

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Non-human humanitarians

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Abstract

The study of humanitarian intervention typically focuses on the human victims and saviours in armed conflict and natural disasters. Moreover, explanations of the virtues of humanitarian norms and ethics emphasise the importance of the universality of suffering and the empathic nature of humanitarian efforts. In contrast, this article explores the neglected world of ‘non-human humanitarians’. Specifically, the article outlines three cases of non-human actors that expand and complicate international humanitarian practices: dogs, drones, and diagrams. Drawing on new materialist and posthuman literatures, the article argues that non-humans possess distinct capacities that vastly expand and transform humanitarian efforts in ranging from relief, to medicine, to conflict resolution. Highlighting non-human humanitarians thus offers a new perspective on the resources available for redressing mass violence and conflict, but also complicates existing definitions of humanitarian norms. To the contrary, the article demonstrates that non-humans often maximise humanitarian services to a degree greater than their human counterparts, but have also introduced changes into humanitarian practices that have problematic unintended consequences. Non-human humanitarians reveals previously discounted participants in international politics and the key roles they play in various international interventions.

Keywords: Drones; Camps; Dogs; Refugees; Humanitarianism; Humanitarian Intervention; New Materialism; Actor Network Theory; Non-humans; Posthuman; Assemblages; Materialism

Introduction

Who performs the labour of humanitarianism? This question serves to highlight the often-invisible role that non-human entities and agents play in processes of humanitarian intervention broadly understood. As a set of ethico-political practices, humanitarianism builds from foundational principles about human rights and dignities and outline codes of conduct in war and strategies of equitable governance that should be extended to all human beings.¹ Human life and labour is thus the centrepiece of humanitarianism. The rise of international humanitarian regimes and institutions during the second half of the twentieth century focused on the expansion of these ideals in an endeavour to change norms of statecraft. As such, humanitarian practices, ranging from military intervention and medicinal care, to non-governmental and charitable endeavours involve a wide range of acts guided by compassionate pleas about the basic provisions that ought to be afforded to human life. Nonetheless, the legitimacy, consistency,

¹Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 2015); Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Michael Ignatieff, *The Rights Revolution* (House of Anansi, 2007); Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

and forms of power at work in humanitarianism have been a source of consistent critique.² In particular, humanitarian practices have been challenged as modes of international dominance, neocolonialism and imperialism. These criticisms have called into question the universality of the category of the human enshrined in humanitarian ideologies³ and argued that the ‘human’ excludes various forms of otherness based on colonial, racial, religious, gendered, and social divisions.⁴ These arguments draw several different challenges to the human as a meaningful political category.⁵ In spite of this critical discourse, non-human entities, such as animals, machines, or inanimate materials, have been largely overlooked despite playing crucial roles in a wide range of humanitarian services and interventions. In this respect, even critical literatures deepen the invisibility of non-human involvement in humanitarian processes. This article explores the relations formed between traditional human humanitarians and what it terms ‘non-human humanitarians’. Tracing these relationships offers a new avenue for exploring the ethical and political limits of humanitarianism as well as a valuable prism for rethinking the value of humanitarian practices.

The article makes three contributions to the existing critical literature on humanitarianism and non-human theories. First, attending to the role of non-humans in humanitarian practices provides new insights into why specific humanitarians practices are successful or, alternately, promote exclusion and violence. In doing so, it expands the potency of earlier critiques about the problematic character of humanitarianism and offers new avenues for humanitarian practitioners to assess what mechanisms, relations, or forms of agency make particular proposals worthwhile. Second, focusing on the material effects of non-humans also moves the debate over humanitarian intervention away from abstract questions about ethical principles and refocuses it on the implications of humanitarian practices. In the context of non-humans, examining these practices opens up a multiplicity of variables that make humanitarian labour possible and isolates what mechanisms improve or undermine the efficacy of humanitarianism. In this case, tracing the role of non-human humanitarians reveals the slow emergence of a paradigm of remote, technocratic governance developing within humanitarian discourses that frequently depends on an instrumentalist model of ethical decision-making. Third, raising the figure of the non-human provides a different avenue for exploring the limits and benefits of humanitarian ethics as a model of responsiveness to political problems. As this article explores in the conclusion, non-human humanitarianism offers a valuable point for reflecting on the types of relationships that sustain generosity and care as well as foster alternative models for humanitarian practice.

The next section outlines the theoretical approach of the article and explains why investigating the relations formed between humans and non-humans is valuable for International Relations (IR). From there, the article examines three different cases of non-human humanitarians: dog

²Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012); Michel Agier, *Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government*, trans. David Fernbach (Malden: Polity, 2011); Didier Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Anne Orford, *Reading Humanitarian Intervention: Human Rights and the Use of Force in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

³Daniel Baer, ‘The ultimate sacrifice and the ethics of humanitarian intervention’, *Review of International Studies*, 37:1 (2011), pp. 301–26; Debbie Lisle, ‘Humanitarian travels: Ethical communication in *Lonely Planet* guidebooks’, *Review of International Studies*, 34:1 (2008), pp. 155–72; Robert Belloni, ‘The trouble with humanitarianism’, *Review of International Studies*, 33:3 (2007), pp. 451–74; Jenny Edkins, ‘Humanitarianism, humanity, human’, *Journal of Human Rights*, 2:2 (2003), pp. 253–8.

⁴Critiques of humanitarianism vary, but consistently expose the power relations that enable humanitarian aid. Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2010); Orford, *Reading Humanitarian Intervention*; Costas Douzinas, *Human Rights and Empire: The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism* (New York: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007).

⁵Samantha Frost, *Biocultural Creatures: Toward a New theory of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), pp. 17–26.

deminers, peacekeeping drones, and refugee camp diagrams. Each section reveals how non-human humanitarians, through their interaction and relations with human beings and institutions, influence the ethical and pragmatic aspects of humanitarian intervention. The final section of the article returns to the theoretical and political problems posed by non-human humanitarians and explores the potential of a non-human humanitarianism. In brief, it suggests that while humanitarianism is, in principle, founded on the seemingly benevolent act of caring for others, it often reproduces multiple forms of rigid political control and violence. In contrast, excavating the complex relations forged between non-human and human humanitarians offers an alternative lens for understanding how generative and creative forms of politics emerge from within the often problematic horizons of humanitarianism.

Humanitarian, all-too-humanitarian

The role of non-human entities in presumably human affairs has become a vital topic in Sociology, Political Science, Philosophy, and IR. A number of different theories provide separate, occasionally incompatible, models of non-human agency and relationality. Bruno Latour's actor-network theory offers perhaps the most common rubric for engaging non-humans, but the literature ranges from vitalist interpretations of 'thing power' to arguments that every non-human object is a fully independent or quasi-conscious entity.⁶ While there is debate within this literature about the status of non-human agency, there is broad agreement on three central problems with traditional social theory. First, this literature calls into question the primacy of human agency by showing how rational choices, political structures, economic relations, buildings, tombs, and linguistic systems are all permeated by non-human entities and objects. Humans thus possess, at best, lateral agency forged in relation to a far larger non-human world. Second, these theories contest basic assumptions about the capacities of human consciousness and subjectivity to access or know the world. As such, many of the predicative capacities of social theory are limited by their inability to conceptualise non-human senses of the world. Third, the literature contests the anthropocentric bias that frames normative theories of value. If non-humans contribute to the making of the world then the problem of value, and therefore ethics, requires a critical reappraisal.⁷

The analysis of non-human agencies has also become a growing subject in IR as concerns about climate change, war, disease, the functional design of networks, and new technologies have grown.⁸ Scholars have also examined non-humans in other, more everyday areas of international politics.⁹ However, theorists of the non-human have largely ignored humanitarianism just as the

⁶The literature on this is growing. See Tim Morton, *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁷The literature making these claims is growing and includes scholars from multiple disciplines: Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Dorian Sagan, *Cosmic Apprentice: Dispatches from the Edges of Science* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

⁸For a sample of the literature, see Anthony Burke et al., 'Planet politics: a manifesto for the end of IR', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 44:3 (2016), pp. 499–523; Stefania Fishel, *The Microbial State: Global Thriving and the Body Politic* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Audra Mitchell, 'Only human? A worldly approach to security', *Security Dialogue*, 45:1 (2014), pp. 5–21; Erika Cudworth and Stephen Hobden, *Posthuman International Relations: Complexity, Ecologism and Global Politics* (New York: Zed Books, 2011).

