

Ideas and Questions for Chapters III and IV of
Agamben's Remnants of Auschwitz

- I. Shame and Guilt:
 1. Feeling of shame associated with (or reduced to) sense of guilt:
 2. Levi's fight against this association
 3. Critique of De Pres's exaltation of biological survival and Bettelheim's rebuttal: circularity of biological survival and dignity based on some "ethics of heroism"
 4. Incapability to separate innocence and guilt, as a consequence to inability to master the shame: hence the assumption of a generic, collective guilt
- II. Beyond the Guilt / Innocence Dialectic:
 1. Inversion of the Hegelian model in Auschwitz: the very inverse of the Greek tragic hero, knowing everything he has done but cannot assume responsibility
 2. A Nietzschean ethics of *amor fati* vs. An anti-Nietzschean ethics of resentment vs. an incapability ethically to assume an eternally returning event :
- III. Various philosophical conceptions of shame: **Shame, the most proper emotive tonality of subjectivity, being consigned to something one cannot assume**
 1. Being ashamed for having to die, to die in the place of another:
 2. Levinas's conception of shame: a being's incapability to move away or break away from oneself, being consigned to something that can't be assumed, being forced to face the desubjectified self
 3. Heidegger's conception of shame: an ontological sentiment in man encountering (in reference to Benjamin's conception of disgust as the fear of being recognized by what repulses us—to recognize oneself in the alterity one cannot assume); *aidos*: being present at one's own being seen
 4. Shame: the experience of **being a subject**, in the double, opposite sense of the word (p. 106-07)
 5. The domain of shame as an object of pleasure: the suffering of not being able to assume one's receptivity enjoyed on the condition of finding outside himself a point in which he can assume his own passivity, a point of impassivity (the indistinction in which the two subjects momentarily coincide is shame)
 6. Kantian conception of auto-affection as an equivalent structure of subjectivity as shame: a receptivity to the second degree, a receptivity that is moved by its own passivity

7. Spinoza's conception of immanent cause: the agent and patient being one, to constitute or show oneself as passive
 8. The experience of desubjectification in speaking: glossolalia—the subject of enunciation being related to an event of discourse, with everything in it already anticipated by a glossolalic potentiality (hence the **impossibility** of speaking)
- IV. Who is the subject of testimony? The one who bears witness to a desubjectification
1. The inhuman in the human that bears witness:
 2. Beyond the insufficiency of two opposed theses: “human beings are human in so far as they are not human”
 3. The insertion of subjectivity into language: formation of subject in an precarious and fragile event of speech (the non-place of language)—**hence a traumatic event, the constitutive desubjectification in every subjectification**
 4. impossibility to speak (the Muselmann) vs. impossibility to know (proxy bearer of testimony)
 5. Disjunction between life considered as function and life considered as history:
 6. Abandonment, Anticipation, and Loss (or Intolerable Presence) for Being: the Melancholic, Schizophrenic, and Obsessive (or Epileptic) types—Auschwitz as a moment of epileptic excess or authentic decision
- V. Disjunction as shame to be the place of testimony:
1. To be able to write only with a “degree zero pseudonym”
 2. The residual “life”: the lesson of Auschwitz, for which “the human being is the one can survive the human being”
 3. Two senses of residual life: the Muselmann (bare life surviving truer and more human life) and the survivor (surviving the inhuman)
 4. From the imperfect coincidence between the human and the non-human, the witness as remnant arises
 5. A non-essentialist conception of human being: existing in the human being's non-place, a being that is lacking to itself and consists in this lack or errancy
- VI. Semantics of enunciation and its ethics of (de)subjectification:
1. Benveniste's “semantics of enunciation” and Foucault's archeology of knowledge: concerning enunciation as “taking place of language” and subject as a position
 2. The ethical question: “What happens in the living individual when he occupies the ‘vacant place’ of the subject ...?”
- VII. From Foucault's “archive”(a system of relations between the said and unsaid) to

Agamben's "testimony"

1. Located in the plane of language as potentiality of speech, a system of relations between the sayable and unsayable:
 2. To situate the subject of testimony in this disjunction: **in relation to an impossibility of speech**—as contingency, a potentiality that gives a caesura between the capacity to be and the capacity not to be
 3. The subject of testimony able to bear witness to the impossibility of speech
 4. Modal categories—possibility, impossibility, contingency, necessity: possibility (ability to be) and contingency (ability not to be) as operators of subjectification; impossibility (negation of possibility) and necessity (negation of contingency) as operator of desubjectification, as pure substance without subject
 5. Auschwitz as the existence of the impossible, the most radical negation of contingency, the absolute necessity
- VIII. Author as cooperator with a "minor" and completer of the incomplete
1. Dual structure of testimony: the witness, the ethical subject, bearing witness to desubjectification, the case of *Muselmann* (coextensive but non-coincidental; divided but inseparable)
 2. Dual survival of *Muselmann* and the witness: the non-human who survives human being and the human being who survives the non-human
 3. The asymmetry between cessations of the two "lives"—organic life and animal life: the disjunction where biopolitics unfolds
 4. The dream of animal life's survival against organic life
 5. The formula that defines the modern biopower: to make survive, to separate absolutely *zoē* from *bios*: *Muselmann* as the very Biopolitical substance produced in modern biopower
 6. To bear testimony: to place oneself in one's own language as if it had been lost, as if it were a dead one, or to place oneself in a dead language as if it were a living one
 7. To what does the witness bear testimony? one's incapability to speak
- IX. Messianic remnant in relation to eschatological caesuras: