it is to situate a subject in this very caesura. The archive’s constitution presupposed the bracketing of the subject, who was reduced to a simple function or an empty position; it was founded on the subject’s disappearance into the anonymous murmur of statements. In testimony, by contrast, the empty place of the subject becomes the decisive question. It is not a question, of course, of returning to the old problem that Foucault had sought to eliminate, namely, “How can a subject’s freedom be inserted into the rules of a language?” Rather, it is a matter of situating the subject in the disjunction between a possibility and an impossibility of speech, asking, “How can something like a statement exist in the site of *langue*? In what way can a possibility of speech realize itself as such?” Precisely because testimony is the relation between a possibility of speech and its taking place, it can exist only through a relation to an impossibility of speech — that is, only as *contingency*, as a capacity not to be. This contingency, this occurrence of language in a subject, is different from actual discourse’s utterance or non-utterance, its speaking or not speaking, its production or non-production as a statement. It concerns the subject’s capacity to have or not to

have language. The subject is thus the possibility that language does not exist, does not take place — or, better, that it takes place only through its possibility of not being there, its contingency. The human being is the speaking being, the living being who has language, because the human being is capable of *not having* language, because it is capable of its own in-fancy. Contingency is not one modality among others, alongside possibility, impossibility, and necessity: it is the actual giving of a possibility, the way in which a potentiality exists as such. It is an event (*contingit*) of a potentiality as the giving of a caesura between a capacity to be and a capacity not to be. In language, this giving has the form of subjectivity. Contingency is possibility put to the test of a subject.

In the relation between what is said and its taking place, it was possible to bracket the subject of enunciation, since speech had already taken place. But the relation between language and its existence, between *langue* and the archive, demands subjectivity as that which, in its very possibility of speech, bears witness to an impossibility of speech. This is why subjectivity appears as *witness*; this is why it can speak for those who cannot speak. Testimony is a potentiality that becomes actual through an impotentiality of speech; it is, moreover, an impossibility that gives itself existence through a possibility of speaking. These two movements cannot be identified either with a subject or with a consciousness; yet they cannot be divided into two incommunicable substances. Their inseparable intimacy is testimony.

4.5 It is time to attempt to redefine the categories of modality from the perspective that interests us. The modal categories — possibility, impossibility, contingency, necessity — are not innocuous logical or epistemological categories that concern the structure of propositions or the relation of something to our faculty of knowledge. They are ontological operators, that is, the devastat-

ing weapons used in the biopolitical struggle for Being, in which a decision is made each time on the human and the inhuman, on “making live” or “letting die.” The field of this battle is subjectivity. The fact that Being gives itself in modalities means that “for living beings, Being is life” (*to de zēn tois zōsi einai estin*) (Aristotle, *De anima*: 413b13); it implies a living subject. The categories of modality are not founded on the subject, as Kant maintains, nor are they derived from it; rather, the subject is what is at stake in the processes in which they interact. They divide and separate, in the subject, what is possible and what is impossible, the living being and the speaking being, the *Muselmann* and the witness — and in this way they decide on the subject.

Possibility (to be able to be) and contingency (to be able not to be) are the operators of subjectification, the point in which something possible passes into existence, giving itself through a relation to an impossibility. Impossibility, as negation of possibility (not [to be able]), and necessity, as negation of contingency (not [to be able not to be]) are the operators of desubjectification, of the destruction and destitution of the subject — that is, processes that, in subjectivity, divide potentiality and impotentiality, the possible and the impossible. The first two constitute Being in its subjectivity, that is, in the final analysis as a world that is always *my* world, since it is in my world that impossibility exists and touches (*contingit*) the real. Necessity and possibility, instead, define Being in its wholeness and solidity, pure substantiality without subject — that is, at the limit, a world that is never *my* world since possibility does not exist in it. Yet modal categories, as operators of Being, never stand before the subject as something he can choose or reject; and they do not confront him as a task that he can decide to assume or not to assume in a privileged moment. The subject, rather, is a field of forces always already traversed by the incandescent and historically determined currents

of potentiality and impotentiality, of being able not to be and not being able not to be.

From this perspective, Auschwitz represents the historical point in which these processes collapse, the devastating experience in which the impossible is forced into the real. Auschwitz is the existence of the impossible, the most radical negation of contingency; it is, therefore, absolute necessity. The *Muselmann* produced by Auschwitz is the catastrophe of the subject that then follows, the subject's effacement as the place of contingency and its maintenance as existence of the impossible. Here Goebbels' definition of politics — "the art of making what seems impossible possible" — acquires its full weight. It defines a biopolitical experiment on the operators of Being, an experiment that transforms and disarticulates the subject to a limit point in which the link between subjectification and desubjectification seems to break apart.

4.6 The modern meaning of the term "author" appears relatively late. In Latin, *auctor* originally designates the person who intervenes in the case of a minor (or the person who, for whatever reason, does not have the capacity to posit a legally valid act), in order to grant him the valid title that he requires. Thus the tutor, uttering the formula *auctor fio*, furnishes the pupil with the "authority" he lacks (one then says that the pupil acts *tutore auctore*). In the same way, *auctoritas patrum* is the ratification that the senators — thus called *patres auctores* — bring to a popular resolution to make it valid and obligatory in all cases.