⁹See, for example, the study of AK-47s, corpses, and trash as everyday international objects. Nisha Shah, 'Gunning for war: Infantry rifles and the calibration of lethal force', *Critical Studies on Security*, 5:1 (2017), pp. 81–104; Jessica Auchter, 'Paying attention to dead bodies: the future of security studies?', *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 1:1 (2016), pp. 36–50; Michele Acuto, 'Everyday International Relations: Garbage, grand designs, and mundane matters', *International Political Sociology*, 8:4 (2014), pp. 345–62; Andrew Barry, 'The translation zone: Between actor-network theory and International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 41:3 (2013), pp. 413–29; Daniel H. Nexon and Vincent Pouliot, '"Things of networks": Situating ANT in International Relations', *International Political Sociology*, 7:3 (2013), pp. 342–5; Christian Bueger, 'Actor-network theory, methodology, and international organization', *International Political Sociology*, 7:3 (2013), pp. 338–42.

critical literature on humanitarianism has neglected non-humans.¹⁰ This missed encounter is a product of the obvious tension between humanitarianism, which presupposes human suffering, compassion, and action as its central terms, and non-human theory that contests the importance of the human. Moreover, critical responses to humanitarianism typically advocate expanding the category of the human by recognising forms of otherness as human rather than interrogating the thorny question of the political status of non-humans. While this is an important effort to expand the horizons of humanitarianism, it falls short when it comes to decidedly non-human figures that are structurally positioned outside of the field of human discourse. Indeed, humanitarian practices are a key nexus to explore how both human and non-human agencies participate in the production and layering of different forms of exclusion within contemporary political practices.

In this vein, the article analyses three different cases of non-human humanitarian agency in international politics: demining dogs, relief drones, and shelter diagrams. Given that these three examples involve different social contexts as well as distinct non-humans, the comparison and methods of this article carry particular analytical risks including simplifying the complexity and lessons of each variation of non-human humanitarians. The article proposes that ‘following the nonhuman’ and outlining the relations that non-humans and humans forge in humanitarian contexts is worthwhile for two reasons. First, as a set of relations, humanitarian practices depend on a multiplicity of human and non-human entities from machines and terrains, to manuals and medicines. By privileging the emergence of particular relations within specific humanitarian institutional settings, this approach illustrates how dynamic connections formed between humans and non-humans are critical to the constitution and success of humanitarianism. Second, much like feminist or postcolonial critiques mark problematic ethical tendencies across disparate political practices, addressing the unique problems posed by the appropriation of non-human labour in humanitarianism also introduces different ethical stakes for the future of humanitarianism. The basic tactic of the article is thus to ‘follow the non-human’ by describing how non-humans and humans interact in the production of differential capacities and outcomes in each respective issue-area identified as humanitarian. Describing these capacities, in turn, supports a more thorough account of what sustains both the violence and generosity of humanitarianism.

In this regard, the article begins from two interpretive principles regarding the importance of reading or analysing the relations between humans and non-humans. First, it avoids over-determining the meaning, characteristics of non-human or human participants in a social practice. Put differently, by leaving open the possibility for connections and interactions between (and among) humans and non-human things, and focusing on capacities for interaction and influence, the article attempts to undermine any authoritative rendering of the agencies that determine the outcomes of social practice and, by doing so, avoid reproducing or simply reversing the privilege historically given to human actors. Rather, the article endeavours to read non-human and humanitarian relations as composed of messy, bumpy, odd, and often unclear encounters rather than unidirectional or organic relations. Second, as consistent with new materialist approaches such as assemblage theory, the article emphasises relations in order to highlight the potential for emergent forms of collective action in response to social and ecological problems.¹¹ In this sense, the benefits or limitations of humanitarianism develop because the ‘whole is greater than the sum of its parts’. This observation encourages a more detailed engagement with the material forces that sustain both problematic and productive humanitarian

¹⁰This is with the obvious exception of the late Lisa Smirl, whose brilliant work on humanitarian space this article is deeply indebted to. Lisa Smirl, *Spaces of Aid: How Cars, Compounds and Hotels Shape Humanitarianism* (London: Zed Books, 2015).

¹¹Dianne Coole, ‘Agnetic capacities and capacious historical materialism: Thinking with new materialisms in the political sciences’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 41:3 (2013), pp. 456–61.

interventions as well as different ethical potentials. Together, these principles provide a stimulus for rethinking human-non-human relations without exhaustively defining or strictly modelling the nature of this convention. Put differently, this approach engages a form of empiricism that endeavours to allow the assemblage or network of human and non-human things to define terms and relations rather than imposing a model of agency. The hope is that this approach will show the prominence of non-human humanitarians in tandem with their human counterparts.

The dogs of humanitarianism

Of all non-human animals, dogs have arguably incited the greatest amount of interest. Many popular science publications comment on the complexity of human-dog interactions, the emotional register of dogs and the importance of coevolution in dog-human development.¹² During a period characterised by the mass destruction of non-human lifeforms, dogs have received unprecedented care and concern.¹³ Literature on dogs now recommends them not only for their labouring abilities, but also as tools of emotional support, chronic pain management, and aesthetic pleasure.¹⁴ Dogs have also become a subject of interest in critical and materialist studies of war and security.¹⁵ While this ‘companion species’, to use the language of Donna Haraway, has witnessed a surge of interest, the function of dogs in humanitarian contexts, such as demining dogs, has received comparatively little attention.¹⁶ In order to assess the benefits of these dogs as tools for the distribution and delivery of aid or relief, humanitarian literatures primarily analyse the dogs through the prism of instrumental rationality.¹⁷ This paradigm understands dogs through an anthropocentric frame, which assesses the value of dogs solely in terms of their contributions to human welfare. This section briefly examines the case of demining dogs to document how this anthropocentric framing impacts humanitarian practice and, simultaneously, to demonstrate how dogs augment humanitarianism.

Dogs have a long history at war, but it was during the Second World War that dogs were first routinely used to identify mines.¹⁸ Since then, the use of dogs in demining operations has slowly become a part of humanitarian operations, a process that grew considerably over the past three decades. Dogs have worked as deminers for the United Nations Mine Action Service, Marshall Legacy, USAID, and Ronco as well as other organisations. The rise in dog demining has produced a proliferation of studies on the capacities of dogs as deminers.¹⁹ These studies conclude that, relative to human deminers, dogs have a variety of advantages. In particular, dogs travel over larger territories than humans on foot, move more fluidly through many ecosystems, reduce the environmental impact of demining operations, easily differentiate between metal and plastic

¹²Cat Warren, *What the Dog Knows: Scent, Science, and the Amazing Ways Dogs Perceive the World* (New York: Touchstone, 2015); Brian Hare and Vanessa Woods, *The Genius of Dogs: How Dogs Are Smarter Than You Think* (New York: Plume, 2013); Alexandra Horowitz, *Inside of a Dog: What Dogs See, Smell, and Know* (New York: Scribner, 2009).

¹³Cary Wolfe, *Before the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2012), pp. 54–6.

¹⁴Merrily Weisbord and Kim Kachanoff, *Dogs with Jobs: Working Dogs Around the World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

¹⁵Mike Bourne, Heather Johnson, and Debbie Lisle, ‘Laboratizing the border: the production, translation and anticipation of security technologies’, *Security Dialogue*, 46:4 (2015), pp. 307–25.

¹⁶Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, ed. Matthew Beigelke (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003).

