

Making resilience strange: ontological politics in a 'time of crisis'

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Introduction: Resilience in a time of crisis

Our analysis is concerned with the multiplicity of resilience. We trace the concept across ecology and security, through to surgery, management, and psychology. In doing so we argue that resilience can only be interrogated politically at its moments of articulation where the ontological politics, norms, values and changes in practices envisaged are named and, often, obscured. Rather than either take resilience to be a determinedly new shift in policy-making or simply an empty signifier, our analysis focuses on the different ways resilience arguments are made to enable, justify and legitimate changes in behaviours and practices that often invoke competing and contradictory visions of the good life to be lived and the bad life or death to be avoided. Armed with an array of diverse examples, the chapter makes resilience 'strange' in a Foucaultian sense and interrogates the ontological politics of resiliences exposing common points of tension that highlight embedded political commitments.

The proliferation of resilience-speak is closely tied to the idea that we now live in a 'time of crisis.' Crisis is interpreted broadly across many domains in which the resilience ideal appears—in ecology it could refer to disturbances in a social-ecological system producing a systemic 'flip' in which a new field of attractors is established; in psychology it could refer to a traumatic experience that an individual cannot efficiently absorb, but rather pushes them into new, possibly destructive behavioural paths. Across its multiple manifestations, resilience has come to stand for the ability to absorb, withstand, persist, and maybe even thrive and reorganise in the face of the shocks and disturbances of always uncertain becoming, that is now even 'more so.' It is difficult to find writings on resilience that do not in some way reference contemporary ecological, financial, political or security crises or the contingencies and anxieties of 'uncertain times.' Resilience is offered as *the solution* to incredibly challenging societal problems. Wendy Larner (2011) has critically explored the 'time of crisis' narrative in relation to qualitative changes under neoliberalism and urges that even as we must be critical of totalizing neoliberal and crisis narratives that claim uniqueness and novelty we must attend to the ways in which contemporary crisis narratives are rearranging political forms and relations, or assemblages: "the widespread identification of crisis...means that existing governmental and political forms are losing their coherence and effectiveness and that new forms of understanding and acting are being invented" (2011, 329; see also Neocleous 2012; Swyngedouw 2010). In this sense, resilience-as-solution narratives work to organise, align and shape relations.

Resilience interventions also re-make connections to the future, yet retreating into the future too. Failure is remedied by greater resilience next time. This pursuit rearranges things in the present in the name of inevitable crises of the future. There is the gleaming promise of what the American Psychological Association calls the "road to resilience" that suggests 'it' could be arrived at in the future even while denying the possibility of completely 'having' or 'reaching' it. But can resilience be such a singular project, particularly if the road is not to a destination but to an ever expanding horizon? What does this pursuit actually look like as it is deployed in diverse regimes, practices or assemblages? What 'new forms of acting and understanding' emerge in the name of resilience? And do these multiple enactments cohere as 'a road to resilience' ('a resilience project') or alternatively travel towards different, sometimes contradictory, and sometimes unsettling destinations?

Rather than reigning in the concept of resilience and granting it a clear causal path of emergence, our analysis is inspired by the explosion of 'resilience' deployments. We are concerned with the multiplicity of resilience (as Anderson, 2015). There are multiple resilience

conceptualisations and proliferating resilience assemblages. Within security, for example, there is no one security resilience: there are assemblages of resilience aimed at ‘radicalising’ youth; cyber systems; critical infrastructure, and so on. These have different geographies and temporalities, they have diverse effects and have different kinds of political implications. While some forms of resilience thinking mesh together, others conflict, meaning that the oft taken-for-granted *good* of resilience (everything that doesn’t lead to death) is invoked in everything from psychology to counter-terrorism but recrafted in different ways.

Thus we wish to problematize and politicize resilience in ways that resonate across its multiple articulations and commitments. Resiliences ‘that go by a single name’ (Mol 2002, 84) can be many different things, imagine many different futures, and inspire different interventions and, yet, are all drawn under the same banner. We thus argue that resilience is multiple. It is not a pre-given object but a generality with ontological flexibility, and we wish to grasp “the coexistence of multiple entities that go by the same name” (Mol 2002, 151). We seek to de-universalise notions of resilience, in order to expose it as a post-political term of art that has to be taken to task at its points of articulation. We maintain that the way in which resilience can be politicized is by forcing the question of its particulars at its points of articulation.