The oldest meanings of the term also include "vendor" in the act of transferring property, "he who advises or persuades" and, finally, "witness." In what way can a term that expressed the idea of the completion of an imperfect act also signify seller, adviser, and witness? What is the common character that lies at the root of these apparently heterogeneous meanings?

As to the meanings of "seller" and "adviser," a quick examination of the relevant texts suffices to confirm their substantial pertinence to the term's fundamental meaning. The seller is said to be *auctor* insofar as his will, merging with that of the buyer, validates and legitimates the property at issue. The transfer of property thus appears as a convergence of at least two parties in a process in which the right of the acquirer is always founded on that of the seller, who thus becomes the buyer's *auctor*. When we read in the *Digest* (50, 17, 175, 7) *non debeo melioris conditioni esse, quam auctor meus, a quo ius in me transit*, this simply means the following: "My right to property is, in a necessary and sufficient fashion, founded on that of the buyer, who 'authorizes' it." In any case, what is essential is the idea of a relationship between two subjects in which one acts as *auctor* for the other: *auctor meus* is the name given by the buyer to the current seller, who renders the property legitimate.

"The meaning of 'he who advises or persuades' also presupposes an analogous idea. It is the author who grants the uncertain or hesitant will of a subject the impulse or supplement that allows it to be actualized. When we read in Plautus's *Miles*, "*quid nunc mi auctor es, ut faciam?*," this does not simply mean, "What do you advise me to do?" It also means, "To what do you 'authorize' me, in what way do you complete my will, rendering it capable of making a decision about a certain action?"

From this perspective, the meaning of "witness" also becomes transparent, and the three terms that, in Latin, express the idea of testimony all acquire their characteristic physiognomy. If *testis* designates the witness insofar as he intervenes as a third in a suit between two subjects, and if *superstes* indicates the one who has fully lived through an experience and can therefore relate it to others, *auctor* signifies the witness insofar as his testimony always presupposes something — a fact, a thing or a word — that preexists

him and whose reality and force must be validated or certified. In this sense, *auctor* is opposed to *res* (*auctor magis . . . quam res . . . movit*, the witness has greater authority than the witnessed thing [Liv. 2, 37, 8]) or to *vox* (*voces . . . nullo auctore emissae*, words whose validity no witness guarantees [Cicero, *Coel.* 30]). Testimony is thus always an act of an “author”: it always implies an essential duality in which an insufficiency or incapacity is completed or made valid.

It is thus possible to explain the sense of the term *auctor* in the poets as “founder of a race or a city,” as well as the general meaning of “setting into being” identified by Benveniste as the original meaning of *augere*. As is well known, the classical world is not acquainted with creation *ex nihilo*; for the ancients every act of creation always implies something else, either unformed matter or incomplete Being, which is to be completed or “made to grow.” Every creator is always a co-creator, every author a co-author. The act of the *auctor* completes the act of an incapable person, giving strength of proof to what in itself lacks it and granting life to what could not live alone. It can conversely be said that the imperfect act or incapacity precedes the *auctor*’s act and that the imperfect act completes and gives meaning to the word of the *auctor*-witness. An author’s act that claims to be valid on its own is nonsense, just as the survivor’s testimony has truth and a reason for being only if it is completed by the one who cannot bear witness. The survivor and the *Muselmann*, like the tutor and the incapable person and the creator and his material, are inseparable; their unity-difference alone constitutes testimony.

4.7 Let us return to Levi’s paradox: “the *Muselmann* is the complete witness.” It implies two contradictory propositions: 1) “the *Muselmann* is the non-human, the one who could never bear witness,” and 2) “the one who cannot bear witness is the true witness, the absolute witness.”

The sense and nonsense of this paradox become clear at this point. What is expressed in them is nothing other than the intimate dual structure of testimony as an act of an *auctor*, as the difference and completion of an impossibility and possibility of speaking, of the inhuman and the human, a living being and a speaking being. The subject of testimony is constitutively fractured; it has no other consistency than disjunction and dislocation—and yet it is nevertheless irreducible to them. This is what it means “to be subject to desubjectification,” and this is why the witness, the ethical subject, is the subject who bears witness to desubjectification. And the unassignability of testimony is nothing other than the price of this fracture, of the inseparable intimacy of the *Muselmann* and the witness, of an impotentiality and potentiality of speaking.

Levi’s second paradox, according to which “the human being is the one who can survive the human being,” also finds its true sense here. *Muselmann* and witness, the inhuman and the human are coextensive and, at the same time, non-coincident; they are divided and nevertheless inseparable. And this indivisible partition, this fractured and yet indissoluble life expresses itself through a double survival: the non-human is the one who can survive the human being and the human being is the one who can survive the non-human. Only because a *Muselmann* could be isolated in a human being, only because human life is essentially destructible and divisible can the witness survive the *Muselmann*. The witness’ survival of the inhuman is a function of the *Muselmann*’s survival of the human. What can be infinitely destroyed is what can infinitely survive.

4.8 Bichat’s central thesis is that life can survive itself and that life is, indeed, constitutively fractured into a plurality of lives and therefore deaths. All the *Recherches physiologiques sur la vie et sur*



*la mort* are founded on Bichat's observation of a fundamental fracture in life, which he presents as the co-presence of two "animals" in every organism. First there is the "animal existing on the inside," whose life — which he calls "organic" and compares to that of a plant — is nothing but a "habitual succession of assimilation and excretion." Then there is "the animal living on the outside," whose life — which is the only one to merit the name "animal" — is defined by its relation to the external world. The fracture between the organic and the animal traverses the entire life of the individual, leaving its mark in the opposition between the continuity of organic functions (blood circulation, respiration, assimilation, excretion, etc.) and the intermittence of animal functions (the most evident of which is that of dreaming-waking); between the asymmetry of organic life (only one stomach, one liver, one heart) and the symmetry of animal life (a symmetrical brain, two eyes, two ears, two arms, etc.); and finally in the non-coincidence of the beginning and end of organic and animal life. Just as in the fetus organic life begins before that of animal life, so in getting old and dying it survives its animal death. Foucault has noted the multiplication of death in Bichat, the emergence of a moving or detailed death, which divides death into a series of partial deaths: brain death, liver death, heart death. . . . But what Bichat cannot accept, what continues to present him with an irreducible enigma is not so much this multiplication of death as organic life's survival of animal life, the inconceivable subsistence of "the animal on the inside" once the "animal on the outside" has ceased to exist. If the precedence of organic life with respect to animal life can be understood as a process of development toward more and more elevated and complex forms, how is it possible to explain the animal on the inside's senseless survival?

The passage in which Bichat describes the gradual and inexorable extinction of animal life in the indifferent survival of organic

functions constitutes one of the most intense moments in the *Recherches*:

Natural death is remarkable in that it puts an almost complete end to animal life long before organic life ends. Consider man, who fades away at the end of a long period of old age. He dies in details: one after another, his external functions come to an end; all his senses cease to function; the usual causes of sensation no longer leave any impression on him. His sight grows dim, confused, and ends by not transmitting the image of objects; he suffers from geriatric blindness. Sounds strike his ear in a confused fashion, and soon his ear becomes completely insensitive to them. At this point, the cutaneous layer, hardened, covered with calluses partially deprived of blood vessels, and now inactive, allows for only an obscure and indistinct sense of touch. Habit, in any case, has blunted all sensation. All the organs that depend on the skin grow weak and die; hair and body hair grow thin. Without the fluids that nourished it, most hair falls out. Odors now leave only a light impression on his sense of smell. . . . Isolated in the middle of nature, partially deprived of his sensitive organs, the old man's brain is soon extinguished. He no longer perceives much of anything; his senses are almost incapable of being exercised at all. His imagination fades away and disappears. His memory of present things is destroyed; in a second, the old man forgets what was just said to him, since his external senses, which have grown weak and are, as it were, dead, cannot confirm what his spirit thinks it grasps. Ideas escape him, while the images traced by his senses no longer retain their imprint (Bichat 1986: 200–201).

An intimate estrangement from the world corresponds to this decline of external senses, an estrangement that closely recalls the descriptions of the *Muselmann* in the camps:

The old man's movements are seldom and slow; he leaves only with great cost the condition in which he finds himself. Seated beside the fire that is heating him, he spends his days concentrating on himself, alienated from what surrounds him, in the absence of desires, passions, sensations — almost without speaking, since nothing pushes him to break his silence. He is happy to feel that he still exists, for almost every other feeling has vanished. . . . It is easy to see, from what we have said, that in the old man external functions are extinguished one after another and organic life continues even after animal life has almost fully come to an end. From this point of view, the condition of the living being about to be annihilated by death resembles the state in which we find ourselves in the maternal womb, or in the state of vegetation, which lives only on the inside and is deaf to nature (*ibid.*: 202–203).

The description culminates in a question that is truly a bitter confession of powerlessness in the face of an enigma:

But why is it that, when we have ceased to exist on the outside, we continue to live on the inside, when senses, locomotion, and so forth are above all designed to place us in relation to bodies that nourish us? Why do these functions grow weaker than internal ones? Why is their cessation not simultaneous? I cannot succeed in fully solving this enigma (*ibid.*: 203–204).

Bichat could not have foretold that the time would come when medical resuscitation technology and, in addition, biopolitics would operate on precisely this disjunction between the organic and the animal, realizing the nightmare of a vegetative life that indefinitely survives the life of relation, a non-human life infinitely separable from human existence. But, almost as if a dark foreboding of this nightmare suddenly crossed his mind, he imag-

ines a symmetrical possibility of a death turned upside down, in which man's animal functions survive while his organic functions perish completely:

If it were possible to imagine a man whose death, affecting only internal functions (such as circulation, digestion, secretions, and so forth), permitted the subsistence of the set of functions of animal life, this man would view the end of his organic life with indifference. For he would feel that the worth of his existence did not depend on organic functions, and that even after their "death" he would be capable of feeling and experiencing everything that until then had made him happy (Bichat 1986: 205–206).