¹⁷Rebecca J. Sargisson et al., ‘Environmental determinants of landmine detection by dogs: Findings from a large-scale study in Afghanistan’, *Research and Development: The Journal of ERW and Mine Action*, 16:2 (2012), pp. 74–80; Ann Goth, Ian G. McLean, and James Trevelyan, ‘Odour detection: the theory and practice’, in *Mine Detection Dogs: Training, Operations and Odour Detection* (Geneva: Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, 2003), pp. 195–208.

¹⁸Erika Cudworth and Steve Hobden, ‘The posthuman way of war’, *Security Dialogue*, 46:6 (2015), pp. 517–22; Goth, McLean, and Trevelyan, ‘Odour detection’, pp. 196–7.

¹⁹Sargisson et al., ‘Environmental determinants of landmine detection by dogs’; Ron Verhagen et al., ‘Preliminary results on the curse of cricetomys rats as indicators of buried explosives in field conditions’, in *Mine Detection Dogs*, pp. 175–94.

components of explosives, and can locate tripwires that are camouflaged from human observation. While dogs do not actively disassemble mines, they also assist in the process of refilling cavities in the earth produced by demining. Notably, these abilities are not intrinsic features of dogs, but emerge from the contingencies of evolution and regimes of socialisation; put differently, the relations forged between dogs and other human and non-human environments, which enable the dog to act differently within what might be called ‘mined ecologies’. The dogs’ olfactory senses are obviously the key element in demining because, with training, dogs are able to identify the odours (aerosolised chemical residues) of TNT and DNT (the critical chemical components of many mines). The effectiveness of dog deminers is thus subject to various climatic conditions such as vapour pressure, temperature, wind trajectory and velocity, sediment composition, rainfall, and humidity.²⁰ In some mined ecologies, dogs perform less effectively than their human counterparts. Nonetheless, the demining literature consistently finds that dogs improve the efficiency and outcomes of mining operations. As one periodical puts it: dogs ‘are considered the best detectors of explosives. Their sensitivity to this kind of substance [TNT] is estimated to be 10,000 times higher than that of a man-made detector.’²¹ Moreover, a report for USAID underscored that ‘manual demining operations *could not match* the clearance productivity of those operations that utilized MDDs effectively.’²² The dog appears to be a ‘natural’ deminer.

Of course, there is no such thing as a natural mine or a natural deminer. Fields of discarded and unexploded munitions are, by definition, complex historically produced human and non-human ecologies. These environments illustrate how the technologies of armed conflict exceed the spatial and temporal boundaries that traditionally define warfare.²³ In this respect, both human and dog deminers enter these milieus as co-creators in the effort to alter a mined ecology that is layered with histories of conflict, species cohabitation, ecosystem destruction, geopolitics and non-living minerals. When demining units enter these ecologies, they do so at the behest of a number of institutions, which define the work of demining as a humanitarian endeavour. By framing demining in this way, humanitarian organisations actively ascribe the label ‘human’ and ‘humane’ to the labour of the dog-human hybrid despite the critical role that dogs play as a specialised labour force in demining and the unique capacities dogs and humans have in collaboration. In this way, the dog’s contributions vanish from humanitarian discourse.

In addition, this presentation of demining also reinforces the distinction between armed conflict, a period of active hostilities, and humanitarian operations, which occur during a postconflict period as well as quasi-stable distinctions between vulnerable populations and humanitarian saviours.²⁴ This distinction overlooks how historically demining operations were also a part of military strategy developed to clear corridors for troop movement and postwar relief efforts.²⁵ As such, security institutions have parallel interests in the work of demining dogs as tools for explosives detection. Consequently, it is difficult to describe the labour of demining dogs in purely humanitarian terms since the technical expertise, training regiments, and capacities of the demining dog move fluidly across humanitarian and military arenas. Moreover, humanitarian operations involve complex

²⁰Sargisson et al., ‘Environmental determinants of landmine detection by dogs’, pp. 74–6.

²¹Maki Habib, ‘Mine clearance techniques and technologies for effective humanitarian demining’, *Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction*, 6:1 (2002), p. 63.

²²Dan Hayner, ‘The evolution of mine detection dog training’, *Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction*, 7:1 (2003), p. 72.

²³Jairus Grove, ‘An insurgency of things: Foray into the world of improvised explosive devices’, *International Political Sociology*, 10:4 (2016), pp. 332–51.

²⁴Caroline Holmqvist, *Policing Wars: On Military Intervention in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 3–6; Vivienne Jabri, *War and the Transformation of Global Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 94–136.

²⁵Anthony A. Faust et al., ‘Observations on military exploitation of explosives detection technologies’, *Detection and Sensing of Mines, Explosive Objects and Obscured Targets*, 8017:16 (2011).

relations of power and privilege. Humanitarian demining encounters the thorny problem of operating in areas where mines extend the trauma of armed conflict well beyond the end of formal hostilities. By rearticulating the distinction between humanitarian and military work, demining operations may undermine the pressure on militaries to reduce the lethal sequelae of armed conflict.²⁶ Humanitarian research on demining dogs may thus inadvertently extend future mining efforts by providing the mine industry and global militaries with the ability to craft more dangerous mine traps or appropriate the capacities of demining dogs for other militarised purposes.

Nonetheless, dogs will continue to play a key part in demining procedures. Organisations such as UNMAS and the Marshall Legacy typically understand the dogs' function as little more than a tool, potentially exchangeable with others, but, which, due to its olfactory capacities, is ideal for demining.²⁷ This rationale has led to the search for other non-human animals with better demining potential that could displace dogs. For instance, 'rats may be the best and cheaper form of landline detection ... they have a better sense of smell, are cheaper to keep and maintain and they are more resistant to tropical disease ... they can be transported even more easily'.²⁸ However, demining organisations have been reluctant to use other non-human demining animals for two reasons. First, as Marshall Legacy materials note: dogs 'are motivated to work because of their strong relationship with their human partners and the reward received for finding a mine. ... This makes *the work fun for the dog*, which motivates them to continue'.²⁹ Second, dog deminers have the capacity to blend more easily into human communities, easing the interaction between deminers and the populations they serve. Human deminers benefit from the companionship formed with dogs and the dogs also occasionally bridge the divides between demining units and the communities they serve, working against challenging social, colonial, and postcolonial barriers. In this sense, the dog transforms the demining process by introducing a series of different affective relationships into a terrain mutually constituted by dogs, human demining crews, exposed communities, and mined ecologies.³⁰

Understood in these terms, the dog's capacity to demine is not a product of physical abilities, but relationships formed between the dog and the social setting of humanitarianism and works because of a number of subtle, but notable changes to the social connections between demining units, local communities, and the other constituencies of mined ecologies. Bonding improves deminer-community relations, but also, as the Marshall Legacy stipulates, changes the affective dimension of demining work by turning it into a more joyful process thereby reducing the pervasive trauma and fear that often accompany the emotional atmosphere of mined ecologies. The emergence of joy is thus an unintended consequence of integrating dogs and humans together into demining work, a subject of frequent commentary by deminers, but rarely addressed in policy analyses of dogs in the literature on demining. The surplus excitement of the dog, a palpable thing for many human trainers and observers, alters the affective dimensions of demining labour in a way that is qualitative, but well documented by testimony about dogs.³¹ While these affective dimensions of dog demining are also open to governance and manipulation, they alter the basic conditions of the demining operation by potentially converting emotionally burdensome tasks into more dynamic, co-creative process.

This role of dogs in demining also raises critical questions about the ethics of humanitarian practices. Demining dogs are the proverbial canary in the coalmine, which labour partly as a

²⁶Eyal Weizman explores how the logic of the lesser paradoxically produces and expands violence in humanitarianism. Eyal Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza* (London: Verso, 2012), pp. 6–17.

²⁷The Marshall Legacy, 'Mine Detection Dogs | The Marshall Legacy Institute', available at: <http://marshall-legacy.org/programs-2/mine-detection-dogs/> accessed 15 March 2017.

²⁸Habib, 'Mine clearance techniques and technologies for effective humanitarian demining', pp. 63–4, emphasis added.

²⁹Marshall Legacy, 'Mine Detection Dogs'.

³⁰On the affective dimensions of non-human animals and their political lessons, see Brian Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us About Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

³¹Tydie Horsley, 'Child-to-child risk education', *Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction*, 19:2 (2015), pp. 32–4.

substitute for a human that is implicitly considered a more valuable form of life. The dog is thus also subjected to an anthropocentric framework that treats canine life as exposable and disposable. This determination hinges on relations of power and violence. In the context of humanitarianism, this implicit determination also produces a paradox since dogs are devalued as a form of non-human life unworthy of the dignities and protections extended to humans, but simultaneously lauded as a brave benefactor and, occasionally, forbearer of humanitarian virtue. While humanitarians praise the dog as a sympathetic being, this sympathy does not motivate any critical analysis of the paradigm that devalues the life of demining dogs. This tension demonstrates that the conception of the human that supports humanitarian work also entails liabilities and exclusions for forms of life deemed non-human or insufficiently human. Necessarily defined outside of the zone of the human, the dog constitutes a form of life legitimately exposed to exclusion and death. Furthermore, the example illustrates that sympathy, often extolled as an affective or emotional response that both distinguishes human ethics and serves as an impetus for humanitarianism, does not immunise humanitarianism from violence. Rather, forms of sentiment, sympathy, and compassion often complement rather than challenge political power. The anthropocentric frame thus not only reveals a one-sided distribution of risk and reward for dog and human deminers, a dynamic that reflects the underlying power relations that frequently characterise humanitarian practices, but shows the underside of claims that exclusively human compassion operates as an antidote to violence.

The case of dog deminers also reveals the possibility that the collaboration of humans and non-humans offer a more expansive form of care than generosity than human-human relations sustain on their own. For instance, in the context of humanitarian intervention, laudable principles often reify relations of power and hierarchy.³² Ironically, demining dogs illustrate that, in some contexts, humans may not have the best capacities to reflect on the violence and control that accompanies humanitarian endeavours. Indeed, dogs make no explicit claims in the debate over humanitarian ideals. Yet, the introduction of dogs into humanitarian labour may affectively change humanitarian practices thereby forging a more valuable form of humanitarianism paradoxically more accessible to many human communities. By failing to recognise the basic divisions that support humanitarian operations and by challenging the emotionally burdensome character of demining work, dogs actively reconstitute demining operations. By doing so, they contribute to a different model of political equity and address a different ethical horizons of humanitarianism. In short, dogs can interrupt and reconstitute human-human interactions in the fraught process of delivering humanitarian services.

The drones of peace

While dogs, with their noted empathic capacities, are relatively easy to understand as non-human humanitarians, other non-living, non-human humanitarians perform similarly important functions in humanitarian operations. The literature on drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and unmanned aerial combat vehicles (UACVs) has largely focused on the ethical, tactical, and political problems introduced by this new technical assemblage of remote warfare.³³ By popular convention, drones reduce the costs and casualties of war. Along with their capacities for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, the drone has become the emblem of precision warfare that allegedly provides better ethical and legal oversight of armed conflict.³⁴ In this sense,

³²David Kennedy, *The Dark Sides of Virtue: Reassessing International Humanitarianism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 3–36.

³³This is an emerging debate. See Kenneth R. Himes, *Drones and the Ethics of Targeted Killing* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); Daniel Brunseter and Megan Braun, 'The implications of drones on the just war tradition', *Ethics & International Affairs*, 25:3 (2011), pp. 337–58; Mark Coeckelbergh, 'Drones, information technology, and distance: Mapping the moral epistemology of remote fighting', *Ethics and Information Technology*, 15:2 (2013), pp. 87–98.

³⁴John Williams, 'Distant intimacy: Space, drones, and just war', *Ethics & International Affairs*, 29:1 (2015), pp. 93–110; William Walters, 'Drone strikes, dingpolitik and beyond: Furthering the debate on materiality and security', *Security Dialogue*, 45:2 (2014), pp. 101–18.

humanitarian principles are mobilised to embrace the drone as a cleaner or more humane form of war. Put differently, the drone is the ideal vehicle to realise the promise of a humanitarian war.

These claims have been subject to intense scrutiny and drones have been criticised for lowering the threshold of violence, normalising new types of military action, violating international law, undermining classical principles of armed conflict, and initiating sweeping new systems for the management of life.³⁵ Critics further argue that drones produce a form of risk transfer warfare that transforms gendered, raced, and otherised populations into acceptable casualties of war.³⁶ Underlying drone warfare is a move to what Derek Gregory calls the 'scopic' view of war in which the battlefield is understood through a god's eye trick.³⁷ This trick alters the social and cultural logics that determine when bodies are vulnerable and creates mobile kill zones where performances of gender, age, and dress are all recruited to legitimate acts of killing. Gregoire Chamayou has brilliantly demonstrated that drone warfare undermines the very distinctions that formalise and legitimate both armed conflict and ethical principles of armed violence.³⁸ Recent works by Hugh Gusterson, Lauren Wilcox, and others reveal how drones promote new forms of phenomenology that both render their operators intimately connected to their targets, but also transform them into invulnerable bodies.³⁹

The attention given to drone warfare has led to the neglect of drone proliferation in other domains. For instance, during the past five years drones have become increasingly important for humanitarian relief efforts and figure prominently in political imaginaries about the future of humanitarianism. Humanitarian drones also encounter the problems of 'remote intimacy' and the 'scopic' regimes of visibility, but with different consequences. Indeed, the repurposing of drones for humanitarian ends begs the question of whether technics are simply tools subject to the aims of the user or non-human entities that, through their relations with humans and other non-humans, change political processes. This section briefly introduces two examples of humanitarian drone use: UN relief missions and the development of edible drones for the purpose of emergency aid. Each example reveals how drones alter the underlying imaginary of humanitarian practice. Perhaps unsurprisingly, endorsements of the drone often accompany a reduction of vulnerable populations to a status that the philosopher Giorgio Agamben calls 'bare life'.⁴⁰ Paradoxically, drones produce new, unthought models of ethics and generosity.

The first UN humanitarian mission to deploy drones occurred in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) under the Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. The drones provided real-time visual imagery of Kinshasa, which facilitated reforms and diplomatic pressure during the civil conflict.⁴¹ In this setting, the drones were defended as providing accurate

³⁵For an overview, see Ian G. R. Shaw, *Predator Empire: Drone Warfare and Full Spectrum Dominance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

³⁶Derek Gregory, 'From a view to a kill: Drones and late modern war', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 28:7–8 (2011), p. 192.

³⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 190–1.

³⁸Grégoire Chamayou, *A Theory of the Drone*, trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: The New Press, 2015), pp. 167–76. Chamayou's rich work on the drone actually offers an interesting point of contrast in critical discourse on non-humans. In an earlier piece, in an effort to describe the role the drone increasingly takes in contemporary warfare he embraces a curious line: '[The drone] is the mechanical, flying and robotic heir of the dog of war.' In a rich footnote, Chamayou notes the privileged place dogs of war are often afforded in cynegetic politics. However, in relation to this piece, he does not comment on the rich presence of the non-human as more than metaphor in the unfolding of armed conflict. In this sense, the previous commentary on demining also retrieves the tracking capacities of non-human dogs for the purposes of addressing the excesses of armed conflict. Perhaps Chamayou's somewhat figurative statement ignores that the affects of the war dog likely produced very different configurations of political space and violence than the modern drones. Gregoire Chamayou, 'The manhunt doctrine', *Radical Philosophy*, 169 (2011), p. 4.

³⁹Lauren Wilcox, 'Embodying algorithmic war: Gender, race, and the posthuman in drone warfare', *Security Dialogue*, 48:1 (2017), pp. 11–28; Hugh Gusterson, *Drone: Remote Control Warfare* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2016).

⁴⁰Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 6.