Conceptualizing resilience multiple

Our rendering of ‘resilience multiple’ draws inspiration from Annemarie Mol’s ‘body multiple’ (2002). In her ethnography of the disease atherosclerosis in a Dutch hospital, Mol details how the disease is enacted multiply in human and more-than-human ways, such as laboratory tests, clinical examinations, in genes, symptom reports, the embodied experience of patients and so on. Yet, multiple does not mean plural. As Mol writes, the body multiple is ‘more than one, but not fragmented into being many’ (2002, viii). The disease still ‘hangs together’ and is rendered actionable through ‘forms of coordination’ (2002, 55). Similarly, even as we argue that resilience is multiple, the ‘assumption of singularity’, how it hangs together amongst its many articulations, is important for how it does work, for its ‘world-making effects’ (Blaser 2012, 54). Translating Mol’s analysis of the enactment of a disease in one site to our analysis of a concept so widely wielded and dispersed, we might ask, what is the assumption of singularity in uses of resilience, how does it ‘hang together’ and what does this enact? We argue that resiliences hang together precisely through the generalizability and flexibility of ‘resilience’, which names a positive future, or desirable conditions of possibility, but does not necessarily have to actively name, promise or craft that positive future, as we elaborate below. As a ‘bridging concept’ (Coaffee, 2006), resilience is offered as an organizing principle and a solution that can beneficially connect whatever needs to be bridged across space and time. Its fundamental ambiguity stems from the fact that resilience is ultimately agnostic as to *what* it joins up, *where* it might span, *who* makes it so, *how* it might get there, and *why* this is good. Through resilience generality, “fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately” (Foucault 2002, xix), are made potential, precisely *through* one and the same word.

Articulations of resiliences should not be seen as divorced from ‘real’ resilience to be found out there, say as an ecosystemic or psychological trait. Rather, these articulations make resilience what it is; they enact and grant capacities in different ways. Thus our purpose is to interrogate the ontological politics of resiliences. Ontological politics “has to do with the way in which problems are framed, bodies are shaped, and lives are pushed and pulled into one shape or another” (Mol 2002, viii). It has to do with the ‘conditions of possibility,’ or the ‘positivity,’ which give things their form and ‘mode of being’ (Foucault 2002, 378). Put differently, John Law calls ontological politics: “a politics about what there is in the world...what there might be in the world. An interference for the kinds of things that might exist in the world. Between the singular and the plural” (2002, 198). We engage with this question of interference between the singular generality of resilience and its multiple, jostling articulations, which invoke quite different crisis politics and relations to the present and future, even as they are drawn under the same banner.

For example, consider two divergent understandings of resilience with regard to poverty. Writing about poverty amongst families, Karen Secombe (2002) argues for understanding resilience in social and structural terms, whereby resilience to poverty should be facilitated through wealth redistribution and strong social welfare policies rather than through the study of individuals who are perceived as resilient in the face of poverty. In sharp contrast, the World Bank roots resilience to poverty in 'the rural poor' who bear the burden of developing resilience through enterprising activity (World Resources Report 2008). Or consider the divergent implications of resilience in ecological thought. While resilience has been deployed in social-ecological systems literatures as a critique of destructive resource management (Zimmerer, 2010), Phelan et al. (2013) argue that 'perverse resilience' can occur, for example, where a high carbon economy becomes locked in and generates its own forms of resilience that prevent more environmentally progressive policy outcomes. While there are differences in terms of the influence and reach of these different understandings, they illustrate the divergent political visions that resiliences enact.

In sketching out the ontological politics of resiliences in this 'time of crisis,' we find inspiration in understandings of contemporary post-politics, which refers to a political condition defined by a lack of antagonism and, in its place, decision-making by consensus and technocratic management and the assumed inevitability of existing capitalist relations. Post-politics takes the form of minor tweaks here and there from experts aimed at the administration of narrowly defined social matters, thus diminishing the demands, 'moments of openness,' reversal, and fundamental antagonisms of the properly *political* (Žižek 1999, 2001). Our purpose is not to simply name resilience post political; rather we wish to draw out the productive elements these discussions provide for thinking through what resilience might or might not enact, particularly with regard to its generality and flexibility as a taken for granted good that does not have to name names or make promises.