Whether what survives is the human or the inhuman, the animal or the organic, it seems that life bears within itself the dream — or the nightmare — of survival.

4.9 As we have seen, Foucault defines the difference between modern biopower and the sovereign power of the old territorial State through the crossing of two symmetrical formulae. *To make die and to let live* summarizes the procedure of old sovereign power, which exerts itself above all as the right to kill; *to make live and to let die* is, instead, the insignia of biopower, which has as its primary objective to transform the care of life and the biological as such into the concern of State power.

In the light of the preceding reflections, a third formula can be said to insinuate itself between the other two, a formula that defines the most specific trait of twentieth-century biopolitics: no longer either *to make die* or *to make live*, but *to make survive*. The decisive activity of biopower in our time consists in the production not of life or death, but rather of a mutable and virtually infinite survival. In every case, it is a matter of dividing animal life

from organic life, the human from the inhuman, the witness from the *Muselmann*, conscious life from vegetative life maintained functional through resuscitation techniques, until a threshold is reached: an essentially mobile threshold that, like the borders of geopolitics, moves according to the progress of scientific and political technologies. Biopower's supreme ambition is to produce, in a human body, the absolute separation of the living being and the speaking being, *zoē* and *bios*, the inhuman and the human — survival.

This is why in the camp, the *Muselmann* — like the body of the overcomatose person and the neomort attached to life-support systems today — not only shows the efficacy of biopower, but also reveals its secret cipher, so to speak its *arcanum*. In his *De arcanis rerum publicarum* (1605), Clapmar distinguished in the structure of power between a visible face (*jus imperii*) and a hidden face (*arcanum*, which he claims derives from *arca*, jewel casket or coffer). In contemporary biopolitics, survival is the point in which the two faces coincide; in which the *arcanum imperii* comes to light as such. This is why it remains, as it were, invisible in its very exposure, all the more hidden for showing itself as such. In the *Muselmann*, biopower sought to produce its final secret: a survival separated from every possibility of testimony, a kind of absolute biopolitical substance that, in its isolation, allows for the attribution of demographic, ethnic, national, and political identity. If, in the jargon of Nazi bureaucracy, whoever participated in the “Final Solution” was called a *Geheimnisträger*, a keeper of secrets, the *Muselmann* is the absolutely unwitnessable, invisible ark of biopower. Invisible because empty, because the *Muselmann* is nothing other than the *volkloser Raum*, the space empty of people at the center of the camp that, in separating all life from itself, marks the point in which the citizen passes into the *Staatsangehörige* of non-Aryan descent, the non-Aryan into the Jew, the Jew into the deportee and, finally, the deported Jew beyond himself into

the *Muselmann*, that is, into a bare, unassignable and unwitnessable life.

This is why those who assert the unsayability of Auschwitz today should be more cautious in their statements. If they mean to say that Auschwitz was a unique event in the face of which the witness must in some way submit his every word to the test of an impossibility of speaking, they are right. But if, joining uniqueness to unsayability, they transform Auschwitz into a reality absolutely separated from language, if they break the tie between an impossibility and a possibility of speaking that, in the *Muselmann*, constitutes testimony, then they unconsciously repeat the Nazis' gesture; they are in secret solidarity with the *arcanum imperii*. Their silence threatens to repeat the SS's scornful warning to the inhabitants of the camp, which Levi transcribes at the very start of *The Drowned and the Saved*:

However the war may end, we have won the war against you; none of you will be left to bear witness, but even if someone were to survive, the world will not believe him. There will perhaps be suspicions, discussions, research by historians, but there will be no certainties, because we will destroy the evidence together with you. And even if some proof should remain and some of you survive, people will say that the events you describe are too monstrous to be believed. . . . We will be the ones to dictate the history of the Lagers (Levi 1989: 11–12).

4.10 With its every word, testimony refutes precisely this isolation of survival from life. The witness attests to the fact that there can be testimony because there is an inseparable division and non-coincidence between the inhuman and the human, the living being and the speaking being, the *Muselmann* and the survivor. Precisely insofar as it inheres in language as such, precisely insofar as it

bears witness to the taking place of a potentiality of speaking through an impotentiality alone, its authority depends not on a factual truth, a conformity between something said and a fact or between memory and what happened, but rather on the immemorial relation between the unsayable and the sayable, between the outside and the inside of language. *The authority of the witness consists in his capacity to speak solely in the name of an incapacity to speak — that is, in his or her being a subject.* Testimony thus guarantees not the factual truth of the statement safeguarded in the archive, but rather its unarchivability, its exteriority with respect to the archive — that is, the necessity by which, as the existence of language, it escapes both memory and forgetting. It is because there is testimony only where there is an impossibility of speaking, because there is a witness only where there has been desubjectification, that the *Muselmann* is the complete witness and that the survivor and the *Muselmann* cannot be split apart.