⁴¹Kasajja Philip Apuuli, 'The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) in United Nations peacekeeping: the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo', *ASIL*, 18:13 (2014), pp. 1–5.

information to the commanders in charge of the Peacekeeping Operation thereby ensuring that operations and confidence building measures were successful. Since 2013, the UN has expanded the number of UAVs in the DRC and Mali and has recommended deployments for Darfur and South Sudan. UN officials argue that the advantages of drones are strictly informational since they use various sensors and thermal imagery and track the movement of both large crowds and individuals.⁴² Effectively, this expands the scale of the data available to UN missions to enable more precise mechanisms of surveillance and, consequently, conflict resolution and peace-keeping. By using drones exclusively for peacekeeping purposes, advocates maintain that UN drones avoid the pitfalls of militarised drone use.

However, the humanitarian context does not render the use of this technology unproblematic. Rather, the justification for deploying humanitarian drones is predicated on their ability to extend vision into inhospitable environments and reproduces the problems outlined by Gregory, Chamayou, Wilcox, and others. At basic, the drone presupposes and generates a distinction between friendly and hostile, proximate and remote spaces thereby recreating the militarised division between humanitarians, the forces they face, and the people they protect and mobilises these divisions for the purpose of humanitarian governance. In doing so, drones not only reinforce the growing discourse on the necessity of securitising humanitarians, but institute a spatial and temporal separation between the recipients and providers of humanitarian aid. The drone-humanitarian relation enables the emergence of a paradigm of 'humanitarian immunity' analogous to the combatant immunity status generated by drone warfare.⁴³

Humanitarian immunity shifts practices of humanitarian relief in several ways. First, by affording humanitarian organisations the ability to deliver aid without directly interacting with the people they serve, the drone thickens the social distance between these groups. While this point of contact is often idealised in humanitarian literature, drones preclude the very problematic relations formed in the encounter with the other. Second, in armed conflict, drones break up the 'phenomenological unity' that makes the act of killing psychologically difficult.⁴⁴ In the context of humanitarianism, the introduction of scopic regimes of visibility and the interruption of 'phenomenological unity' similarly interferes with the formation of sympathies and sentiments, emotions, and affects, which theoretically inform the delivery of humanitarian care.⁴⁵ Third, the use of drones in military contexts creates exploitable anxieties and fears in target populations subjected to continual aerial observation and humanitarian drones recreate these dynamics. While humanitarian drones may be unarmed, this is neither immediately apparent from the ground nor likely to change the affective dynamics of remote surveillance.⁴⁶ As a result, the presence of drones may incite unpredictable patterns into conflict as ambiguous, possibly threatening entities rather than passive devices for gathering information. Lastly, the presence of surveillance drones in humanitarian emergencies opens the possibility of extending drones for other, more militarised purposes since the line separating observation and violence-capacity is almost non-existent in the age of drone warfare. Unsurprisingly, the arguments in favour of drone-based aid view drones in terms of instrumental rationality and ignore how assemblages of drones, humans, and humanitarian institutions transform practices rather than simply making them more efficient. The paradigm of instrumental rationality, in contrast, treats the drone as little more than a tool of technocratic governance guided by humanitarian principles. This image

⁴²John Karsrud and Frederik Rosén, 'In the eye of the beholder? UN and the use of drones to protect civilian', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 2:2 (2013), pp. 1–10, 27.

⁴³For a brilliant description of how humanitarian compounds and vehicles securitise humanitarians see Smirl, *Spaces of Aid*, pp. 4–7.

⁴⁴Chamayou, *A Theory of the Drone*, pp. 114–26.

⁴⁵Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, pp. 1–21; Sharon Siwinski, 'The aesthetics of human rights', *Culture, Theory and Critique*, 1 (2009), pp. 23–39.

⁴⁶Kristin Bergtora Sandvik and Kjersti Lohne, 'The rise of the humanitarian drone: Giving content to an emerging concept', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 43:1 (2014), pp. 157–60.

legitimises a wider, more remote form of control with uncertain implications for the future delivery of aid.

The repurposing of drones for humanitarian endeavours has also altered the aspirations of drone research. These changes involve speculative visions about the future of computation, new marketing opportunities, designing and engineering novel platforms, and thin aspirations to give humanitarianism a futuristic reboot. For example, Nigel Gifford's organisation, Windhorse Aerospace, has been working to develop a new type of drone, which it calls the 'Pouncer'.⁴⁷ Unlike existing drones, the Pouncer is billed as a humanitarian technology that will send food to remote humanitarian crises. Unlike other drones, it is explicitly advertised as eliminating the necropolitical aspects of remote warfare.⁴⁸ According to Windhorse's materials, the Pouncer will be designed to carry vacuum-sealed foodstuffs, but the engineering components of the drone will also be made of consumable matter. The Pouncer will therefore both serve as the means of transporting food and water to a remote location and as a digestible resource itself. Windhorse engineers have explored the possibility of, for instance, constructing the Pouncer out of condensed vegetable composites. Windhorse also boasts that the Pouncer will be successfully able to land within a seven-metre radius of an established target and will be marketed as a prefabricated technology with only the GPS coordinates necessary for deployment. At a substantially lower weight and cost than traditional drones, the Pouncer will enhance mission flexibility and the delivery of aid to many locations simultaneously. The Pouncer is thus promoted as a thoroughly efficient, humanitarian device.⁴⁹

While the Pouncer remains in development and, like many forms of technological futurism, overtly, perhaps implausibly, optimistic, the discourses on the Pouncer reflect the technocratic tendencies operating within humanitarianism with unconsidered consequences. Inexpensive Pouncers could, for example, undermine the need for humanitarian relief workers to physically reach disaster sites at the same speed thereby shortchanging existing humanitarian operations. The capacity of Pouncers to deliver food without the possibility of human casualties also supports the paradigm of humanitarian immunity. The success of this tactic of drone aid will likewise depend on centralising control over the distribution of aid within humanitarian compounds and headquarters and eliminating the face-to-face contact that allegedly defines classical practices of humanitarianism.

At the same time, the Pouncer raises other interesting questions from the perspective of non-human-human interactions and critical design. According to Windhorse's vision, the Pouncer is simply a perishable commodity marketed to the humanitarian context through the prism of instrumental rationality. However, drones are not simply tools, but entities that, through their interaction with humans, modify political possibility. In this sense, the Pouncer's appearance within humanitarianism offers a subtle, but revolutionary vision of ethical responsibility because the Pouncer is arguably the first form of semi-autonomous, self-delivering foodstuffs. In this respect, Windhorse's designs for the Pouncer actually introduce a new practice almost by accident in which non-humans, with some degree of self-organising power, sacrifice themselves, by being consumed, in the delivery of humanitarian aid. The Pouncer is thus definitively not a mediator – in Bruno Latour's sense – but the site of the invention of a new relationship between 'food source' and 'food consumer' in which the substance, food, is ascribed some degree of agency and self-direction or cultivation within humanitarian discourses, and that practically will deliver itself for the purposes of aid. In contrast with more traditional humanitarian supply

⁴⁷David Pilling, 'UK company develops edible drones to feed hungry', *Financial Times*, available at: {<https://www.ft.com/content/6d43c762-07cb-11e7-ac5a-903b21361b43>} accessed 14 March 2017; 'This is the world's first edible, humanitarian drone', *Business Insider*, available at: {<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-worlds-first-edible-drone-2016-9>} accessed 16 March 2017.

⁴⁸Jamie Allinson, 'The necropolitics of drones', *International Political Sociology*, 9:2 (2015), pp. 113–27.