In particular, we find two important lines of enquiry in Erik Swyngedouw's (2010) understanding of post-politics. First, in reference to the 'apocalypse forever' of climate change post-politics, Swyngedouw finds a purely negative relation to the future:

"In contrast to other signifiers that signal a positively embodied content with respect to the future (like socialism, communism, liberalism), an ecologically and climatologically different future world is only captured in its negativity; a pure negativity without promises of redemption, without a positive injunction that 'transcends'/sublimates negativity and without proper subject" (2010, 224).

Resilience could be seen, in contrast, as a positive placeholder in relation to the future. We are not arguing that resilience is positive or that 'it' produces the secure relation it arouses, but that, politically, it resides in the empty space of this purely negative relation to the future that Swyngedouw describes. This is the irrefutability of resilience: who could argue against the desirability of 'being resilient'? It suggests a positive relation with the future with positive affects but it makes no demands or promises.. Without the demand, "nothing really has to change" (ibid, 223). This is the power of agnostic, general resilience—that it simultaneously names the 'cure' and names nothing substantial at all. Further, and in line with neoliberal resilience critiques discussed below, when it makes an appeal to the future that is rooted in the present, to minor tweaks and the 'administration of social matters' (Žižek 1999, 199), its 'conditions of possibility' are located in maintaining the present condition not in fundamentally changing existing frameworks. Thus, our concern for the 'singular' of resilience is that it arouses positive visions of the future and yet it makes no demands.

We would caution, however, against ending the story here: that 'resilience' (singular) simply reproduces the status quo or ultimately does nothing at all. 'Resilience' is multiply enacted—through widely different means and towards dramatically different ends—and this is the focus of our interrogation of ontological politics and interferences. This task is important because there is a

tendency to reify resilience as, in particular, a neoliberal object, born out of and perpetuating neoliberal logics, conditions, and relations (Walker and Cooper 2011, Evans and Reid 2014, Joseph 2013). For example, Walker and Cooper (2011) trace resilience through the work of ecologist C.S. Holling and the uptake of complexity thinking in ecosystem science and place it in relation to contemporaneous Hayekian neoliberals' attention to irruptive and nonlinear dynamics of capital. Resilience is cast as a neoliberal term of art that buttresses a disavowal of any promise of societal security, devolution of responsibility to the individual, an ideal of self-organisation without intervention, normalisation of crisis, and financialisation of moments of crisis as sites of capital accumulation. As Mackinnon and Derickson (2012: 254) put it: "resilient spaces are precisely what capitalism needs—spaces that are periodically reinvented to meet the changing demands of capital accumulation in an increasingly globalised economy." There is thus "an intuitive ideological fit" between neoliberal philosophies and resilience logics (Walker and Cooper 2011, 144). This line of thought resonates with the post-politics of resilience general outlined above.

We do not disagree with this analysis, but we think it can give resilience a coherence that obscures the "oscillation between singularity and multiplicity" (Law 2002, 199) that is crucial for making resilience appear as an object (i.e. solution, natural trait etc.). So our aim is not to refute these readings of neoliberal resilience, nor is it to rescue or recraft resilience for progressive ends. Rather, our aim in looking at resilience through its multiple and divergent articulations is to understand the difference that resiliences make in particular instances. The key moments lie in recognizing the conditions of possibility that resilience articulations open up or foreclose; in interrogating its ontological politics at its points of articulation. We aim to show how and where resilience deployments name names – can be *made* to name names – by focusing on what we see as two key moments of tension and interference inherent in any appeal to resilience: its sitings or locations and the interventions that are meant to foster or create resilience. The following section draws out these two key tensions using examples from a variety of domains.

The ontological politics of resilience multiple: Sitings and Interventions

Sitings

Resilience has been described as a capability, quality, outcome, tool, ideological instrument, process, posture, and an inherent property. In this section we argue that what 'resilience' *is* is fundamentally tied to *where* it is said to be or come from, and, further, that these spatial ontologies of resilience are inherently linked to the conditions of political possibility of resiliences. As Mol emphasizes, the 'question about *where* the options are is so relevant to ontological politics" (1999, 80).

In the case of resilience multiple, the issue of spatial ontologies is particularly important because articulations seem to suggest that what makes resilience, what it actually is, can be fashioned from almost any invocation of that which has survived or that is functioning or alive. This generality and its vague positive injunction, require denaturalization. Consider, for example, Brian Walker's (2009) definition of resilience where he discusses the ways in which trauma surgery is designed to move people from an indeterminate state of shock back towards life rather than death. He draws a dualistic life-death graphic on a whiteboard that represents how surgeons attempt to steer the body towards the life-pole, away from the waiting death-pole, by intervening with medical instruments, induced comas and so forth. The body's resilience is equated with survival and is proven through this trial. A failure to be resilient directly leads to death in this case. A similar equation is found in the common tactic of using past traumas survived or the non-occurrence of crisis as 'evidence' of resilience. Psychiatrists Southwick and Charney (2012) study former prisoners of war and other individuals who survived trauma, individuals who were 'bent but not broken,' in order to make claims about the traits held by these purportedly biologically, psychologically, and socially resilient individuals—and how others might foster these same traits. In cybersecurity that

the Internet 'has not yet failed' is used as evidence of its resilience (ENISA 2011). Past traumas survived or never realized are retrospectively or prospectively labeled as evidence of resilience. The non-resilient, the non-surviving, become the other through which resilience emerges—even those that live in arguably 'less resilient' ways are often granted the trait of resilience by surviving. If 'resilience' can be equated with anything that is functioning, it is emptied of meaningful content. This is an important part of how its generality, its vague positive injunction, becomes productive eliding over quite different commitments. By being attendant to the ways in which resilience is located or slides between locations, bares certain assumptions, options, and possibilities of resiliences.

This question of spatial ontologies and their political effects is helpfully elaborated by considering Aranda et al.'s (2012) distinction between three common ontological orientations of resilience: found, made, and unfinished. *'Resilience found'* locates resilience in inherent capacities of individuals or systems. In these articulations, the de facto good of resilience can be 'discovered,' as it is located a priori in the resilient subject. The most extreme examples of this locate resilience biologically or inherently, such as the growth of genetic resilience in disease treatment experimentation that suggests an inbuilt resilient trait. 'Found' framings are also evident in less overt articulations, such as encouraging indigenous groups to seek psychological connections, which "allow communities to access the resilience of their ancestors" (Landau, 2007: 355). 'Found' resilience frameworks can work to reward those who 'possess' it, while also requiring strategies to cope with those less well endowed. *'Resilience made'* is about practices rather than inherent properties; here, resilience is not discovered but nurtured (Aranda et al 2012). In 'made' framings, things and people can be made resilient through an engagement of environmental factors and hearts and minds. Consider, for example, the wealth of self-help websites geared toward fostering psychological resilience. MeQuilibrium offers a self-help system to create internal fortitude to deal with life's little problems. The Climate Psychology Alliance offers therapy for those struggling to become resilient to the mental anguish of a changing climate. 'Made' is also evident in the proliferating efforts to teach or train for resilience, particularly in security domains. For example, the FBI offers resilience lessons in the bureau's curriculum to teach and discipline the resilient subject through "a training of the mind" (Larned, 2012). 'Made' suggests an active process of crafting and working toward resilience in relation to environmental factors, events, or stressors and variably assigns responsibility for obtaining it. Aranda et al. (2012) argue that there is a third, more analytical resilience siting in play: *'resilience unfinished'*. This is a poststructural resilient subject, ambiguous, reflexive, and with an embodied and affective biography. The resilient subject is produced through a set of practices and behaviours and is always already unfinished such that subjects embody, learn, instill, and generate resilience, however defined. We could think about, for example, how resilience discourses produce 'neurotic citizens' (Isin, 2004) or encourage us to focus on 'poor choice making' (Chandler, 2013); if becoming resilient is the imperative of our 'time of crisis', how can one know if one is resilient enough? Most important, this frame draws out the interminable horizon, the never-ending project of pursuing something called resilience.