It is necessary to reflect on the particular status of the subject from this perspective. The fact that the subject of testimony — indeed, that all subjectivity, if to be a subject and to bear witness are in the final analysis one and the same — is a *remnant* is not to be understood in the sense that the subject, according to one of the meanings of the Greek term *hypostasis*, is a substratum, deposit, or sediment left behind as a kind of background or foundation by historical processes of subjectification and desubjectification, humanization and inhumanization. Such a conception would once again repeat the dialectic of grounding by which one thing — in our case, bare life — must be separated and effaced for human life to be assigned to subjects as a property (in this sense, the *Muselmann* is the way in which Jewish life must be effaced for something like an Aryan life to be produced). Here the foundation is a function of a telos that is the grounding of the human being, the becoming human of the inhuman. It is this perspective that must

be wholly called into question. We must cease to look toward processes of subjectification and desubjectification, of the living being's becoming speaking and the speaking being's becoming living and, more generally, toward historical processes as if they had an apocalyptic or profane telos in which the living being and the speaking being, the inhuman and the human — or any terms of a historical process — are joined in an established, completed humanity and reconciled in a realized identity. This does not mean that, in lacking an end, they are condemned to meaninglessness or the vanity of an infinite, disenchanting drifting. They have not an *end*, but a *remnant*. There is no foundation in or beneath them; rather, at their center lies an irreducible disjunction in which each term, stepping forth in the place of a remnant, can bear witness. What is truly historical is not what redeems time in the direction of the future or even the past; it is, rather, what fulfills time in the excess of a medium. The messianic Kingdom is neither the future (the millennium) nor the past (the golden age): it is, instead, a *remaining time*.

4.11 In an interview in 1964 given on German television, Arendt was asked what remained, for her, of the pre-Hitlerian Europe that she had experienced. "What remains?" Arendt answered, "The mother tongue remains" (*Was bleibt? Die Muttersprache bleibt*). What is language as a remnant? How can a language survive the subjects and even the people that speak it? And what does it mean to speak in a remaining language?

The case of a dead language is exemplary here. Every language can be considered as a field traversed by two opposite tensions, one moving toward innovation and transformation and the other toward stability and preservation. In language, the first movement corresponds to a zone of *anomia*, the second to the grammatical norm. The intersection point between these two opposite

currents is the speaking subject, as the *actor* who always decides what can be said and what cannot be said, the sayable and the unsayable of a language. When the relation between norm and *anomia*, the sayable and the unsayable, is broken in the subject, language dies and a new linguistic identity emerges. A dead language is thus a language in which it is no longer possible to oppose norm and *anomia*, innovation and preservation. We thus say of a dead language that it is no longer spoken, that is, that *in it it is impossible to assign the position of a subject*. Here the already-said forms a whole that is closed and lacking all exteriority, that can only be transmitted through a *corpus* or evoked through an archive. For Latin, this happened at the time of the definitive collapse of the tension between *sermo urbanus* and *sermo rusticus*, of which speakers are already conscious in the Republican age. As long as the opposition was perceived as an internal polar tension, Latin was a living language and the subject felt that he spoke a single language. Once the opposition breaks down, the normative part becomes a dead language (or the language Dante calls *grammatica*) and the anomic part gives birth to the Romance vernaculars.

Now consider the case of Giovanni Pascoli, the Latin poet of the beginning of the twentieth century, that is, a time when Latin had already been a dead language for many centuries. In his case an individual succeeds in assuming the position of subject in a dead language, thus lending it again the possibility of opposing the sayable and the unsayable, innovation and preservation that it is by definition lacking. At first glance one could say that insofar as he establishes himself in it as a subject, such a poet genuinely resurrects a dead language. This is what happened in cases where people followed the example of an isolated *actor*, as in the Piedmontese dialect of Forno, when, between 1910 and 1918, one last speaker passed his language on to a group of young people who began to speak it; or in the case of modern Hebrew, in which a

whole community placed itself in the position of a subject with respect to a language that had become purely religious. But in this case the situation is more complex. To the degree to which a poet who writes in a dead language remains isolated and continues to speak and write in his mother tongue, it can be said that in some way he makes a language survive the subjects who spoke it, producing it as an undecidable medium — or testimony — that stands between a living language and a dead language. In a kind of philological *nekuia*, he thus offers his voice and blood to the shadow of a dead language, so that it may return — as such — to speech. Such is this curious *actor*, who authorizes an absolute impossibility of speaking and summons it to speech.

If we now return to testimony, we may say that to bear witness is to place oneself in one's own language in the position of those who have lost it, to establish oneself in a living language as if it were dead, or in a dead language as if it were living — in any case, outside both the archive and the *corpus* of what has already been said. It is not surprising that the witness' gesture is also that of the poet, the *actor* par excellence. Hölderlin's statement that "what remains is what the poets found" (*Was bleibt, stiften die Dichter*) is not to be understood in the trivial sense that poets' works are things that last and remain throughout time. Rather, it means that the poetic word is the one that is always situated in the position of a remnant and that can, therefore, bear witness. Poets — witnesses — found language as what remains, as what actually survives the possibility, or impossibility, of speaking.

