

The Politics, Ethics,  
and Aesthetics of  
**Inoperativity**



Edited by  
**Giovanni Marmont**  
**German E. Primera**

**Journal of Italian Philosophy**  
Volume 3 (2020)

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Michael Lewis (*University of Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom*)  
Marco Piasentier (*University of Jyväskylä, Finland*)  
German E. Primera (*University of Brighton, United Kingdom*)  
Will Stronge (*University of Brighton & University of Chichester, United Kingdom*)

## ADVISORY BOARD

Giuseppe Bianco (*Centre Français de Recherche en Sciences Sociales, Prague, Czech Republic*)  
Adriana Cavarero (*Università degli Studi di Verona, Italy*)  
Lorenzo Chiesa (*University of Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom; Genoa School of Humanities, Italy; European University at St. Petersburg, Russia*)  
Simona Forti (*Università del Piemonte Orientale, Italy*)  
Tom Frost (*University of Sussex, United Kingdom*)  
Connal Parsley (*University of Kent, United Kingdom*)  
David Rose (*University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, United Kingdom*)  
Davide Tarizzo (*Università degli Studi di Salerno, Italy*)  
William Watkin (*Brunel University, United Kingdom*)  
David Webb (*Staffordshire University, United Kingdom*)



### Address for Correspondence

Journal of Italian Philosophy  
University of Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 7RU  
United Kingdom

**E-mail:** [michael.lewis@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:michael.lewis@newcastle.ac.uk)

**Website:** <http://research.ncl.ac.uk/italianphilosophy/>

ISSN 2515-6039

# Journal of Italian Philosophy

Volume 3 (2020)

## The Politics, Ethics, and Aesthetics of **Inoperativity**

### Contents

**Contributors** ..... 4–7

#### Articles

Giovanni Marmont and German E. Primera  
Propositions for Inoperative Life ..... 9–21

William Watkin  
Inoperativity as Category: Mathematizing the Analogous,  
Habitual, Useful Life in Agamben’s *The Kingdom and the Glory*,  
*The Signature of All Things* and *The Use of Bodies* ..... 23–49

Kieran Aarons  
Destitution and Creation: Agamben’s Messianic Gesture ..... 51–89

Angelo Nizza  
Towards a Critique of Inoperativity in Luciano Bianciardi’s  
*La vita agra* ..... 91–109

Carlo Crosato  
Telling the Truth, or Not: Notes on the Concept of Ethics in  
Foucault and Agamben ..... 111–137

Tyson E. Lewis  
The Pataphysics of Inoperativity in the Works of Giorgio  
Agamben ..... 139–161

Elliot C. Mason  
Thing: a fugitive in( )operation ..... 163–189

Malte Fabian Rauch  
Archaeologies of Contemporary Art: Negativity, Inoperativity,  
*Désœuvrement* ..... 191–215

## **Translations**

Valeria Bonacci  
Form-of-life and Use in Homo Sacer ..... 217–245  
*Translation by Jacopo Condò and Giovanni Marmont*

Giorgio Agamben  
Bataille and the Paradox of Sovereignty ..... 247–253  
*Translation and Foreword by Michael Krimper*

**Links** ..... 255

## Contributors

### **Kieran Aarons**

Kieran Aarons teaches social and political philosophy at Loyola University Chicago and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is currently completing a book on the concept of destituent power, linking the philosophies of time and festivity in Furio Jesi and Giorgio Agamben to contemporary social and ecological movements.

### **Jacopo Condò**

Jacopo Condò is a PhD candidate at the University of Brighton with a background in moral philosophy, medical ethics, and law. His research is primarily concerned with ethical challenges connected with real-life practices in medico-legal contexts, specifically regarding the protection and support of autonomy within the context of anorexic patients' refusal of treatment. Key interests in his work are relational theories and critiques of value-neutrality, enhancement and defense of autonomy in context of vulnerability, dialogical theory of language, feminist philosophy. Jacopo is particularly interested in the application of "late" Wittgenstein work in ethics, as well as in Charles Taylor's expressivist conception of language.

### **Carlo Crosato**

Carlo Crosato is a PhD candidate in Political Philosophy at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. He collaborates with some important Italian journals and magazines, such as L'Espresso, ilManifesto, and LaLetture del Corriere della Sera. He is the author of *Critica della sovranità* (Orthotes 2019), and of three sylloges of poetry. He edited a monographic issue of *Ethics&Politics* on Agamben's ontology, which will be published in December 2020. Carlo is currently an independent researcher and he is working on the issue of the subject in Foucault's philosophy.

### **Michael Krimper**

Michael Krimper teaches in the Department of French and the Gallatin School of Individualized Study at New York University where he received his PhD in Comparative Literature in 2018. His current book project, *The Unmaking of Literature*, examines how work becomes a problem and

is reimagined across a wide array of writing throughout the twentieth century. His articles have appeared or are forthcoming in *New Literary History*, *SubStance*, *Parallax*, and *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, among other venues.