⁴⁹Pilling, 'UK company develops edible drones to feed hungry'.

strategies such as dropping food from mobile airplanes or helicopters, the Pouncer suggests the possibility of a non-human humanitarian ethic devoted fully to supporting the life of the other, to the point of self-sacrifice. This possibility reverses a much larger trajectory of food procurement, not only within humanitarian practice, but also in the evolutionary and social habits of human beings who either through physical labour or social hierarchy produce foodstuffs. The Pouncer, in contrast, envisions a mode of nourishment that self-transport. Hence, the Pouncer intersects with a series of questions about diet, cultural habits, health and nourishment, but also the role of non-humans in the nourishment of human bodies. Unlike vegetation that must be gathered or grown, or non-human animals, which must be hunted and killed, the Pouncer will present itself exclusively for the purposes of consumption. The Pouncer's novelty is thus not just in extending the world of drone technics into the humanitarian field, but in widening the question of the politics of eating as both human, humanitarian, and non-human practice. Unlike a humanitarian action premised on remoteness, the Pouncer's aid would literally bio-energetically replenish the body of an aid recipient and, in doing so, disappear in the act of giving itself to the other. As such, a different model of ethical engagement is at work in the production of the Pouncer. While it is difficult to pinpoint the layers of agency at stake in this design, the edible drone raises the question of how to analytically distinguish the physical systems surrounding the delivery of aid, the actual material 'assistance' of aid and the multiplicity of non-humans at work in these processes. If the drone typically is understood through the prisms of remoteness and social distance that enable violence then the Pouncer highlights layers of non-human generosity at work within aid relationships when understood from a perspective that de-emphasises human agency.

Diagrams of relief

As humanitarian enclaves, refugee camps facilitate emergency shelter in response to ecological disasters and political violence.⁵⁰ However, camps have also been criticised as liminal spaces of control that treat their denizens as little more than bodies to be governed. To date, the critical conversation about refugee camps has focused on the question of the forms of exclusion and resistance at work in these spaces while the material or non-human dimensions of camps, including the built environment, has received comparatively little analysis.⁵¹ This section does not address the physical agencies assembling refugee camps such as tent fabric, latrines, barbed wire, or rope.⁵² Rather, it examines the production and circulation of diagrams of camp space and, more specifically, two models of the camp: the standard UN 'Family Tent' and the more recent Transitional Shelter (T-Shelter), which was first deployed at the Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps in Jordan.⁵³ Diagrams are not typically understood as non-human agencies because they originate from human designers. Yet, in some sense, the work of figures like Michel Foucault demonstrates

⁵⁰Dan Bully, 'Inside the tent: Community and government in refugee camps', *Security Dialogue*, 45:1 (2014), pp. 63–80; Charlie Hailey, *Camps: A Guide to 21st-Century Space* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2009); Sarah Kenyon Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

⁵¹For repetition of this theme, see Agier, *Managing the Undesireables*; Agamben, *Homo Sacer*; Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973).

⁵²Anna Feigenbaum, Fabian Frenzel, and Patrick McCurdy, 'Protest camps', in Mark Salter (ed.), *Making Things International 2: Catalysts and Reactions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), pp. 49–62; Alexander D. Barder, 'Barbed wire', in Salter (ed.), *Making Things International 2*, pp. 32–48; Andreas Folkers and Nadine Marquardt, 'Tent', in Salter (ed.), *Making Things International 2*, pp. 63–78; Peter Redfield, 'Vital mobility and the humanitarian kit', in Andrew Lakoff and Stephen J. Collier (eds), *Biosecurity Interventions: Global Health and Security in Question* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 147–72.

⁵³Shelter Working Group-Jordan, 'T-Shelter for Azraq Refugee Camp' (UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency, 16 March 2015), available at: http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/working_group.php?Page=Country&LocationId=107&Id=10 accessed 15 August 2017.

that diagrams, such as the Panopticon, may have sweeping political implications that exceed the intention of their creators.⁵⁴ Given the critical concerns about refugee camps, diagrams are often overlooked as non-human objects that participate in the production of humanitarianism and, as such, are a fruitful site to expand on the subtle powers of non-human humanitarians.

Camp diagrams operate at several scales. At the most abstract level, diagrams engage in an ordering of spatial and temporal relationships that demarcate the boundaries between the interior and exterior of an encampment. In the interiority of a camp, subdivisions occur between areas for housing units (whether tents or concrete structures), medical support, food distribution, transit routes and pathways for service vehicles, lines for clean water and sanitation, entries and exits, sentries and officers.⁵⁵ Scale involves questions of the built design and architecture of individual shelters as camp administration encounters the problem of orchestrating the movement of bodies, food, water, and medicine. Yet, encampment also involves basic questions pertaining to the construction of each shelter out of material components, which ultimately function by isolating bodies from unfavourable environmental conditions.⁵⁶ Camp diagrams thus operate across macro, meso, and micro scales and their segmented character lends them to expansive paradigms of governance with the capacity to control every aspect of life from the safety and security of camp residents to the simple ability to sleep.⁵⁷

During the past decade, the UNHCR and related agencies have created a number of different diagrams that offer alternative designs for refugee camps. The *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter*, for instance, privileges two strategic priorities in camp design, which it describes as ‘settlement’ and ‘shelter’. The document emphasises that refugee camps should develop a “response master plan” [that] should define the *best settlement typologies* to be adopted in a given context and should ensure that settlements relate to each other and to the existing government ... It should be based on a *macro, meso, and micro scale analysis* whereby a particular settlement is designed taking into account the network of services, infrastructures and resources available in the settlement’s vicinity.⁵⁸ The ‘master plan’ refers to the most abstract level of a camp diagram, which defines the camp as a suitable response to the problem of refugees. In the language of the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter* traces an ‘abstract machine’, but without determining in advance how the different elements of this machine work together.⁵⁹ This abstractness generates an ‘elastic’ relationship between the camp and other political, economic, and environmental factors including the availability of resources, cost, population growth, and relation to local polities. Refugee camps are thus designed to be isomorphic across geographical, social, and environmental differences without being identical. As such, the mode of governance of camps may produce similar effects in terms of political exclusion (or resistance), but do so through highly variable means.⁶⁰ The document continues: ‘shelter assistance should, therefore, be tailored around these variables. *It cannot be standardized.* Planning and responding to shelter needs is a contextual and dynamic process.’⁶¹ While it is important to recognise that contingencies impact encampments, this

⁵⁴Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), pp. 195–230.

⁵⁵UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency, *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter: A UNHCR Strategy 2014–2018* (Division of Programme Support and Management, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2014).

⁵⁶Hailey, *Camps*, pp. 16–18.

⁵⁷Suzan Ilcan and Kim Rygiel demonstrate how even the capacities to resist the camp environment often extend political control of the camps. See “‘Resiliency humanitarianism’: Responsibilizing refugees through humanitarian emergency governance in the camp’, *International Political Sociology*, 9 (2015), pp. 333–51; Bully, ‘Inside the tent’, pp. 67–70.

⁵⁸UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter*, p. 19, emphasis added.

⁵⁹Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 54.

⁶⁰Heather L. Johnson, *Borders, Asylum and Global Non-Citizenship: The Other Side of the Fence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 80–2.

⁶¹UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter*, p. 22, emphasis added.

statement is also paradoxical insofar as it proposes camp shelter as a standard response to the problem of refugees while explicitly rejecting the possibility of standardising camps.

What accounts for the paradoxical disavowal and endorsement of the standardisation of the refugee camp? The answer is the document's attraction to the diagram of the camp rather than one specific image or physical space of the camp. In this respect, the key features of camp diagrams are topological – concerned with continuities and discontinuities – that can be adapted to multiple environments. Note the line in the first quoted section of the guide that argues for adopting a 'master plan' with the best possible settlement typology. Each of these camp typologies recreates an underlying topology that establishes relations, points of connection, between the interior and exterior of the camp spaces. As a topology designed to interiorise some elements (refugees, tents, people, etc.) and exteriorise others, the camp has an incredible capacity to expand or contract, morph into new shapes or form interconnected vacuoles linked via linear corridors or non-linear connections. This 'elastic' quality is what enables the creation of multiple camp typologies so that camp spaces integrate into larger networks, contract into miniature spaces, or expand to mimic the scale of traditional urban spaces.⁶² Elasticity makes refugee camps valuable instruments for crisis management, but, simultaneously, vastly expands their potential to exclude or promote political violence.⁶³ As the architect Eyal Weizman demonstrates, humanitarian projects often operate according to a logic of the lesser evil as a means of legitimating and expanding humanitarian governance. The lesser evil embraces the minimisation of violence, but, in doing so, subtly justifies expanding and normalising violence. In this context, the 'master plan' strategy seeks to establish 'the best of all possible camps', selecting among several typologies, without critically addressing the political implications of the camp diagram itself.⁶⁴ Indeed, if the topological diagram of the camp operates as an abstract, non-human component of the creation of camp spaces then camp systems are not a by-product solely of human intentions, but an outcome of a design process, which consistently recurs across a variety of camp spaces. This diagram results partly from the functional problems that develop from sheltering a large, mobile population, but is also emergent feature of camps that differentiate them from other institutions. The emergence of a diagram of the camp thus not only regulates elements of camp construction, but subtly normalises political and moral imperatives of humanitarian governance.⁶⁵