To what does such a language bear witness? To something — a fact or an event, a memory or a hope, a delight or an agony — that could be registered in the *corpus* of what has already been said? Or to enunciation, which, in the archive, attests to the irreducibility of saying to the said? It bears witness to neither one nor the other. What cannot be stated, what cannot be archived is the language

in which the author succeeds in bearing witness to his incapacity to speak. In this language, a language that survives the subjects who spoke it coincides with a speaker who remains beyond it. This is the language of the "dark shadows" that Levi heard growing in Celan's poetry, like a "background noise"; this is Hurbinek's non-language (*mass-klo, matisklo*) that has no place in the libraries of what has been said or in the archive of statements. Just as in the starry sky that we see at night, the stars shine surrounded by a total darkness that, according to cosmologists, is nothing other than the testimony of a time in which the stars did not yet shine, so the speech of the witness bears witness to a time in which human beings did not yet speak; and so the testimony of human beings attests to a time in which they were not yet human. Or, to take up an analogous hypothesis, just as in the expanding universe, the farthest galaxies move away from us at a speed greater than that of their light, which cannot reach us, such that the darkness we see in the sky is nothing but the invisibility of the light of unknown stars, so the complete witness, according to Levi's paradox, is the one we cannot see: the *Muselmann*.

4.12 The remnant is a theologico-messianic concept. In the prophetic books of the Old Testament, what is saved is not the whole people of Israel but rather only a remnant, which is indicated in Isaiah as *shear yisrael*, the remnant of Israel, or in Amos as *sherit Yosef*, the remnant of Joseph. The paradox here is that the prophets address all of Israel, so that it may turn to the good, while at the same time announcing to the whole people that only a remnant of it will be saved (thus in Amos 5:15: "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph;" and in Isaiah 10: 22: "For although thy people be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall be saved").

What are we to understand here by "remnant"? What is decisive is that, as theologians have observed, "remnant" does not seem simply to refer to a numerical portion of Israel. Rather, *remnant designates the consistency assumed by Israel when placed in relation with an eskhaton, with election or the messianic event*. In its relation to salvation, the whole (the people) thus necessarily posits itself as remnant. This is particularly clear in Paul. In his Letter to the Romans, Paul makes use of a series of Biblical citations to conceive of the messianic event as a series of caesuras dividing the people of Israel and, at the same time, the Gentiles, constituting them each time as remnants: "Even so then at this present time also [literally 'in the time of now,' *en to nun kairo*, Paul's technical expression for messianic time] there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11: 5). The caesuras do not, however, merely divide the part from the whole (Romans 9: 6-8: "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed"). The caesuras also divide the non-people from the people, as in Romans 9: 25-6: "As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not my beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God." In the end, the remnant appears as a redemptive machine allowing for the salvation of the very whole whose division and loss it had signified (Romans 11: 26: "And so all Israel shall be saved").

In the concept of remnant, the aporia of testimony coincides with the aporia of messianism. Just as the remnant of Israel signifies neither the whole people nor a part of the people but, rather,

the non-coincidence of the whole and the part, and just as messianic time is neither historical time nor eternity but, rather, the disjunction that divides them, so the remnants of Auschwitz — the witnesses — are neither the dead nor the survivors, neither the drowned nor the saved. They are what remains between them.

4.13 Insofar as it defines testimony solely through the *Muselmann*, Levi's paradox contains the only possible refutation of every denial of the existence of the extermination camps.

Let us, indeed, posit Auschwitz, that to which it is not possible to bear witness; and let us also posit the *Muselmann* as the absolute impossibility of bearing witness. If the witness bears witness for the *Muselmann*, if he succeeds in bringing to speech an impossibility of speech — if the *Muselmann* is thus constituted as the whole witness — then the denial of Auschwitz is refuted in its very foundation. In the *Muselmann*, the impossibility of bearing witness is no longer a mere privation. Instead, it has become real; it exists as such. If the survivor bears witness not to the gas chambers or to Auschwitz but to the *Muselmann*, if he speaks only on the basis of an impossibility of speaking, then his testimony cannot be denied. Auschwitz — that to which it is not possible to bear witness — is absolutely and irrefutably proven.

This means that the phrases, "I bear witness for the *Muselmann*" and "the *Muselmann* is the whole witness" are not constative judgments, illocutive acts, or enunciations in Foucault's sense. Rather, they articulate a possibility of speech solely through an impossibility and, in this way, mark the taking place of a language as the event of a subjectivity.

4.14 In 1987, one year after Primo Levi's death, Zdzislaw Ryn and Stanislaw Klodzinski published the first study dedicated to the *Muselmann*. The article, published in *Auschwitz-Hefte* bearing the

significant title "At the Border Between Life and Death: A Study of the Phenomenon of the *Muselmann* in the Concentration Camp," contains eighty-nine testimonies, almost all of former Auschwitz prisoners. They had been asked to respond to a questionnaire on the origin of the term, the *Muselmänner's* physical and psychological traits, the circumstances that produced "Muselmannization," the behavior of functionaries and other prisoners with respect to *Muselmänner*, and *Muselmänner's* death and chances of survival. The testimonies collected in the article do not add anything essential to what we already knew, except for one particularly interesting point, which calls into question not simply Levi's testimony, but even one of his fundamental presuppositions. One section of the monograph (Ryn and Klodzinski 1987: 121–24) is entitled *Ich war ein Muselmann*, "I was a *Muselmann*." It contains ten testimonies of men who survived the condition of being *Muselmänner* and now seek to tell of it.

