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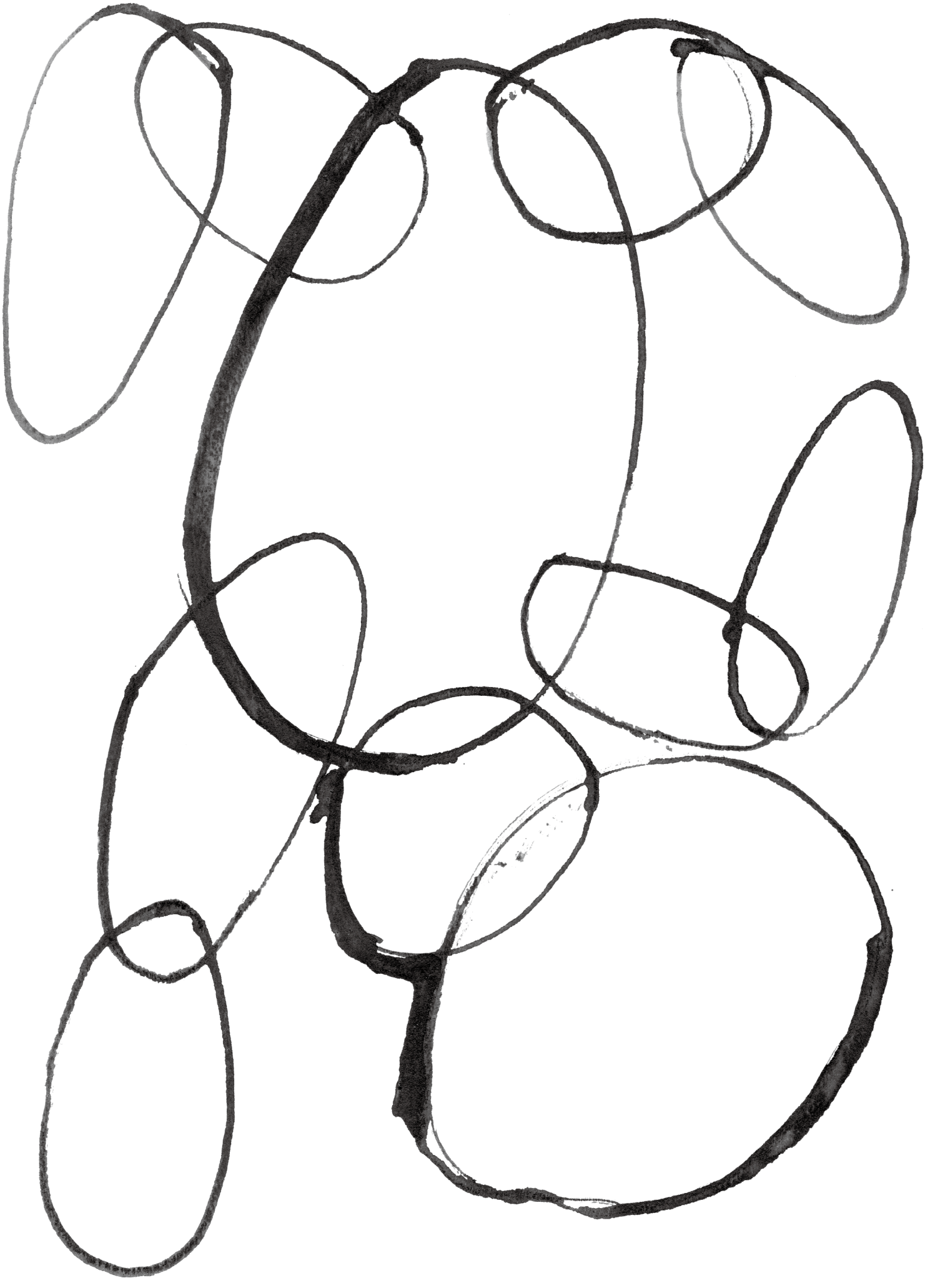
70 Years Minima Moralia

2021, issue 2



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Editorial

Krisis 41 (2): 1.

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Editorial

This issue of *Krisis* brings together a dossier of short essays as well as a number of stand-alone contributions to mark the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of Theodor Adorno's *Minima Moralia*. The latter's reflections on a damaged life, however, could be regarded as a model for all the materials collected in this issue; to paraphrase Adorno, it could be said that any contribution to *Krisis* aims to magnify certain splinters in the eye so as to catalyze social critique.

Adorno's aphorisms also remind us that the academic article is anything but the sole vehicle for philosophical reflection. As with our 2018 issue on "Marx from the Margins", our dossier on *Minima Moralia* consists of several dozen short essays that follow a looser, or even aphoristic, form. Together they form a constellation which, we hope, also underlines the need for more experimental modes of writing and publishing, within and beyond the form of the peer-reviewed article.

Harriet Bergman's article "Rising Sea Levels and the Right Wave" examines how the climate catastrophe might invoke further damage if we do not account for the "fascist creep" that lingers behind activist tropes which do not take into account the different responsibilities for, and implications of, climate breakdown. Bryan Doniger's "The Enthusiasm of Political Sequences" opens up pathways towards challenging the damaged life by proposing Sylvain Lazarus' notion of enthusiasm as the disposition to accompany transformational politics. Finally, in the article "Sanctuary Politics and the Borders of the Demos", Eva Meijer explicates the changing meaning of the sanctuary, for human and nonhuman animals, to shed light on underlying patterns of political inclusion and exclusion.

Lastly, four book reviews reflect on recent contributions to critical political and social theory. In his review-essay, Jamie van der Klaauw discusses the recent works of Willem Schinkel and Rogier van Reekum; in his review of Maurizio Lazzarato's *Capital Hates Everyone* (2021), Marius Nijenhuis situates this new work within Lazzarato's oeuvre; Janneke Toonders reviews Ashley J. Bohrer's *Marxism and Intersectionality* (2020); and Yvette Wijnandts engages with Katerina Kolozova's *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals* (2020).

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Rising Sea Levels and the Right Wave: An Analysis of the Climate Change Communication that Enables "the Fascist Creep."

Harriet Bergman

Krisis 41 (2): 2-18.

Abstract

Climate change communication can create space for a "fascist creep" by playing into fear and not communicating the different responsibilities for, and impacts of, climate breakdown. This paper gives a brief overview of past and current of eco-fascists and points towards tropes and ways of communicating that might give space for a fascist creep. These include the Anthropocene concept, the Extinction symbol, and calls for purity.

Keywords

Anthropocene, Climate Breakdown, Eco-Fascism, Privilege, Fear, Climate Change

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Rising Sea Levels and the Right Wave: An Analysis of the Climate Change Communication that Enables "the Fascist Creep."

Harriet Bergman

Introduction

The sea levels are rising, and so is the far right. In 2019, two terrorists, worried that environmental and racial degradation would threaten their way of life, planned and executed terrorist attacks in El Paso and Christchurch. They claimed to be eco-fascists. Eco-fascism refers to the ideology and style of politics that advocates ethnic nationalism as a response to environmental breakdown. The terrorists' concern about climate breakdown is well-founded: for many years, people have known about the consequences of climate change (Wallace-Wells 2019, 2; Oreskes and Conway 2010, chap. 1). Scientists warn that global warming will not stay below two degrees Celsius (Gasser et al. 2015, 2), and there is broad agreement that humankind's collective actions do not reflect this understanding (United Nations Environment Programme 2019). Especially among people and within countries with the most historical responsibility for CO^2 emissions, responses fall short (Tokar 2014, 16; Parks and Timmons Roberts 2009, 387; Williams 2021, 4). Meanwhile, the climate crisis is represented as a burden to be borne by everyone equally, one with a unique ability to inspire cooperation (Zetkin 2021, xvii; Swyngedouw 2013, 13). In reality, however, climate change will exacerbate existing inequalities, as it is marginalised and poor people who suffer first and most. Fossil-fuelled modernity constitutes a racialised and unequal class system, and the history of climate change and capitalism are tightly connected in ways that benefit a select group of white men (Yusoff 2018, 39; Szeman and Diamanti 2020, 138; Sealey-Huggins 2017, 101).

Mainstream Western climate change communication often leaves these topics – with their links to colonialism, imperialism, and privilege – out of the conversation. Moreover, insights from privilege theory are relatively rarely applied for analysing responses to climate change and environmental breakdown (Pellow and Park 2017, 143; Williams 2021, 98). According to privilege theories, people are privileged in so far as they measure up to the "mythical norm" that assumes that the standard person is a white, heterosexual, cis-gender, able-bodied, middle-class male (Lorde 2017, 96). In this paper, privilege refers to the idea that some aspects of one's identity make life easier, and that the experiences of others who lack these advantages are difficult for those with privilege to recognise. Although there have been discussions within the climate movement about how privilege influences the choice of tactics for activism – most notably from the Wretched of the Earth Collective critiquing Extinction Rebellion (2019) – the role of privilege in shielding oneself from different perspectives remains under-researched in relation to climate breakdown.

This paper aims to redirect academic attention to the revival of eco-fascism by analysing how unacknowledged privilege and its effect on climate change communication make it vulnerable to fascist co-optation. For the purposes of this paper, I describe instances of eco-fascism and point to some strains of thought or invocations of emotion that can facilitate the "fascist creep." This refers to the space the left creates

for fascism to "creep" into both radical political groups and subcultures as well as into mainstream discourse. The right wave, the metaphor chosen for the special issue on the New Right, emphasizes "aspects of the new rights' effective organizational and communicative practices" (2021, 2). A fascist wave is an accumulation of many tiny droplets which together form a movement capable of travelling in an unintended direction. Some of these droplets consist of appeals to victimhood and innocence; some droplets are declarations of emergency and threat. I argue that ethnic nationalists profit from appropriating fearful narratives about crisis and victimhood due to climate breakdown. This appropriation is likely to be expedited if climate communication obfuscates the unequal responsibilities for, and impact of, climate breakdown.

The Fascism in Eco-Fascism: the "Fascist Creep"

Eco-fascism is an understudied subject within both fascism studies and environmental studies. For example, in the global survey *The Far Right Today,* the only allusion to the influence climate breakdown and ecology could have on fascism is the mention of "eco-terrorism" (Mudde 2019, 132). Nor is it mentioned in *The Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right* (Rydgren 2018). Similarly, in *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society,* mention of fascism is limited to three sentences on "enviro-fascism" as one of the possible political responses to climate change (Gilman et al. 2011, 9). The recently published book by Andreas Malm and the Zetkin Collective, *White Skin, Black Fuel – on the danger of fossil Fascism,* aimed to bridge this research gap (2021). This paper delves into the ways in which climate activists might strengthen an eco-fascist wave.

Most scholars agree that fascism is a form of ultranationalist ideology and practice (Passmore 2002, 25). Ultranationalism is the strain of nationalism that promotes the interests of one people or state above those of everyone else. There seems to be a consensus that fascism employs specific techniques to inspire ultranationalism, namely the retreat to a past and appeals to threats of victimhood (Stanley 2019, chap. 6; Passmore 2002, 25). With fascism, I refer to both a political style and its aims: invoking fear, wishing for purity, harking back to a mythical past where all was good, a call for strong leadership to protect the innocent, and the promise of a better future. Eco-fascism, like fascism, is both contradictory and overdetermined. It would be beyond the scope of this article to give an exhaustive overview of its history and present state. However, ignoring eco-fascism in times of environmental collapse is a mistake. One way in which fascism can grow is by "seizing the popular narrative and public discourse" (Ross 2017, 259). Alexander Reid Ross argues that material conditions motivate both sides of the political spectrum; individuals who suffer material disenfranchisement can turn either to the left or the right for answers (2017, 258). Fascism can grow through absorbing and encouraging existing sentiments within society. However, just as material disenfranchisement can politicise someone, so can environmental degradation and extreme weather events.

Ross would argue that being alarmist about the climate, without analysing why and how it is breaking down, may result in some of those who became radicalised or politically active on the left of the political spectrum moving towards the extreme right (2017, 2). Following Ross, I call the little entry points that allow fascists to infiltrate or

co-opt a discourse, the "fascist creep." The fascist creep encompasses both the porous borders between the radical right and fascism and the "crossover space between right and left" (2017, 3). Ross analyses how fascism has used the space created by the left to creep into both mainstream and radical subcultures (2). The connection between ecology, nature, climate, and right-wing politics is not inherent, nor is it inevitable (Staudenmaier 2011, 25). However, neither are ecological issues by definition the terrain of social progressives. Contemplating fascism, Michael Zimmerman asks whether, "under mounting and political stress", ecology movements in advanced societies will be able to "avoid the risk of aligning themselves with these dark forces" (1995, 211). "Enviro-fascism" is a possible response to climate change that hard-right environmentalist parties might engage in, with the aim of protecting one's own ethnic group by restricting immigration and hoarding resources (Gilmann et al. 2012, 9). Claudia Card argues that ecological holism and ideas that emphasise the interconnectedness between humans and nature can and often are combined with "blood and soil" fascism, as well as sentiments like racism, xenophobia, and hatred for refugees (1996, 203).

With these definitions of fascism in mind, a movement or an individual can be called eco-fascist if they consider environmental destruction, or climate change, as a threat to "the racial integrity of the people" and demand a reorganisation of society in "terms of [an] authoritarian, collectivist leadership principle based on masculinist-martial values" (Zimmerman 1995, 209). Eco-fascistic describes those ways of communicating and invoking tropes that many scholars call fascistic: invoking fear and the need for protection, appealing to a united innocent "us" that needs protection from "them". Eco-fascism is the ideology that, instead of seeking a global approach to mitigate climate breakdown, aims to install a racially pure nation, protected from alien influences.

I Did Nazi that Coming: Eco-Fascism Past and Present

Around the turn of the last century, the German Boy Scout group die Wandervögel organised hikes into the woods, retreating into the wild to defy German bourgeois norms and enjoy the unadulterated purity of nature. Whilst they considered themselves apolitical, they realigned their practices and ideas some decades later when members of the group joined the Nazis (Staudenmaier 1996, 10). If, like the Weimar youth, people "were to think of their commitments only as matters of personal improvement and ignore the political contexts," they could be more easily exploited and co-opted (Card 1996, 203). The German biologist Walther Schoenichen was one of those who exploited a love of nature for fascistic ends. After a successful career in nature conservation, and many publications on the necessity of protecting German forests, he revealed his conservationism to be firmly aligned with his Nazism. The protection of nature and National socialism were tightly connected for Schoenichen because the *Volksgemeinschaft* to which Hitler aspired had its foundation in "blood and soil" (Zimmerman 1995, 216). "Blood and soil" refer to two things that must be pure: the blood of the *gemeinschaft*, and the soil that sustains it. The slogan "Blut und Boden" means that those born on the land must preserve it – especially against those who do not belong there. Schoenichen saw a link between being in nature and feeling part of a community. His work teaches that nature provides a place to contemplate a *volkisch* essence and forms the grounds for a

powerful connection with *Heimat* (Zimmerman, 220). Within Germany, there has thus been a history of nature-lovers who, either by ignoring political context or by seeing their love for nature in part as a love of purity, became fascistic.

Around the same time, on another continent, American conservationist Madison Grant founded the Bronx Zoo and several national parks and was lauded for his dedication to endangered flora and fauna. He also wrote *The Passing of the Great Race*, a book that Adolf Hitler considered "his bible" (Spiro 2009, xi). Grant dedicated his life to saving nature, to preserving endangered flora and fauna. This dedication to endangered species also extended to his own white race (Spiro, xii). For him, eugenics and conservation were two sides of the same coin, both preserving as much of the old America as possible (Spiro 2009, xii). Skipping forward to the 1980s, Karlo Pentii Linkola expressed admiration for the Nazis while he spoke to the Green Party in Finland about the need to get organised. The Finnish Forest conservationists argued that the solution to environmental degradation lies in stopping overpopulation (Tammilehto 2004). He argued that a Green Party member - if concerned about the environment - should:

> learn to harden his own heart when necessary. He will have to learn to ignore minor interests for the sake of bigger interests. He will have to learn to be feared and hated. (Linkola quoted by Tammilehto 2004).

Linkola is a proponent of "life-boat ethics," an ethics that prefers to save a few lives rather than trying to get everyone on board because there are only limited resources. In the same decade as Linkola's speech, the wilderness movement *Earth First!* adopted deep ecology and was accused of propagating eco-fascism (Reid Ross 2017, 124). According to deep ecology, postponing difficult political decisions now means that more drastic interventions will be required later in order to save humankind and the biosphere (Zimmerman 1995, 209). This should not be controversial in itself: the more CO_2 is emitted, the more likely it becomes that we will pass a point of no return. However, deep ecologists' focus on population control makes them susceptible to fascist appropriation (Zimmerman 1995, 215; Schrader-Frechette 2002, 5). Although it is possible to interpret deep ecology progressively, many accuse the philosophy of "indulging in the same kind of anti-humanistic and anti-individualist nature mysticism that paved the way for Nazi victory in a period of social, political, and 'ecological emergency'" (Zimmerman 1995, 226). Deep ecologist and *Earth First!* founder David Foreman claimed to see famine as a welcome means of depopulation. Similarly, Christopher Manes, a deep ecologist under the pseudonym Miss Ann Trophy, lauded the AIDS crisis (Zakin 2002, 312). This view can be summarised as welcoming the AIDS crisis as an opportunity to let nature seek its balance, thereby preventing further ecological destruction (Bookchin 1991, 148-149). It is beyond the scope of this paper to argue whether *Earth First!* was fascistic or not, but deep ecologists used language that did little to prevent accusations of misanthropy and fascism.

Some eco-fascists actively claim the label. For example, on popular online discussion forum Reddit, a user wrote:

> What really pisses me off is how everyone associates deep ecology with Communism and far-left ideologies, which are deeply rooted in industrialisation. It was Nazi Germany that was environmentally aware not Soviet Russia, with the rabid industrialisation. (Reddit thread quoted by Manavis 2018).

Outside of Reddit, on other social media, eco-fascists often use tree, mountain, and earth emojis in their name and a symbol associated with neo-Nazism, the "life" rune, which Heinrich Himmler used to signal *Lebensraum* (Manavis 2018). A self-identified eco-fascist claimed in a recent interview that the use of the word *Lebensraum* did not mean conquest for him. Instead, it meant maintaining and caring for the land passed on by our forefathers (Manavis 2018). Caring and maintaining the land implies a defence against those elements and people that supposedly threaten to make it less pure or drain its limited resources. Similar sentiments about overpopulation and the faulty trope of "the tragedy of the commons" are still echoed in the current environmental movement.

Sentiments concerning racial purity and the destruction of nature continue to flourish today. They were used to justify two recent terrorist attacks. In El Paso, Texas, on August 3 2019, a shooter killed twenty people and injured even more. In New Zealand, on March 15 2019, a white supremacist terrorist shot 51 people at a mosque. He explained his terrorist attack as a wish for "ethnic autonomy for all peoples with a focus on the preservation of nature and the natural order" (Tarrant 2019). These white-nationalist terrorists self-identified as "eco-fascist" and used environmental arguments to bolster their white nationalism (Achenbach 2019). They expressed their worries about, amongst other things, the feminisation of society, illegal immigrants, and climate breakdown. The terrorist from the latter attack wrote:

> There is no Conservatism without nature, there is no nationalism without environmentalism, the natural environment of our lands shaped us just as we shaped it. (Tarrant 2019).

Nationalism and environmentalism are intrinsically linked for Tarrant, building on the environmental determinist idea that climate and environment are a determining factor for peoples' and nations' development. Protecting and preserving the land is therefore equal in importance to protecting and preserving his ideals and beliefs. His ideology and his adoption of the label "eco-fascist" are inspired by a growing community of self-proclaimed eco-fascists online who share memes with texts like "Save Trees, not Refugees" and discuss how to prevent further ecological collapse. According to this community, the rational response to climate breakdown is making sure the worthy can continue their way of living:

> the American lifestyle affords our citizens an incredible quality of life. However, our lifestyle is destroying the environment of our country. So the next logical step is to decrease the number of people in America using resources. (Tarrant 2019).

This assumption, based on the idea that population growth is the true driver of climate change, and that resources will always be misused, leads him to commit mass murder in

the name of preserving land. Rather than seeking ways to mitigate the effects of climate breakdown, his ideas are fixated on purity, committed to 'business as usual', and focused on himself.

One could object that some of these examples relate to the environment and nature rather than climate and that climate change poses different challenges to nature preservation. However, I believe there is a connection between the nature preservation movement and the mainstream climate movement. Those concerned with climate change are often also worried about nature, and vice versa (Lertzman 2015, 20). Furthermore, the naïveté that made the Wandervögel easier for the Nazi party to co-opt applies to both nature- and climate-minded groups. Lastly, when climate change causes more mass migration, concerns about a "right to the land" and racial purity are likely to grow (Shah 2020, chap. 1). From the examples above, ranging from concerns about purity to overpopulation, we can discern how a right wave might benefit from concerns about climate breakdown.

Riding the Wave: Movement Communication

Extinction Rebellion is one of the fastest-growing climate movements of today. Since their launch in 2018 they have become active in 81 countries, with more than a thousand local chapters (Extinction Rebellion 2021). It seems fair to conclude that they appeal to a broad audience and are skilled in bringing new people onboard. Part of their communication strategy is precisely this: appealing to as many people as possible (Glynn and Farrell 2019, 124). Below, I will analyse their adopted logo, the Extinction Symbol as a "floating signifier."

Finding a slogan or theme everybody can rally behind is the holy grail of social movement communication, according to activist and writer Jonathan Schmucker (2017, 41). He uses the floating signifier concept to explain the success of the term "we are the 99%." The Occupy Wallstreet movement used a slogan that refers to no actual object and has no agreed-upon meaning; as a result, almost everybody can align themselves with it. Schmucker states that the perfect floating signifier can make or break a social movement or campaign (2017, 52). What makes a signifier attractive is that it has no single accepted meaning, so people can project onto it whatever meaning they wish. This was also partly the goal of Extinction Rebellion when they chose the extinction logo to represent their movement.

Climate justice activists make an analysis that stresses the need to take different impacts and contributions to climate breakdown into account when discussing global warming (Tokar 2014, 19). However, the broader climate movement does not necessarily do so (Taylor 2016; Heglar 2019) and has been criticised for lacking BAME representation (Climate Reframe 2021), even being described as a "white middle-class ghetto" (Bawden 2015). A painful example of whitewashing the climate movement was the cropping of Ugandan climate activist Vanessa Nakate from a picture with Greta Thunberg and other white climate activists (Woodyatt 2020). After a press conference of five climate activists at the World Economic Conference in Davos in 2020, Associated Press sent out a picture from which Nakate, founder of the Rise Up Movement, had been cropped. They later apologised and stated there was "no bad intention." Nakate

did not consider the erasure as incidental and proclaimed that the people losing their homes need to be able to bring their message across. (Nakate as quoted in Tinsley 2021, 2). In removing a young black woman from a picture of white female climate activists and citing the other activists, but not the woman from Africa, the existence of black voices within the climate youth movement was negated. This makes climate change more of a "white" issue and does not remind an assumed white audience of the victims of climate change with other skin colours. When campaigning to stop climate change, the movement does not necessarily recognise the role of imperialism and colonialism in creating climate change (Tinsley 2021, 11). The neglect of different forms of privilege, and the overlooking of race, are common in the broader climate movement (Taylor 2014). There are however many exceptions to this. For example, climate activist groups such as Shell Must Fall, Reclaim the Power, and Code Rood have made explicit connections between colonialism, migration policies, and climate breakdown (Code Rood 2020, Reclaim the Power 2018). NGOs like Friends of the Earth, and organisers such as Suzanne Dhaliwal from the No Tar Sands Campaign, have spoken out about the lack of diversity and have criticized campaigns mainly targeting white people (Gayle 2019). Extinction Rebellion has so far mobilised thousands of new people for the climate cause. People from all ages and walks of life demonstrate, petition, lobby, blockade, block, and glue themselves onto buildings under the banner of XR. Many within these movements are committed to climate justice, which some recognise is required to make the Paris Agreement work (Thunberg 2019, 9). Within the Extinction Rebellion handbook many contributors also express this commitment (2019). Furthermore, the group is learning and evolving, and many local groups have different opinions to those expressed by the people I will refer to. However, since the reasoning behind Extinction Rebellion's communication is also used by other elements of the climate movement, it is apt to take the XR logo as an object of analysis.

Extinction Rebellion's analysis of "time running out" is similar to that of the school strikers. Fridays4Future, the movement of high school students on strike to protest politicians' apathy concerning climate change, are clear in their analysis: their future is being robbed from them. However, some people are not only robbed of their future but also of their present (Thunberg 2019, 39). The need for intervention and the profound loss people in the West will likely experience is clearly communicated. The stories of climate change already happening, and analyses of the vastly differing power structures that have enabled climate breakdown and ecological destruction both in the past and present, could counter the possibility of fascistic co-optation of climate breakdown. However, movements do not always portray these different causes and impacts, and sometimes even deliberately choose to stay away from politics. Below I will argue that communicating about climate change in a neutral way both results from and results in an unawareness of privilege.

The Extinction logo consists of an hourglass in a circle, representing time running out for the earth. London artist ESP created this logo in 2011 as "an ecological symbol of peaceful resistance" (Extinctionsymbol, 2020). Since the non-violent civil disobedience platform for climate activism adopted this catalysing symbol in 2018, many local XR chapters have used the logo. In a newspaper article, the observation was

made that "it is not often that a single symbol emerges to represent a global, decentralised activist movement, but the ER symbol is now ubiquitous" (Brown 2019). Another popular news article compares the Extinction symbol to the peace sign (Rose 2019). The Extinction Rebellion logo communicates a message that is relatively open to interpretation. It conveys that time is running out but does not suggest how to act on that fact. In a talk about the XR logo, one of the founders of the art and design section of the activist group stated that the design of the logo is undogmatic, not prescriptive, but fluid and open to interpretation (Farrell 2020). This echoes the sentiment portrayed in the Extinction Rebellion handbook, that because "we are rebelling for a cause that affects us all," aggressive colours and connotations to any specific political agenda should be prevented (Glynn and Farrell 2019, 125). Instead, the style of XR must be dynamic rather than alienating or dividing (Glynn and Farrell, 126).

The idea that climate change affects us all is widespread. It is a trope of climate breakdown communication: that we are all in this together and that, therefore, climate breakdown has the unique ability to bring everyone together. The wish to be actively inclusive is also widely shared. However, as in this case, it is often presented in a manner that aims to be non-aggressive and politically neutral. By not recognising the differences between people, the idea of "colour-blindness" can actively exclude people who experience that neutral often means "white" (Mills 1997, 19; Delmas 2019, 204). Extinction Rebellion has had many conversations about inclusivity, and many local branches are actively committed to be welcoming to people from all walks of life and backgrounds. However, their communication about their logo does not reflect this. The inclusivity that is actively discussed and reflected in the logo is that the hourglass does its best not to scare away different political opinions.

Whose Sea-Levels? Neutrality Is a Privilege

Reaching as many people as possible through the active inclusion of different political backgrounds stems not only from the wish to reach a wider audience, but also from being in a position that enables one to conceptualise inclusivity as "including different political opinions." It is a form of privilege to be able to frame inclusivity as concerned with political opinions. The question to be asked is: Who is actively welcomed by this inclusivity? Are these the people Extinction Rebellion, or any climate movement, should prioritise to build alliances with? What is the effect of this active inclusivity? Active inclusivity is framed here as not discriminating between different political ideologies, whereas it could also be the commitment to explicitly welcoming different genders, skin colours, economic and educational backgrounds, and abilities. Whether building a broad political alliance is a successful movement strategy is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the effect of not explicitly putting race and other axes of privilege on the agenda is that people can consider it irrelevant.

Privilege prevents people from recognising the unfair starting point from which conversations begin (Delmas 2019, 204). Only when acceptance on the grounds of gender, race, class, and able-bodiedness is guaranteed, can those who do not fit the white middle-class mould worry about the lack of inclusion of political conservatives. Only when there are no more direct and apparent barriers to participation – like

having a meeting space accessible for those in wheelchairs, or being sure you will not face harsh police brutality when you join a protest – can inclusivity based on political opinion be prioritised. Privilege prevents people from seeing their privilege (Sullivan 2019, chap 1.; Delmas 2019, 204).

Acknowledging one's privilege is a first step towards understanding that your specific position in society or on the planet might shield you from harsher experiences (Sullivan 2019, chap 2.; MacMullan 2015 650). I consider privilege to be a morally neutral term to describe the other side of oppression: when there is injustice, there is also privilege. This is in line with the observation that any system of differentiation shapes not only those who benefit from it, but also those who are oppressed by it (Frankenberg 1994, 1). Your position within a system of differentiation thus influences your viewpoint, and thus your point of view. Points of view, then, influence what you recognise as just and unjust – for you need to view something before you recognise it. White privilege can be conceptualised as the advantages of being white, the easier access to upward mobility and the easier movement throughout a white world (Sullivan 2019 chap 1.), but also as the thing that prevents you from recognising these and other injustices or inequalities (Mills 1997, 18). Privilege in this paper is thus understood as having real, material impacts on the world, as well as resulting from structural racism and personal prejudices (Zack 2015, chap. 1). Ignorance about one's privilege – be it male, white, able-bodied, straight, or thin privilege – makes one less likely to understand those who deviate from the "mythical norm" (Lorde 2017, 96).

Not coming across as too aggressive and promoting active inclusivity might be part of a strategy to reach as many people as possible. "Not aggressive" turns into "not starting uncomfortable discussions", making it possible to conceptualise inclusivity as reaching people from different political backgrounds. Many climate movements are in an ongoing discussion about representation to the outside world, and what their key messages should be. One could imagine calling the people partaking in actions "concerned citizens," "earth defenders," or "grannies for climate" in order to circumvent calling them "activists", and therefore not to come across as too aggressive. However, when one is not actively aware of the implications of one's pursuit of inclusivity, the result may be a sacrificing of part of the content so as to reach more people.

One might question how "we are all in this together" could be divisive and enabling of fascist creep, rather than inspiring cooperation and empathy. An analogy can be made with the slogan #blacklivesmatter. The Black Lives Matter movement introduced this hashtag to call attention to the fact that black people were much more likely to face police violence than white people. The claim that their lives mattered was a radical one in a society that did not always treat them that way. A response to this call was to claim that "all lives matter": police violence is wrong *regardless* of the victim's race. This take on the issue diminishes the suffering of black people, for "the slogan 'black lives matter' is meant to underscore the qualitatively distinct experiences of African-Americans with racist police violence in the US" (Pellow 2018, 44). While "All lives matter" sounds more pluralistic, it erases the experiences and realities of people of colour (Pellow 2018, 44.). The same goes for climate breakdown. The threat or event of ecosystem collapse does not discriminate; neither does a police bullet. Whether it will

hit you, and to what effect, and whether there will be outrage about that fact, sadly, does seem to be influenced by skin colour, socio-economic background, and where on the earth you were born.

The neutral standpoint is that of the dominant group – and a typical response to being confronted with the subjectivity of that standpoint is anger (Stanley 2018, chap. 6). It is privilege that makes it possible to ignore the unequal effect of climate breakdown on different groups of people, and it is privilege that ignores the unequal contribution those people make to climate breakdown. Not acknowledging that privilege makes it easier for people to rally behind the logo. However, just like the floating signifier of Occupy or the non-political stance of the Wandervögel, if potentially 99% of the world can rally behind a slogan, it might also attract or emancipate people who have very different ideas about social change than its initiators had. Sara Ahmed's work on diversity and complaint reflects that sentiment. She argues that it is the uncomfortable, too-aggressive, words that might not reach as many people but do more work. Diversity is one of the terms she recognises as less threatening than other terms (2017, 101). Broad support can be gained by using words that do less, analyse less, threaten less: "the words that travel more are the words that do less (diversity), while the words that travel less do more (racism)" (Ahmed 2017, 101).

There are many concepts within climate change communication that travel far but do less work. The Occupy movement shows this can be dangerous: the movement's broad support not only consisted of anti-capitalists, hippies, and communists, but also of people who believed the banking system to be run by lizard people or Jewish people. Some of these people later turned to the far-right for answers (Lagalisse 2019, 76). "We are the 99%" leaves it open to the imagination what the 1% might look like. Therefore, it attracted more people – but at the same time also exposed those newly politicised people open to messages that the original Occupiers did not intend. This is where the "fascist creep" might happen (Reid Ross 2017, 5). A watered-down message might keep people comfortable and attract more people to the movement but might not do enough to push them forward. The climate movement thus should be careful with floating signifiers or unspecified slogans that attract and gather more people – especially when their inviting message could be susceptible to co-option by eco-fascists.

Anthropo-Who: the "Equally Innocent" Trope

It is not only the wish to be neutral and find the perfect floating signifier that leaves the climate movement vulnerable to fascist creep. Both the "equally innocent" and the "fear of crisis" trope create space in climate discourse that, firstly, obscures the responsibility for causing climate change, and secondly, hints towards fascistic solutions of decisionism and circumventing democratic deliberation. Below, I will analyse the concept of the Anthropocene and show how critiques of the differing responsibilities for our "new geological epoch" also hold for other obfuscating narratives about climate breakdown.

The "equally innocent" trope is likely best exemplified by the term "Anthropocene." This is the proposed name for a new geological epoch – one that is "defined by overwhelming human influence upon the earth" (Grusin 2017, vii). The term was coined in the 1980s by Eugene Stoermer and popularised around 2000 by

Nobel laureate Paul Crutzen. Both recognised signs that the planet was entering a new geological period: humankind's impact on the earth was visible and pointed to the end of the Holocene. Anthropocene emphasised the magnitude of the problems that fossil fuel combustion has created. Anthropos means "human" in ancient Greek: humanity was now so powerful that it could change the course of planetary history. Although the Anthropocene working group of the International Commission on Stratigraphy is still working to identify precisely when the period began, the term is already widely used both within and outside of academia to discuss the seriousness of climate change.

However, the term Anthropocene is not uncontroversial for people who accept climate science. Amongst other criticisms, it argued that the term obfuscates the responsibility for, and thus possible solutions to, the crisis in which we find ourselves (Haraway 2016, 37; Bonneuil and Fressoz 2017; 84), that it gives humankind a "compensatory charge" of at least having made an impact (Dean 2016, 2), and that it is too deterministic to motivate a struggle for change (Malm 2014, 17).

Kathryn Yusoff argued that the formulation of the Anthropocene entails a turning away from race in *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None,* a history of the relation between geology and subjectivity (2018, 3). If "Anthropos" means human it is essential to consider what "human" means, and where the borders around who counts as a person, and who does not, have been drawn, both in the past and in the present. Clear in her analysis is that for a long time the term did not refer to black people. Geology lets whiteness off the hook by failing to acknowledge the dispossessing practices of subject-making (Yusoff, xiii). What geologists find to be traces of the Anthropocene are also traces of the "slave mode of production": "to address this silence would be to understand geology as a regime for producing both subject and material worlds, where race is established as an effect of power within the language of geology's objects" (Yusoff 2018, 4). The Anthropocene is understood as a future, rather than the past extinctions of black and indigenous peoples. Geographical place, and the place of the human, are important aspects of the story of environmental breakdown, and both are overlooked in Anthropocene discourse. Thus Anthropocene is an inadequate name for what has taken place and is now going on.

Others had already proposed the terms Anthroposphere, Homogenocene, and Noocene before Crutzen's popularisation of the term Anthropocene to denote the effect of humankind's interference with the climate (Schneiderman 2017, 169). Among the more than 80 proposed names for this epoch (Chwalczyk 2020, 1), Donna Haraway has proposed the name Chtulucene (2016, 35) and James Moore "the ugly word" Capitalocene (2016, 5). Different names for this moment locate both speaker and crisis in "different temporal and spatial locations," writes Tinsley (2021, 2). When we talk about the Anthropocene, we do not adequately address the different locations from which one can speak. Many scholars thus doubt whether calling "the Anthropos" responsible for this new geological epoch accurately describes a crisis caused by the fossil combustion of a select group of people (Bonneuil and Fressoz 2017, 68; Tinsley 2021, 5). Words have real material impacts, discourse has extra-discursive effects, even if it is not always – or ever – possible to determine how an event was created. Anthropocene is a word that overlooks differing responsibilities for the rising CO^2 concentration in

our atmosphere, and therefore also occludes some of the possibilities to ameliorate and mitigate climate breakdown. It is thus not a politically neutral word, but a word that protects those who made the most impact from realising their heightened responsibility in causing, and thus also potentially ameliorating, climate breakdown.

"The Anthropocene" is a potent mobiliser for the climate movement because it clearly indicates the immensity of the crisis — a whole new time-scale - caused by humans. However, the term is contested. "What do we obscure, and what do we privilege with such a choice?" (Schneiderman 2017, 176). She does not deny the necessity of naming this new geological era but recognises that our words are not without effect. A term like Anthropocene can pose as being politically neutral, whereas Capitalocene cannot (Moore 2016, 5). The assumption that "future generations" need protection ignores and discards black and brown lives already lost or being lost (Bonneil and Fressoz 2017, 71). Whereas the Anthropocene discussion is an academic one, similar terms and slogans do the same work outside the ivory tower. For example, on Amazon, a notebook with "The dinosaurs thought they had time too" is on sale, conveying the message that, indeed, time is running out, but also obscuring the fact that the dinosaurs went out with a bang, whereas humanity loses people every year. By taking a shortcut, these words imply that human existence, rather than a way of existing, is the problem. Also, actions, like solemn funeral processions where people carry a casket with the words "our future," convey that something is taken from innocent people. The "equally innocent" trope frames climate breakdown as being caused by humans rather than a specific set of profit-seeking fossil-fuel-combusting people.

This has two detrimental effects. Firstly, the trope makes it possible for white climate activists in the global North to portray themselves as victims, obscuring how they benefit from the current geopolitical structure in which they find themselves. It makes climate change communication vulnerable to the fascistic rhetoric of victimhood. "Equally innocent" blames all people equally - not just in terms of historical contribution, but also in terms of who is currently responsible. Ignoring these differences in (historical) fossil-fuel emission portrays the people who currently enjoy the many privileges that this has brought them as purely victims, rather than as the complex subject position of both having benefitted and prospectively suffering from the same thing (Dean 2016, 2). Furthermore, those who will suffer in the future are portrayed as the victims, rather than those suffering already. Extinction Rebellion writes that they "refuse to bequeath a dying planet to future generations by failing to act now" (2019, 2), with this sentence claiming a fight for future generations, rather than the ones currently dying. By combining victimhood with political neutrality, the climate movement might find itself in a similar position to that of the Wandervögel.

Secondly, by obscuring blame, it makes population control, rather than, for example, the supervision of transnational companies, a spearhead for climate change prevention (Bonneuil and Fressez 2017, 72). Depicting the climate crisis as caused by humans results in the notion that getting rid of some of them – it does not matter who - might benefit the climate. If people are contributing to climate breakdown, fewer people mean less climate breakdown. When Paul Ehrlich starts his book *Population Bomb* with an image of people, he describes poverty (1988, 1). On the other side of

his taxi window, the people he sees eating, washing, sleeping, arguing, defecating, and begging are not middle-class white men, but poor people with skin a different colour to his. Lots of research points to the profound discomfort privileged people experience when reminded of their unfair starting points (Stanley 2018, chap. 6). Not mentioning the effects of colonialism, imperialism, and extractivism on the climate, and how these impact on global warming, keeps the conversation going smoothly. Not making the privileged white audience in the global North uncomfortable might mean communicating that it is human existence rather than a way of existing that is the problem. Whether academics, social movements, individuals, or mainstream media do this, the effect is that the message is made more palpable by painting the assumed audience as less complicit.

This is an Emergency: the "Fear of Crisis" Trope

By obscuring the different contributions to and causes of climate change, one also obscures the various possible solutions. This is doubly dangerous if it obfuscates the difference between victims of climate breakdown and stresses the importance of purity and preservation of what is. The "fear of crisis" trope is hazardous because of the work of the "equally innocent" trope. Invoking "fear of crisis" is an appealing strategy for movements. After all, there is a real threat that will cost many lives. Appealing to fear, stressing the immensity of the effects of the combustion of fossil fuels, might motivate people to act (Reser and Bradley 2017, 2). Furthermore, acting sooner rather than later might still mitigate some effects of climate breakdown (Wallace-Wells 2019, 34).

Focussing on the limited time left might convince people that it is now or never and spur them into action. However, two effects of the "fear of crisis" trope make it attractive to eco-fascists. These rely on rhetorical tricks that have been labelled as fascistic in the past (Manavis 2018). First, the urgency to act now downplays the fact that many people have already suffered from climate breakdown. It is only from a privileged position that one can frame the destruction of fossil fuel use as a problem concerning the future (Williams 2021, 98). A call for panic because the house is on fire is disrespectful: it has been burning for quite some time now, and the servants living in the attic have already lost their lives. Ignoring that truth about climate breakdown allows for the claim "there are no grey areas when it comes to survival" (Thunberg 2019, 8). There is no grey area between living or dying on an individual level, but for humankind there is. Horrible consequences will follow for both non-white and white people if no action is taken; however, horrible things are already happening and have already cost millions of lives. The apocalypse is not in the future; the apocalypse is now (Swyngedouw 2013, 10).

Second, the call to act now and the fear that motivates it encourages *decisionism*, whereby the crisis narrative might circumvent democratic decision-making, preserving what is, rather than creating what could be by rethinking the system that resulted in climate breakdown in the first place. One could think either of techno-fixes or border control here to keep a specific place liveable. Fascism, writes Jason Stanley, thrives on anxiety (2018, chap. 10). In times of anxiety, there is little motivation to think about justice, fairness, and systemic causes. Fear can keep existing power structures in place (Ahmed 2004, 64). When fear designates something as under threat in the present, "that

very thing becomes installed as that which we must fight for in the future" (Ahmed 2004, 77). Claire Colebrook warns that crisis narratives create a space where it is acceptable to act without taking everyone into account (2017, 10). The climate crisis is considered to be such an emergency that there is no time to wait for deliberation. She writes that "just as the 2008 global financial crisis allowed the immediate bailout of banks without questions of justice or blame being allowed to delay what was declared to be a necessary response, so the severity of the Anthropocene presents itself as a justification in advance for executive actions" (Colebrook 2017, 11). Conveying that something is a crisis is not in and of itself a wrong approach or fascistic. However, if it conveys the idea that a strong leader should intervene or that there is not time to hear everyone, it starts to resemble decisionism. Decisionism, the state of emergency that Carl Schmitt describes, is that state in which there is so much trouble that it must be up to one strong leader to make bold interventions to save the nation (Hirst 1999, 5). A constant state of emergency in which there is no space for communication is not only fascistic in and of itself but also provides dangerous grounds for decision-making if there is no clear consensus on a just and fair way to tackle the problem.

The climate movement should be careful to use language that acknowledges the different impacts of and contributors to climate breakdown. This way, the fear and feelings of loss that climate change inherently brings about will not be as easily co-opted for ethnic nationalist purposes.

Conclusion

The sea levels will rise, and preventing the worst and mitigating the inevitable is crucial. However, at the same time as the sea levels are rising, there is a fascist wave emerging. It might be a good idea, as Zimmerman suggests, to actively minimise the risk of aligning oneself with this wave (1995, 211). This paper aimed to add to the understanding of eco-fascism by analysing one of the ways in which ethnic nationalists potentially profit from the growing concern about climate breakdown. Such an understanding can guard against the alignment or "fascist creep". Within this paper, I argued against a tactic of appeasement and undifferentiated inclusivity in climate breakdown communication. I have not argued for a specific course of action. Nor did I see the onus as being on me to put forward an account of how narratives and emotional appeals influence people's behaviour. Letting ethnic nationalists profit from one's communication is both morally and strategically wrong, whether it is intentional or unintentional, for reasons beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, I argued that an (unconscious) wish to assuage privileged people, or a lack of knowledge of one's privileged position, might explain the use of language that fits within a white nationalist discourse. I explored why it might be that little is done to actively ward off fascists and the themes that might be inviting them in. I claimed that some of the messages of the climate movement do not do enough to prevent a rise of right-wing shock doctrine policies or to curb anti-immigrant sentiments. Material disenfranchisement can be politicised in different ways, so it is possible that rising sea levels will give rise to a fascist wave. An awareness of how privilege influences the climate movement's communication strategy could stop it from contributing to this wave.

Notes

1 The term "fascist creep" was introduced by Alexander Reid Ross, who contrasts the 'creep' to the 'fascist drift' as first introduced by Philippe Burin (Reid Ross 2017, 1).

2 Claude Levi Strauss first introduced this concept in his discussion of Marcel Mauss (1987, 63), Ernesto Laclau further analysed signifiers in his exploration of popular identities (2018, chap 5.).

3 BAME stands for Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority representation.

4 The El Paso terrorist, for example, argues that "the aftershock from my actions will ripple for years to come, driving political and social discourse, creating the atmosphere or fear and change that is required" and that he represents "Millions of European and other ethno-nationalist peoples that wish to live in peace amongst their own people, living in their own lands, practicing their own traditions and deciding the future of their own kind" (Tarrant 2019).

5 If a movement were actively obscuring blame and not explicitly making the caveats that would prevent one from inferring that it is population growth that is to blame, this would create space for a 'fascist drift.' I do not claim Extinction Rebellion is doing this.

6 I would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers for encouraging me to more sharply define my own position in the debate, which is indeed poles apart from a tactic of appeasement.

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Biography

Harriët Bergman pursues a PhD at the Centre for European Philosophy at the University of Antwerp, researching whether feminist philosophy and critical race theory can help discussions on climate breakdown concerning privilege, guilt, denial, power and social change.

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The Enthusiasm of Political Sequences: Notes on Sylvain Lazarus's Anthropology of the Name

Bryan Doniger

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Abstract

In *Anthropology of the Name*, Sylvain Lazarus warns us against subordinating radical political thinking to its relationship with extant social reality. When we attribute thought to historical or social prerequisites which supposedly 'determine' it, we deny that thinking can challenge *what already is*. By contrast, radical politics contest the extant and create new social possibilities. For Lazarus, 'enthusiasm' is the disposition that accompanies transformational politics. This essay distinguishes Lazarus' 'enthusiasm' from Alain Badiou's 'fidelity.' I argue, contra most English-speaking interpreters, that Lazarus' theory of politics is a) distinct from Badiou's and b) better suited for thinking through moments of political resistance.

Keywords

Sylvain Lazarus, Alain Badiou, Political Emotions, Communism, Workers' Inquiry

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The Enthusiasm of Political Sequences: Notes on Sylvain Lazarus's Anthropology of the Name

Bryan Doniger

Introduction

In *Anthropology of the Name*, the French anthropologist Sylvain Lazarus levels a far-reaching critique against the "scientistic" methodologies adopted by many contemporary historians and political theorists (Lazarus 2015, 78). More specifically, Lazarus worries that social scientists tend to subordinate political thinking to its relationship with our extant social reality. As he puts it, they demand that thought "hold forth on its requisites" (2015, 52). In other words, social scientists presuppose that thought necessarily *has* requisites that determine what it is; they assume that thinking is merely an expression of a set of pre-given historical or social circumstances that they endeavor to study. But, for Lazarus, the social scientists' methodological assumption that thought has requisites leaves them with a limited ability to adequately study and understand the thinking that happens during moments of direct contestation against "the existing social and political order of things" (Lazarus 2016, 113). For example, amidst workers' strikes and uprisings, people often refuse to remain beholden to the way in which bosses, policemen, politicians, and capitalists have already defined their social position. During the strike, people *think otherwise.* Their relationship with the existing historical and social order is one of direct challenge and antagonism. The social scientists' mistake is to wrongly assume that our thinking in moments of strike, uprising, or revolt remains subordinate to our current social arrangement.

Lazarus' method of inquiry, which he opposes to the methodology of social scientists, is rooted in the thesis that moments of political contestation are also moments when *people* think. For him, the word "people" is a "certain indistinct" (Lazarus 2015, 61). The statement 'people think' asserts that there *is* a group that partakes in the act of thinking, but it doesn't determine any necessary prerequisites for their thinking. We can assert that people think, without defining in advance who these people are, how many they are, what social and historical situations dictate their thinking, and so on.[1] *People think* is therefore a radically non-conditional statement. Put differently, "in people's thought, the possible is that by which the real is identified" (Lazarus 2019). As I will go on to show, *enthusiasm* is Lazarus' name for the courageous, militant disposition that helps us identify those contestational political sequences where people think, and where their thinking leads them to fight on behalf of the possibility of another world. Lazarus maintains that a moment of enthusiastic politics is also a moment where we can see how people's thought opens up a conflict with the social order that already exists.

Although interest in Lazarus' work is quickly growing in the English-speaking world, most of his essays are not yet widely available in English.[2] Thus far, only four texts by Lazarus have been translated: *Anthropology of the Name*, "Can Politics be Thought in Interiority?", "Worker's Anthropology and Factory Inquiry", and "Lenin and the Party". Three of these four works were translated in the past seven years. The scarcity of available resources for understanding Lazarus has led to a problem in the secondary literature. Namely, most of the interpretations of Lazarus published in English are heavily

reliant upon Alain Badiou's understanding of his project.[3] In *Metapolitics*, Badiou argues that "Lazarus' thought does for politics what Lacan has done for love: he organises its disjunctive encounter with history" (Badiou 2005, 54). In this passage, and throughout *Metapolitics*, Badiou implies that Lazarus' theory of politics is essentially parallel to his own (just as Badiou's thinking on love apparently runs parallel with Lacan). Most of Lazarus' English-speaking interpreters have followed Badiou's lead. They read Lazarus primarily as a critical interlocutor who helps clarify and bolster Badiou's views on politics. Granted, it certainly makes sense to draw at least some parallels between Badiou and Lazarus. The pair are frequent political collaborators, and they both intend for their work to throw a "monkey wrench...in the machinery of capital" (Badiou 2012, xxx).[4] Put less metaphorically, both Lazarus' and Badiou's political writings contest the necessity of our current social reality.

However, Badiou's interpretation of Lazarus fails to note a crucial point of contention: the pair have very different understandings of the 'affect' or 'disposition' that accompanies a militant commitment to fighting the existing social order. Whereas Lazarus writes of people's *enthusiasm* during political sequences, Badiou instead evokes the *fidelity* of political subjects. Lazarus' enthusiasm and Badiou's fidelity diverge from one another in two key respects:

> Difference One: Badiou emphasizes that fidelity is a courageous commitment to something "absolutely detached" from our current situation (Badiou 2001, 68). Fidelity is the feeling that allows a political subject to rupture with a given finite situation and to instead live "as an immortal" (Badiou 2009, 505). By contrast, Lazarus links enthusiasm not with immortality, but with possibility. When 'People think' their thinking isn't always defined by an essential disinterestedness or 'detachment' from the extant. To the contrary, political sequences entail an *active*, *real contestation*. Put differently, moments of enthusiastic politics happen when people open up a conflict with the ruling social order that attests to this order's non-necessity: "another subjectivation is possible" (Lazarus 2016, 119).
>
> Difference Two: when a moment of political resistance ends, Badiou argues that this indicates a 'betrayal' of the subject's fidelity (the end of their commitment to live as an immortal and detach from *what already is*). Put differently, the end of a political sequence is a moment of failure. By contrast, Lazarus writes that even after politics ends, the site where politics took place can remain "an enthusiastic site"– a site saturated with evidence that *thinking happened here* (Lazarus, 2015, ix).

My argument is that Lazarus' distinctive concept of 'enthusiasm' both justifies and clarifies the most unique aspect of his work: his invention of a rigorous methodology for studying the past sites where politics took place.[5] In order to study the thinking that took place amidst various past political sequences (workers' movements, revolutions, and so on), Lazarus proposes that we conduct anthropological inquiries into the places where politics happened. Lazarus' inquiry is only possible because political enthusiasm isn't characterized by 'detachment' from the extent (per Badiou), but rather by real, active contestation. Put succinctly, Lazarus thinks that politics happens at real sites and

that these sites remain *saturated with enthusiasm* even after a given political sequence has ended. Thus, if English-speaking readers remain overly beholden to Badiou's interpretation of Lazarus, we run the risk of ironing over precisely the theoretical divergences that lead to Lazarus' commitment to anthropological inquiry (rather than, for instance, to philosophy).

My paper is divided into three sections. I began by summarizing Lazarus' theory of how political sequences work before honing in on Lazarus' unique method and fleshing out my precise disagreement with Badiou's interpretation.

Section One discusses the danger of the methodological supposition that 'People do not think.' Lazarus traces out the dangers of this supposition by outlining the specific problems and paradoxes it has caused for prior theories of Marxism.

Section Two demonstrates that Lazarus' concept of enthusiasm allows him to identify moments when radical politics happen without attributing the emergence of politics to an individual, a vanguard party, or a social class. At its root, enthusiasm is always *people's* enthusiasm, rather than the enthusiasm of some specific, determinate group. Of course, Lazarus acknowledges that certain groups, (i.e. workers, peasants, armies, and political organizations) can help nourish political enthusiasm. However, they are never enthusiasm's requisite cause. Thus, in Lazarus' theory of politics, politics does not require a state, a 'vanguard party' or a 'revolutionary class'; although such groups have helped to build enthusiasm in specific political sequences.

Section Three summarizes Lazarus' notion of 'political investigation' or 'inquiry.' It also demonstrates how Lazarus' concept of investigation puts him at odds with Badiou's claim that the end of a political sequence is a moment of failure. Here, and throughout my paper, my aim is not to offer a systematic critique of Badiou's work.[6] Rather, I point out a significant problem with his interpretation of Lazarus. Again, by conflating Lazarus' theory of politics with his own, Badiou does not give us sufficient resources for understanding why Lazarus studies people's thought via an anthropological method of inquiry. A discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of Lazarus' anthropology will require us to return to some of Lazarus' political concepts (for instance, 'enthusiasm', 'the prescription', 'saturation,' and 'the site of politics') and to study these concepts on their own terms.

Section One: To Refute the Statement "People Do Not Think"

The supposition that "people do not think" (a supposition that, for Lazarus, has deep roots in the social sciences) is not just cruel or condescending; more dangerously, this notion denies the possibility that people can wage a real fight against the extant (Lazarus 2015, 54). The scientists and social scientists who maintain that "people do not think" don't always state this claim outright. Instead, Lazarus demonstrates that the statement "people do not think" is implicit in other claims about the determinate conditions that supposedly make thought possible. For example, we should be wary of claims that 'scientists think,' or that 'party leaders think,' or that 'workers think, under conditions of class struggle.' These claims aren't necessarily untrue. However, each of them asserts the existence of thinking only under certain, predetermined conditions (for instance, the

conditions of scientific rationality, or the conditions of political oppression). And yet, again, if thought is rooted in the specific conditions of our current social reality, then it can't open up a conflict with this reality without undermining its own basis.