Across domains, however, there is no *one* ontological siting. Rather, it can be variably named as found, made, and unfinished. Consider for example, one of the author's tests results for the 14-Item Resilience Scale™ test, which is actually used in academic psychology research. With a score of 68 out of a possible 98, part of the author's online test report stated, "Your resilience level is on the low end but this doesn't mean you have zero resilience. Everyone is resilient to some degree." The scale seems to be of several minds about the siting of resilience. It asks for gender, age, and general health, which, along with the admission that 'everyone' is at least somewhat resilient, would seem to suggest 'found.' But it is centred on self-reported assessments of personality traits and how one might handle situations that could arise: asking how determined you are, if you believe in yourself, and to what degree you "usually manage one way or another." This, coupled with the wealth of psychology research developing country specific, culturally specific versions of the test, seem to suggest 'made'. The entire enterprise, that some psychologists identify incredibly broad self-

reported traits as evidence of something called 'resilience,' which is both possessed and cultivated through practice and mindfulness, demonstrates the 'unfinished' nature of it all.

A key moment in discerning the particular antagonisms and claims of resiliences is to locate where it is said to reside and how it got there. For example, is it suggested that *humans* are resilient or are *some* humans resilient (e.g. along geographic ('Americans') or circumstantial ('the poor') lines)? How did they come to be that way, were they born with it or did they learn to be resilient through trials, learning, necessity, or...? The answers to these kinds of questions offer moments of specificity for nailing down the ontological politics, demands, and promises of resiliences. Who or what is asked to become resilient, who is deemed to 'be resilient', how did they obtain this, can others get it, who claims to 'give' it or teach it, and so on?

For instance, take the example of psychologist Michael Ungar's 'social ecology' approach to resilience (2011) in the case of childcare:

"One can hypothesize that if we grew the environment—for example, by providing well-subsidized quality public day care for all children under the age of 5—we could create the optimal conditions for more resilient children...The day care, if culturally relevant, *potentiates* the development of resilience. Whether an individual child benefits specifically is not the core issue; rather, the fact that the day care is there, and the possibilities for change it provides for working and socially isolated parents, creates a social ecology where more positive development can be expected" (2).

Here, resilience does not reside, found or made, in day care spaces or in individual parents and children. Resilience is potentially enabled through socio-spatial relationality; it is a desired possibility that could only emerge from the production of spaces of positive development. It names the positive value: communal responsibility for and expectation of societal security and care. Further, it names how this positive value could be enabled: well-subsidized public day care. This example is somewhat rare in resilience parlance because it very openly bares its ontological locations and their political responsibilities and desired future. These elements are what must be uncovered by resilience critiques and openly articulated by those wishing to mobilize resilience politically.

Interventions

Cutting across resiliences from another angle, baring the different ways resilience might be created or fostered through interventions reveal multiple interferences and divergent political imaginations. This is again an issue of denaturalizing resiliences, which is particularly important given the enduring impact of resilience conceptions drawn from ecologists such as C.S. Holling (1973) who argued that management plans focused on rigid *control* made ecosystems less resilient. Instead, they advocated adaptive management approaches that are flexible to changing circumstances, immanent properties of ecosystems, and that effectively learn by doing. If resilience is predominantly defined as an inherent property and immanent relation of self-organizing systems, then how do actors, perhaps outside of these systems, intervene within them? In this section, we argue that this issue of intervention is another axis along which the politics of resiliences are revealed at points of articulation.

While systems, individuals, and phenomena are said to be most resilient when left to their own devices, this has not meant that things are always or even usually left to develop without guiding interventions. For example, climate change policy still fixates on the 2 degrees temperature target; for all the calls to experimentation, much of conservation ecology is still determinedly preservationist in approach (Cabin, 2007); and for all the talk of cyber resilience and the desirability of letting it alone, the explosive growth of the cybersecurity industry obsessively pursues ways to reign in and guide emergent cyber relations.

Rather than the hands-off benevolence that self-organisation might suggest, we find active projects of crafting and directing relations, which is to say nothing of the just-as-political decision *not* to intervene. Resilience is rarely invoked without recommendations for how to build resilience. As

the Department of Homeland Security puzzlingly reports, “Resilient self-healing systems require a complete overhaul” (2004: 14). Perhaps Brian Walker sums up this tension best when he states: “The essence of resilience...is to understand feedbacks *that keep it self-organizing in the way we want it to be*” (2009, emphasis added). This fundamental tension begs the question, who defines how ‘we want it to be’? How are the ‘self’ and the ‘inherent’ actively crafted? This moment of tension is one of the key openings for interrogating the ontological politics of resiliences by revealing the political weight of what is often cast as the natural unfolding of inherent, self-organizing relations.