Of course, camp diagrams are not only abstract, but material entities that emerge in inscription, representation, imagery, and transcription. The abstract design of the camp is thus an actant *alongside and within* camp spaces that is visible, touchable, and traceable. To study this aspect of camps, it is worth looking at diagrams as textual or pictographic objects within humanitarian manuals and reports. The recommendations of guides such as *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter* assume that camp diagrams are not just abstract topologies, but concrete non-human objects that support the replication of physical shelters from the collaboration of human bodies with tools, supplied materials as well as outlines and pictures in engineering guides and manuals. Comparing two camp diagrams illustrates this point. The standard UN 'Family Tent' is a regular emergency sheltering system, which was redesigned in the mid-1990s and is produced by multiple manufacturers. Devised for five inhabitants, the total tent weighs approximately 55 kg, has roughly 23 m of space, and an exterior secured with multiple poles. Diagramming materials from the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), UNHCR, and other organisations employ actual images of the necessary components and assembly

⁶²Benjamin Meiches, 'A political ecology of the camp', *Security Dialogue*, 46:5 (2015), pp. 488–90.

⁶³Adam Ramadan, 'Spatialising the refugee camp', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38:1 (2013), pp. 65–77.

⁶⁴Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*, pp. 3–9.

⁶⁵Johnson, *Borders, Asylum and Global Non-Citizenship*, pp. 21–31. See also Liisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

instructions to ensure that remote humanitarian operations are capable of swiftly deploying units.⁶⁶ The diagrams are also accompanied by questions and prompts about the appropriateness of the tent to the humanitarian context and the need for potential adaptations of the family tent. In contrast, the recently developed T-shelters used at Azraq, Zaatari, and other refugee camps rely on different images.⁶⁷ Unlike the standard 'Family Tent', T-shelters use metal cladding, aluminum insulation, plastic roofing, and a steel structure, which 'produce a more durable shelter space developed for windy, dry climates'.⁶⁸ The resulting structure facilitates a larger total area, but simultaneously contracts space. Much like the 'Family Tent', operational instructions include considerations of the economic, ecological, and social implications of T-shelters as well as the ease of access and construction. In this sense, the imperatives guiding camp construction generate two isomorphic, but visually distinct structures that both provide shelter and introduce the complexities of humanitarian governance.

However, the actual diagrams are also material objects written and depicted in manuals that include 3D designs, scaffolds and blueprints, component lists, and instructions or guidelines for construction work. The widespread construction of the 'Family Tent' and T-shelter presupposes the dissemination of these diagrams. In effect, the diagram actually governs the construction of a shelter space and, consequently, has ramifications that scale up to the construction of the camp space as a whole. By enabling non-engineers, volunteers, and other personnel to produce camps, the relationship between human service workers and the diagram introduce a new set of capacities by converting the latent potential of a set of materials (concrete, plastic, fabric, steel, etc.) into an actionable shelter space. In this way, the manual diagrams renders concrete the abstract topology of the camp and converts it into a working model for the formation of political space. Absent the manual, second-order questions of how to best govern camp spaces according to multiple typologies or the selection of the most appropriate camp for the context disappear since the guides are critical to standardising elements of camp construction and, hence, imperatives of governance. Diagrams thus reinforce humanitarian governance as a way of making camp topologies actionable to humanitarian labourers who would otherwise face profound difficulties constituting a camp based on isomorphic principles. The fact that the diagrams counsel for variation in camp models while subtly promoting isomorphic design, illustrates how the intervention of non-humans is crucial to reproducing a similar paradigm of governance throughout humanitarian politics. It also suggests that the control of humanitarian spaces often occurs on paper, in the form of imaginaries and drawings, long before physical camp spaces comes into being.⁶⁹

Moreover, the politics of the diagram, how the models work, the impact they have for camp labourers and denizens, the forethought in their design and artistry have never been fully studied. The assumption that these diagrams exist solely as limited sketches, crafted for the widest possible audience, significantly diminishes their role in the production of humanitarian spaces. To underline the point, the emergence of massive self-organised camp spaces indicates that while refugee camp design is important, it does not necessarily require formal oversight or diagramming, but can occur as an itinerant, auto-poetic reconstruction of space with its own self-organised possibilities of control and resistance.⁷⁰ Consequently, the diagram of the camp, a key non-human object that would not be present in a self-organised camp, is doing more than simply explaining how to build a shelter or formalising a construction process, rather, the diagram is a

⁶⁶Shelter Working Group-Jordan, 'Site Planning and Shelter Camp Restructure Project: Za'atari Refugee Camp-Mafraq' (UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency, 29 June 2016), available at: {http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/working_group.php?Page=Country&LocationId=107&Id=10} accessed 16 August 2017.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Eyal Weizman, *Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability* (Boston: Zone Books, 2017).

⁷⁰On self-organization of urban spaces, see Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (New York: Zone Books, 1997), pp. 25–102; on the emergence of self-organized camps, see Agier, *Managing the Undesireables*, pp. 41–58.

crucial non-human object that supports the articulation of a paradigm of political governance relatable and acceptable to humans by accommodating specific processes of construction. The non-human diagram of the camp thus works at several levels with practical effects. First, it actualises a topology that makes the refugee camp governable according to logics of inclusion and exclusion. Second, as an iterative, reproducible image, it designs the construction of refugee camps in divergent areas in accordance with isomorphic political imperatives. Third, the guide makes it possible for humanitarians to experience an affective sense of accomplishment and mastery that makes the work of producing camp spaces more ‘enriching’ and ‘rewarding’ affects of accomplishment. As a result, the work of encampment, though subtle, works to reify problematic elements of humanitarian governance even as it produces livable shelters. The interest and importance of diagrams in recent humanitarian literature underscores that the diagram itself, as a non-human entity, is a critical to the growth of humanitarian governance. Absent this participation, the capacity to normalise refugee camps as a political site might never occur at the same scale. The example thus demonstrates how non-human humanitarians not only open up new ethical or generous models of humanitarianism, but also support the articulation of more rigid political arrangements.

Post-humanitarianism

Dogs, drones, and diagrams are only a small sample of the non-human entities at work in humanitarianism. Their presence signals a need to reconsider the cogency of humanitarian principles, practices, and politics and to complicate efforts to theorise the non-human in IR. This section briefly summarises the implications of the fecund, often problematic relations formed between non-human and human humanitarians.

Non-human humanitarians call into question the principles that ground traditional humanitarian politics. Orthodox accounts of humanitarianism explain the genesis of humanitarian politics on the basis of shared sentiment and compassion. In specific, the existence of human empathy, as a unique faculty, allows individual human beings to recognise and relate to the suffering of others. By beginning with an assumption about human capacity for compassion and compassionate-reason, humanitarianism stipulates that a fundamental equality exists among all human beings as a consequence of being capable of accessing one another’s experience. Therefore, the virtue of treating others with respect and dignity comes to be recognised as a universal value through mechanisms of compassion. In this sense, humanitarian politics makes the capacity for human empathy both a defining feature of human life and the key mechanism for realising this value in politics. Unfortunately, as Didier Fassin explains, this is also ‘a politics of inequality’ predicated on a distinction between precarious lives that must be empathised with and non-precarious lives that must activate the affective machinery of empathy to make humanitarian politics deliver on its promise of a more ethical world. This model assumes that the mechanics of empathy, the affects of projection and connection with other human beings, translated into politics will have a productive effect by reducing the possibility of violence. In doing so, humanitarianism makes a series of problematic assumptions about the relation between self and other.⁷¹ The danger of these assumptions is aptly summarised by Jonathan Boyarin: ‘the hegemony of empathy as an ethic of the obliteration of otherness ... occurs where humanism demands the acknowledgment of the Other’s suffering humanity ... where the paradoxical linkage of shared humanity and cultural otherness cannot be expressed’.⁷² Humanitarian politics effaces otherness by presupposing the universal mechanisms of empathy and obfuscating the differential circumstances of politics, but then reasserts these differences in order to justify acts of

⁷¹Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, p. 3.

⁷²Jonathan Boyarin, *Storms of Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 86.

power such as intervention or remote governance. In this respect, humanitarianism constitutes a mode of governance over precarious life.⁷³

Non-human humanitarians complicate this critique in two ways. First, non-humans challenge the assumption that compassion and empathy are exclusive, natural, or universal human capacities and, in this sense, contest a fundamental principle of humanitarianism. However, in contrast to deconstructive approaches, non-human humanitarians illustrate how sentiments, technologies, and processes of compassion and control (and their mixture) develop from the contingent relations formed through the collaboration of non-human and human entities. The problem with humanitarian politics is thus not necessarily the emphasis on empathy per se, but the presumption that empathy originates exclusively from humans and works in relatively transparent, universal ways. The example of non-human humanitarians challenge both of these aspects of humanitarianism.

For instance, the demining dog's capacity to produce more joyful work in the minefield is not a form of compassion in the sense traditionally considered by humanitarianism, nor is it a result of the dog's intrinsic features. Rather, it is an emergent form of generosity that builds on a series of relations operative in the context of humanitarian practices. These relations include biological coevolution of olfactory sensitivity, training regimes, ecological and interpersonal interaction, and the ability to socialise without the same constitutive burdens of speech, translation, and position. Similarly, camp diagrams operate as co-participants into the organisation of political space. As material objects, pictures, and models, and also abstract ideals, referenced in guides, they facilitate the transposition of governance across linguistic, social, and political difference. Their movement throughout the bureaucracy and institutions of humanitarian governance consequently facilitates micropolitics of control on a global scale.⁷⁴ Non-human/human relations thus provide a different account of the genesis of the limits and benefits of humanitarian politics, which can be read in the material production of space.

If non-human humanitarians demonstrate that compassion is assembled rather than intrinsic to humanity then they raise a second, related, challenge to the principles of humanitarianism. Namely, non-human humanitarians problematise the need to emphasise the human in humanitarian politics. In some sense, humanitarianism has always been a politics of interrelation because it concerns the commensurability of feelings of pain, suffering, and sympathy across relations of social difference. However, in traditional humanitarian discourses, the main point of emphasis is the way in which the natural capacity for empathy and connection enables human beings to dignify and constitute one another as subjects worthy of protection. Non-human humanitarians, to the contrary, reveal that this imagined site of empathic commonality is not essentially human. Instead, non-humans enjoin and encourage the production of generosity, care for (and control of) the other in many different ways, many of which do not resonate with this model. As such, non-human humanitarians reveal the arbitrariness of the assumptions about the complementary character of human empathy and the fragility of relying on a politics in the name of the human. Non-humans similarly demonstrate the arbitrary enclosures operating in debates about humanitarianism, which exclusively value and prioritise the figure of the human. The mere existence of non-human humanitarians poses questions about the capacity of humanitarian politics to engage in forms of expropriation and marginalisation of those forms of life that do not register with the underlying image of human faculties. In this regard, non-human humanitarians reveal the limits of orthodox humanitarian politics and reveal it not only as the governance, but also the production of precarious life.

However, if, as this article demonstrates, the differential relations formed in the encounters between humans and non-human humanitarians produce new types of generosity then the practices of non-human humanitarians also unsettle systems of intelligibility and normative

⁷³Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004), pp. 118–19.

⁷⁴Agier, *Managing the Undesireables*, pp. 3–11.

valuation that reinforce hierarchy and power in humanitarian politics. Examining the genesis of generosity would thus require not only a more reflexive examination of the limits and categories of the human, but a more experimental form of engagement with emergent capacities for generosity that develop through the collaborative labour of humans and non-human others. To illustrate the point, consider existing experiments in animal rights, which make an effort to stretch humanitarian and liberal legal terms to non-human animals. These are productive, pragmatic efforts, but they work to adjust and slightly expand rather than recast underlying political ontology. In contrast, in the more liminal space where non-human humanitarians operate, the problem of equity, recognition, empathic identification, and mutual cooperation are often less regulated by legal and political regimes. As such, there are real experiments ongoing, even if unrecognised in these terms, between humans and non-humans over how to support life and existence in the face of incommensurable circumstances, what constitutes a means of inciting concern, care, and control for otherness? In this sense, non-human humanitarianism contests the anthropocentric privilege that structures humanitarian domains and, through their relation with humans, show that forms of generosity emerge, not from principled accounts of anthropocentric compassion, but messy, contingent, and fraught interactions. The shift entails a move away from abstract principles of human welfare and empathy and one into the thicket of weird relations generated between humans and non-human things. This move involves risk because it abandons the pretension to a universalism based in compassion and instead plunges politics into a terrain that is co-constituted and, as such, incommensurable to existing standards of value, but, in the spirit of Jacques Derrida, it is a politics far more open to the potential for other modes of relation, other others, and other futures.⁷⁵

Shifting the point of emphasis of humanitarian politics in this way also has practical complications. First, it illustrates the dangers of a paradigm of humanitarianism increasingly attracted to remote, technocratic regimes of governance and the securitisation of humanitarian life. In parallel, it challenges the construction of urgency in humanitarian politics as predicated on a narrow understanding of the potentials for humanitarian action. Non-human humanitarians thus introduce different temporalities and spatialities into the horizon of humanitarian politics and merit a reconsideration of the closure of debate on the subject of intervention. It also shows how the liminal spaces and zones of exceptionality that emerge in humanitarian governance and that are often read purely as a site of dangerous political control are also a space of what Giorgio Agamben calls ‘anomie’ and the formation of new modes of ethics and life.⁷⁶ Second, non-human humanitarians call for a reconsideration of the relations, agencies, and forms of life that make humanitarian ventures productive and problematic. Drones, for instance, exist in productive relation with other actors in the humanitarian field. Understanding non-humans purely as tools misrepresents how these technologies not only changes the efficiency, but also the intensity and therefore the character of humanitarian politics. Humanitarian politics thus must begin to consider the exigency of matter as a constitutive element not just in the delivery, but formation of humanitarian services.

Lastly, non-human humanitarians offer a cautionary note regarding critiques of non-human politics emerging in IR. New forms of object and material analysis often task themselves with theoretically puncturing the fantasy of human prowess, agency, and importance in global politics. While this article resonates with this goal, non-human humanitarians also illustrate that non-human theory can also introduce greater complexity into traditional areas of human politics and, in fact, deepen the appreciation of the capacities that these aspirations engender. Critiques are often too quick to abandon the figure of the human as if human life and politics were not already crisscrossed by multiple relations that render rich sites of theoretical and ethical elaboration possible. Non-human humanitarians thus caution against criticising human endeavours too

⁷⁵Jacques Derrida, ‘Hospitality’, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 5:3 (2002), pp. 3–18.

⁷⁶Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, p. 185.

zealously or evacuating human agency too thoroughly. Instead, they suggest that even domains obstinately and discursively identified as most fully 'human' involve relations and constituents that are more than human. In this regard, non-human humanitarians point out that humanitarian practice does signify a break with traditional ethical formulations of politics and does entail the genesis of novel modes of response to the other. In short, non-human theory not only showcases the limits of the human, but also the value of specific political endeavours. As non-humans become a more focal point in IR, this article demonstrates that these forms of theorisation should proceed with the ambition of creating more capacious forms of politics in tandem with human counterparts.

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