Let's turn to one example of a situation where social scientists have wrongly and disastrously tried to subordinate people's thinking to the social arrangement that their thinking fought against. As early as 1935, Black American Marxists like W.E.B. Du Bois were already worried that prevailing social scientific methods produced accounts of the fight for Black emancipation that rendered Black workers almost entirely agency-less.[7] In *Black Reconstruction*, Du Bois argued that Black workers won the civil war via a general strike. For him the strike "was not merely the desire to stop work. It was a strike on a wide basis against the conditions of work" (Du Bois 1992, 67). In other words, this strike not only ended slavery but also posited a very different economic and social order. Rather than continuing to work for the profit of slave owners, the strikers put forth the possibility of a new, "fateful experiment in democracy" (ibid., 715). They wanted a world where they owned land and cultivated it on their own terms. This new organization of work, founded on land-ownership for all, could have led to a worker-centered economy where Black people labor without having the fruits of their labor taken by bosses or capitalists. But virtually all historians of reconstruction failed to account for the Black workers' general strike, even supposedly 'progressive' historians like Charles and Mary Beard. Of course, many of these historians operated under the assumption that Black people were biologically inferior to whites. But many other historians (including the Beards), justified their racist oversight of Black workers' power on *historical* or *sociological* grounds. They began from the supposition that Black people were ignorant and weak due to their abject position in the pre-existing social and economic order.

Lazarus thinks that a set of problematic methodological assumptions very similar to the ones that Du Bois wrote against in 1935 (for example, assumptions that 'people do not think' or, more specifically, 'Black workers do not think') have been endemic to the work of many past Marxist historians and political thinkers. In "Thinking After Classism," Lazarus demonstrates that many of the most prominent European revolutionary theorists of the last two centuries offered conceptualizations of thinking in which thinking is fundamentally rooted in the extant.[8] Lazarus goes on to identify two different problematic procedures through which previous Marxists have attempted to subordinate people's thinking to the extant social order–*determination* and *operation*:

1. *Determination, or, the dialectic of the objective and the subjective,* was Marx's mistake when it came to conceptualizing the agency of political revolutionaries. Lazarus claims that this mistake begins "with the *Communist Manifesto*, published in 1848" (Lazarus 2016, 119). In the *Manifesto*, and throughout many of his later texts, Marx argues that revolutionary consciousness is directly determined by people's social positioning.[9] As Lazarus puts it, Marx often maintains that "the totality is the means for a nomination of the subjective" (Lazarus 2015, 93). To rephrase this, Marx attributes the thinking of working people to objective conditions outside of their own subjectivity (for instance, the conditions of their

> subjugation and exploitation within factories). Workers are revolutionary *because* of their social class: "The central operator" that determines their consciousness "is clearly class" (2015, 80). However, if we accept that class positioning necessarily determines workers' capacity for revolutionary thought, then we will not be able to meaningfully come to grips with moments when workers *refute* their class positioning. If class subjugation is necessary for revolutionary thinking, then how can workers problematize their subjugation without undermining the determinate condition that enables their own thinking? Furthermore, we cannot deny that workers *often* contest the extant reality that dominates them. This contestation doesn't undermine workers – in fact, it can lead to empowering sequences of sustained political action. Thus, Marx's deterministic view of class consciousness will not even suffice for conceptualizing the revolutionary agency of the industrial workers whose political aims he intends to bolster.

Although I find Lazarus' critique of Marx to be perhaps a bit embryonic, we can nonetheless see the aspects of Marx's theory of resistance that Lazarus worries about if we turn, for example, to Marx's remarks from "The Documents of the First International" on why workers should strike for an eight-hour working day. The purpose of the eight-hour legal limit, Marx writes, is to restore "health," "physical energies," and "the possibility of intellectual development, social intercourse . . . and political action" to workers (1993, 78-79). Marx thinks that capitalism (or, at least, the capitalist social order of his own historical period) sows the seeds for its own destruction by concentrating hundreds of thousands of laborers in industrial cities which can serve as centers for strategy and resistance. However, when the law enables a normal working day of 15, 12, or even 10 hours, the working classes lack the time and health to fully organize. Each reduction in the length of the working day is therefore hugely beneficial. In his "Inaugural Address" to the International Workers, Marx writes in praise of the ten-hour work limit enacted by the Factory Bill of 1847. This bill was the product of "30 years' struggle" by workers in England. In the decade after its passing, English workers saw "immense physical, moral, and intellectual benefits" (ibid.) By fighting for legal reforms like the Factory Bill, workers' associations can shorten working days, which in turn will bring about a smarter, stronger, and more organized working class. And yet, for Lazarus, Marx's problematic claim is that workers' strength and capacity for revolution is directly tied to their social circumstances. First, it was apparently necessary for workers to be proletarianized, so that these workers could arrive at the thought of striking en masse. Then, it will be necessary for workers' conditions to somewhat improve, so as to allow for 'the possibility of intellectual development.' At every step of this process, Marx seems to be suggesting that the workers' social class determines how they think.

2. *Operation*, or, *the dialectic of the subjective and the objective* was, in turn, Lenin's mistake when it came to identifying the political power of people's thought. Lazarus distinguishes *operation* from *determination* by claiming that operation "raises not so much the question of determinations of consciousness as the issue of the possible effects of consciousness on the order of the real" (Lazarus 2015, 92). In contrast with Marx, Lenin refuses to subordinate thinking by studying its supposed "determination" within our current social reality. He refutes

Marx's claim that industrial workers are the 'revolutionary class' par excellence: "In contrast to the Marxist thesis that can be stated as 'Where there are proletarians, there are Communists,' Lenin opposed spontaneous consciousness" (Lazarus 2007, 259). In other words, by shifting from Marx's class consciousness to his own concept of 'spontaneous consciousness,' Lenin is able to maintain that people's thinking does not depend on deterministic conditions outside of thought. Thus, according to Lazarus' interpretation, Lenin's early writings open up the possibility that thinking does not need to hold forth on its requisites.[10] However, although Lenin's concept of spontaneous consciousness marks a significant step toward affirming the thesis that *people think*, Lenin goes on to cast doubt upon spontaneous consciousness' political efficacy. In his view, spontaneous consciousness cannot truly problematize 'the order of the real.' Put differently, Lenin maintains that spontaneous consciousness only becomes capable of resisting our social order once it is organized into a party. For him, "there is no politics that is not organizational, and the word party denotes this" (2007, 255). Thinking is spontaneous, but *political* thinking is organized.

Lazarus' objection to Lenin's 'operational' thinking is that the organized consciousness of the party – just like the consciousness of Marx's industrial workers – is necessarily determined via social positioning. If we wish to attain a count of who does and doesn't qualify for organized consciousness, we will have to resort to an assessment of the conditions that define thinking in our current social order. *Who has had the chance to develop organized consciousness through the proper 'political education'? Who is equipped to lead political movements, and who is not well-positioned for this task?* Questions like these end up smuggling back in the very same demand that thought hold forth on its requisites.

In summary, the problem with both "determination" and "operation" is that both attempt to directly map "intellectuality onto an exterior reality" (Lazarus 2015, 78). To subordinate "intellectuality" to the reality that supposedly determines it is the crux of what Lazarus calls "the pair ideology/science" (Lazarus, 2019). The ideology/science pairing presents us with a false dichotomy that severely inhibits our political thinking. Either we are scientists who define thinking in terms of already-existing reality, or else we have succumbed to 'ideology,' understood here as an irrational flight of fancy away from the real. However, if we assume that our thinking is undefinable except via *what already is*, then we are forced into accepting that the desire for social transformation stands at odds with thinking.

Rather than resigning ourselves to the procedures of determination and operation, we should instead ask, "Is there room for a real that pertains to a non-objectal and non-nominalist thought?" (Lazarus 2015, 63). If naming a revolutionary social class (as Marx does) or a political party (as Lenin does) is both "objectal" and "nominalist," do we have any other options for identifying "real" moments of political contestation? This question leads Lazarus to invent a procedure for naming and understanding political opposition that stands completely at odds with the "definitions" employed by Marx, Lenin, and other social scientists. There are "two approaches to words:" the definitional

approach, and "the other, where there isn't polysemy but opposition of *prescriptions*" (Lazarus, 2019). In section two, I argue a) that political *prescriptions*, rather than definitions, are Lazarus' object of study – that is, his tool for naming and understanding the new *possibilities* opened up by political opposition – and b) that "enthusiasm" is the disposition that accompanies our successful deployment of prescriptions.

Section Two: Lazarus' Enthusiastic Prescriptions

Because political sequences cannot be identified by a requisite condition that explains their existence (i.e. party organization or class consciousness), Lazarus proposes an alternative method for identifying politics: we know that politics is taking place when we encounter "an enthusiastic site" (Lazarus 2015, ix).[11] In "Can Politics Be Thought In Interiority?", Lazarus argues that Mao Zedong's unique insight into politics was that we can identify political transformations without relying upon *operation* or *determination*. Rather than naming a revolutionary class or a vanguard party, Mao wrote that revolution in China was identifiable via widespread "enthusiasm for socialism":

> this strictly Maoist category...makes history disappear... Enthusiasm for socialism is not (only) that of a "radiant future," but a singular theory of development (here, a term that is in no way economic), registered from now on in the forms taken by the army: not only military force, but practicing the work of the masses, which is obligatory…. The most general principle which interests us, having to do with development, is the following: "the new is created in the struggle against the old." (Lazarus 2016, 124).

In this passage, Lazarus counterposes "enthusiasm for socialism" with "history." History is a "theory of development" in which any conceivable "radiant future" must *depend upon* the old. Mao, by contrast, puts forth a theory of development via contestation, where "the new is created in the struggle against the old." Put differently, enthusiastic moments are times when we oppose what already is with "what could be" (Lazarus 2019).[12] Because Maoism is characterized by this struggle, Lazarus describes Maoist politics as a "dialectical" sequence of politics (Lazarus 2016, 119). On Lazarus' terms, "enthusiasm for socialism" is the name for a mode of politics where people challenge the extant and, in so doing, hypothesize that "another subjectivation is possible" (2016, 119). Furthermore, enthusiasm (understood as a Maoist category) reverses the Leninist understanding of a vanguard party that leads the masses' revolution and dictates their politics. The army does not *politicize* the masses; rather it carries out work on their behalf: "The army practices the work of the masses, it nourishes enthusiasm for socialism" (2016, 125). This is why Lazarus goes on to describe the dialectical mode of politics as a "people's war" (2016, 126-127). Enthusiasm predates the army: it is *people* who are enthusiastic, and the people's army simply nourishes this enthusiasm. Thus, a close reading of Lazarus' discussion of Maoism in "Can Politics be Thought in Interiority?" reveals two claims not only about the nature of "enthusiasm for socialism," but also about the nature of enthusiasm, more generally:

> Claim One: Enthusiasm is always enthusiasm *for possibility* – it emerges in moments when the possible struggles against the extant. Put differently, enthusiasm

is linked with *prescriptions*, rather than *definitions*.

Claim Two: Enthusiasm is always the enthusiasm *of people*. Determinate groups (i.e. armies, classes, and parties) can sometimes "nourish" enthusiasm, but they are never enthusiasm's sole source.[13]

To expand on these claims, enthusiasm is nourished via *prescriptions* precisely because prescriptions allow people to challenge the existing social order on behalf of possibility (Lazarus 2015, 7). Whereas definitions rely on *what already is*, prescriptions identify real possibilities for challenging *what is* in favor of *what could be.* As Lazarus puts it, prescriptions name the possibility of "a real other than the objectal, one that could be constituted through inquiry, forming a new field of knowledge and not a scientific system" (Lazarus 2015, 62)**.** Prescriptions don't 'get us away' from the real. Rather, they allow us to challenge one "order of the real" and evoke another possible subjectivation – "a new field of knowledge." In "Worker's Anthropology," Lazarus turns to an analysis of the French auto worker strikes of the early 1980s in order to provide an example of how political prescriptions can help us enthusiastically oppose the definitions that are circulated by bosses, politicians, journalists, policemen, and other functionaries of the ruling order.[14] Lazarus describes the early '80s as a time of massive layoffs in the French auto industry. Amidst these layoffs, workers at various factories rose up to dispute both the "amount of severance pay" that they were receiving and "the logic of its calculation" (Lazarus 2019). The workers knew that the "calculation" of their severance package was problematic: bosses and government officials insisted that many of the individuals working in the factory were not workers, but 'foreigners.' By using terms like "Shi'ite" and "immigrant" to describe the people laboring in the factories, the bosses and politicians "made the figure of the worker completely disappear" (ibid.). This reduced the number of workers who were eligible for severance package. On Lazarus' terms, the bosses and politicians used the words 'worker' and 'foreigner' in a definitional manner. These names purported merely *to describe* extant social reality. Their usage legitimated the decision-making processes of the current ruling order – namely, the bosses' approach to counting workers. The workers struck back against their bosses with a radically different naming procedure: "*It is the worker who counts the worker, it is not the boss, severance for all*" (ibid.). In other words, the bosses' approach to counting workers is an illegitimate procedure, and so we must oppose it. "Severance for all" is a call for material improvements in the lives of workers, but it is also a hypothesis concerning the possibility of a different social order, one where "it is the worker who counts the worker."

By deploying enthusiastic prescriptions, the workers' aim is not to replace their bosses as the ones who exclude and include particular individuals from the definition of 'worker.' The workers' account of who does and doesn't count as a worker is intentionally broad and indeterminate: "severance for all." As Lazarus puts it, an enthusiastic prescription is less like "a demand," and more like "a thesis, a principle" (Lazarus 2019). The workers, in issuing their prescription, do not demand to be the ones who determine who does and does not count as a worker (otherwise, they would need to issue specific, definitional criteria for what a worker is). Instead, the workers' prescriptions are aimed at disputing the legitimacy of the "worker/boss" relation: the workers challenge

the process whereby the status and value of the workers is counted by an external group of bosses. In order to carry out this dispute, they offer the "thesis" of another "order of the real" – one where workers can refuse to be counted and valued by an external authority.

If definitions subordinate thinking to "an exterior reality," prescriptions completely reverse the relationship between the real and thought: thought acts upon the real, and not vice versa. As Lazarus puts it:

> In the discursive [viz. definitional] process, the real, understood starting from what is, is unique. In our process of an anthropology of thought, the possible opens a conflict of prescriptions (there are many possibles) and every prescription supports a distinct order of the real (Lazarus 2019).

Definitions subjugate the *singularity* of people's thought – they make it seem as though a multiplicity of thoughts can be explained via a single, unimpeachable reality. By contrast, prescriptions only work in moments when thought is singular and irreducible, and when it opens up a multitude of different possible realities. Thus, enthusiastic prescriptions are both political and oppositional, insofar as they refuse to conflate "the real" with whatever current social order supposedly 'governs' our thinking.

My claim is that Lazarus' notions of 'enthusiasm' and 'the prescription' break with Badiou's seemingly similar notion of fidelity to a greater extent than Badiou's interpretation of Lazarus acknowledges. Indeed, Badiou fails to note the distinctive character of the 'enthusiastic prescriptions' that Lazarus views as necessary for politics. On the one hand, Badiou uses the concept of 'enthusiasm' in some of his more recent work on politics, and one could argue that he inherits this concept from Lazarus. For example, in both *Logic of Worlds* and *Métaphysique du bonheur réel*, Badiou writes that political subjects who maintain fidelity are rewarded with a feeling of *enthusiasm* (See Badiou 2015, 40 and 2009, 76). However, on the other hand, these descriptions make it sound like enthusiasm is simply one component of the experience of what Badiou calls 'political fidelity,' as though these political dispositions are entirely commensurable with one another.

Badiou defines fidelity thusly: "fidelity...amounts to a sustained investigation of the situation, under the imperative of the event itself; it is an imminent and continuing break" (Badiou 2001, 67). The 'event itself,' for Badiou, is a "hazardous" brief moment where *something* flashes before our eyes that allows us to distance ourselves from the situation in which we find ourselves (2001, 67). The political subject has a continuing fidelity to this event, even once it has vanished; just as a fidelitous Christian harbors a continuous commitment to a God beyond this world, so too the fidelitous subject tries to distance itself from its "ephemeral" situation (2001, 70). Put differently, because the event breaks with a given social situation, the fidelitous subject must become essentially "disinterested" in this situation (2001, 69). Our disinterestedness in the situation, paired with our spirited commitment to the hazardous event, allows us to punch "a 'hole' in knowledges" and produce "new knowledges" (2001, 70).

Badiou mistakenly conflates Lazarus' idea that politics happens via political enthusiasm with his own notion of politics via fidelity. We can see this mistake clearly

in a passage from *Metapolitics* where Badiou claims that Lazarus' statement 'people think' is intended to ascribe to people's political thinking a certain 'immortality' or 'eternity.'

> [People's thought, as defined by Lazarus] is thinkable, as a precarious singularity restricted by dates… and as indifferent to time. To think a singularity does indeed determine it, in the words of Thucydides, in the guise of an ‚eternal acquisition' (Badiou 2005, 38).

Here, Badiou acknowledges that people's thought is situated within time. After all, people's thought is "a precarious singularity restricted by dates" – we can accurately speak of people's thinking *during Maoism*, or people's thinking *amidst the autostikes*. However, Badiou tries to argue that people's thought is, in a far more important sense, also "indifferent to time." Remember: Badiou thinks that the fidelitous subject no longer desires to *live within* their finite, ephemeral, social situation. This is what Badiou means when he writes that the fidelitous subject lives "as an immortal" (Badiou 2009, 505). Under Badiou's interpretation of Lazarus, when people think, their fidelitous thinking is indifferent to time. Because something matters *more* to people than the ruling social order, they can challenge the legitimacy of this order, even if this puts their prior way of life at risk. Badiou argues that Lazarus' statement 'people think' is simply another way of theorizing the immortality of the political subject.

In order to conflate Lazarus' theory of politics with his own, Badiou makes two strong interpretative claims about Lazarus' statement that people think. The first of these claims is true, but I argue that the second one is clearly false:

> Badiou's First Claim: Badiou correctly claims that "at the heart of [Lazarus'] thought one finds a de-temporalization of the possible." Put differently, to assert that people think is to claim that thought is sometimes *in excess* of temporalization – we can't necessarily understand thinking by reducing it to the time when it took place. If possibilities could always be identified via time, then the real possibilities opened up by people's thinking would be restricted to the determination of their time period. Badiou is absolutely correct that this is precisely the form of 'determination' that Lazarus' theory of politics tries to avoid.
>
> Badiou's Second Claim: However, Badiou subsequently claims that, because people's thinking *can't necessarily be reduced* to the time when it took place, this means that people's thought is necessarily *indifferent* to time: "to think singularity does indeed *determine* it...in the *guise* of an eternal acquisition" (Badiou 2005, 38, emphasis mine). In Badiou's interpretation of Lazarus, people can only think if they are disinterested in their temporalized social situation, and interested in something entirely outside of time. This interpretation would unify Lazarus' enthusiastic people with Badiou's subject – both 'people' and the fidelitous subject strive to live as an immortal. However, this second claim must be a misunderstanding of Lazarus, because it demands that we place a requisite condition on people's thought (namely, thought *must be* eternal, and not temporal).

In summary, Badiou's first claim is true, for people's thought is *not necessarily* temporal. However, Badiou's second claim is false, for people's thought is also *not necessarily* eternal. Again, what is truly unique about Lazarus' theory of politics is his rigorous refusal to name a requisite condition for thinking. Badiou's interpretation of Lazarus misses this essential point.

We can see the distinction between Badiou's *fidelity* and Lazarus' *enthusiasm* even more clearly if we try to actually apply the concept of fidelity to the enthusiastic factory strikes that Lazarus studies in "Worker's Anthropology." The striking factory workers do not seem to be acting as a fidelitous subject. When these workers opposed their bosses, they were clearly very concerned with their own material interests within the immediate social order ('severance for all'). Of course, the workers' interest was not *limited* to questions about the "amount of severance pay and the logic of its calculation." Again, their strike also poses fundamental challenges to the "boss/worker relation in this kind of situation" (Lazarus 2019). But to deny that these workers are quite directly and importantly concerned with improving their well-being within their immediate social situation would be absurd.

If fidelity is characterized by a "disinterested interest," the factory workers' enthusiasm is by contrast a form of *dual interestedness* (Badiou 2001, 49). As Lazarus puts it, "prescription, while not excluding that it can be factualized, materialized, or put to work, identifies itself essentially as an intellectuality, that is to say, as a thesis" (Lazarus 2019). When we are enthusiastic, our interest is always double. We are interested in *contesting* material reality, but we are also interested in how this contestation helps us *affirm* the thesis of another possible subjectivation. Thus, enthusiasm does not allow us to subordinate people's thinking to either temporal phenomena or to the eternal. This means that, on Lazarus' terms, it is not wrong to describe enthusiasm as 'enthusiasm for socialism,' 'enthusiasm for severance,' or 'enthusiasm for the army'. These phrases each describe different procedures through which enthusiastic prescriptions are "factualized, materialized, or put to work." As Lazarus goes on to write, "A mode in interiority can be identified (we can know its nature) by looking for what thought has been opened up in the world" (Lazarus 2016, 112). As I will elaborate in Section Three, we can find evidence of the thought that "has been opened up in the world" by looking to the particular sites where past political sequences happened.

Section Three: Lazarus' Inquiry

Lazarus' notions of 'enthusiasm' and 'the prescription' give him the conceptual resources to consistently identify and understand past moments of political opposition. Put differently, these concepts justify and clarify his decision to create a rigorous methodology for studying political sequences. Lazarus has a number of different names for the method that he develops: "anthropology of the name," "inquiry," and "political investigation" are three of the most common ones (Lazarus 2019). I want to conclude by underscoring that Lazarus' conception of inquiry is one of the most unique and crucial dimensions of his project.[15] In the "Preface to the English Edition" of *Anthropology of the Name*, Lazarus writes that he intends to nourish enthusiasm "about thought when it is possible to say

how it is at work when it is at work" (Lazarus 2015, 9). The inquirer's primary task is to identify sites where political contestation took place, and to show how thought was "at work" in these sites. By identifying these places, the inquirer herself becomes a figure of contestation. She opposes herself to those historians and social scientists who, when they maintain that 'People do not think,' make thought itself disappear. As Lazarus puts it, "deciding as to the existence of the word – thus forbidding its disappearance, subjectivating it as what permits a transformation in consciousness of those who pronounce it – is exactly what I mean by *people think*" (Lazarus 2016, 111). The inquirer, who does not live amidst a political sequence, may not be in a position to effect a transformation in consciousness. Nonetheless, by returning to sites where politics happened, the inquirer forbids the "disappearance" of the prescriptions that took place at that site.

Political Sequences

Inquiry is an anthropological procedure (rather than a philosophical one) because it studies a given political sequence by returning to the real sites where politics happened. Sites are necessary for politics because "thought is a relation of the real" (Lazarus 2015, 53). If thought were not at work in some actual site, then it would not be capable of supporting the *real possibility* of a *what can be* that stands opposed to a *what already is*. For instance, factory strikes are effective because "there is circulation followed by evacuation of the word 'worker' if it is not paired with the category of the factory" (2015, 153) Here, Lazarus does not mean to suggest that the factory dictates the workers' thinking, but rather that the workers *use* the factory as a site of opposition. The workers make the factory into a place where they can problematize the state's "circulation" and "evacuation" of the word "worker." When she studies the factory, the inquirer opposes the subordination of thought to the real by identifying the specific location where a "singular thought" had real effects on the world (Lazarus 2019).

In studying a site of politics, the inquirer affirms the possible by locating evidence of what Lazarus calls "saturation" (Lazarus 2015, ix). The word 'saturated' has a double meaning: it means both 'to be used up' and 'to leave behind evidence.' During a political sequence, a site becomes saturated with new, real, possibilities for *what can be* (i.e. socialism, severance for all, the prospect that "it is the workers who count the workers," and so on). Once this sequence of politics ends, the particular objects and names that were at play in this sequence can become "worn out or saturated." A 'worn out' word is one that is no longer adequate for forcefully pushing back against the existing social and political order of things. Put differently, past prescriptions like 'socialism' and 'severance for all' are not always useful for future political sequences. Nonetheless, when we inquire into *how thinking happened* in past political sequences, this proves that people's thought is capable of refuting the domination of bosses and politicians, and thereby transforming a given social order.

Lazarus contrasts the task of the inquirer with the task of the social scientist and historian. Historians and scientists attempt to define the requisites that supposedly determine a moment of political contestation, and to explain why this contestation ultimately failed. For instance, "the prevailing explanations for the collapse of socialism have commanded the establishment of a revivified and *purged* historicism" (Lazarus

2015, 175). Lazarus, who wrote *Anthropology of the Name* in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, knows all too well that historicism thrives in moments when resistance to capitalism is lethargic and depressed. In such moments, the ruling order's dominion over thinking begins to seem inevitable, and so the conclusion of historicism (namely, that thought cannot challenge the extant) starts to sound like common sense. By contrast, inquiry is an ongoing refutation of the historicist/scientific paradigm: "There are…unnamable names. The anthropology of the name maintains that the only possible enterprise of naming consists in the naming of the sites of the name and the identification of the category" (2015, 166). When people think, they assert that they are "unnamable," refuting the authority of any boss, politician, or party who attempts to define or count their existence (Lazarus 2019). For this reason, people's thought is doubly endangered. First it is endangered by the naming procedures of politicians, bosses, and state authorities. Then, it is challenged again by the social historians and scientists who revive the "enterprise of naming." Rather than stage yet another siege upon the "unnamable," Lazarus' inquirer returns to the site where political contestation took place, and asks "what does thought think when it thinks?" (Lazarus 2015, x). The inquirer's task is therefore to resuscitate enthusiasm – identifying our past, present, and future capacity to refute the necessity of *what already is*.

Put differently, the inquirer reverses the historian's description of the relationship between thought and the real. Politics has sites, but the sites themselves are determined by people's thinking, and not vice versa. The most we can say about the relationship between the worker and the factory is that, "At the factory is the worker" (Lazarus 2015, 154). The factory doesn't determine the worker; it is instead one of the places where the worker's thought and action can potentially take place. Lazarus argues that this reversal is essential for "postclassist" political analysis (Lazarus, 2019). A classist analysis would attempt to define workers' thinking by way of their 'real' or 'material' social position. For example, because the Paris auto factory strikers' demands were "factualized, materialized," and "put to work" as the demands *of* auto workers, we could easily conclude that 'Here *People did not think*, only *workers thought*.' This would pave the way for an interpretation of the strikes in which we would name a particular radical or revolutionary social group, and explain the conditions that led to their resistance. However, Lazarus would point out that once a site becomes a *political* site, we can no longer make sense of people's intellectuality by studying their social position. Although the workers are still subjugated by their bosses, they begin to insist that *The boss does not determine me, for another subjectivation is possible*.