In ecological literatures one of the prime ways of pursuing a positive proliferation of resilience is through experimentation and the retreat from certainty when acting to conserve or restore ecosystems. For example, Gross (2010) argues that ecological restoration must embrace the unexpected; surprises are likely when reintroducing species or recovering contaminated or industrial sites. Perhaps the most complete statement of experimentation in ecology is provided by Cabin (2007) who proposes that one could allocate land plots to groups with different ecological ideas and simply see what happens. Those that function successfully will eventually be chosen as the model for recolonizing the remainder of the area. This is a radical re-distribution and democratization of expertise, in which the ultimate epistemological failure to know in advance what might work transforms experimentation into the only strategy to ensure resilient solutions. The emphasis is on positive transformations to engineer new futures rather than return to vulnerable pasts (Young, 2010; see also Nelson, 2014). But each resilience intervention contains (whether discussed transparently or not) a view of the positive, the goals sought, the ideal world to be enacted. Nonequilibrium ecology can be politically progressive or conservative (Zimmerer, 2000); experimentation can be resisted, transformed and can fail (Castan Broto and Bulkeley, 2013). Interventions in resilience multiple need to be interrogated for their specific effects in particular articulations and experiments.

If ecological resilience interventions are turning to experimentation, one rough equivalent in security is creating redundancy, or the possibility for multiple pathways of recovery to emerge during events. Here, the ideal for resilience interventions is that they might foster an “in-built adaptability to the fluid nature of the new security threats” (Coaffee, 2006). For example, infrastructure security agendas in the US, UK, and EU explicitly wish for self-healing systems and security that is emergent, inherent, and ‘designed in.’ The security sector borrow quite liberally from ecological and biological concepts to argue for letting systems find their own pathways. For example, one US report states that: ‘To achieve the strategic goal of self-healing, self-sustaining CI [critical infrastructure] networks, automated responses to electromagnetic disturbance, laser, and particle beam weapons will need to suppress, divert, redirect, re-profile and otherwise “morph” the attacked system into a form that can survive the event’ (Department of Homeland Security, 2004: 34). The report longingly references traits such as “graceful stealth” (19) and outlines goals like new manufacturing processes and materials science ‘that may be patterned after biological processes’ (14). It details the desirable traits of nanotechnology innovations that mimic the outer protection of shellfish, soil as a model of self-healing, and the productive possibilities of processes like DNA and RNA replication.

While these natural imaginaries of resilience are quite explicit, interventions to craft ‘it’ are often fuzzy and indistinct. Security interventions are commonly described with words such as sensing, smart, embedded, autonomous, autonomic, intuitive, and inherent. Here, intervention is written out, as security seems to merely tap into ‘natural’ or ‘found’ qualities. This is not the case, however, as interventions are vital—‘suppressing, diverting, redirecting, morphing’—that comes to define ‘inherent’ properties. For example, the Department of Homeland Security’s “Resilient Electric Grid” initiative is testing superconductor cables that might replace existing copper wire infrastructures. The hope is that the cables would allow substations to automatically distribute excess capacity during emergencies, thus avoiding surges and major power failures. In this case, development of this inbuilt flexibility is a project that emboldens spending on private sector research

and development. The Resilient Electric Grid is partnered with the private company Consolidated Edison, but one program manager states: 'There are a lot of components to this system so there are a lot of places for others to get in' (Michael, 2012). These places 'to get in' on the resilience security project expose the active interventions and shaping of 'self-organizing' and self-healing' systems. One task for resilience analytics is to expose the ways that appeals to the 'natural' can obscure political choices.