### **Tyson E. Lewis**

Tyson E. Lewis is a professor of art education in the College of Visual Arts and Design at the University of North Texas where he teaches classes in educational philosophy, aesthetics, critical theory, and phenomenological research methods. He is author of many books in the field of educational philosophy including *On Study: Giorgio Agamben and Educational Potentiality* (Routledge, 2015), *Inoperative Learning: A Radical Rewriting of Educational Potentialities* (Routledge, 2019), and most recently, *Walter Benjamin's Anti-Fascist Education: From Riddles to Radio* (SUNY Press, 2020).

### **Giovanni Marmont**

Giovanni is an independent researcher and a tutor at the University of Edinburgh. His work rethinks the sphere of use in order to trouble processes of individuation and devise experimental practices of sociality. He holds a PhD from the University of Brighton (2019) and his current research includes a co-authored chapter on critical logistics for the forthcoming Edward Elgar handbook *Sociology of Globalization* (with Craig Martin), as well as a monograph on use as study.

### **Elliot C. Mason**

Elliot C. Mason is a PhD candidate at the University of Brighton, researching the intersection of Black studies and contemporary architectural theory. His first monograph, *Building Black: Towards an Antiracist Architecture*, will be published in 2021. A section of the manuscript was shortlisted for the Fitzcarraldo Essay Prize 2020. Elliot's poetry and essays have been widely published, including in *Magma*, *Tribune*, *3:AM*, *Site-Writing* and *SPAM*. His first collection of poetry, *City Embers*, is coming out in November 2020 with Death of Workers Whilst Building Skyscrapers Press. He is the founder of [Penny Drops Collective](#), with whom he has put on dozens of performances, plays, protests, exhibitions and talks.

## Angelo Nizza

Angelo Nizza teaches philosophy in secondary education institutions in Italy. He completed his PhD in Philosophy of Language at the University of Calabria in 2017 and he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici in Naples. He is a member of the coordinating team of the *Remo Bodei Summer School of Philosophy* in Roccella Jonica, organized by the Scholé Association and directed by Bruno Centrone (University of Pisa), as well as of the editorial board for the *Italian Journal of Philosophy of Language* (University of Calabria). In 2018 he participated in the National Conference of the Italian Society of Philosophy of Language (University of Milan), and he recently published the volume *Linguaggio e lavoro nel XXI secolo. Natura e storia di una relazione* (2020, Milano-Udine: Mimesis).

## German E. Primera

I am a senior lecturer in the Department of Humanities at the University of Brighton, where I teach Critical Theory and Political Philosophy. My research interests include French and Italian Contemporary Philosophy and Thought, Black Studies, Biopolitics, the Politics of War and Political Theology. I am the author of the monograph *The Political Ontology of Giorgio Agamben* (Bloomsbury, 2019). Other recent publications include: ‘Violence, Biopolitics and Resistance: The Meaning of Violence in the work of Giorgio Agamben’ in *The Meanings of Violence: From Critical Theory to Biopolitics* edited by Gavin Rae and Emma Ingala (Routledge, 2019); ‘Sovereignty between the Katechon and the Eschaton: Rethinking the Leviathan’ in *Telos: Critical Theory of the Contemporary* 187 (2019), co-authored with Melayna Lamb; ‘Introduction to the Thought of Roberto Esposito’ in *An Italian Philosophy Reader*, edited by D. Rose and M. Lewis (Bloomsbury, 2020) and ‘Economic theology, Governance and Neoliberalism: The lessons of The Kingdom and the Glory’ in *Praktyka Teoretyczna*, 2 (2016).

## Malte Fabian Rauch

Malte Fabian Rauch is a researcher in the DFG project “Cultures of Critique” at Leuphana University in Lüneburg, where he currently writes his PhD on Agamben, Adorno and Bataille. He is the editor of *Reiner Schürmann Essays and Lecture Notes*, published by Diaphanes and Chicago University Press. In 2019, he edited the collection: Reiner Schürmann, *Tomorrow the Manifold: Essays on Foucault*. He is currently

preparing an edition with Reiner Schürmann's lecture notes on Marx, which is scheduled to be published in 2021. Besides his work as an editor, he has published on a wide range of themes in critical theory, contemporary art and aesthetics. His research is particularly focused on forms of passivity, deactivation and inoperativity, which he investigates at the intersection of philosophy, art and design.

## **William Watkin**

William Watkin is Professor of Contemporary Philosophy and Literature at Brunel University. He is the author of *In the Process of Poetry: The New York School and the Avant-Garde*, *On Mourning*, *The Literary Agamben* and *Agamben and Indifference*. His most recent work, *Badiou and Indifferent Being* is the first of two volumes looking at Badiou's Being and Event project. The second, *Badiou and Communicable Worlds* is out in 2021, as is his study of contemporary modes of coercion, *Bioviolence: How the powers that be make us do what they want*. He is currently working on a study of a new philosophy of indifference called, simply, *Indifference*.