In the expression "I was a *Muselmann*," Levi's paradox reaches its most extreme formulation. Not only is the *Muselmann* the complete witness; he now speaks and bears witness in the first person. By now it should be clear that this extreme formulation — "I, who speak, was a *Muselmann*, that is, the one who cannot in any sense speak" — not only does not contradict Levi's paradox but, rather, fully verifies it. This is why we leave them — the *Muselmänner* — the last word.

*I can't forget the days when I was a Muselmann. I was weak, exhausted, dead tired. I saw something to eat wherever I looked. I dreamt of bread and soup, but as soon as I woke up I was unbearably hungry. The food I'd been given the night before (my portion of bread, fifty grams of margarine, fifty grams of jam, and four potatoes cooked with their skins on) was a thing of the past. The head of the barrack and the other inmates who had positions threw out their potato-skins, sometimes even a whole potato. I used to watch them secretly and look for the skins in the trash so that I could eat them. I would spread jam on them; they were really good. A pig wouldn't have eaten them, but I did. I'd chew on them until I felt sand on my teeth. . . . (Lucjan Sobieraj)*

*I personally was a Muselmann for a short while. I remember that after the move to the barrack, I completely collapsed as far as my psychological life was concerned. The collapse took the following form: I was overcome by a general apathy; nothing interested me; I no longer reacted to either external or internal stimuli; I stopped washing, even when there was water; I no longer even felt hungry. . . . (Feliksa Piekarska)*

*I am a Muselmann. Like the other inmates, I tried to protect myself from getting pneumonia by leaning forward, stretching my shoulders as much as I could and, patiently, rhythmically moving my hands over my sternum. This is how I kept myself warm when the Germans weren't watching.*

*From then onward I went back to the camps on the shoulders of my colleagues. But there are always more of us Muselmänner. . . . (Edward Sokół)*

*I too was a Muselmann, from 1942 to the beginning of 1943. I wasn't conscious of being one. I think that many Muselmänner didn't*

*realize they belonged to that category. But when the inmates were divided up, I was put in the group of Muselmänner. In many cases, whether or not an inmate was considered a Muselmann depended on his appearance. (Jerzy Mostowsky)*

*Whoever has not himself been a Muselmann for a while cannot imagine the depth of the transformations that men underwent. You became so indifferent to your fate that you no longer wanted anything from anyone. You just waited in peace for death. They no longer had either the strength or the will to fight for daily survival. Today was enough; you were content with what you could find in the trash. . . . (Karol Talik)*

*In general, one can say that among Muselmänner there were exactly the same differences, I mean physical and psychological differences, as between men living in normal conditions. Camp conditions made these differences more pronounced, and we often witnessed reversals of the roles played by physical and psychological factors. (Adolf Gawalewicz)*

*I'd already had a presentiment of this state. In the cell, I felt life leaving me. Earthly things no longer mattered; bodily functions faded away. Even hunger tormented me less. I felt a strange sweetness. I just didn't have the strength to get off my cot, and if I did, I had to lean on the walls to make it to the bucket. . . . (Włodzimierz Borkowski)*

*In my own body, I lived through the most atrocious kind of life in the camp, the horror of being a Muselmann. I was one of the first Muselmänner. I wandered through the camp like a stray dog; I was indifferent to everything. I just wanted to survive another day. I arrived in the camp on June 14, 1940, with the first transport from the Tarnów prison. . . . After some initial hardships, I was put in the farm-*



ing Kommando, where I worked at harvesting potatoes and hay and threshing until the fall of the same year. Suddenly something happened in the Kommando. They had discovered that civilians outside the camp were giving us food. I ended up among the disciplinary group, and that is where the tragedy of my life in the camp began. I lost my strength and health. After a couple of days of hard work, the Kapo of the old Kommando had me moved from the disciplinary group to the sawmill Kommando. The work wasn't as hard, but I had to stay outside all day, and that year the fall was very cold. The rain was always mixed with snow. It had already begun to freeze over and we were dressed in light fabrics—underwear and shirts, wooden clogs without socks with cloth caps on our heads. In such a situation, without sufficient nourishment, drenched and frozen every day, death left us no way out. . . . This was the beginning of the period in which *Muselmann*hood [das *Muselmanntum*] became more and more common in all the teams working outdoors. Everyone despised *Muselmänner*; even the *Muselmann*'s fellow inmates. . . . His senses are dulled and he becomes completely indifferent to everything around him. He can no longer speak of anything; he can't even pray, since he no longer believes in heaven or hell. He no longer thinks about his home, his family, the other people in the camp.

Almost all *Muselmänner* died in the camp; only a small percentage managed to come out of that state. Thanks to good luck or providence, some were liberated. This is why I can describe how I was able to pull myself out of that condition. . . .

You could see *Muselmänner* everywhere: skinny, dirty figures, their skin and faces blackened, their gaze gone, their eyes hollowed out, their clothes threadbare, filthy and stinking. They moved with slow, hesitating steps poorly suited to the rhythm of the march. . . . They spoke only about their memories and food—how many pieces of potato there were in the soup yesterday, how many mouthfuls of meat, if the soup was thick or only water. . . . The letters that arrived for

them from their homes didn't comfort them; they had no illusions about ever going home. *Muselmänner* anxiously expected packages, thinking of being full at least once. They dreamt of rummaging through the kitchen trash to find pieces of bread or coffee grinds.

*Muselmänner* worked out of inertia or, rather, pretended to work. For example, during my work at the sawmill, we used to look for the blunter saws that were easier to use, without worrying about whether they actually cut or not. We often pretended to work like that for a whole day, without even cutting one block of wood. If we were supposed to straighten nails, we would instead hammer away at the anvil. But we had to make sure that no one saw us, which was also tiring. *Muselmänner* had no goals. They did their work without thinking; they moved around without thinking, dreaming only of having a place in the line in which they'd be given more soup, more thick soup. *Muselmänner* paid close attention to the gestures of the food officer to see if, when he ladled out the soup, he drew it from the top or the bottom. They ate quickly and thought only about getting second helpings. But this never happened—the only ones who got second helpings were those who had worked the most and the hardest, who were favored by the food officer. . . .

The other inmates avoided *Muselmänner*. There could be no common subject of conversation between them, since *Muselmänner* only fantasized and spoke about food. *Muselmänner* didn't like the "better" prisoners, unless they could get something to eat from them. They preferred the company of those like themselves, since then they could easily exchange bread, cheese, and sausage for a cigarette or other kinds of food. They were afraid of going to the infirmary; they never claimed to be sick. Usually they just suddenly collapsed during work.

I can still see the teams coming back from work in lines of five. The first line of five would march according to the rhythm of the orchestra, but the next line would already be incapable of keeping up with them. The five behind them would lean against each other; and in the last

lines the four strongest would carry the weakest one by his arms and legs, since he was dying. . . .

As I said, in 1940 I drifted through the camp like a stray dog, dreaming of coming across at least a single potato skin. I tried to lower myself into the holes near the sawmill, where they fermented potatoes to make fodder for the pigs and other animals. The inmates would eat slices of raw potatoes smeared with saccharin, which tasted somewhat like pears. My condition grew worse everyday; I developed ulcerations on my legs and I no longer hoped to survive. I hoped only for a miracle, although I didn't have the strength to concentrate and pray faithfully. . . .

This was the state I was in when I was noticed by a commission of officers who had entered the barracks after the last roll call. I think they were SS doctors. There were three or four of them and they were particularly interested in Muselmänner. In addition to blisters on my legs, I also had a swelling the size of an egg on my ankle bone. This is why they prescribed an operation and moved me, together with some others, to Barrack 9 (which used to be Barrack 11). We were given the same food as the others, but we didn't go to work and we were allowed to rest all day long. Camp physicians visited us; I was operated on—the scars from the operation are still visible today—and I got better. We didn't have to be present at the roll call; it was warm and we were doing well. Then one day, the SS officers who were responsible for the barrack didn't come. They said that the air was suffocating and ordered all the windows to be opened. It was December, 1940. . . . After a few minutes, we were all shivering from the cold; then they made us run around in the room to heat ourselves up, until we were all covered in sweat. Then they said, "Sit down," and we did as they said. Once our bodies had cooled down, and we were once again cold, it was time for more running—and so it lasted for the whole day.

When I understood what was going on, I decided to leave. When it was time for me to be examined, I said that I was all better and that I

wanted to work. And this is what happened. I was transferred to Barrack 10 (which had become number 8). They put me in a room in which there were only new arrivals. . . . Since I was an old prisoner, the head of the barrack liked me, and he spoke of me as an example for the other prisoners. . . . As a result I was transferred to the Farming Kommando, in the cowshed. There I also won the trust of the other inmates, and I had extra food, pieces of beetroot, black sugar, soup from the pig's sty, large quantities of milk and, what's more, the heat of the cowshed. This got me back on my feet again; it saved me from Muselmannhood. . . .

The period in which I was a Muselmann left a profound impression on my memory. I remember perfectly the accident in the sawmill Kommando of fall 1940; I still see the saw, the heaps of wood blocks, the barracks, Muselmänner keeping each other warm, their gestures. . . . The last moments of the Muselmänner were just as they say in this camp song:

*What's worse than a Muselmann?  
Does he even have the right to live?  
Isn't he there to be stepped on, struck, beaten?  
He wanders through the camp like a stray dog.  
Everyone chases him away, but the crematorium is his deliverance.  
The camp infirmary does away with him!*

(Bronislaw Goscinski)

(Residua desiderantur)