Resilience interventions have to articulate when something is 'resilient enough,' which also bares assumptions about exposure, agency, and responsibility for risk-taking. Consider Brian Walker's elaboration on the essence of ecological resilience with the example of exposing children to dirt and dust in their environments in order to increase their resilience to disturbances from the environment: 'The way you maintain the resilience of a system is by allowing it to probe its boundaries... [by] disturbing and probing the boundaries of resilience' (Walker, 2009). Active intervention is to test the boundaries. In parts of psychology, similarly, resilience is a capacity that emerges precisely as one is exposed to adversity. For example, Garmezy et al (1984) posit a 'challenge model' of children's stress resistance wherein exposure to "stress is treated as a potential enhancer of competence" as long as it is not excessive. An American Psychological Association report on resilience and African American adolescents emphasizes that young people can be considered "at promise" as opposed to "at risk". In this framing, certain factors 'traditionally considered risk factors—can be reconceptualized as adaptive or protective processes' (2008: 3). Here, persistent risk exposures or vulnerabilities are recast as potentially positive moments for enhancing adaptability. Some trials of resilience, however, take on a rather different social and political character. Phelan et al. (2013) posit that 'perverse resilience' occurs where a fossil fuel economy becomes internally resilient despite seeming to fall out-of-line with ecological health. . A system that is too resilient to change for the 'better good' can have collateral damage and be destructive for some interests or living things. Interventions to prop up capitalism, in this example, can sediment internal contradictions and endemic perversity, as much as encouraging 'naturally' positive traits to flourish.

There are common frictions or interference across the interventions of resiliences appearing in social-environmental systems, security, business, and psychology interventions. There is a tension between advocating for self-determination and ownership while simultaneously dictating the terms (or interventions) of the "enterprise" of self-determination from without. There is also a common tension related to risk exposure and how this is intervened upon (or not). We draw on such diverse deployments precisely to illustrate the varying political 'projects' underlying specific articulations and interventions of resiliences. Rather than giving agency to 'resilience,' or having faith in it, or allowing it to maintain coherence as an apparent object, we argue that analyses must explicitly trace the practices that are being re-made through these interventions in specific contexts of articulation. Calls for resilience can therefore take rather different ontological politics in terms of the interventions aimed at achieving 'it' as they implicitly or explicitly articulate a desirable future world and responsibility (or not) for this in the present.

Conclusion

If we now live in a 'time of crisis' then fundamental questions emerge: where does crisis originate? Who and what bear the burden of crises of oppression, insecurity, ill health, inequality, debt, and environmental degradation? What are the desired futures and how will this be enacted? Is this about accepting vulnerability, expecting security from governance mechanisms, accepting survival without political promise or qualification, to live a vulnerable life with positive projects? Do we 'learn how to die' (Evans and Reid, 2012)? What does the appeal to 'resilience' do in this context and how can we interrogate its inherent generality?

In this chapter, we have argued that resilience is multiple. Like crisis, resilience becomes an organising concept, but it does so within a variety of different ontological assumptions, which have

varying geographical, temporal and political implications. Our aim is not to offer a 'right' model of resilience against other deployments. Rather we have attempted to make the concept of resilience strange in a Foucauldian sense. It is our contention that, to paraphrase Mol's discussion of atherosclerosis, the singularity of objects requires work, it is an 'accomplishment.' Competing ontological objects that are kept apart, spatially dispersed (in distinct hospital wings or across academic disciplines) belies the frictions between them: "As long as incompatible [resiliences] do not meet, they are in no position to confront each other" (2002, 119). We find that there are a multiplicity of spatial ontologies and interventions amongst resiliences – and they (don't) resolve the ontological challenge of assessing and defining the resilient from the non-resilient (human, non-humans, planet, Internet, ecosystem) in different ways with different political visions.

The generality of resilience can be made to do any number of things. The politics of resiliences only appear when it is made explicit what and where 'resilience' is, where it could or should be, and how it might get there in any given context, as above: the daycare for broad communal support rather than an individual child's traits or redistribution of wealth versus individual poverty resilience. We think Walker and Cooper (2011) are right to emphasize the degree to which resilience has been and can be deployed toward profoundly conservative and systemically self-referential ends. This is one ontological siting, where resilience is supposedly found in the survival of the unavoidable and never-ending turbulence of speculative capitalism. There are, however, many other ontological locations of resilience. While we can identify that resilience is emerging as one of the organising concepts in a contemporary zeitgeist of uncertainty, critical approaches have to grapple with the geographical, political, and temporal ambiguities of the concept. We say this not necessarily to resuscitate or rescue resilience but to offer a framework for assessing the implications of this concept so widely wielded to arrange present relations in the name of such widely divergent visions of the future. Critical assessments of resilience can cut across the generality, ambiguity, and evasiveness of resilience by nailing it down, forcing the question of specifics—which we maintain is perhaps the only universal moment for politicizing the concept.

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