In conclusion, Lazarus' rigorous conceptualization of "political investigation" enables us to understand past political struggles against the dominant social order without reducing them to a long series of failures. Here again, contrasting Lazarus with Badiou proves useful. In Badiou's analysis of politics, the end of fidelity is necessarily a moment of failure: "to fail to live up to a fidelity is Evil in the sense of *betrayal*, betrayal in oneself of the immortal that you are." By contrast, Lazarus' "Preface to the English Edition" introduces *Anthropology of the Name* as a project that intends to nourish enthusiasm:

> What I would readily call the site of the book named *Anthropology of the Name* is an enthusiastic site. Enthusiastic about what? For one thing, about the fact that a new conception of politics can be opposed to the end of the great period that extends from the Russian Revolution to today (Lazarus 2015, ix).

If the task of politics is to contest the extant itself, then the task of inquiry is to oppose the scientific and historical paradigm of our time. This opposition requires a "new conception of politics," and therefore a different approach to studying the sites where politics once took place, a different way of identifying the political sequences of "the great period that extends from the Russian Revolution to today." By naming 'enthusiasm for possibility' as the disposition that allows us to identify politics, and by "configuring the real through prescriptions and possibles," Lazarus poses a significant challenge to the persistent, violent demand that thought hold forth on its requisites. We, in turn, would be naive to neglect the tremendous possibility nourished by such an endeavor.

Notes

1 "'People' is an indistinct. Nothing is prejudged (this is what makes it 'indistinct'), except their existence (and this is what makes the term certain)" (Lazarus 2015, x).

2 Recently, an international group of Marxist scholars whose work is increasingly influenced by Lazarus organized the first American conference dedicated to studying his work. See Haider, Marasco, Neocosmos, Tutt, Tupinambá 2020.

3 To name a few examples, see Neocosmos 2016, Wamba-dia-Wamba 1993 and 1994, Corcoran 2015, Harper 2016, and Bosteels 2018. For one attempt to disentangle Lazarus and Badiou's thinking on time, see Calcagno 2007.

4 Lazarus and Badiou together formed a post-Leninist, post-Maoist political group called "Organisation Politique." For a short history of this organization, see McLaverty-Robinson 2015.

5 One interpreter who has tried to center Lazarus' methodology in his reading of Anthropology of the Name is Asad Haider. See Haider, 2018.

6 Indeed, my engagement with Badiou in this paper is relatively narrow. I focus on his formulation of fidelity in Ethics, and I supplement this reading with passages from Logic of Worlds, Metapolitics, and Plato's Republic that either directly engage with Lazarus or help further develop Badiou's notion of fidelity.

7 This example is far from random. Lazarus has been particularly well-received outside of France by Marxists who study past sequences of resistance against racism and colonization. See Neocosmos 2016, Wamba-dia-Wamba 1993 and 1994, and Haider 2019.

8 To offer one example, Lazarus is particularly critical of previous Marxist thinkers who view worker's thinking as a simple reaction to pre-existing external historical conditions like 'the economy' or 'class struggle.'

9 "From the standpoint of an investigation of forms of thought, the dialectic of the objective and the subjective is a direct mapping of intellectuality onto an exterior reality" (Lazarus 2015, 78).

10 Lazarus attributes Lenin's refutation of Marxist determinism to his early works – and most especially to What is to be Done? See Lazarus 2007, 255.

11 To rephrase this claim as a conditional syllogism: 'If there is enthusiasm, then politics happened here."

12 Although Lazarus adopts Mao's notion of enthusiasm, he also argues that Mao's distinction between 'new' and 'old' is less helpful for identifying modes of politics than his own opposition of the extant and the possible: "But it is not a matter here of a problematic position that, through the new and the rupture, would reintroduce revolt or social upheaval, even revolution. If this were so, we would find ourselves facing a new attempt at the historicization of forms of thought, by opposing two forms: one which would reflect on the same and the law in historical processes – it is what would maintain, regarding the phenomena that it studies, the said history as a longue durée; and the other which would maintain that it is the history of ruptures, transformations, mutation, revolutions that are situated at the heart of the order of things" (Lazarus 2019).

13 These two claims regarding enthusiasm do create necessary conditions for enthusiasm's existence. Enthusiasm, unlike people's thought, does hold forth on its requisites. More specifically, people's thought is required for the creation of 'an enthusiastic site.' To put this as a conditional syllogism: it is true that "If there is enthusiasm, then there is people's thought." However, it is not true that "If there is people's thought, then there is enthusiasm." If the first statement were false, enthusiasm would not be helpful for identifying moments when people think. If the second statement were true, enthusiasm would become a requisite for people's thoughts. Lazarus thinks that enthusiasm can help us identify particular moments where people think, but he wants to avoid using enthusiasm to give a full account of what does and doesn't count as people's thinking.

14 For a more extensive treatment of Lazarus' discussion of the French auto worker strikes, see Haider 2018.

15 Of course, Lazarus is not the first one to give inquiry or "worker's inquiry" a vital role in radical political struggles (see Haider and Mohandesi, 2013, and Hoffman 2019). What is unique about Lazarus is his understanding of the inquirer as a figure who asserts that another world is possible, and who radically contests the historians and social scientists of her time on behalf of this possibility.

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Biography

Bryan Doniger studies philosophy and the idea of communism at the New School for Social Research. He is interested, in particular, in the history of post-Althusserian Marxism. His work has previously appeared in *Critical Legal Thinking*.

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Sanctuary Politics and the Borders of the Demos: A Comparison of Human and Nonhuman Animal Sanctuaries[1]

Eva Meijer

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Abstract

Sanctuary traditionally meant something different for humans and nonhuman animals, but this is changing. Animals are increasingly seen as subjects, and, similar to human sanctuaries, animal sanctuaries are increasingly understood as political spaces. In this article I compare human and nonhuman sanctuaries in order to bring into focus underlying patterns of political inclusion and exclusion. By investigating parallels and differences I also aim to shed light on the role of sanctuaries in thinking about and working towards new forms of community and democratic interaction, focusing specifically on the role of political agency and voice.

I begin by briefly discussing the political turn in animal philosophy, in which nonhuman animals are conceptualized as political actors. I then discuss "Zatopia", a thought experiment that shows that viewing sanctuaries as separate from larger political structures runs the risk of repeating violence, and I investigate parallels with certain practices and policies in farmed animal sanctuaries. In order to overcome the obstacles thus identified, I turn to the concept "expanded sanctuary", which explicitly focuses on connections between sanctuary and larger political structures. I discuss two examples of expanded sanctuary in which the agency and voices of those seeking or taking sanctuary are foregrounded: VINE Sanctuary, and the Dutch migrant collective WE ARE HERE. In the final section I briefly touch upon the consequences of these considerations for our understanding of sanctuary in relation to political membership and reforming communities.

Keywords

Animal Sanctuary, City of Sanctuary, Expanded Sanctuary, Interspecies Relations, Political Aimal Philosophy, Political Philosophy

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Eva Meijer

Introduction

The sanctuary movement in Europe and North America is growing (Carney et al. 2017; Lenard and Madokoro 2021). Responding to global crises and the rise of populist regimes, churches, campuses, cities, counties, and even states declare sanctuary status to protect the human rights of all, and to provide safety. These sanctuaries focus primarily on assisting migrants with precarious status, often refugees, but may also assist others who are in need of safety. The nonhuman animal sanctuary movement is also growing, especially in the US (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2015; Gillespie 2018). There are many different types of nonhuman animal sanctuaries, which for example provide permanent housing and care for formerly exploited farmed animals, assist stray animals living in urban areas, or rehabilitate and release wild animals.

Originating in the context of religion, human sanctuaries are seen by many as apolitical spaces, which provide a safe haven for those who fall outside of the legal and political order (Lenard and Madokoro 2021; Squire and Bagelman 2013). In this view of sanctuary, those seeking sanctuary are regarded as outsiders or guests, in contrast to citizens (Derrida 2000), and connections between sanctuaries and political institutions and practices are often not made explicit. Conceptualizing sanctuaries in this manner, however, runs the risk of reproducing exclusion and hierarchies of power (Yukich 2013) and even of legitimizing certain injustices, because the underlying power structures are not challenged, while their effects are mitigated. New sanctuary practices challenge this and offer a more political model of sanctuary, which focuses on political agency, resistance, and redefining the *demos*, the people (Carney et al. 2017; Délano Alonso et al. 2021; Lenard and Madokoro 2021).

Animal sanctuaries are currently often seen and presented as safe havens. This is perhaps most clear in the farmed animal sanctuary movement, where nonhuman animals who are "rescued" from the intensive farming industry can "live out their lives" in peace. Even though this is often combined with vegan outreach, which is aimed at societal change, and even though these sanctuaries save lives that are seen as worthless, which is a political act, this way of formulating the situation – by society at large, but also sometimes by the sanctuaries themselves – runs the risk of reinforcing the underlying anthropocentric hierarchy that sees humans as saviours and nonhuman animals as victims. This attitude is reflected in different practices, some of which are directed at other humans, such as for example visitors' programs, and some of which concern the lives of animal residents, such as deciding where and with whom they live, as I will explain in more detail below. Similar to the human case there are however also animal sanctuaries which explore more political models of interaction with animal residents and the outside world (Blattner, Donaldson and Willcox 2020; Donaldson and Kymlicka 2017; Jones 2014).

While sanctuary traditionally meant something different for humans and nonhuman animals, there have always been parallels. In both cases those seeking sanctuary

fall outside of the borders of the political community. Their political agency is contested, they have no fundamental rights or citizenship rights, and thus they often depend on the goodwill of others for safety and basic needs, like housing or medical care. In the case of humans there is a basic structure of universal rights. However, these often collapse when humans leave the political community to which they belong (Arendt 1951, 1996 [1943]; Agamben 1998). While humans generally find it easier to recognize that other humans are political agents and (possible) bearers of rights compared to other animals, there is a long tradition of viewing certain human groups, such as Blacks, women, Jews, and refugees, as less-than-human (Spivak 1988). If these groups are awarded rights inequalities often remain, because dominant practices and institutions are designed to benefit the historically powerful groups. In processes of exclusion and stigmatization members of these groups are furthermore often animalized: they are portrayed as animals, in language and/or images, and sometimes treated similarly (Adams 2010 [1990]; Derrida 2008; Gruen 2015; Ko and Ko 2017; Taylor 2017).

Further conceptualizing parallels and differences between human and nonhuman groups can be helpful towards better understanding exclusionary mechanisms in current nation states, and, perhaps, in moving beyond them. This works both ways. Thinking about justice for nonhuman animals is often based on insights about human justice, but the treatment of nonhuman animals can also shed light on ways in which humans are silenced and their agency is not taken seriously.

This comparison is especially relevant given that the status of nonhuman animals in society and theory is changing. In recent years there has been a 'political turn' in animal philosophy. Building on insights from the life sciences and social justice movements, it is argued that the interests of nonhuman animals should be taken into account in political decision-making, some even claiming that they should be considered as political actors. Before I turn to discussing parallels between different types of sanctuaries, I therefore first briefly discuss this political turn.

The Political Turn in Animal Philosophy

In *The Politics*, Aristotle famously stated that only humans are political animals, because they speak, or, more specifically: they have *logos*, which means reason, or rational speech, and therefore can distinguish between good and evil (Aristotle 1991 [350BC]). He connects this rationally informed political agency to the borders of the *demos*: other animals, who may have voices and express themselves but who lack *logos*, cannot be part of the political community. Contemporary political philosophers from different theoretical backgrounds still follow Aristotle's views, both in the sense that they only regard humans as political animals and in making a strict distinction between humans on the one side and other animals on the other (i.e. Habermas 1981; Rancière 2014; Rawls 1971).

But there are reasons to resist this strict distinction. It is impossible to draw a firm line between all human and all nonhuman animals on the basis of capacities; moreover, the lives of humans and other animals are intertwined not just socially but also politically.

The inner lives of nonhuman animals have become a serious topic for research in the past decade. Studies focusing on agency, cognition, emotion, culture, and language

challenge a strict border between humans and all other animals (Despret 2016; Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011; Meijer 2019; Smuts 2001). Furthermore, the image of the human as a rational being, separate from nature, has in the past decades also been challenged in poststructuralist, decolonialist and feminist thought, which has had consequences for who we see as political actors, and which acts are seen as political in the case of humans (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011; Meijer 2019).

Following evolving views about animal subjectivity, recent years have seen within political philosophy an interest in animals (Cochrane, Garner and O'Sullivan 2016; Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011; Meijer 2019). In philosophy animals were traditionally mostly considered within the field of ethics. Ethics focuses on how humans should treat other animals, for example whether it is morally allowed to eat them, kill them, or keep them captive (Regan 1983; Singer 1975). Political animal philosophy focuses on a different set of questions. For example, it investigates the relations between groups of nonhuman animals and human political communities, what kind of relations other animals would desire with humans, and how existing institutions can be extended to incorporate their interests. Concepts such as justice, democracy, citizenship, resistance, and sovereignty are used to reflect on why we should, and how we can, reformulate relations with animals.

Many authors in the political turn in animal philosophy argue that human institutions should take into account animal interests for reasons of justice (Cochrane, Garner and O'Sullivan 2016) – for example, that animal interests should be taken into account in democratic decision-making regarding their lives (Garner 2013). There are also theorists that question the existing system more fundamentally, and argue that nonhuman animals should be seen as political actors (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011; Hobson 2007; Meijer 2019). The lives of humans and other animals are interconnected in many ways. Other animals are part of myriad social, economic and cultural practices through human consumption and trade; they are companions, neighbours, used for amusement and food. In these – sometimes political – relations, they are not passive objects, but agents who, when possible, actively shape their lives (Hobson 2007).[2] Different groups of animals, such as domesticated animals or wild animals, stand in different relations to human political communities, leading to different rights and obligations.[3]

Viewing nonhuman animals as political actors and investigating questions of community and justice concerning them raises many challenging questions: about justice and citizenship, but also about what other animals want and how we can find out (Donaldson 2020; Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011; Meijer 2019).

Mainstream animal rights theory traditionally focused on abolishing relations with nonhuman animals, because these relations were seen as necessarily inherently oppressive (Francione 2008; Regan 1983; Singer 1975). While currently they usually are so, this view is problematic since we share a planet with the other animals, and better relations are possible and often already exist (see Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011 for a longer version of this argument). Furthermore, an abolitionist standpoint reinforces anthropocentrism in the sense that it again relies on humans deciding what is just for other animals. Taking seriously animal agency and subjectivity implies reformulating relations and societies with them (Donaldson 2020; Gillespie 2019; Meijer 2019).

The role of animal sanctuaries in the political turn

In order to find out what other animals want, we need to develop new forms of conducting research (Blattner, Donaldson and Wilcox 2020; Despret 2016; Gillespie 2019), new ways of living together (Smuts 2001), and new political experiments (Meijer 2019). These aspects are interconnected. The questions humans ask in research determine the framework in which other animals can answer. For a long time research into animal behaviour was mostly conducted in order to find out more about humans (Despret 2016; Meijer 2019). Furthermore, much of this research involved captivity or even solitary confinement. But studying animal agency at sites which limit that agency will influence the outcomes of the study (Blattner, Donaldson and Willcox 2020; Gillespie 2019). Also, in many studies researchers projected the social norms of their time onto their animal research subjects, for example with regard to gender and power hierarchies within groups (Despret 2016). To move beyond this and to be able ask other questions, as well as to allow the animals to respond in new ways, we need a different starting point.

Animal sanctuaries challenge existing human-animal hierarchies and take animal subjectivity seriously. Therefore they can play an important role in developing new forms of knowledge production (Blattner, Donaldson and Wilcox 2020; Gillespie 2019). As Kathryn Gillespie writes: sanctuaries "pose a possibility for exploring other nonnormative ways of creating livable spaces for formerly farmed animals that do not reproduce farming models of species segregation, farm-based practices of care, and highly uneven power relationships between human caretakers and animal residents" (2018:127). An important aspect of exploring new ways of living together involves deliberation about collective decisions: "One way to mitigate captivity and transform knowledge about the care of farmed animal species is to incorporate animals in the decisionmaking process" (*ibid.*, see also Blattner, Donaldson and Wilcox 2020; Meijer 2019).

However, not all sanctuaries share the same commitment to foregrounding animal agency and creating new societies with the animals, but instead focus on abolishing relations, or simply on rescuing animals and highlighting suffering. Sanctuaries that are committed to reforming society may also adopt practices and policies that carry traces of this attitude towards animal residents.[4] This is unfortunate, because (partially) viewing them as victims or patients of care obscures their agency and leaves intact part of the existing power hierarchies which might reinforce the patterns of exclusion sanctuaries aim to challenge (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2015). An image of nonhuman animals as not capable of political agency or as having no interest in democratic interaction lies at the basis of the political exclusion of other animals in western societies, and stands in the way of reformulating communities together with them (Donaldson 2020; compare Meijer 2019 on speaking for other animals in activism).

In the literature about human sanctuaries, understood broadly to include, for example, refugee camps, shelters, and City of Sanctuary practices, this is a familiar theme (Délano Alonso 2021; Squire and Bagelman 2013). When sanctuaries only focus on rescuing lives – which in the case of humans too is an act of resistance in a world in which these lives are not valued – they are not automatically addressing the larger political logic of insider and outsider, nor the injustices that led to the need for sanctuary for certain groups in the first place. In other words, rescuing refugees, or even assisting them

to become citizens in a given nation state, treats a symptom and does not address the underlying problems (Agamben 1998). A narrative based on helping or rescuing also leads to a risk of repeating hierarchical relationships in the sanctuaries themselves. In order to explore this dynamic in more detail, I first turn to Zatopia, a thought experiment about a human sanctuary, and then discuss farmed animal sanctuaries.

Sanctuary as Utopia and the Risk of Repeating Exclusion

In the essay *Nergensland* (2017, Nowhere Land), Dutch green left politician Femke Halsema introduces Zatopia. Zatopia is an imaginary city, located at the border of Jordan and Syria, where refugee camp Zaatari is currently located. On the 200 km2 that Zatopia would rent from Jordan, refugees would be able to work and study, and have access to rights. They would build an economy and have democracy and freedom of the press, as well as a police apparatus trained by the United Nations. The UN and the UNHCR would guard Zatopia and have the right to keep people out. After a year of good behaviour refugees would receive a refugee passport, with which they would be able to travel and regain their freedom of movement. The government would be shared between the refugee community and the UN. Zatopia should be seen as a common: a space outside of the borders of existing nation states, where those previously without a right to rights would have them. Written in response to the European "refugee crisis" that began in 2013, Halsema's rationale behind developing this utopia is that Europe cannot simply open borders and welcome all refugees, for this would lead to too much pressure on existing European countries. However, many humans are currently stuck in refugee camps without the possibility of continuing their lives, a situation that can last for many years. In order to overcome this impasse we need a common, a new type of location, in between the countries the refugees fled and Europe.

The idea of establishing a Zatopia has rightfully received criticism from Dutch antiracist and decolonial thinkers (a.o. Nduwanje 2018; Prins 2018). They argue that borders remain closed, which leaves intact the idea and physical reality of "fortress Europe": a wealthy utopian society that needs to be protected from outside. The logic of the nation state within this framework is not adequately challenged. Furthermore, the hierarchy between white and non-white bodies is left intact, violence against non-white humans is not taken seriously, and the historical and present exploitation of other countries by European countries, both in colonial times and in the current age, is not addressed. Olave Nduwanje (2018) calls Zatopia, for this reason, "more of the same".

This criticism can be summarized by saying that the idea of Zatopia is a mere palliative: instead of changing political and legal structures so that humans do not need to leave their countries, challenging structures of economic exploitation, and/or turning Europe into a welcoming place (see also Agamben 1998; Arendt 1996 [1943]), we would found a large sanctuary which would in the end function as a sort of nation state for the stateless, with increased monitoring and control of the movements and behaviours of residents. While this could indeed improve the opportunities of individual refugees to lead a good life – they would be able to study and work, as would their children – it leaves intact structural inequalities, and could even legitimate them because it mitigates excessive violence.

Problems with viewing farmed animal sanctuaries as utopias

Many farmed animal sanctuaries (FAS) bear similarities to Zatopia. Farmed animal sanctuaries are committed to offering formerly exploited nonhuman animals a home and care. The animal residents at these farms can "live out their lives" in safety until they die of natural causes. Many of them are portrayed as ambassadors for their species. Their personalities and relationships with one another and with humans are often made public through social media posts and visitors' programs, which aim to educate individual consumers about animal individuality and promote veganism.

Similar to Zatopia, FAS offer a space where nonhuman animal residents can live in safety and build relationships, thereby realising and developing themselves over time. There is border control in the form of fences, and their behaviours and relations are monitored (see Emmerman 2014 for a discussion of the similarities between sanctuaries and zoos). They live in a site outside of the nation state, in which they have certain rights, and which is developed in order to offer a permanent solution for those lucky individuals who make it there, as the outside world cannot provide them with rights or guarantee their safety. With some imagination we can also compare the structure of government: animal agency provides input for how sanctuaries are run on a daily basis, with human caretakers playing the role of the UN, providing additional knowledge and protection. For example, the animals decide upon certain activities – they play, eat, sleep, make friends, or negotiate social structures – while humans decide who lives where or decide upon meal times, intervene in conflicts, build shelters, and allow visitors from outside or not.

There are of course also large differences. Nonhuman animal rights are currently not recognized in the way that human rights are (flawed though the system is in the human case), and their position is therefore even more precarious. They did not flee their country, but are without rights in their country of origin (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011). In contrast to humans in Zatopia they do not receive a passport after a year – they usually can never leave the sanctuary because they would not be safe in the outside world.

Part of the criticism that Zatopia attracted also applies to certain practices and policies of farmed animal sanctuaries; for example, where sanctuaries focus on rescuing individual animals and changing the behaviour of individual consumers by promoting veganism, but do not address the larger structure underlying the political exclusion of animals. Placing violence against nonhuman animal bodies in the forefront of outreach actions to the larger public, online and offline, and mentioning their exploitation, does not automatically challenge the epistemic and cultural hierarchy between humans and nonhuman animals (see Gillespie 2018 Chapter 6 for a careful discussion of this problem).

This can be visible in attitudes towards political animal agency. Micro-agency – for example, regarding what foods animal residents eat, which friends to hang out with, preferences in interaction with visitors – is often respected in animal sanctuaries, but nonhuman animals are thought not to be capable of, or have an interest in, making decisions that concern the larger structures or their lives, specifically the political structures (Donaldson 2020; Donaldson and Kymlicka 2015; Meijer 2019). In line with

ideas about animals in larger society, political nonhuman animal macro-agency is often not taken seriously (for discussions of how micro-agency connects to macro-agency, see Abrell 2019; Gillespie 2018; Jones 2014; see also Emmerman 2014). For example, in FAS residents cannot usually choose to opt out of relations, they cannot leave the community; there is sometimes species separation, which limits their options for social choice; while they can choose not to engage with visitors, they cannot always choose not to participate in visitor programs (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2015; Gillespie 2018); and while how sanctuaries are run is often shaped by animal agency, there is often no co-government, based on democratic negotiations about what the good life means to them (*ibid*.; see Jones 2014 for an alternative; see also Donaldson and Kymlicka 2015, 2017). This focus on micro-agency can be visible in the narratives about the animal residents in larger society, but also as sometimes provided by the sanctuaries themselves. Animals are for example said to be "rescued" and can "live out their lives safely", implying there are human saviours who know what is best for the other animals.

When farmed animal sanctuaries are presented as utopias for animals living there, emphasizing that they finally live the life they deserve (Abrell 2016; Donaldson and Kymlicka 2015), they seem to be end stations where all is well. This glosses over the difficulties of caring for and working towards equality with formerly exploited animals, but also obscures the new forms of agency that can arise in these settings, as well as the possibilities for moving beyond anthropocentrism and the given power relations that follow from that (Donaldson 2020; Emmerman 2014).

There is, furthermore, an additional problem, one that we do not find in Zatopia. Animal sanctuaries often rely on donations in order to be able to sustain themselves, so they need to invest time and effort into fundraising and having visitors, which sometimes compromises the wellbeing of residents and invades their privacy. Nonhuman animal residents are in some farmed animal sanctuaries also expected to perform emotional labour, such as, for example, cuddling with visitors. Elan Abrell (2016) argues sanctuary animals in these cases can be seen as "sacrificial citizens" because their interests and rights are sometimes compromised by the practical, financial, and educational priorities of sanctuaries.

Statism and Pastoralism

Zatopia is a thought experiment that can shed light on problematic features of sanctuary practices and policies. Specifically, it draws our attention to the risks of repeating, within sanctuary structures, the very political and social hierarchies that led to the need for sanctuary in the first place.

Vicki Squire and Jennifer Bagelman (2013) point to two possible dangers associated with human sanctuary, namely statism and pastoralism. Statism refers to dividing people into categories of citizens and noncitizens, which reaffirms state hegemony and the logic of inclusion and exclusion. Pastoralism refers to a hierarchy of protector and protected, and in this categorization certain lives are deemed worthy of protection and others not; for example, refugees are often portrayed either as victims or criminals (*ibid*.). Pastoralism affirms statism because it constitutes the noncitizen migrant or refugee as apolitical.

Both pastoralism and statism can be found in nonhuman animal sanctuaries too. As we saw, a focus on victimhood obscures their political agency as well as possibilities for new political relations and engagements. Not recognizing political animal agency is interconnected with their exclusion from the *demos* (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011; Meijer 2019).

The need for sanctuaries follows from unjust political and economic systems. The examples of Zatopia and farmed animal sanctuaries that replicate hierarchies in their practices and/or policies make clear that instead of viewing sanctuary as a place, or a set of practices, which support the integration of outsiders into a given people, the underlying political structure needs to change. This requires rethinking membership both in relation to national borders but also within nations, where we find exclusionary mechanisms regarding nonhuman animals but also human citizens. Moving beyond statism and pastoralism requires not only a different attitude towards those needing sanctuary, as (co-)authors of change, but also towards larger political (and economic) structures (Abrell 2016, 2019; Délano Alonso et al. 2021).

In both human and animal cases there are sanctuaries and sanctuary practices that address this challenge and focus explicitly on connecting to larger society. The concept "expanded sanctuary" captures this intersectional movement which strives towards justice for all (see also Abrell 2016, 2017, 2019; Délano Alonso et al. 2021; Emmerman 2014; Pachirat 2018).

Expanded Sanctuary and Transforming Society

Nonhuman animals and refugees are not the only groups in society who fall outside of the borders of the *demos*, either completely or partially, by being denied certain rights, justice, or political voice. In the US, organizations such as BYP100, Mijente, and Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) call for sanctuary for all communities that experience criminalization, policing, and incarceration, especially Black communities. For example, social justice scholar Monique Worris and attorney and researcher Andrea Ritchie (2017) argue for an expanded sanctuary that centres Black women, girls, and femmes who experience racial profiling, criminalization, and exclusion in their daily lives.

Expanded sanctuary means that in providing and thinking about sanctuary we should take into account not just those who come from abroad, but also those suffering from injustices within societies. Furthermore, sanctuary requires a commitment to changing the economic, political, and ecological structures that force refugees to leave their country. This also requires providing support in countries abroad because wealth is unequally distributed and countries in the global north have contributed to, and are still involved in, the exploitation of other countries.

Providing sanctuary is in this understanding interconnected with working towards social justice for all (Abrell 2019; Ferdowsian 2018), within and beyond state borders (Délano Alonso et al. 2021).

Alexandra Délano Alonso (2021) shows that sanctuaries in places where the economic and political conditions are insufficient to guarantee protection and safety for their own inhabitants can transform local communities, such as, for example, the

Las Patronas group of women who hand out food to migrants in freight trains passing by their town of La Patrona, Veracruz, near the Gulf of Mexico. They do not view their work as a hierarchical situation in which citizens assist migrants, but rather as an egalitarian process which is not just about food, but also about sympathy, sharing and solidarity. In this process, the groups are equal. Through the interactions the women are transformed, and the rest of the community is too. This transformation can concern gender roles, social awareness, or education about structures of violence that bring about migration processes. The actions of these women not only form a critique of violent structures, they also present the alternative. Délano Alonso describes this form of sanctuary as a critical, dynamic and transformative practice which focuses on building new forms of community and relationships, aiming to challenge existing structures of inclusion and exclusion. These practices of solidarity are not just a response to unjust laws, or forms of civil disobedience, but rather consist of a new form of politics that begin with a perspective of the equality of all, ultimately aiming to rebuild social structures (see also Délano Alonso et al. 2021).

In order to further investigate what expanded sanctuary could mean in the case of humans and nonhumans I will discuss two examples: VINE Sanctuary and the Dutch migrant collective WE ARE HERE.

VINE Sanctuary

VINE Sanctuary is a farmed animal sanctuary that offers refuge to nonhuman animals who were rescued from, or escaped, the egg, dairy and meat industries, cockfighting, or zoos (Blattner, Donaldson and Wilcox 2020; Jones 2014; jones 2014, 2019). The residents include chickens, cows, ducks, doves, emus, geese, pigeons, and sheep. In addition to creating a multispecies community with the residents, VINE conducts research and educates on local and national levels. By creating and sharing knowledge they aim to contribute to systemic change in agriculture, trade, and consumption, as well as change human attitudes in these matters. Working from an ecofeminist perspective, they actively seek out alliances with other animal, environmental, and social justice organizations.[5]

Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of taking seriously animal agency in their community (Blattner, Donaldson, Wilcox 2020, Jones 2014; jones 2014, 2019). The spaces, practices, routines and relations in VINE sanctuary are almost all co-formed by the animals (see Jones 2014 for a discussion of how this works with chickens). While there are limitations on the residents' agency for reasons of their safety, a hostile larger society, and the fact that agency is always influenced and limited by living with others, the humans who live and work with them actively search for ways to foster subjectivity, communication, and relations (*ibid.*). The animal residents express themselves in myriad ways: they take on different social roles in the group, choose their own spaces to live, make friends of different species, shape social norms and co-author governments. Humans in VINE and similar sanctuaries no longer behave as hosts or rulers who have predecided what is the best way to act, but engage in sometimes difficult processes, with uncertain outcomes, of question and response with the animal residents in order to find out (Blattner, Donaldson, Wilcox 2020; Jones 2014; jones 2014, 2019).

Sanctuaries like VINE can have a transformative effect on society. Donaldson

and Kymlicka (2017) argue that they are spaces for deep learning and slow transformation.[6] This "slow transformation" model does not aim to attract visitors from cities in order to convert them to veganism, but instead invests in connecting with the local rural community they are part of, and in intersectional justice by "becoming a good citizen of the local community (…) and planting the seeds of alternative rural economy in Springfield" (2017, 4).

This model proposes to learn about care and justice with nonhuman animals. In this understanding, both building better interspecies relations and connecting to other social justice movements can contribute to changing larger political and economic structures.

WE ARE HERE

A second example of an expanded sanctuary is the work of the Dutch group WE ARE HERE. WE ARE HERE is a collective of undocumented and illegalized migrants, based in Amsterdam, who campaign for human rights. The group came together in 2012, when they decided to collectively squat a building. Shelters in the city of Amsterdam can only be used between 5 pm and 9 am, and the collective wanted a real place to live. Many members were in the Dutch asylum system for years or even decades without receiving a residence permit. The first real place of residence was the *Vluchtkerk* (the refuge church). Their squatting of the building and the activities they organized received a lot of attention in Dutch media. Celebrities performed there in solidarity, and they organized a Christmas dinner which was open to everyone. Since then they have squatted a series of buildings, and have been visible in different ways. They spoke to journalists, participated in street demonstrations, gave concerts, and worked together with a theatre collective. This allowed them to bring to light their precarious position, and to voice their opinion about the Dutch system. WE ARE HERE members take their own position as a starting point for bringing to light problems with the Dutch shelter system, focusing specifically on the situation in Amsterdam. Instead of hiding, as most undocumented refugees do, they make their daily realities visible. While they are supported by volunteers and people who work for Vluchtelingenwerk, a Dutch organisation that supports refugees, they are the ones in charge and speak up for themselves.

The collective is constantly in flux – some gain Dutch residence permits, others disappear. It currently exists of different sub-groups, such as a women's collective and a Swahili collective. While some group members plead for citizenship, others explicitly state they do not want citizenship, but basic human rights. They keep emphasizing that all should have access to medical care, education, work, housing, freedom of expression, and so on. The collective believes the right to speak up is extremely important for those without rights.[7]

While adequately addressing the injustices WE ARE HERE face requires institutional change, with their acts they already change the script and contest the violent structures they are subjected to. When WE ARE HERE squat a church and publicly speak out against an unjust system in the media, they claim the citizens' rights to housing and freedom of expression. With their acts they call the law into question in creative ways and develop new ways of being heard and of expressing themselves

politically. By doing so, they put issues on the agenda that would otherwise not receive much, or any, attention.

Sanctuary as Starting Point

In this brief exploration I explored the role of sanctuaries in working towards new forms of political community, and mapped obstacles to this process. In both cases of human and nonhuman sanctuaries, working towards a more just future requires more than providing safety: it also asks for a critique of larger political, economic, and ecological structures, and for being aware of the dangers of replicating hierarchies in the contexts of sanctuaries.

Both VINE Sanctuary and WE ARE HERE explicitly challenge social and political injustices beyond the scope of sanctuary. They also challenge the dichotomy between citizen and non-citizen. While members of the WE ARE HERE collective do not have official citizenship, many of them participate in society and have done so for a long time. De facto, they are members of society, even though they are formally and legally not recognized as such (see also Isin 2013; Johnson 2012; Sassen 2002).

In farmed animal sanctuaries such as VINE Sanctuary nonhuman animals also exercise political agency and are members of the *demos*. While they do not take part in street demonstrations, theatre plays, or are interviewed by newspapers, they do participate in building new forms of community with others. The humans who form these communities with them make sure of paying attention to their expressions and agency in this process, and of learning from them (Abrell 2016, 2019; Blattner, Donaldson and Wilcox 2020; Donaldson and Kymlicka 2015; Jones 2014; jones 2014, 2019). Jones (2014) points out the importance of observation and learning from the animals themselves in VINE, especially in relation to freedom.

For those engaged in the human sanctuary movement, learning about these processes in animal sanctuaries can be useful because they can shed light on the ways in which humans seeking sanctuary can be silenced and not be taken seriously. They present new ways of working towards equality, and show the importance of taking seriously the political agency and voice of those who have no right to speak within official democratic practices and institutions, and who might have internalized that deprivation. These new interspecies societies also present a different perspective on political membership which can inform new understandings of citizenship as a practice instead of something that is given.

Working towards alternative forms of community and relationships with others, and developing alternative political structures inside and outside of sanctuaries, requires setting aside fixed views of the *demos* and citizenship. It asks for discussing difficult questions, changing unjust institutions, and listening to others. In these processes sanctuaries and sanctuary practices can provide safety or assistance, and offer a new starting point: for conversation, imagination, and new relations.

Notes

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2 In this context Hobson (2007) makes a useful distinction between "Politics" and "politics". "Politics" is often understood as the institutional arrangements of the state and international relations. This is however not the only space where political acts occur. There are also peoples, spaces and practices that challenge these institutions through non-traditional political avenues, such as social movements, as well as a politics of the 'everyday'. Hobson calls these acts, actors and movements "politics". While Politics often relies on rational deliberation in human language, politics might include street protests, acts of civil disobedience, art and music. Hobson argues convincingly that other animals also take part in politics.

3 In their book Zoopolis. *A Political Theory of Animal Rights* (2011), which is one of the most influential works in the political turn in animal philosophy, Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka focus on these relations to develop a theory of political rights. They propose to view domesticated animals as co-citizens of shared multispecies communities, wild animals as sovereign self-governing communities, and liminal animals – those who live among humans but are not domesticated, such as pigeons or rats – as denizens.

4 As mentioned above, there are many different types of sanctuaries that have different practices and philosophies. In what follows I focus on farmed animal sanctuaries. I recognize the wide variety of practices that take place in farmed sanctuaries, as well as outside constraints on nonhuman animal agency (for example, the need for fences; see Jones (2014) for an exploration of this issue in relation to chicken freedom). My point here is not that there are "good" or "bad" sanctuaries, but rather to zoom in on a certain aspect of human/nonhuman animal relations in certain sanctuaries.

5 See http://vinesanctuary.org for a longer description and photographs.

6 One example of deep learning in the context of farmed animal sanctuary is in veterinary medicine. Currently, there are not many places where farmed animals can live until their natural death – they are usually killed when they reach adulthood. In sanctuaries people have learned about medical care for older farmed animals, and through internships and connections with other vets and scientists brought these insights back into veterinary knowledge (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2017).

7 https://wijzijnhier.org/tijdslijn/what-did-we-achieve-in-four-years/

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Biography

Eva Meijer is a philosopher and writer. Meijer works as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Amsterdam (NL), on the four-year research project *The politics of (not) eating animals,* supported by a Veni grant from the Dutch Research Council, and as a postdoctoral researcher in the project *Anthropocene ethics: Taking animal agency seriously* at Wageningen University and Research (NL). She is the chair of the Dutch study group for Animal Philosophy. Recent publications include *When animals speak. Toward an Interspecies Democracy* (New York University Press 2019), *Animal Languages* (John Murray 2019) and *The Limits of my Language* (Pushkin Press 2021). Meijer wrote twelve books, fiction and non-fiction, and her work has been translated into eighteen languages. More information can be found on her website: www.evameijer.nl

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Dossier: Adorno's *Minima Moralia* at 70

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Dossier: Adorno's *Minima Moralia* at 70

This year is the 70th anniversary of the publication of Adorno's *Minima Moralia*. Written on the occasion of Max Horkheimer's 50th birthday, these "reflections on damaged life" (as the subtitle reads) became, after publication in 1951, widely read also outside of academic circles, and established Adorno's reputation as an essayist and public intellectual in post-war Germany. Jürgen Habermas later referred to it as the author's "Hauptwerk", ("that one can study as though it were a *summa*") and while it may have to compete for this title with the later-written books *Negative Dialectics* and *Aesthetic Theory*, it is safe to say that *Minima Moralia* is in any case the richest of Adorno's books, in thematic scope, emotional depth, and most certainly in literary style.

In the canon of philosophical works, it is difficult to find anything like it. There are of course precursors, like Pascal's *Pensées*, Nietzsche's *Morgenröte*, and Benjamin's *Einbahnstrasse*, but still Adorno's aphorisms are quite unique, weaving together parodies of poems or lullabies, personal memories, dense philosophical prose, art and literary criticism, and social and cultural analysis. Some of his most quoted lines, like "The whole is the false", "Wrong life cannot be lived rightly", and "The splinter in your eye is the best magnifying glass", come from this work, even though Adorno himself would shudder at the thought of his philosophy being reduced to set of catchphrases.

Adorno's work has, in recent years, again gained a lot of interest, but one might argue that his use of the genre of the philosophical aphorism has had little follow-up (nor, for that matter, by Adorno himself, who did not write anything resembling it in later life). Today, especially, the practices and institutions of academic publishing, and the cultural hegemony of analytic philosophy, all but forbid anything differing from the "steel-hard shell" of the journal-article.

This is why, on the occasion of this anniversary, *Krisis* decided to make a dossier devoted to *Minima Moralia*, which is at the same time dedicated to the aphorism form. We asked a diverse group of authors to write a short, aphoristic text. The topic was of their own choosing; it didn't have to deal with Adorno's philosophy, let alone would we dare ask authors to write in an "Adornian" style. Rather, we asked the authors to pick a quote and/or fragment from *Minima Moralia*, and use it as a point of departure for their own reflections.

Either explicitly or implicitly, the contributions in this dossier together address the question whether life, seventy years after publication of *Minima Moralia*, is still damaged. Although we might not compare our own time and experiences to the ones that Adorno lived through, we have in recent years, and are still, faced with numerous catastrophes, not in the least the ecological catastrophe that puts grim truth to Adorno's lines that "even the blossoming tree lies the moment its bloom is seen without the shadow of terror." (§ 5)

While *Minima Moralia* was written only by Adorno, such was not the case in many other texts produced by the Frankfurt School. Following the latter example, we want to thank the many authors who contributed a text and the four co-editors: Samir Gandesha, who was a guest editor on this dossier as well as Thijs Lijster, Tivadar Vervoort and Guilel Treiber from the Krisis editorial board. Finally, a note on referencing: since

the authors used different translations of *Minima Moralia*, or sometimes chose to amend an existing translation or use their own translation, we decided to refer in all cases only to the aphorism number. With this strategy we also encourage readers to read the entire aphorism when they are interested in the reference.

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From Downton Abbey to Minneapolis: Aesthetic Form and Black Lives Matter

Tom Huhn

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From Downton Abbey to Minneapolis: Aesthetic Form and Black Lives Matter

Tom Huhn

After 400 years of brutality and oppression, what finally made possible for a majority of American citizens the realization that some large portion of our fellow citizens continues to be systematically diminished and discriminated against? One answer is Netflix and HBO, along with the whole suite of online viewing platforms that deliver visual narratives.

By summer 2020 there was a certain fatigue – after months of quarantine viewing – and thus an appetite for more compelling drama. More pointedly – and here is where the role of aesthetic form becomes prominent – there was the preparation provided over the last several years by the expansion of a relatively new form of visual narrative, of the miniseries and multi-season series formats. Contemporary viewers are thus afforded, via these novel forms of consuming narrative, a more extended, nuanced, and thus deeper involvement with whatever dramas unfold. We thereby became, by means of our narrative imaginations having been reformatted and extended, more invested in the significance of things and perhaps thereby more attentive. These formats cultivated in us a hunger for an ever-greater commitment to extended drama, just like that which Aristotle defined as the enactment of the meaning of what human beings do.

Regardless of how explicit the video evidence of black people being dehumanized and killed, we have only our imaginations to rely on to tell us the meaning of, and allow us to sympathize with, the horrors that we witness. However well-meaning all those Sidney Poitier films, or the poignancy of Norman Rockwell's paintings of integration, whatever sympathy they elicit seems not to have sufficiently prompted the imaginations of white people; they did not go deep enough within the souls of white folk to rouse them very far up. So too the relentlessness of the video evidence of violence against blacks, the CNN format of the 24-hour repetition compulsion of horror, which often leaves us more numb than awakened. Evidence, sadly, might prove insufficient fuel for the imagination.

We can only imagine ourselves, unfortunately, into the humanity of our fellow citizens – as well as our own (which remains an ongoing task for each of us) – and I'm suggesting that what might have played a critical role in the retrofitting of the white imagination such that it could take in the reality of 'I can't breathe,' is that black lives can come to matter only if the white imagination is prepared to see them and to admit it. Other commentators on race relations, far wiser, believed that love would be the means for preparing the expansion of the imagination. But, in the imagination, love – at least in regard to race – has shown itself to be as feckless as evidence.

In the face of the ongoing insufficiency of love, the multi-season, multi-episode form of visual narrative helped make possible what love has been thus far incapable of. It's as if the accumulation, finally, of so many previous seasons of violence against blacks, the episodes of Emmett Till, Rodney King, Oscar Grant, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, Breonna Taylor, et al., culminated in the season finale George Floyd. Binge-watching helped prepare the imagination to

realize Floyd's murder as the culmination of too many episodes and seasons of brutality. I don't in any way mean to equate these horrific events and murders with entertainment, but I do believe that what made it possible only now for white America to see the meaning of them is that they appeared to happen – in the imagination – according to the aesthetic forms by which we now mostly consume visual dramas. (Note the curiosity that the broadcast of *Roots* in 1977 was one of the very first miniseries).

Human actions become meaningful when the imagination has the means and forms to make them appear so. Aristotle explains in his *Poetics* that art is superior to history because the latter, regardless how true, remains too close to events for their significance to be experienced. History thereby offers precious little opening for us to imaginatively take in and feel the drama of events. It's as if we couldn't fully imagine the extent of the system of tragedy until we had repeatedly witnessed an unending miniseries of tragedies. Consider again the prophecy of Gil Scott-Heron's *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*; the revolution that consists of the realization of systemic racism was indeed televised, but only after television was revised to afford the appearance of a deeper and broader drama. Seeing exactly what continues to happen did not suffice to elicit the desire for change. We can't know the meaning of the reality we inhabit until it appears as a form we can imagine it in. And only then, perhaps, might we begin to imagine it otherwise.

Biography

Tom Huhn is the chair of the Art History and BFA Visual & Critical Studies Departments at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. He received a PhD in Philosophy from Boston University, and has been a visiting professor at Yale University and the University of Graz, Austria. His books include: *Imitation and Society: The Persistence of Mimesis in the Aesthetics of Burke, Hogarth, and Kant*; *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*; *The Wake of Art: Criticism, Philosophy, and the Ends of Taste*; and *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory.* His publications include: *New German Critique, Art & Text, Oxford Art Journal, British Journal of Aesthetics, Art Criticism, Telos, Eighteenth-Century Studies, Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Oxford Encyclopedia of Aesthetics, Philosophy and Social Criticism, Art Book, Art in America*. Huhn has been a Getty Scholar and Fulbright Scholar. Huhn's curatorial works include: «Ornament and Landscape,» at Apex Gallery; «Still Missing: Beauty Absent Social Life,» at the Visual Arts Museum and Westport Arts Center; "Between Picture and Viewer: The Image in Contemporary Painting" at the Visual Arts Gallery, NYC.

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Truthful Hope

Ruth Sonderegger

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Truthful Hope

Ruth Sonderegger

Wherever we look these days too little is happening too late although it is utterly clear what needs to be done.

Despite the facts presented by both scientists and activists, the recent Glasgow Climate Change Conference ended with empty proclamations and promises that will hardly change the alarming speed of the climate change on planet earth. Similarly, the pandemic, which is not yet over, has made it very clear that it is the poorly-paid jobs related to reproduction and care that are the most essential ones; jobs that are executed by people on whom we all depend. However, reproductive work is as belittled and under- or unpaid as ever since the onslaught of capitalism. The worlds of so-called professional caregiving, meatpacking, or logistics, are still the very hells of exploitation and exhaustion as those which have been identified in earlier phases of the current pandemic. Against all evidence that zoonotic diseases (like covid-19) have everything to do with human practices of ever-more cruel encroachment into the habitats of animals, for example by way deforestation, monocultures, or the sealing of soils, such practices are intensified by the hour. Also, there is ample evidence that all of these and many other global challenges cannot be met within the borders of nation-states. Nevertheless, national borders are more than ever protected, if not militarized, and new border walls are erected. "Westernized" (Ramón Grosfoguel) humans in particular seem to be attracted to the illusion that they can rescue themselves by denying vaccines no less than denying breathable air, non-toxic soil, regions of bearable temperatures, and much more, to others, although there is plenty of evidence to suggest that isolated solutions are a part of the problems we are facing. The brutalizing tendency of acting with reckless disregard to the deaths of millions on the shores of rising seas, in deserts, war-, border- or otherwise toxic zones, takes its toll even on those (mainly inhabiting the global north) who profit from this neglect; what is more, we know it.

The blame for us northerners' inability to act in light of what is knowable, if not blatantly obvious, cannot solely lie with the defenders of post-truth or alternative truth, although neither their existence nor the powerful networks and unsocial media associated with them can be denied. Such enemies of truth are too easy a target for those who see themselves as representatives of enlightenment and the search for truth. The failure of the Glasgow Climate Change Conference is a very good case in point. It made room for impressive and moving speeches by scientists, activists, and politicians (particularly from the global south) whose findings and warnings were not denied but, worse, simply ignored, and therefore remained without consequence. Of course, there are the myriads of vested (class) interests that are always present at conferences like this one which recently ended in Glasgow, but there has to be more than the blatant incapability of acting in accordance with what is obviously known; more than the unwillingness to sacrifice egoistic profits and privileges that are so clearly tied to the ruin of the earth as we know it. It can't be the vastness of the relations and networks of a globalized world that keep humans from acting in accordance with what they know. For there are fascinating stories, animated statistics, and what have you… that bring

us closer to the devastating and excruciating facts than we seem to be able to digest. What is missing in even the most compelling evidence and the most obvious truths is hope. Truth alone seems to not be enough. Or, according to Theodor W. Adorno, truth alone is not even fully true. This is so because mere truth ties us, today more than ever, to a cluster of disastrous barbarities that are obviously wrong even if their depiction is correct. Therefore, Adorno writes in his reflections upon the damaged life: "In the end hope, wrested from reality by negating it, is the only form in which truth appears. Without hope, the idea of truth would be scarcely even thinkable, and it is the cardinal untruth, having recognized existence to be bad, to present it as truth simply because it has been recognized." (§ 61).

Such Adornian hope cannot be reduced to empty wishes. Much rather it is the art of imagining and improvising an alternative to the facts that need to be researched, talked about, and circulated as meticulously as possible and fought against as hopefully as we can. However, only the fiercest and most negative critics seem to be able to practice such hope; critics such as, for instance, Asad Rehman, who spoke on behalf of the "black, brown and indigenous people" of the global south at COP26. His closing speech addressed the rich who offered nothing but "more empty words". And he continued: "You're not keeping 1.5 alive. You are setting us on a pathway to 2.5 degrees, you're setting the planet on fire while claiming to act. Your greenwashing kills […] but we are not without hope. It just will not rest with you but with us and we don't compromise on justice."[1]

Notes

1 "'Blackness Itself Is the Crime': Bishop William Barber on Racism in the Ahmaud Arbery Murder Trial," Democracy Now!, accessed November 17, 2021, cf. min15:06-16:28. https://www.democracynow.org/2021/11/15/rev_dr_william_barber_ahmaud_arbery.

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Biography

Ruth Sonderegger (1967) is Professor of Philosophy and Aesthetic Theory at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria. She completed her PhD in Philosophy at the Free University Berlin. From 2001 to 2009 she worked at the Philosophy Department of the University of Amsterdam. Currently, she researches the history and systematics of the concept of critique as well as (everyday) practices of critique; her second research focus is on the history of aesthetics and its entanglements with the history of colonial capitalism. Since 2004 she has been a member of the editorial staff of *Krisis: Tijdschrift voor actuele filosofie* [Krisis: Journal for Contemporary Philosophy].

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The Idea of Tolerance and The Perspective of The Individual

Arthur Cools

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The Idea of Tolerance and The Perspective of The Individual

Arthur Cools

How is critical theory possible? – The question must have had an immediate urgency in the context in which Adorno was writing the aphorisms of *Minima Moralia*. The legitimacy of Max Horkheimer's distinction between critical theory and traditional theory and the social relevance of the interdisciplinary research programme at the *Institut für Sozialforschung* were radically at stake given World War II and the ongoing destruction of the European continent through fascism. Exiled in the United States, Adorno was facing the breakdown of civil society, the subjugating logic of industrial production, the rise of the consumer society, the solitude of the individual. The historical context has changed but late-capitalist production, individualism, and consumer society did not disappear.

How is critical theory possible? – the question still demands. The answer to this question that motivated Adorno to write the aphorisms of *Minima Moralia* is "the sphere of the individual": in this sphere, he contends that "… critical theory lingers not only with a bad conscience" ("Dedication").[1] In the individualist society, the historical meaning of the social and the inner conflicts of society are repressed, but they re-appear in the experience of the individual. Moreover, in an individualist society, the emancipatory power of contestation can only come from the individual. The aphorism is the form that imposes itself in order to take into account this condition of the individual. The negative is given with this form because the aphorism does not lead to synthesis. It refuses to be integrated with the dialectical unification of opposites. However, the aphorism is not sealed – it is not a hedgehog as in the case of Schlegel's Romantic idea of aphorism – it leads the individual beyond itself. It intends to reveal and express from the perspective of the individual the meaning of the social, the various relations of actual society to the individual, and how far disconnected they may be from a true sense of universality. There is no encompassing theory, no argument-based connections between definitions, no conclusions, but in each fragment, a new unique reflection on basic concepts of modernity and modern society arising from a minimal individual sensibility; – how does critical theory appear from this condition?

Tolerance is such a concept to which Adorno draws our attention in the aphorism "Mélange" (§ 66). It is a fundamental principle in a multicultural society. The idea of tolerance is based upon the argument that all people and all races are equal, but "it lays itself open to the easy refutation by the senses".[2] Given the scientific evidence that Jews are not a race, the idea of tolerance does not alter the fact that in the event of a pogrom, it is the Jew who is intended to be killed. The "refutation" of the idea of tolerance is not limited to the factual event of genocide. As an abstract normative ideal, the idea of tolerance is complicit in supporting social mechanisms which neglect differences between individuals and stimulate convictions that not enough has been done to consider individuals as equal. In this way, the individual is subsumed under a standard of which they fall short. "To assure the black", says Adorno (who is using here the N word in German), "that he is exactly like the white man, while he is obviously not, is secretly to wrong him still further."[3] From the perspective of the individual, the idea of tolerance

appears to be an instrument of adaptation to a given standard of norms. However, the aphorism that critically reveals this complicity between the idea of tolerance and the system of industrial capitalism cannot guarantee avoiding the risk of being unjust in its turn. Nor can the individual that opposes the normative ideals of the system: "stubborn enthusiasm for blacks gets along with outrage at Jewish uncouthness".[4]

How then is critical theory possible? – The question is not resolved. The answer is not given once and for all. Yet the very act of addressing this question anew in the present context of political activism attests to the power of critical theory.

Notes

1 I slightly changed the English translation of *Minima Moralia* by E.F.N. Jephcott (London / New York, Verso, 2005) in accordance with the original text that I quote in the footnote. "In ihr [die Sphäre des Individuellen] verweilt die kritische Theorie nicht nur mit schlechtem Gewissen."

2 "Es setzt sich der bequemen Widerlegung durch die Sinne aus, […]."

3 "Attestiert man dem Neger, er sei genau wie der Weiße, während er es doch nicht ist, so tut man ihm insgeheim schon wieder Unrecht an."

4 "mit der sturen Begeisterung für die Neger verträgt sich die Entrüstung über jüdische Unmanieren."

Biography

Arthur Cools is professor in the philosophy department at the University of Antwerp. He teaches Contemporary Philosophy (continental tradition), Philosophy of Art and Aesthetics. He publishes in the field of critical theory, philosophy of literature, hermeneutics and contemporary French phenomenology. He is the author of *Langage et subjectivité. Vers une approche du différend entre Maurice Blanchot et Emmanuel Levinas* (2007) and has co-edited *Levinas and Literature. New Directions* (2021), *Kafka and the Universal* (2016), *Debating Levinas' Legacy* (2015), *Metaphors in Modern and Contemporary Philosophy* (2013), and *The Locus of Tragedy* (2008) amongst others.

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The Possibility of a "Felt Contact with Objects"

Sudeep Dasgupta

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The Possibility of a "Felt Contact with Objects"

Sudeep Dasgupta

In the "Dedication" to Max Horkheimer which opens *Minima Moralia*, Adorno reflects on the personal aphorisms which follow thus: "Subjective reflection, even if critically alerted to itself, has something sentimental and anachronistic about it" . Sentimentality, because the reflections of the subject seem irrelevant or deluded in the face of the objective conditions which have precipitated "the dissolution of the subject" (ibid). Reflections *from* a damaged life, the subtitle of the collection, will have something anachronistic about them, because the life out of which the subject reflects has been thoroughly debased by the social relations of production: "Our perspective of life has passed into an ideology which conceals the fact that there is life no longer". However, in typical Adornian fashion, the dim and depressing picture being drawn will be given a negative dialectical turn of the screw. Adorno continues: "But the relation between life and production, which in reality debases the former to an *ephemeral appearance* of the latter, is totally absurd … Reduced and degraded essence [life] tenaciously resists the magic [produced by production] that transforms it [life] into a façade" (ibid., emphasis added). In what follows, I will glean those moments in *Minima Moralia* where Adorno's reflections from this debased and degraded life offer ways of thinking resistance.

In his defense of the particular Adorno assigns "individuation" not "the inferior status" in relation to the whole Hegel constructs, but "a driving moment in the process" of a social and historical totality marked by contradiction. Precisely *because* "the socialization of society has enfeebled and undermined him", Adorno argues "the individual has gained […] in richness, differentiation and vigour" (17). A politics of the possible emerges from the very rifts and contradictions engendered by objective conditions and registered at the level of subjective experience. That is why the violent conditions of socialization are both the context and the very conditions of possibility for resisting it. *Minima Moralia* closes in the "Finale" with the suggestion "Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices" as both "indigent and distorted". Yet these perspectives can only emerge from perspectives "marked […] by the same distortion and indigence which it seeks to escape" (§ 153). How can estranging perspectives on the world emerge from "felt contact with objects" (§ 153)[1] in an estranged world, and what help could Adorno's reflections in *Minima Moralia* offer?

The resistance of the object to conceptual capture, and the ways in which this resistance is felt at the level of subjective experience, is precisely what the subject feels in its contact with, rather than violent appropriation *of*, the object. The use of style defamiliarizes the subject's exposition of its relation to the object and registers, through writing, the immorality of the demand to be clear and communicate. In "Morality and style", Adorno avers "Regard for the object, rather than for communication, is suspect in any expression" (§ 64). The demand for "certain understanding", that is the certainty produced by perfect comprehension, negates what emerges when style registers "the regard for the object" rather than its subsumption to concepts. Subjective experience which registers "felt contact with objects" will sabotage the demand that the exposition

of thought must be made familiar to the reader through showing "explicitly all the steps that have led him to his conclusion" (§ 50) to enable duplication.[2] Estranging perspectives on reality are expressed and registered through the form given to thought's relation to the object: "For the value of thought is measured by its distance from the continuity of the familiar" (§ 50), its distance from "the instantaneous sizing-up of the situation" in order "to see what is 'going on' more quickly than the moments of significance in the situation can unfold" (§ 92).[3]

The non-transparency of the objective world, sought to be made clear by communicative reason and lucid language, requires a reformulation of the knowledge produced by the subject. Reflections that emerge from the damaged life of a subject produce knowledge that registers precisely the contradictions, rifts and fissures which accompany the subject's experience of what Shierry Weber Nicholson (2019) calls "malignant normality". That is why in "Gaps", Adorno asserts "knowledge comes to us through a network of prejudices, opinions, innervations, self-corrections, presuppositions and exaggerations, in short through the dense, firmly-founded *but by no means uniformly transparent medium of experience*" (§ 50 emphasis added). Estranging perspectives emerge then precisely from the felt experience with objects of the partly opaque and contingent process by which thought reflects on life as "a wavering, deviating line" (§ 50). Experience registers the contingency of the normalcy of domination, of life being otherwise, of another "possible" life, and that is why Adorno casts life as "an ephemeral appearance" rather than the permanent and achieved effect of reification. Miriam Bratu Hansen (2011) has explored precisely the importance of bodily experience in Adorno's aesthetic theory where the contradictions, rifts, and violence of damaged life are registered. The concept of "dissonance" also describes precisely an aspect of subjective experience from which Adorno begins to glimpse the possibility of a critical reflection on damaged life[4].

Estranging perspectives on the given to think the possible, the deployment of style to register the felt contact with the object, the potential of subjective experience to register an indigent and distorted reality, the centrality of rifts, dissonance, and contradiction in thinking the relation of the particular to the general – through the form of the aphorism –, *Minima Moralia* configures modalities of resistance for a possible other life as it itself, and as a collection/constellation the book exemplifies the process of "thought thinking itself"[5] through a felt contact with objects.

Notes

1 Elsewhere Adorno begins to expand on this aphoristic phrase: "in philosophy, we literally seek to immerse ourselves in things that are heterogenous to it, without placing those things in prefabricated categories […] to adhere as closely to the heterogenous" (Adorno 2000, 13, emphasis added).

2 In "genuine style", Adorno offers a counter-formulation to systemic thinking. Here, he argues that "style is a promise" to the extent that it refuses "achieved harmony, in the questionable unity of form and content, inner and outer, individual and society" and registers the tension between the poles of the general and the particular (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002, 103; see also Edward W. Said 2007).

3 Critiquing the static character of systems in which thought places objects and thus subsumes them to concepts, elsewhere (2000, 25) Adorno states: "To comprehend a thing itself, not just to fit and register it in its system of reference, is nothing but to perceive the individual moment in its immanent connection with others". An estranging perspective refuses precisely the temporality of a system, of thought as "instantaneous sizing-up", and notes the unfolding moments of the object in its relation to others.

4 "What we differentiate will appear divergent, dissonant, negative for just as long as the structure of our consciousness obliges it to strive for unity" (Adorno 2000, 5; See also Dasgupta 2019).

5 Cook analyzes Adorno's call that "metaphysics today should question whether, and to what extent, thought can transcend the sphere of concepts, or of thought objects, to think material things" (2007, 229). The essay is one place which fleshes out what "the felt contact with things" for Adorno might mean for philosophy. The subject's feeling through contact with things, as Adorno argues and Cook explains, is quite different from the recent focus on objects in Object-Oriented Ontology.

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Biography

Sudeep Dasgupta is Associate Professor in the Department of Media Studies, the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA) and the Amsterdam Centre for Globalization Studies (ACGS) at the University of Amsterdam. His publications focus on the aesthetics and politics of displacement in visual culture, from the disciplinary perspectives of aesthetics, postcolonial and globalization studies, political philosophy, and feminist and queer theory. Publications include "The Aesthetics of Indirection: Intermittent Adjacencies and Subaltern Presences at the Borders of Europe", *Cinéma et Cie* 17:28 (2017), the co-edited volume (with Mireille Rosello) *What's Queer about Europe ?* (Fordham University Press, 2014), and *Constellations of the Transnational: Modernity, Culture, Critique* (Rodopi, 2007).

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The Fragile Strength of a Dissolving Subjectivity

José A. Zamora

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The Fragile Strength of a Dissolving Subjectivity

José A. Zamora

As a man who, by rights, should have been put to death, and according to whom it was only by chance that he escaped the extermination perpetrated by the National Socialists, he felt "the drastic guilt of him who was spared." This feeling was born of the inevitable complicity of the survivor and the basic principle of bourgeois subjectivity that made such extermination possible in the first place: coldness. In this respect, Adorno had no doubts: one cannot continue to live if the enormous suffering brought about by catastrophe is constantly borne in mind. To continue reproducing one's own existence under the conditions established by capitalist socialization demands coldness in the face of the suffering of those who were annihilated. Such coldness is not simply an attribute of certain individuals, but rather, it is an objective principle of social relations under which all the members of capitalist society reproduce their existence.

Therefore, when rethinking the linkage between subjectivation and suffering, we must not overlook the fact that Adorno writes not *about* the damaged life but, rather, *from* it. In *Minima Moralia* it is not the sovereign subject, master both of his own will and ability to know, who pontificates on the just life. Rather, it is a subject who is doubly wounded by the violence of the barbarity that blighted Europe and by the keen awareness of the dehumanizing cost of continuing to live during and after the catastrophe. In other words, it is a subject that acknowledges the impossibility of leading a just life in the wrong and who therefore recognizes that it is no longer possible to experience the truth about life other than by confronting its alienated form; that is, confronting "the objective powers that determine individual existence even in its most hidden recesses" ("Dedication").

Indeed, thought becomes paralyzed when faced with such an unfolding of effective destruction, one that even assumes the irrational price of ultimate self-destruction. Furthermore, many of the great ideas of enlightenment modernity pale in the face of such destruction: reason, the subject, autonomy, emancipation, and progress. The reversal of means and ends that undermines the enlightened imperative of treating individuals as ends themselves, which, within this tradition, could nevertheless be criticized and countered, reveals the absurdity of the process of capitalist modernization which consummates this reversal by transforming life into an ephemeral apparition. Before such a process, naivety is no longer possible. Barbarity is not the *other* in relation to this process. Rather, barbarity's roots are buried in that process and its contradictions. This fact requires a radical self-critique of enlightened modernity and its fundamental figures of self-understanding. First, the idea of the subject, which in itself is an exemplary compendium of the signal ideas of said modernity; all of Adorno's efforts to radically critique modern subjectivation and subjectivity are motivated by the experiences of barbarity that blight the twentieth century. Such experiences drive him to attempt to unravel not only the processes that constitute this specific subjectivity, but also the ties that bind the crushing objectivity of the historical dynamic and the dissolution of the subject, ties that became absolute in the extermination camps but was never limited to the camps.

Throughout *Minima Moralia*, Adorno repeatedly reflects on the conditions of possibility of an inquiry into the subject's experience of dissolution, which itself is necessarily aporetic. This moment of reflection is aporetic because even if one lacks any intention of doing so, in its unfolding one reproduces the illusion of the same subject that questions its own existence in light of its experience of self-annihilation. For this reason, such reflection cannot simply surrender itself to the immediacy of an apparently authentic subjective experience, disregarding the objective mediation that constitutes and transcends it. However, neither is there some theoretical understanding of objectivity that dissolves the "subject" form without the painful experience of the individual who has been emptied of this substance, one which can only come from non-antagonistic objectivity, from a place free of coercion. Following Hegel's intention and not his bias in favour of a false totality over and against the singular, Adorno considers precisely that which disappears as essential in perceiving the true character of the false totality. Recognition of the primacy of an antagonistic totality, of the objective tendency that manifests itself in the annihilation of the individual, its effective ally, prohibits its reification and, all the more, the glorification of a universality whose negativity is accessible only through the individual experience of the coercion and domination that ruin his life.

The point of intersection between antagonistic objectivity and individual experience is suffering, the "objectivity that weighs upon the subject; its most subjective experience, its expression, is objectively mediated" (Adorno 1973, 17-18). Hence, for Adorno, the two poles—individual experience and a critical theory of society—claim each other, without the tension between them disappearing and without either one being able to do without the other at any time. Theory that intends to articulate a critical self-awareness of reified social relations, which are objectified and almost closed off to theoretical and practical questioning, must feed on subjective experience. However, this experience needs this very same theory if it is to become an undiminished, unadministered experience. This collaboration is possible because it involves an experience that develops from its object as a contradictory and dynamic object and which, precisely for this reason, is not purely subjective and insubstantial: the experience gathers in itself all the burden of objectivity that courses through it, and as soon as it is mediated by the rationality that informs this objectivity it makes possible its theoretical approach, namely the work of the concept. Regardless of how weakened it became, for Adorno, the *possibility* of experiencing in itself the coercive force that individuals suffer in a society marked by the tendency to total socialization had never been suppressed. Furthermore, he never lost trust in the possibility that the content of that experience could emerge in the interpretation of social and cultural phenomena. It is precisely upon such content that the theory of social objectivity should draw.

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Biography

José A. Zamora is a Senior Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy (Spanish Higher Council for Scientific Research - CSIC), Madrid-Spain. PhD (Münster/Germany). His research lines are Critical Theory (Th.W. Adorno, W. Benjamin), Social Suffering, Authoritarianism, Philosophy after Auschwitz, Political Theologies of Modernity. Main publications: *Krise -Kritik -Erinnerung. Ein politisch-theologischer Versuch über das Denken Adornos im Horizont der Krise der Moderne* [Crisis – Critique - Memory. A political-theological attempt about Adorno›s thinking in the horizon of the crisis of modernity] (1995), *Th. W. Adorno: Pensar contra la barbarie* [Th. W. Adorno: Thinking against Barbarism] (2004; port. 2008) and *La crisis y sus víctimas* [The crisis and its victims] (2014). He chairs the «Sociedad de Estudios de Teoría Crítica» and is editor of *Constelaciones. Revista de Teoría Crítica*.

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Unity in Suffering

Nicholas Baer

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Unity in Suffering

Nicholas Baer

"One should be united with the suffering of people: the smallest step toward their pleasures is one toward the hardening of suffering" (§ 5). Thus concludes the fifth aphorism of *Minima Moralia*, Part One (1944), where Theodor W. Adorno reflects on the role of the intellectual in a world of ongoing horror. Prefiguring Leo Löwenthal's identification of *Nichtmitmachen* (nonparticipation) as an essential feature of critical theory, Adorno characterizes *Mitmachen* (participation) as a screen for the tacit acceptance of inhumanity: the pleasantries of everyday sociability perpetuate silence on injustice, and affability masks brute domination under the guise of egalitarianism. In place of a disingenuous self-alignment with the oppressed and their sources of pleasure, steadfast isolation serves as the intellectual's sole form of solidarity, with suffering as the true basis of unity.

Adorno's statement marks a rebuke to Hegelian philosophy, which had rationalized individual suffering as part of a grand metaphysical plan of history. This theodicean, idealist philosophy had ascribed a higher truth or meaning to material suffering, thereby affirming the existing social order and justifying abuses of power in the name of divine right or progress. Joining a lineage of Hegel's critics (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche), Adorno and other members of the Frankfurt School sought to lend voice to the senseless, irreparable suffering of history. In *Negative Dialectics* (1966), Adorno wrote that if Hegel "transfigured the totality of historic suffering into the positivity of the self-realizing absolute," the world spirit that moves forth—like the ruinous storm that drives Walter Benjamin's angel of history into the future—"would teleologically be the absolute of suffering" (2004, 320; see also Noble-Olson 2020).

Yet suffering was not only a historical-philosophical issue for Adorno, but also an aesthetic one. While Adorno was critical of a culture industry that offered a sinister palliative for mass suffering, re-consigning consumers to misery through false promises of pleasure and escape, he also maintained that art was unique in its ability to give expression to suffering without betrayal. Famously asserting and later nuancing the claim that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (1983, 34; see also 2004, 362), Adorno postulated that the abundance of suffering paradoxically both prohibits and demands the existence of art, which necessitates an aesthetic autonomy from the real suffering that it nonetheless serves to remember. At the close of his posthumously published *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), he asked "what would art be, as the writing of history, if it shook off the memory of accumulated suffering" (2002, 261).

When revisiting *Minima Moralia* today, Adorno's resolute isolation from the pleasures of the oppressed may sound ascetic and elitist, and his call for suffering as a point of unity rings hollow in a geopolitical landscape where even the most coercive entities mobilize the rhetoric of victimhood (see Geuss 2005, 17-18). Yet, however undifferentiated and undialectical Adorno's account of suffering, it remains a vital antidote to the often-cynical, reified politics of *Leiden* (suffering, pain) and *Mitleid* (compassion, sympathy) in our own time. Adorno's work helps to establish suffering as a key concern of philosophy, opening a series of questions that have lost none of their actuality: Which art gives unbetrayed expression to suffering? How can we avoid forms

of complicity, desensitization, and false comfort? And what is the role of the intellectual in a world of violent domination and unremitting horror?

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Biography

Nicholas Baer is Assistant Professor of Film Studies in the Department of Arts, Culture, and Media at the University of Groningen and Junior Fellow at the Alfried Krupp Institute for Advanced Study in Greifswald. He has co-edited two volumes of film and media theory: the award-winning *The Promise of Cinema: German Film Theory, 1907–1933* (University of California Press, 2016) and *Unwatchable* (Rutgers University Press, 2019). Baer has published on film and media, critical theory, and intellectual history in journals such as *Film Quarterly, Leo Baeck Institute Year Book, Los Angeles Review of Books, Public Seminar, and October,* and his writings have been translated into six languages. At present, he is completing a monograph, *Historical Turns: Weimar Cinema and the Crisis of Historicism,* which examines films of the Weimar Republic in relation to the "crisis of historicism" that was widely diagnosed by German intellectuals in the interwar period.

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Politics of Solitude

Johan Hartle

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Politics of Solitude

Johan Hartle

"For intellectuals, unswerving isolation [Einsamkeit] is the only form in which they can vouchsafe a measure of solidarity. All of the playing along, all of the humanity of interaction and participation is the mere mask of the tacit acceptance of inhumanity" (§ 5). This is one of Adorno's descriptions of damaged life in the fifth aphorism of his *Minima Moralia*. After having missed the historical moment for redemption and reconciliation, the intellectual is, somewhat narcissistically, presented as the one who preserves the universal idea of humanity, which finds itself betrayed by the logic of the everyday, by the false concreteness of popular culture, and the fictitious reality of ordinary people. The postulation is, however, not free of bad conscience. In the next aphorism, entitled "Antithesis", he suggests the exact opposite: by not participating, the intellectual also demonstrates snobbishness, falsely assuming to be better than 'regular' folks.

The general attitude of distance and the loss of social embeddedness reflects the historical experience of exile. Every "intellectual in emigration," Adorno writes, "is, without exception, damaged". Forced to emigrate from Germany under fascism, the experience of deracination and solitude had fully inscribed itself into the intellectual disposition of the first-generation Critical Theorist. This experience of exile following the historical rupture caused by the failure of the progressive working-class movement and the rise of fascism, strengthened and transposed the feeling of loss into an epochal historical perspective.

In this sense, the specific intellectual disposition and the gesture of critique that Adorno suggests bears a strong historical signature. This connects Adorno's thought with various post-colonial perspectives (diaspora philosophy) and even with certain minority politics (if they are critical about dominant milieus and not merely affirming specific identities); but there are also other, less historically contingent, conditions under which the situation of the intellectual is characterized by estrangement, distance, and solitude. Exile and emigration also appear as structural conditions for the position of the intellectual.

For what, really, is an intellectual? In Adorno's concept of the intellectual, the idea of intellectual labor is characterized by various forms of separation, specifically the separation of manual and intellectual labor, and of popular and high culture. In a functionalist understanding of the intellectual (most famously presented by Antonio Gramsci: "*All* men are *intellectuals*, but not *all* men have in society the function of *intellectuals.*"), the intellectual is constituted by her institutional role. In this light (which is not explicitly present, but neither alien to Adorno's account) intellectuals are formed by their position in social institutions (such as universities, museums, concert halls, theatres, public media etc.). In bourgeois societies, such institutions fulfil general, public, and potentially universal tasks. Thus, being constituted and subjectivated by such institutions, also means to represent these ideas, tasks, and societal norms. The intellectual is, as such, a representative of humanism, and of the fiction of bourgeois universalism.

This is where the antinomies of the intellectual, as an embodiment of the norms, begin. Clearly, no one can possibly embody the universal (not the Sartrean universal

intellectual, for sure). But no intellectual can persist without this fiction. Living by, and according to this fiction, thus means overcoming the gravity of particular interests, of lobby groups, specific cultural milieus, lifestyles, and so forth. It is also in this light that figures of distance, solitude, tactical alienation, and strong affects against "the nice people, the popular ones, who are friends with all" (§ 3) play a decisive role in Adorno's collection of aphorisms.

Ever since the French revolution, so Claude Lefort and others have emphasized, the idea of democracy (equality, universality) was based on the idea that the throne of the king had to remain empty. The intellectual, as a personification of this aporetic idea of universality as an empty seat, has this contradiction inscribed into herself: she cannot be the flesh of universality and thus has to think beyond herself to also leave her own chair empty for an idea of universality that is yet to come, or is at least postponed. This is the existential antinomy by which the intellectual lives, the antinomy that is inscribed into her social role. Distance, estrangement from common life, from popular milieus and mass culture, the solitude of the intellectual, is unavoidable still. She is diasporic and in exile.

Such condition bears, however, as all estrangement, a messianic dream of reconcilement: of the intellectual and the people, of the material organization of social life and the universal claims and promises that bourgeois society have given for the past 250 years. She has to believe in the possibility of real universality and thus has to abstain from "the toasts of cozy sociability".

Biography

Johan Hartle is the dean of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. He held professorships at the State University for Arts and Design Karlsruhe, the Academy of Fine Arts Münster/Westphalia, and the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. For several years he taught philosophy of Arts and Culture at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). His publications include: *Aesthetic Marx* (London: Bloomsbury 2017, edited, with Samir Gandesha), *The Aging of Adorno's Aesthetics* (Milan: Mimesis 2021, edited with Samir Gandesha and Stefano Marino).

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Intellectual Bad Conscience and Solidarity with the Underdogs

Titus Stahl

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Intellectual Bad Conscience and Solidarity with the Underdogs

Titus Stahl

There are few aphorisms in *Minima Moralia* that display a less sympathetic attitude towards their subject than "They, the people" (§ 7). Adorno denounces the "*amor intellectualis* for [the] kitchen personnel" in the subsequent aphorism, but "They, the people" already seems to confirm all suspicions about the alleged elitism of critical theory. The idea that intellectuals mostly encounter those less educated when "illiterates come to intellectuals wanting letters written for them" is laughable, even for the 1950s, and the claim that, among the "underdogs", "envy and spite surpass anything seen among literati or musical directors" (ibid.) oozes with contempt, no matter how much Adorno insists that these alleged character deficits result from the social structures in which uneducated, working class people find themselves.

Yet the point of Adorno's remarks is not to disprove a deferential form of a Lukácsian "standpoint theory", according to which workers are epistemically and/or perhaps even morally superior to the intellectuals who take up their cause. Rather, he wishes to criticize those intellectuals who promote such theories because of the "justified guilt-feelings of those exempt from physical work". While Horkheimer had already criticized those who were "satisfied to proclaim with reverent admiration […] the creative strength of the proletariat" as evading intellectual effort in "Traditional and Critical Theory" (1975, 124), Adorno offers a social-psychological explanation of persistence of this form of deferential standpoint theory: It is a species of bad conscience arising from the fact "that intellectuals are […] beneficiaries of a bad society" as he puts it later in *Minima Moralia* (§ 86).

This critique seems to have become obsolete, however. Not only is it a mistake to read Lukács' original argument as entailing that working-class people have superior knowledge even before any theoretical effort—an insight of which feminists such as Hartsock (1983), who took up Lukács's argument in the 1970s to formulate more well-known versions of "standpoint theory", were well aware—no serious theory espouses anything close to such an uncritical deference to the working class, the existence of which is in any case up for debate.

What, then, remains of Adorno's argument? What remains is the question of whether there is a distinctive standpoint characteristic of intellectuals, rooted in their social situation—one that induces a systematic "guilty conscience" that prevents a realistic assessment of their own situation.

Being exempt from hard physical labor is no longer a distinctive characteristic of intellectual professions. What makes intellectual—including academic—labor different from other forms is that it is impossible to control it by spelling out in advance the steps that intellectuals must perform and how to perform them. Those tasked with coming up with theories, narratives, or justifications must be accorded a certain amount of autonomy in their work if they are to perform it at all.

This has always made intellectuals suspect in the eyes of their managers, since there seems to be no completely reliable way to ensure the subordination of their activities to institutional imperatives. The desperate attempts to quantify "academic

output" and the equally desperate attempts of humanities departments to show that they produce some sort of predictable benefits for society (in the form of "critical thinking skills") are evidence of a desire to dissolve these suspicions.

In the "Culture Industry" chapter of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno speculates that the "remnant of autonomy" (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002, 105) which intellectuals still enjoy, is on the brink of being replaced by their total subordination to the interests of the market or, more directly, economic-political rulers. His claim that ideology is being replaced by direct command has been proven false, however, and intellectual production has not disappeared as a functional requirement for social integration.

Yet intellectuals face suspicion not only from those who, more or less grudgingly, grant them the freedom to perform their function in the cultural and educational sphere, but also from those whose work is more directly subordinated to social imperatives. It is a cliché among academics that their relatives openly wonder how one can earn a living doing things that one cannot really explain. There is always a fine line between this skepticism and open resentment of the fact that intellectuals are not subject to those forms of subordination and control that others face in their daily working lives. Not a small part of the hatred directed towards "liberal elites" may derive from this resentment. The bad conscience of intellectuals that results from their internalization of this resentment, and their acceptance of the claim that they enjoy substantive privileges, can still be detected everywhere, even if it is no longer expressed by an attempt to subordinate themselves to the cause of "the workers".

This bad conscience is not a feeling that leads to any form of progress, however. It leads those in intellectual professions to overstate the amount of freedom they enjoy, which is always conditioned in any case, and it causes them to come up with unconvincing justifications for why they, in particular, should be exempt from direct subordination under the profit motive. Such justifications tacitly agree with the idea that there is something special about intellectual labor that justifies granting it a degree of autonomy not afforded to other kinds of labor. The bad conscience of the intellectual thereby begins to legitimize the "real subsumption" of other forms of labor (Marx 1992, 1028).

As those who resent the fact that intellectuals are granted such autonomy correctly perceive, this idea is unconvincing—not because intellectual work could be equally well subordinated, but because *all* forms of work require autonomy, creativity, and knowledge on the part of those who perform it. More often than not, and in almost all jobs, managerial control keeps people from doing their job well. This is most obviously the case with care work, where attention to the particular needs of others systematically resists external control. But even those who perform work that is culturally seen as requiring less creative effort, such as cleaning, understand themselves as engaged in a creative task that often requires them to subvert the rules imposed by their managers if they are to do their job well (Tweedie and Holley 2016, 1889).

It is therefore neither a unique form of creativity nor a special need for autonomy that distinguishes intellectual work from other forms, but only a difference in the degree to which those in control are willing to grant such autonomy to different kinds of work. If intellectuals were less concerned with proving the usefulness of their specific

type of work to a society that serves neither their own interests nor those of others, and if they were more interested in challenging the prevailing standards of usefulness which justify denying that autonomy to others who deserve it to the same degree, then their bad conscience could make way for a form of solidarity that rejects a distinction in normative status between intellectual and non-intellectual work. Such solidarity is not envisioned by Adorno, however. In fact, he reserves his few positive remarks on solidarity in *Minima Moralia* for relations among intellectuals (§ 83). Attention to a wider form of solidarity that overcomes the isolation of intellectual work is needed, however, both to remove the sting of Adorno's remarks and to develop a politically reflective theory of the social standpoint of the intellectual.

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Biography

Titus Stahl is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Groningen where he does research on contemporary and historical issues in Critical Theory, theories of oppression, domination, ideology, the philosophy of hope and the ethics of privacy. His most recent publication is *Immanent Critique* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2021).

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To Be Recognized by the Dog

Vladimir Safatle

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To Be Recognized by the Dog

Vladimir Safatle

> It is one of my joys, not to be a house-owner," wrote Nietzsche as early as *The Gay Science*. To this should be added: ethics today means not being at home in one's house. (§ 18)

Odysseus finally arrives home dressed by Athena as an old beggar. On the threshold of his house waited his dog, Argos. At the time of his departure, Argos was a cub. Now, old and flea-ridden, he doesn't even have the strength to stand upright, yet when Odysseus appears, Argos has no doubts. He recognizes him and stands up, unable to even run towards his master. The tears flow when Odysseus sees him old and weakened. The dog then "goes into the darkness of death", as Homer says, a bit like someone who was just waiting for a re-encounter.

The dog recognizes Odysseus, but his wife does not. Even after having regained his composure after the battle with the suitors who had taken over her house, Penelope isn't certain that it is, in fact, Odysseus standing by her side, the husband she'd been waiting for. In fact, Penelope needs proof, and therefore tests the memory of he who claims to be her husband. It is through memory that the moment of recognition will transpire, deciding what is certain and what is uncertain. Odysseus will have to show that he knows what his bed is made of. He will have to recount, once more, the promises of rooting that had constituted the bed he shared with his wife. Recognition appears here as an acknowledgment that is supported by the capacity of recall.

But to the dog, Odysseus needs to show no such thing. Beyond appearances, Argos is the only one capable of recognizing something like the "brute being" of Odysseus. Here's a detail to which we ought not to be indifferent. For it poses the following question: Is there something in us that is only recognized by the eyes of what is not human? If not even the love of the woman who had always waited was true, if only the dog was certain, then we might wonder where such certainty comes from? For, perhaps, he found his certainty in the trace of the animality that exists in us, that is, in what for the Greeks is inhuman, in what does not bear the image of man.

It is ironic to think that, after returning home after many years of exile, it is this inhuman quality that first indicates the return to the "*nostos*". Odysseus finds his singular belonging in being recognized by an animal, that is, by a creature that is, in a certain way, "below man." Here, singularity is linked to precisely not being an attribute of *humanitas.*

It is vital to remember this point because we are so caught up in the search for recognition from other subjects, we so need the assent provided by other subjects that we forget how often what comforts us, what really tells us we are at home, is to be recognized by an animal, to be recognized by something that, after all, is not self-consciousness. Animals perceive the animality that remains within us, they remind us of the trace of the non-identical from which we have never been able to completely distance ourselves.

Perhaps this is why we human beings have never been able to completely

distance ourselves from other animals. Even when domesticated, other animals remind us of something that was left behind, though not completely, in the rationalization process. This trace of otherness is terrifying. For Odysseus would certainly feel the worst of men if the dog forgot him. It would be an unbearable deterritorialization not to be recognized even by the dog. Perhaps it is for no other reason that Freud, sick and broken at the end of his life, realized that his time was up when, due to the repulsive smell that came from his jaw, even his dog withdrew from him. When this happened, his reason for living was gone. It was precisely at the moment of his dog's withdrawal that Freud died.

Biography

Vladimir Safatle, Professor at Universidade de São Paulo (Department of Philosophy), author of, among others: *Grand Hotel Abyss: Desire, Recognition and the Restoration of the Subject* (Leuven University Press, 2016).

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New Labor

Martin Shuster

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New Labor

Martin Shuster

The advertising character of culture shines in its gaudy light (§ 26)

We last humans no longer even rub elbows for warmth. We do not touch, except by means of our screens and our newsfeeds. A cornucopia of blue light, the phone screen is at best illusory warmth, one whose actual coldness cuts us to our core. "If you're not paying for it, you're the product." Pundits repeat the line endlessly, as if repetition alone confirms its truth. Of course, as with all lies, there is a modicum of truth here: we are the product of social media, but only in the sense that we are produced by it, produced by the algorithms hidden beneath the light of the screen. We are its workers, laboring at all hours, in post office and grocery lines, in classrooms and cafes, in parks and playgrounds, in bathrooms and bedrooms; we labor tirelessly, tiredly, tiresomely. Jobs are in fact now just a "side hustle." Every click, every share, every like creates more content, streamed back to us, like Saratmak. A urophagia of profit, every click a current, each more current than the last, a shower of gold for Mr. Zuckerberg. Like all fool's gold, however, its scientific use can only be incendiary. Not satisfied with the spark of a wheel-lock, this pyrite now lights fire to everything in its path. The same feeble light inches its way from the iPhone screen to the fluorescent lights of the Senate, each animated by the same meme, now fashioned onto insurrection t-shirts shining back to us via news screen. Ernst Cassirer once noted that there is no field into which the problem of space does not in some way enter. This is no less true of cyberspace. Where physics corrects us and invites us to speak of space-time rather than mere space, speak here of profit-space, rather than cyberspace, which now stretches far beyond the confines of the digital realm, lodged increasingly within every inch of time-space, like a global virus. "Augmented reality" betrays more truth than we'd like to admit: our labor accounts for every augmentation, our clicks and likes and views and our smart devices and glasses and TVs forming hubs on Elon Musk's race to outer space. "Never have violence, inequality, exclusion, famine, and thus economic oppression affected as many human beings in the history of the earth and of humanity. Instead of singing the advent of the ideal of liberal democracy and of the capitalist market in the euphoria of the end of history, instead of celebrating the 'end of ideologies' and the end of the great emancipatory discourses, let us never neglect this obvious macroscopic fact, made up of innumerable singular sites of suffering: no degree of progress allows one to ignore that never before, in absolute figures, have so many men, women and children been subjugated, starved or exterminated on the earth" (Derrida 2006, 106). These lines remain true still, except that for the masses even potentially to countenance them, they must now be fused into a meme, sent into cyberspace only in order to be sent back—long the fate of all things in the autonomy of modernity—all things doubled, now for profit.

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Biography

Martin Shuster is associate professor of philosophy and holds the professorship of Judaic studies and justice at Goucher College, where he also directs the Center for Geographies of Justice. In addition to many articles and essays, he is the author of *Autonomy after Auchwitz: Adorno, German Idealism, and Modernity* (University of Chicago Press, 2014), *New Television: The Aesthetics and Politics of a Genre* (University of Chicago Press, 2017), and *How to Measure a World? A Philosophy of Judaism* (Indiana University Press, 2021).

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Dwarf Fruit, or: The Impertinent Self

Josef Früchtl

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Dwarf Fruit, or: The Impertinent Self

Josef Früchtl

One might think that dwarf fruit is fruit for human beings so small that in our imagination they tend to populate myths and fairy tales. But dwarf fruit is simply the name for fruit that grows on little trees, even in a big pot on the balcony. It does not differ from the fruit – apples, pears, cherries, plums – of bigger trees, but it ripens faster. Thus, though the tree seems ridiculously small, the fruit – the apple – is as sappy and sweet-sour as you like to have it. It may even give you a kick as if it were from the tree of knowledge.

"Dwarf fruit" is also the title of an aphorism – it is number 29 – in Theodor W. Adorno's *Minima Moralia* that arranges a series of short sentences, among them the famous and last one: "The whole is the false", inverting Hegel's: "The true is the whole". Another sentence has also become famous, or at least it has caused some trouble and personal criticism. It sounds laconic, and at first sight the implicit scandal may escape the reader: "In many people it is already an impertinence to say 'I'".

In principle, saying 'I' is the simple, and at the same time crucial, characteristic of that kind of being that is able to refer to itself and to identify itself in verbal language. It is the privilege of articulated self-consciousness in the shape of human beings. But – here we go again – Hegel has already told us that there is a specific contradiction or dialectic in using the pronoun "I". Whoever uses it refers to a Self that is absolutely individual and at the same time thoroughly universal. By saying "I" we distinguish ourselves from all other beings able to say "I", and this includes expressing what is common to all of us, namely the capacity to say "I" and thus express self-consciousness.

Given the historical conditions of the 1940s when Adorno wrote down his *Minima Moralia*, the Self that proudly presents itself by saying 'I' is nothing but a universal cover that includes in fact nothing, at least nothing individual. The whole that has become the false is the whole of a totalising systematic theory, the totalitarian state, the "iron cage" of capitalism (Max Weber), and the ideological manipulation of the "culture industry". Saying "I" under such circumstances is the sad prerogative of a few critical intellectuals, artists, and philosophers, but for the majority of people it is an impertinence. They claim to be individuals, but in fact their individualism is fake. This can be confirmed by a prominent line of theorists after Hegel, a line that connects Marx and Kierkegaard (about whom Adorno wrote his first philosophical book) with Nietzsche, Freud and Weber. But following the aphoristically sharpened dialectical thinking of *Minima Moralia*, it can also be confirmed in apparently small gestures and expressions. For example, if we hear someone talking about a work of art - a Beethoven symphony or a play by Beckett – by simply saying: "I like it", thus using a catch-all term to describe a specific experience, we have to admit – far from being impertinent ourselves - that we are confronted with faked individualism (Adorno 1992, 244).

This is the story Adorno is telling us. Or more precisely, it is the main story. For in between his firm and exaggerated statements there are differentiations and doubts. Above all in the 1960s, twenty years after having written *Minima Moralia* in his US-American exile, Adorno becomes more and more aware of a split consciousness

in all these people who are shaped by the absorbing power of a capitalist consumer society. Their individualism is not only fake. They show a tension between having fun and doubting it, or the other way round: despising something intellectually while liking it affectively. While a band playing traditional German music for brass instruments is marching past and the young intellectual standing at the wayside contemptuously twists his mouth, he realises that he is following the primitive beat by pounding softly with his right foot.

Since the 1960s, for a larger proportion of the readers of Adorno, popular music has been as important as the texts of the philosopher. They have learnt that they can do one thing – listening to the music of Beethoven – while not abandoning another – dancing to the music of Chuck Berry (and a lot of other rock 'n' roll bands). For them there is no demand for Beethoven to "roll over". There is the demand to make room for rock 'n' roll, certainly, but not entirely, only to an equal extent. So, the revolting students of the 1960s (and later) also know about the contradiction they themselves incorporate. To express it simply with a refrain from the Rolling Stones: "I know it's only rock 'n' roll, but I like it". I really know that it is only rock 'n' roll, but I like it because it expresses what I – together with a lot of other people – feel. It is – expressed in fine Hegelian language – a form of cultural self-assurance or sensuous self-reflection. Adorno certainly is a burnt child and thus fixated on the continuing elements of a totalitarian society after World War II, but the re-educated children of the ruins start dancing and fighting in the street while carrying *Minima Moralia* in their pockets and digesting its bitter-sweet dwarf fruit.

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Biography

Josef Früchtl is professor of philosophy with a focus on philosophy of art and culture (Critical Cultural Theory) at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). He is publishing in the field of aesthetics (with a focus on aesthetics and ethics as well as aesthetics and politics), Critical Theory, theory of Modernity, and philosophy of film. His recent publication is Vertrauen in die Welt. Eine Philosophie des Films (München: Fink 2013), translated as Trust in the World. A Philosophy of Film (New York & London: Routledge 2018).

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Fanon Pulls Out a Knife and Cuts Adorno's Throat

Willem Schinkel & Rogier van Reekum

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Fanon Pulls Out a Knife and Cuts Adorno's Throat

Willem Schinkel & Rogier van Reekum

> [W]hen the colonized hears a speech about Western culture he pulls out his knife – or at least he makes sure it is within reach. (Fanon 2002 [1961], 46)[1]

> *Savages are not better human beings.* – One can find in Black students (*Negerstudenten*) of national economy, in Siamese students at Oxford, and in devoted art-historians and musicologists of petty bourgeois background generally the inclination and readiness to combine the appropriation of what is new and to be learned with a boundless respect for what is established, validated or recognized. (§ 32)

I

It is 1952, a year after Adorno wrote *Minima Moralia*, an acclaimed culmination of cultural criticism. Fanon takes out a knife and cuts Adorno's throat. Let Martin Jay (1984) ruminate over the motherfucker's picture *now*: no longer mournfulness, not even (this is important) surprise, just despair. You can just see Adorno think, with his despair-ridden deer-in-headlights gaze, 'but that was only a theoretical model!'

Or so we imagine. We imagine Fanon's knife as a device of invention, as partaking in the invention of human beings that he describes, in 1952, in *Peau noire, masques blancs*. This invention is the invention of modalities of togetherness that do not yet exist, and the very imagination of invention already constitutes what Harney and Moten have called fugitivity (Harney & Moten 2013). A mode of being that recognizes, as Adorno does, that there is no escape, but also that there is, at least, at the very least and all the time, fugitivity, lines of flight, invention.

II

What appears to have hardly been noted thus far is that Fanon, anyhow preoccupied with the role of the knife in Algerian (anti-)colonialism, seems to be riffing off of Nazi poet Hanns Johst: "Wenn ich Kultur höre... entsichere ich meinen Browning." What Fanon establishes seems, at first sight, to be the exact inverse of Johst: the deployment of a fascist trope against fascism itself. But he's deploying it against the fascism long recognized (by Du Bois, Césaire, and many others) as expressed in the fact of the colony as both precursor to and experimental testing ground of the European concentration camp.

And this means it's not quite an inversion. It's an inversion that ends up with an excess, a bycatch. Johst inverted gives something that doesn't only put the knife to fascism's throat, but to Adorno's as well. Like a magical mirror showing more than expected – the ghosts in the room – putting the knife to fascism's throat means putting it to something that, more generally, ruminates about its culture, assesses it over against those Adorno calls savages (*Wilden*) – by which he means Black people, Asians, non-occidentals generally speaking, perhaps accidentals. This something that shows up as Fanon's bycatch to fascism, this excess that extends the very meaning of fascism, is what can simply be called whiteness. Invisible, until it appears in the reflection of Fanon's blade.

III

Adorno, we imagine, does not survive Fanon. He does not survive this encounter with blackness that he very well knows (herein lies Adorno's exceptional contribution) to be the epicentre of the double helix of fascism and capitalism. And so he avoids it, being caught up in, and most forcefully and tellingly expressing, an affect we might call 'white pessimism' – but only if you promise to crack a smile, or giggle a little at the very idea, at the very thought that *this* could be an affect one is caught in.

White pessimism acts as, pretends to be, the last defense against… well, what else: history. Against the return of history, of all those ghosts, of lives expended. Payback time. This pretense acts to hold up, swallow and piteously regurgitate the history of mankind so that our future never arrives and is forever cast as a foreshadowing of man's disillusionment. Caved still. Negative dialectics: something to claim to *have arrived at*, a claim to history, history now undone – undone *only* now, it is implied.

The catch, of course, is that the pessimism is fully justified. There is nothing to redeem. We will be stripped of everything we may once have thought was ours, and we lack even a single reason to object. As it was gained, it will be lost. Capital will not endure anything else. So as long as one pretends that all of this *would eventually come about*, that all of this, however contingent, has been unfolding along some temporal arc, progress now unmasked as doom, one is still masking, still clinging to whiteness and, as such, even if resigned to a stationary posture, still *waiting* for some contradiction, for help. However, as Jonathan Jackson writes to his brother George, "While we await the precise moment when all of capitalism's victims will indignantly rise to destroy the system, we are being devoured in family lots at the whim of this thing. There will be no super-slave" (Jackson 1990, 10-11). There was never going to be one. Dialectics is how this thing called whiteness entertains itself in the meantime. Or, and this cannot be controversial: dialectics tracks the time it takes the master to abolish himself. A long time.

And while we wait: what if we practice pessimism not as any negative conclusion to what humanity, at one time, might have expected, but as the lived reality of our common existence *in invention*? The ever-recurring inventiveness that lives from, in, and through the failure of the world. Never getting stuck on words. So let's quickly rush past words, words about how white people don't deserve pessimism. White people, like the rest of us, deserve nothing to begin with. The pessimism that is our existence in common was already right there, plenty already, escaping history, coming with us, returning with us. We were never going anywhere, so what's the wait? Why the posture?

IV

Martin Jay is right to point out the despair and mournfulness on Adorno's face. But why is Adorno not surprised when Fanon cuts his throat? Don't you know he's been talking to Houria Bouteldja all along?

Adorno's despair, this affect of total capture, emerges as the ultimate realization of capital's avowal of its operations as effacement, as desertification. Is there anything negative here? Anything that is not folded into a logic that claims total capture, but that of course fails to achieve it, fails to preclude invention? Why does Adorno appear to *believe* capital's confession of total capture, this affirmative admission of guilt?

Why does he *perform* it? Why, when it is clear (to him) that capital generates outsides, that there are outsides generative of capital, that capital always already presupposed the not-quite-human subjects (not-quite-subjects) of 'race', never quite enlisted as life but always available as death, as objects for the act of killing? Why, when it is clear that, despite all that, there is and will be fugitivity, invention?

Adorno writes: "Hitler's stupidity was a ruse of reason" (§ 69). Now, in the fullest loyalty of betrayal, let's paraphrase him. Let's substitute Adorno for Hitler (and is this substitution not the secret summary of Adorno's theoretical program?): *Adorno's stupidity was a ruse of reason*. Now cut it.

Notes

1 "[...] lorsqu'un colonisé entend un discours sur le culture occidentale, il sort sa machette ou du moins il s'assure qu'elle est à portée de sa main."

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Biography

Rogier van Reekum is an assistant professor at the department of Public Administration and Sociology of Erasmus University Rotterdam. His work focuses on the politics of migration and knowledge controversies. Rogier has published on border visuality, nationalism, place making, citizenship & migration politics, immigration policy and education.

Willem Schinkel is professor of social theory at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

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After All, It Is Only an Animal…

Guilel Treiber

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After All, It Is Only an Animal…

Guilel Treiber

A standard *bon ton* in the milieu of radicals is that the colony was the testing ground for Auschwitz. Initially, the statement was meant to elevate the suffering of the colony. It ended by downgrading Auschwitz. Nowadays, Auschwitz is a mere repetition of the horrors of colonialism. It is nothing more than the perfection of methods tried elsewhere. The argument only holds if one tries hard to forget history, and only if one dives fully dressed into the warm, murky waters of a *Judeo*-Christian Europe. What better way is there to clean one's sins than by making the victims the originators of the culture and land that has devoured them again and again and again. According to this logic, very soon, one will write of Judeo-African-Arab-Christian Europe. One should beware of naively adopting the discourse of those whose identity has always been mere imitation.

Freud may have been wrong on all points concerning Moses; however, there is one where he got it right. Antisemitism is one of the oldest, most ancient forms of the hatred of difference and, simultaneously, of identity. One hates those who tried to do things differently by reducing everything to the one. If there is an original Jewish sin, it is the sin of the universal, not that of whiteness or European culture. Nietzsche already stated as much in his genealogy of slave morality. He thought he saw a way out of it. Little did he know that what he understood as overcoming was just a tiny drunken hic before full acceleration. Indeed, slave morality and its nihilistic drive have never been better. The creation of values is dead. Long-live the return of the repressed, long-live the universal Victim (or the victim of the Universal?).

Adorno wrote that the real difference between the intellectual and the activist is that the latter is less aware of its "entanglement" in capitalism and colonialism (§ 6). He did not know the startling, synthetic form very well: the intellectual-activist who not only effaces self-reflexivity but renders its effacement opaque by linguistic prowess and wordy acrobatics (Adorno may have detected this figure in the wrestler-intellectual, § 87). In their work, the intellectual-activist states, in passing, what they would have wanted to say out loud – by becoming Israelis, Jews replaced the Nazis. To be honest, the Jews were never that different from their oppressor. The dominated are always implicated in their own domination (§ 117 & § 119). However, those Jews who replaced the torments of Europe by wanting to become like all other nations needed time to learn the art of domination, to master that of colonialism and oppression. They are yet to grasp that of genocide. They have not actualized a potentiality always implied in nationalism. Indeed, only the contamination of Jewish thinking by raison d'état could have led to Gaza.

However, let us not make the mistake, Gaza is not Auschwitz (not yet). And Auschwitz did not take 400 years to perfect. It took two millennia of ongoing persecution. What was done in Africa, the Americas or Asia was first tried at 'home' on the Jews. Forgetting this is to forget that the Jewish bourgeois and the European colonialist of pre-WWII Europe may look alike yet are different in rank and kind (§ 6). Let's say it clearly: Algiers, Auschwitz, or Gaza, should not be made into a competition of suffering; they are humanity's "progress into hell" (§ 149).

"Only a crippled mind needs self-hatred in order to demonstrate its intellectual essence – untruth – by the size of its biceps" (§ 87). Indeed, by its willingness to use violence in the name of victimhood it does not know, to employ misogynic-phallic metaphors in the name of women it always ignored, and to declare grand statements to obsessively veil the narrowness of mind it tries so compulsively to hide, the wrestler-intellectual ignores the fact that they too are walking knee-deep in blood. That the Jews are the apex of White European bourgeoisie and, hence, may be eradicated (theoretically at least) is not only "economic sophistry" but also the denial of "the infernal machine" that is Western history (§ 149). The wrestler-intellectual who "relinquishes awareness of the growth of horror" for the sake of choosing only one, most horrible Victim, where all others are effaced, "fails to perceive" "the true identity of the whole", that is, "terror without end" (§ 149).

The only "emancipated society" that can exist is not one where pessimistic intellectuals will pit racial differences against each other in the name of the Victim's moral purity. Nor is it a society where these differences are effaced for the sake of an abstract "equality for all". A truly emancipated society is one where "the realization of universality" can happen in the "reconciliation of differences", where one (and communities) can be "different without fear" (§ 66). The only way forward is by writing a history of the pogrom, of which Auschwitz, Gaza and Cape Town are chapters, where the perpetrator being Aryan, white, black, Jew, or Asian is a mere epiphenomenon of what is truly at stake: "what was not seen as human and yet is human, is made a thing" to be discarded since "after all, it's only an animal" (§ 68).

Biography

Guilel Treiber is an affiliated post doctoral researcher at the Centre for Research in Political Philosophy and Ethics Leuven (RIPPLE). He specializes in the study of resistance and political protest via a poststructuralist perspective. He is currently working on a synthesis between Foucauldian genealogy and Critical Theory in order to use the resulting methodology to analyse our present conditions in digitally connected mass societies.

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Bad Infinity, and Beyond

Thijs Lijster

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Bad Infinity, and Beyond

Thijs Lijster

With the ink of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* still wet, Hegel famously remarked, in a letter to a friend, that he saw the world-spirit on horseback in the shape of Napoleon, as the Emperor and his troops marched into Prussia. It is highly doubtful whether it would have been a consolation for Napoleon's victims to know that their suffering was a necessary stepping-stone in the history of progress, but also for the man himself Hegel's remark can hardly be considered a compliment: the "cunning of reason", after all, implies that the individual acts not on its own volition, but as a mere instrument. Theodor W. Adorno understood that well when, in the 33rd aphorism of *Minima Moralia,* he saw the world-spirit in a V2 rocket:

> Had Hegel's philosophy of history embraced this age, Hitler's robot-bombs would have found their place beside the early death of Alexander and similar images, as one of the selected empirical facts by which the state of the world-spirit manifests itself directly in symbols. Like Fascism itself, the robots career without a subject. Like it they combine utmost technical perfection with total blindness. And like it they arouse mortal terror and are wholly futile.

Each era gets the world-spirit it deserves. In the summer of 2021, Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos, in his rocket-ship called *New Shephard*, made his first successful flight outside the earth's atmosphere. Officially, it was not the first private-commercial spaceflight on record (Richard Branson beat him to it by a few weeks), but it was certainly the one that was most discussed. This was, amongst other things, due to the shape of the rocket which, even to those not into Freud, left so little to the imagination; due to Bezos' cynical words of thanks to the exploited Amazon employees to which he owes his billions; and due to the mind-blowing superficiality of the first words he uttered in space (*"who wants a Skittle?"*).

The dark irony in Adorno's appropriation of Hegel lies in the image of the world-spirit personified, but blind and without will, "not on horseback, but on wings and without a head". According to Adorno, this "refutes, at the same stroke, Hegel's philosophy of history", for it demonstrates not a progress in self-consciousness and freedom, but merely of instrumental reason, a cunning that merely perpetuates the blind struggle for power that reason attempted to escape. (As he later put it in *Negative Dialectics*: "No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb", a realization he considered as "the horror that verifies Hegel and stands him on his head").

Unlike Hitler's robot-bombs, Jeff Bezos does in fact have a head, as well as a face, although (just like Zuckerberg's) it is a rather generic one. As faceless as these men may seem, and as devoid of soul and character traits (*almost* making one feel nostalgic for the oligarchs and aristocrats of yore, the Bourbons and the Romanovs, the Rockefellers and Carnegies, who were just as ruthlessly exploitative but at least appeared to have personality and taste, and paid for their indulgences in the shape of art and culture), and as much truth there is in Marx's conviction that we cannot blame the individual

capitalist (since "he is only capital personified"), as well as in Adorno's famous statement that "wrong life cannot be lived rightly", this also should not keep them off the hook; they are, in fact, subjects.

Perhaps for this very reason, and so as to add a grain of personality to his otherwise mundane appearance, Bezos might have felt compelled to wear a cowboy-hat during the press conference following the spaceflight, by far the most fascinating and haunting element of the entire spectacle. The hat, moreover, also provided yet another image, in which the world-spirit manifested itself as a symbol. In the popular imagination of the twentieth century, the cowboy, hero of the wild west from John Wayne to *Toy Story's* Woody, became the personification *par excellence* of the discovery and conquest of the "new world", the *go west* that had encompassed modernity, and according to Hegel even the entire human history; but with that also the retroactive legitimization of white-settler colonialism and the primitive accumulation of which history Marx remarked that it is "written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire." This relay-race of domination which had started in ancient Athens, and went via the Roman, Frankish, Dutch and British Empires to the United States, had to end at the West Coast (lest one ended up in the "Far East" again). On the coast of California, the horizon of the so-called "western world" reached its natural, albeit not its actual, limit. As W.J.T. Mitchell wrote: "The 'westward' imperative has no more literal or concrete meaning, and can only be replaced by something figurative: cosmic or inner space, *Star Wars* or self-actualization." Hence, the US West Coast became the habitat of both Hollywood and NASA, and of Burning Man as well as cyberspace.

In Bezos' cowboy hat, this entire history crystallizes as in a symbol: not only capitalism, colonialism, ecological destruction, and patriarchy seem to be condensed in this single image, but also the entanglement of inner and cosmic space mentioned by Mitchell. In the oligarch's overblown ego *Star Wars* and self-actualization go hand in hand. Capitalism's accumulation, expropriation, and expansion acknowledges no natural limits, and hence "it will not die a natural death", as Benjamin rightfully remarked. If Napoleon was the world-spirit on horseback for Hegel, and the V2 rocket for Adorno, then we have seen the world-spirit in the shape of a Beverly Hills space cowboy, stepping out of a gigantic phallus, and spraying the crowd with champagne.

Biography

Thijs Lijster is assistant professor philosophy of art and culture at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Groningen, and member of the *Krisis* editorial board since 2007.

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Transparency and its Schematism

Sjoerd van Tuinen

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Transparency and its Schematism

Sjoerd van Tuinen

"Just as the old injustice is not changed by a lavish display of light, air and hygiene, but is in fact concealed by the gleaming transparency of rationalized big business, the inner health of our time has been secured by blocking flight into illness without in the slightest altering its aetiology" (§ 36). Adorno's analogy between the administration of social conflict in monopoly capitalism and the objectification of subjectivity through the repression of mental suffering deserves to be unpacked in full. It is exemplary of an inchoate freudomarxism, which sees psychopathology as mirroring capitalist modes of production. It anticipates critiques of power structures and commercial interests at work in the psycho-therapy-education industry. But it also extends to domains beyond the corporation and the soul. It resonates with the contemporary failure of 'leaks' to end tax evasion or change the operations of secret services, as well as with the impotent appeals for more transparency made by technocrats and populists alike. In suggesting the real and not merely metaphorical interconnectedness of heterogeneous forms of false positivity, it performs the arch-gesture of the negative dialectic.

Today transparency still counts as a panacea. It promises accountability and healing for romantic relations, markets, and democracies as much as for the planet at large. Yet while transparency is celebrated both as a duty and as a right, it remains false insofar as it triggers no new forms of responsibility or liberation. For as Adorno would no doubt remind us, 'seeing through' is first of all the fetish of an enlightenment blinded by its own light. Transparency is the homogenizing element of the "context of delusion" (Verblendungszusammenhang): the convergence of total mobilization with total access in the form of a universal competition – the commodity form – of images.

At the heart of Adorno's analogy lies the socio-cultural drama of the impoverishment and mutilation of experience (Erfahrung). Accordingly, the analogy marks the beginning of an encyclopedic series of loose connections between social and individual pathology (§ 36), bourgeois psychology and authoritarianism (§ 37), the pursuit of happiness and mass ignorance (§ 38), or the replacement of speculative philosophy by the scientism shared by the analytical philosophy and psychoanalysis (§ 42). In fact we are not dealing with empirical analogies but with transcendental "schemata". They produce opaque but distinct kinds of evidence where the natural light of liberal democracy fails.

Kant introduces the notion of "schematism" in the First Critique to explain the harmony between disparate domains of experience, the intuition and the understanding. Whenever things appear transparent, this is because the imagination operates under the general 'rule' of the concept. Nevertheless, the schematism is not the head of subjectivity but its heart. It is hidden in the living 'depth' of the soul, indicating that it does not belong to the subject but rather to a drama in which we are always already beyond ourselves. The question that Kant fails to investigate is what makes the schematism submit to the rigid frame of our understanding at all. How did our capacity to synthesize get damaged this way? What remains of subjectivity when the schemas – the outlines of identities and equivalences – are already in place? This, as well

as the consideration of its own schematizing activity, should be the starting point of any critique of transparency.

Because subjectivity was considered the transcendental condition of enlightened transparancy, it could never appear as such. As a consequence, it will not be missed when the conditions of transparancy are replaced by other forces. In Dialectic of Enlightenment Adorno demonstrates that what naturalizes our experience is social practice. The culture industry relieves us from the labor of schematization, providing us with the framework of readymade concepts and sentimental clichés to which both nature and subjectivity must conform. Hence, the world of the binge-watcher immediately translates the humanist enthusiasm for the free use of one's own understanding into the objective necessities of self-preservation.

It would nonetheless be too simplistic to blame Hollywood and Netflix alone for this degeneration of subjectivity. The need for transparency is quite a bit older, and its dialectic is not bound to the enlightenment epoch. In short, the problem is that transparency is intrinsically polemical. While it is an important weapon in the demystification of power asymmetries, the polemical never fails to turn against itself – in its hardened dialectical fashion, the negation of the negation always precedes the initial negation. This explains why, historically speaking, the need for transparency is more insatiable and encompassing than the need for secrecy that was typical of traditional dictatorships. It arises from the dream of global mastery and control.

In the panopticons, shopping malls, and boulevards of the nineteenth century, one already sees that the truth of openness and accessibility lies in the surveillance and governance of ubiquitous circulation rather than in the stripping of the emperor's clothes. By the time of the publication of Minima Moralia the schematism of human experience was already being usurped by Cold War information technologies. Nowadays, Silicon Valley has replaced mass mediatization with big data, probalistic logic, and automated decision-making. In surveillance capitalism, the market transparency of deregulation combined with centralized planning turns us all into passive 'users' – laboratory rats with or without UBI – from whom profitable behavioral data is harvested.

When understood in terms of logistics, transparency means invisibility and absence of noise. It is not a quality of information, but of the medium in which information becomes visible or readable. Modernity bathes in the pervasive light of maritime maps and GPS, of Vermeer's windows and of conceptual art, of remote sensors and MRIs, of dating-site algorithms and credit scores, of high-frequency trading and automized weaponry. In all these cases, technology dissolves the appearance of nature and reveals the blind workings behind it. Through the foreshortened emplotment of space and time, it provides the expansive schema of a world that knows no negativity, only constant improvement – the meta-world of whiteness (Harney and Moten 2021, 15-17).

The problem with transparency, then, is double. It is perhaps best understood as a code of conduct in the triple sense of behavior, management, and medium for transmission. It encodes and produces the circulating flows from which it extracts a surplus value of information. Whether it is our language, our attention, our will, or our intimate relationships, logistics renders them legible, calculable, available. At the same time, every code is an encryption. There is no transparency without means. These are typically light,

electricity and money – media that disappear into what they communicate and obscure what makes communication possible. Under modern conditions, it is not nature but technology that loves to hide. This means that no quantity of transparency can ever take away the suspicion that is inherent in the use of all media. It is precisely our restless desire for knowledge and information that reinforces mistrust and disorientation. What could possibly go wrong?

Our contemporary problem, perhaps also the problem of the enlightenment as a whole, is not a lack of transparency but of imagination. If the task of the schematism is to establish communication across differences without collapsing them, the understanding does the opposite: It renders us indifferent. Whether it is the mass murder at the European borders or the impact of climate change, we are unable to actually experience what we already know or feel beyond the necessities that we immediately recognize. Here the schematism functions like the famous invisible hand of the market. It is the filter of a hypocrisy that destroys the experience of the other, letting through only what can nourish the thick skin of our clear conscience.

This is also implied by Adorno's critique of psychologization as a means of dominance that forbids any knowledge of the suffering it produces. Just as fact-checking or ethical considerations about fairness constitute a degree zero of free thought, the exposure of hypocrisies oscillates between the emancipation of the repressed and the apology for absolute self-alienation. The very word 'happiness' – today revealingly substituted by 'resilience' – suffices to disparage its contrary, thereby relinquishing our capacity of imaginative schematization to the Kantian depth, or indeed the Freudian id (§ 38). Its authoritarian schema is that of a bad conscience that seeks compensation in herd-like ways of mobilizing the irrational and subhuman drives (§ 37, § 40). What better condition for the emergence of fascist states than this internalization of castration, the libidinal performance demanded of the individual who can be considered healthy in body and soul?

Today's return of behaviourism under the sign of the digital is well exemplified by Apple's flagship store in New York (Alloa 2016). The glass cube with basement illustrates how it is no longer necessary to hide the extreme asymmetry between user interface and the machinery underneath. The same goes for AI decision-making systems or the finance sector. Although the schematizing backend of social life remains unknown, its difference from the frontend fails to scandalize us. Through microtargeting and modelling, technologies for the automated distribution of privileges, we happily let ourselves be nudged into a libertarian paternalism instead.

Yet when it comes to the logistical conditions of fascism, perhaps there is no more adequate contemporary analogue than the distributed surveillance and total symmetry of blockchain technology. While a cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin decentralizes the control over currency, it subjects everything from law-keeping, healthcare and education to competition. Consequently, its unique transparency can only lead to reliability, not trust. Although its source is fully open, it only communicates its own schematization of human interaction, which is even more compelling as it immunizes us to the anonymity that defines everyday life. Hence the libertarian fantasy of self-sovereign identity: Where privacy no longer exists, demand data ownership. Yet in

complete abstraction of the vital need to share data, property will not solve the dilemma between privacy and security, or between well-being and convenience. Just as a selfie is unthinkable without the compulsive desire for personal transparency, commodification will not make us freer human beings, only more calculable and calculating ones.

The critical task today, then, is the same in philosophy as it is in psychology and technology; it is to jam the smooth functioning of schematism and turn the imagination into the broken mirror of reality. How to reclaim the thickness of a subjectivity that interrupts flows, instead of remaining a hollow switchboard for circulation? How to restore the aesthetic element as the ground of rationalism? Nobody is dreaming the depoliticizing dream of de-mediation, of getting rid of interference and regaining authenticity. On the contrary, it is only in the intransparancy of means and the accompanying indeterminacy of ends that the instrumental reason of effective neoliberalism opens a new, dreamlike dimension for a denaturalized politics (Brouwer, Spuybroek, and van Tuinen 2016).

In this regard, it is precisely Adorno's analogies that provide nuanced – some would justifiably add paranoid and far-fetched – intuitions of the falsity of the world. Our task as readers is not to reconstruct the networks that connect the terms. As with the essay, the aphorism, and the miniature, it is rather a matter of being incomplete and knowing it. In particular, critical language must stray from the demands of straight talk, that is, the total equivalence and interchangeability of language – its policed insignificance. Against the 'secularist' defence of the freedom of speech, it upholds language's non-innocence. Against 'progressive' attempts at explicitly codifying and designing linguistical behaviour, it maintains ambivalence and ambiguity. And against the 'egalitarian' pretension to analytical clarity, it asserts the rights of a philosophy that swims beyond the shallow end of the pool of language. Aesthetic Theory: the free use of the imagination in experimenting with non-indifferent modes of schematization.

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Biography

Sjoerd van Tuinen is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

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Normality Proper to the Time is Sickness

Fabian Freyenhagen

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Normality Proper to the Time is Sickness

Fabian Freyenhagen

Capitalist societies have the uncanny ability to constantly change, and yet remain the same.

An envisaged psychoanalysis of the prototypical culture of mid-twentieth-century society – especially as it presented itself in California – was predicted to reveal that sickness proper to this time is normality (§ 36). Being a regular guy or popular girl then required blocking all signs of illness, displaying exuberant vitality and cheerfulness as if one's soul's salvation depended on it. In fact, the mechanical nature of the bodily comportment and the suppression of even as much as a furrowed brow inadvertently suggested that the hearts had stopped beating long ago; and that what was presented to us were corpses, skilfully prepared so as to not scare off anyone at the open-casket funerals that were hidden in plain sight. It was a time when being homosexual was considered a mental illness, which tells us not only about the sexual mores then, but also about the stigma – even taboo – that was attached to those not considered normal in their mental or emotional make-up.

As times have changed, so have mores. Being diagnosed as presenting with mental illness has become much less stigmatised, especially if the sufferers are privileged and do not have socially unacceptable delusions. Certain conditions are now often understood as examples of neurodiversity, rather than abnormality. Being neurologically different is sometimes even celebrated, as in the trope of the troubled geniuses of the world of art, mathematics, or finance that populate the silver screen and on-demand streaming devices. It has become statistically likely and accepted – even fashionable, judging by how many princes and other celebrities go public with it – to receive at least one diagnosis in one's lifetime, be it anxiety, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity, or autistic spectrum. It is seen as a mark of individuality to be an instance of a general category, although this absurdity is partly masked by the exceptions and reasonable adjustments an acknowledged diagnosis might make available to whoever is prepared to accept it (this *quid pro quo* can be witnessed in university contexts, where the rise in mental health problems has been particularly striking). Still, perhaps, so far so good. Things become more troubling when we consider the open secret that an ever-increasing number of us are prescribed and take medication meant to address low mood or anxiety, conceptualised as chemical imbalances in the brain; and the less open secret that the side-effects might be worse than the (purported) disease. The shift from the "age of anxiety" to the "age of depression" has been accompanied by a shift of response, from one of telling people to man up or be locked up to one of popping pills and exemption badges. What it means to be mentally distressed has changed in a way that can almost be dated to a specific year: in 1980 a watershed occurred in psychiatry – inevitably first in the USA – whereby mental distress became understood as a bundle of symptoms, for which the aetiology need not be known. The individualisation of mental distress – something that already worried Adorno about mid-twentieth-century psychoanalysis's becoming part of social hygiene – thereby reached a completely new level. The change in ontology within psychiatry made this distress into an illness of the brain of yet-unknown origin. The causal nexus of these developments is like a vortex

of forces that cannot be easily disentangled. Yes, there have been changes in cultural and moral – including sexual – norms, but the result we are faced with today also owes much to the material forces brought to bear by the pharmaceutical companies and the incentives structures of private and public health-care providers. Destigmatisation, in our times, has come at the expense of commodification. If only the suffering wouldn't so stubbornly persist through its normalisation and medicalisation! For while it is a source of income, it is also a source of inconvenience for the new enterprenerial world.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. Whether to be normal is to deny illness to the point of being dead, or to accept illness to the point of dying of the supposed cure, does not alter in the slightest the aetiology of the individual and social malaise, or indeed the lack of a real cure. Once again, bringing to light – be it the mid-twentieth-century hygiene of social adaptability or the early twenty-first century explosion of mental illness diagnosis – does not automatically remove but instead can hide, indeed *has hidden*, the "secret domain of the faeces" (§ 36), the remaining wretchedness; and more effectively so. The signs of repression are perhaps no longer repressed at the individual level, but now at the collective one. Yes, there is increasing recognition that there are social causes of illness, including mental distress. But even this insight is co-opted into social control, albeit often in the supposedly innocent and subtle form of changing the "choice architecture" advocated by behavioural insight teams. Instead of social change, we get mindfulness and resilience training; and whether the default becomes 'opt out' instead of 'opt in', will not change this.

When the norm has become for society to be ill, what's the future for health? Perhaps there is hope in the thought that no normalising of suffering can completely erase the critical potential suffering has as motor of thinking.

Biography

Fabian Freyenhagen is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Essex, UK. His publications include *Adorno's Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly* (Cambridge University Press, 2013) and articles and book chapters on Critical Theory. He is investigating the idea of social pathology, particularly in relation to mental distress, its conceptualisations and social causes.

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This Side of the Pleasure Principle

Peter E. Gordon

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This Side of the Pleasure Principle

Peter E. Gordon

"He alone who could situate utopia in blind somatic pleasure [...] has a stable and valid idea of truth."This surely ranks among the more memorable and provocative statements in Adorno's *Minima Moralia*; it appears in the reflection (§ 37) in which the author offers critical remarks on the more repressive or anti-utopian themes in psychoanalysis. The title itself is intended as a sly riposte to Freud, whose *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) introduced the controversial idea of a destructive instinct (*Todestrieb*) alongside the instinct for pleasure (*Lustprinzip*) or libido. Written in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, Freud's revisionist argument for a second and competing instinct of aggression arguably marked a conservative turn in psychoanalytic theory, insofar as it prepared the theoretical terrain for the idea that civilization can only survive if it represses the instinct for aggression that is a piece of the human being's own psychic constitution. Adorno rejects this conservative theme as a sign of Freud's "unenlightened Enlightenment." On the one hand, Freud was the great opponent of bourgeois moralism; he endorsed the maligned ideal of human happiness as a "critical standard" for his work. On the other hand, Freud reconfirmed the that very same moralism as a social necessity. In modern culture, Adorno writes, psychoanalysis is poised in ambivalence—between a "desire for the open emancipation of the oppressed, and apology for open oppression." In my own ongoing encounter with *Minima Moralia*, these critical reflections on psychoanalysis remain of greatest importance, not least because they offer a corrective to the dominant interpretation of Adorno as an embittered negativist who looks upon modern society as a place of unremitting darkness in which true happiness is impossible and "life is not lived." In his rejoinder to Freud, Adorno appears in a different and unfamiliar light: he aligns himself with "blind somatic pleasure" as if it furnished the key to unrealized utopia. Perhaps nowhere else in the book does its author provide such a forthright confirmation of what he has announced in the opening dedication to his friend Max Horkheimer, namely, that his "melancholy science" remains faithful to philosophy's ancient task: "the teaching of the right life."

As someone who feels an ongoing connection to the tradition of critical theory, I find this particular reflection from *Minima Moralia* especially instructive. It reminds us that social criticism remains committed to a standard of human happiness even if the surrounding world has miserably failed that standard. Few aphorisms in the book so vividly express this commitment and thereby underscore the normative ideal of a life worth living that still animates critical theory. Most striking of all is Adorno's concluding suggestion that in modern culture, the imperative of repression imposes itself on us from two directions: the moralist's hostility to pleasure and the unbeliever's hostility to paradise. Although he lies at the furthest remove from any religious faith, Adorno resists the crude dualism between materialism and metaphysics. He recognizes that the religious longing for ultimate fulfillment is not merely annulled in the simplest demand for material pleasure but finds its dialectical realization. Metaphysics is honoured at the moment of its fall.

Biography

Peter E. Gordon is the Amabel B. James Professor of History and Faculty Affiliate in Germanic Languages and Literatures and in the Department of Philosophy at Harvard University. A frequent contributor of reviews and criticism to periodicals such as *The Nation, The New Republic, The Boston Revie*w, and *The New York Review of Books*, he is the author of several books on critical theory and the history of modern European philosophy, including *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: between Judaism and German Philosophy* (2003); *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (2010); *Adorno and Existence* (2016); and *Migrants in the Profane: Critical Theory and the Question of Secularization* (2020). He has also co-edited several volumes, including *The Routledge Companion to the Frankfurt School,* with Espen Hammer and Axel Honneth (2018).

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Thought's Last Chances: On Being Bound and Free

Cecilia Sjöholm

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Thought's Last Chances: On Being Bound and Free

Cecilia Sjöholm

> …the glance at what is remote, the hatred of banality, the search for that which has not yet been grasped, for what has not been encompassed by the general conceptual schema, is the last chance for thought. In an intellectual [geistigen] hierarchy, which continually holds everyone responsible, then irresponsibility alone is capable of immediately calling the hierarchy itself by name. The sphere of circulation, whose marks are borne by intellectual outsiders, opens the last refuges to the spirit [Geist], which it is selling off, at the moment when these no longer really exist. Whoever offers something which is one of a kind, which no-one wants to buy anymore, represents, even against their will, freedom from exchange. (§ 41)

This last chance for thought has perhaps escaped us, since Adorno wrote those lines in *Minima Moralia*. Thought is today wholly administered by bureaucracy, workpackages, digitalization, social media. We must search for it elsewhere. Perhaps in art, which has stood in the middle of thought for thousands of years.

The long history of the relationship between art and philosophy speaks for itself. Not only is it long, it is also slow. Philosophy tends to return to the same genres and works; Greek tragedy, Shakespeare, modernists. These are all so familiar to philosophy, and yet so elusive. To Adorno, canonized modernist avant-gardism was still radical. To some, its formal revolution appeared threatening. Avant-gardism made conservatism and fascism join forces in diligent hatred, a hatred rooted in weakness and the incapacity to withstand the deterioration of the self. In contrast, Adorno saw modernist art provide the glimpse of an insight into the possibilities of that which in our times comes across as the impossible: it is both free and bound. It is both bound in and by the warmth of things, and free to move beyond those things.

The object of art which harbours thought is not just any kind of object. It is the conflict-ridden focus of political opposition, social antagonism, affects and drives. The object of art is a body of constant changes, appearing in multiple forms, and it can derive both out of conscious work and what is unconscious in work. Adorno sees all these possibilities. The object of art—at least in the form that Adorno finds radical—is a symbol of almost eternal freedom. But it is also the origin of projections, hopes, and dreams.

How to find warmth in infinite freedom? How can free unbounded thought attach to the rooted life of love, intimacy, closeness? How can art offer routes where these antagonistic spheres are combined, joined, or merged? Most often, Adorno conceives of art in abstract terms of autonomy and freedom. And yet art gives us the hint of a context of life and living beings: social ties of warmth and trust.

With regards to social relations, Adorno forestalls a full climatology containing warmth and cold. We strive towards warmth. It is a fundamental element that we cannot forestall, that we seek but cannot find. It is lost to modern man. There are no societies, known by us, that are governed by warmth. Cold, in turn, is a perversion of warmth. In a cold society, human relations have been formed by technologies and tools. Once

started, this development easily spins out of control. It mutates. It morphs into the natural, into the social, into the self, into thought.

A subject that is truly thinking freely needs to intertwine a form of critical consciousness with an attraction towards the warm and the intimate. To approach the warmth of things requires a kind of dialectic between the free and the bound. Thought cannot naturally be held warm. It does not seek to restore unmediated warmth. Rather, it is seeking to undo the conceptual dualism which has led to the submission of warm life under cold thought. In approaching art, and the hope that art gives rise to, Adorno is seeking to liberate thinking from the cold inherent to it. In the Western tradition, thinkers are expected to master distance and objectivity, with a certain cold. But art can be both hot and cold. A symbol for freedom and for love. The one who is attracted to the warmth of things, does not think through mere distancing, but through the attraction towards a certain light, which may be both cold and warm. In art, lost possibilities are nourished through a hope of experiences beyond the cold of freedom.

Art holds a sensitivity and a sensibility which is not a memory of an original love, but rather an intensification of thought's own process. Through art, the philosopher becomes capable not only of thinking freely, but also of returning to the many intensities that life may offer. Such as erotic intensity, the intimacy of whispered words, or the warmth of a love that has vanished or that is kept hidden. In this way, thought can open itself to a vigour which is almost corporal. Aesthetic experience may bestow us with a powerful sense of life. Art is not weakened by thought, but intensified. It becomes the *daimon* which keeps the possession of thought unresolved, and alive.

Let us see how this continues. Perhaps administered thought will marginalize art even more than today, marginalize the warmth, life and love inherent to it and give up on its lost possibilities, of joining the free and the bound. But still, we can and should keep thinking about art, against the thought administered by sheer bureaucracy.

Biography

Cecilia Sjöholm is professor of Aesthetics at Södertörn University. Her research is particularly focused on the relation between art and politics in contemporary culture. She has published extensively on art, psychoanalysis and critical theory, engaging in particular in how art and aesthetics invite us to rethink political concepts and structures.

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Malignant Normality and the Dilemma of Resistance: Honoring *Minima Moralia*

Shierry Weber Nicholsen

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Malignant Normality and the Dilemma of Resistance: Honoring *Minima Moralia*

Shierry Weber Nicholsen

Normality is death. (§ 56[1])

Malignant normality: an inhumane social actuality that is "presented as normal, all-encompassing, and unalterable." (Lee 2017, xv), a term originally coined by Roberty Jay Lifton for Auschwitz. But as Adorno says, "wherever the momentum of [the logic of history] carries it, it reproduces equivalents of past calamity." And so, normality is death.

One of the many forms of death is the flattening of the structure of the mind. Adorno calls this the mutilation of the subject. The destruction of the difference between truth and lies by the Trump regime, for instance (Lifton).

If normality is death, terror sustains and enforces it. Adorno speaks of the abolition of the distinction between sleeping and waking. Terror generates dreams that are no different from nightmares: in 1934 Charlotte Beradt records a dreamer testifying to the destruction of the difference between interior and exterior. In his dream, the dreamer says "I looked around, horrified, and all the dwellings around, as far as the eye can see, no longer have walls." (1966, 25; my translation). The distinction between reality and nightmare is eliminated along with walls. Individual nightmare and collective malignancy are two sides of the same thing.

All-encompassing terror creates the sense that the malignant normality is indeed all-encompassing and inescapable: "just the way things are." Language – the capacity to articulate experience and to think about it – falls victim to this terror, mutilating itself. In 1933 a woman dreams that in her sleep she speaks a language she does not know, "so that I won't understand myself and so no one can understand me, in case I say something about the state, because that is of course forbidden and has to be reported." (Beradt 1966, 56; my translation). Currently, we struggle to make meaning with corporate-speak, a facsimile of language that defeats meaning at every turn.

Language and the flattened mind cooperate to create versions of denial, maintaining the semblance of normality in a malignant situation, from the "doubling" (Lifton) in which a special personality is created to allow staff to endure the malignant normality of Auschwitz, to the corporate insistence on "deniability". Stanley Cohen details some of the ways language can be perverted into accounts that serve to justify or excuse and thereby deny atrocities: It can be used to deny responsibility for the actions, to deny that injury was done, to deny that victims are victims and not perpetrators, to condemn those who condemn the atrocities, and to appeal to alleged higher ends that would justify the actions (2001, 60-61).

The terror of malignant normality induces not only the sense that it is all-encompassing, but the sense that it is unalterable – and dangerous to even think that it could be otherwise. In this situation, Cohen remarks, the question may be not so much why we resort to denial but why do we ever not do so? (2001, 248). With *Minima Moralia* in mind, we may pose the same question about resistance: The question is not so much how entanglement in malignant normality comes about but how it is ever possible to resist it?

Resistance must be possible, for malignant normality's claim to constitute the totality of reality is not tenable. It is an illusion propagated by the forces of malignancy; an absolute totality is a contradiction in terms. Resistance would consist in the mutilated subject's struggle for self-reflection on its own entanglement in malignant normality – reflection from, in Adorno's formulation, the "perspective of redemption" which would "displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light" (§ 153).

But here is the dilemma of resistance: it is virtually impossible to disentangle oneself enough to achieve a standpoint removed "even by a hair's breadth" (§ 153) from what is, and whatever is gained in the struggle will necessarily be distorted by the status quo, the all-encompassing malignant normality from which it has been wrested. Anything gained in that struggle will be not something abstract and pure but merely the humble, contingent, confused, naive pain of a subject sensing betrayal.

Rather than the perspective of 'redemption' – in these days a suspect word - we might speak of something akin to it: the mutilated subject's struggle for a perspective animated by 'moral injury', a term hitherto used for the anguish of combat veterans suffering from the betrayal of their moral values. Moral injury, with its experience of outrage and shame, acknowledges the world as indigent and distorted from the perspective of what would have been "right", resisting a malignant normality by acknowledging damaged life.

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Notes

1 Unless otherwise indicated, quotations come from the NLB edition of Minima Moralia (1974), translated by E.F.N. Jephcott.

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Biography

Shierry Weber Nicholsen is a psychoanalyst in private practice in Seattle. She is the translator of Adorno's *Notes to Literature* and *Hegel: Three Studies,* and the author of *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno's Aesthetics.* She is currently working on a book on moral injury.

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The Wound and the Flower

Surti Singh

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The Wound and the Flower

Surti Singh

"Is femininity secreted by the ovaries? Is it enshrined in a Platonic heaven? Is a frilly petticoat enough to bring it down to earth? Although some women zealously strive to embody it, the model has never been patented. It is typically described in vague and shimmering terms borrowed from a clairvoyant's vocabulary" (de Beauvoir 2011, 3). Only a few years before the publication of *Minima Moralia*, Simone de Beauvoir had published the *Second Sex*, a work in which she raised this paradox of femininity: it was something so enmeshed in the understanding of womanhood, and yet, could not be properly located. Femininity was to be found neither in the biological body, "secreted by the ovaries," an effect of being in possession of a womb or uterus, nor in the appeal to some eternal feminine soul, which by the mid-twentieth century had already become anachronistic. Yet, on de Beauvoir's account, femininity was also not simply a gender performance—the donning of a frilly petticoat—as Judith Butler would later famously argue. For de Beauvoir, femininity was a negative term, something that embodied everything that in a heterosexual, patriarchal society, man is not. If masculinity and femininity shared an abstract legal parity, in concrete reality, there was a deep asymmetry. The "feminine character" is Other—it is inessential, inferior, irrational, a situation of bodily imprisonment marked by menstruation, childbirth, menopause and hormones—a condition, therefore, of great repulsion.

Adorno's *Minima Moralia* is not a feminist text, but it is comprised of a set of aphorisms that, like de Beauvoir, ask after the condition of femininity in a patriarchal society. In the aphorism, "Since I set my eyes on him," (§ 59) Adorno discusses the feminine character, and the ideal upon which it is based, as products of patriarchy and, in a fashion similar to de Beauvoir's, views this masculine production of the female character as a "negative imprint of domination". This aphorism culminates in Adorno's provocative formulation "femininity itself is already the effect of the whip". Adorno refers to the infamous passage from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where the little old woman says to Zarathustra, "You are going to women? Then don't forget the whip." For Adorno, this injunction reflects Nietzsche's adherence to the idea of an eternal feminine soul, and the equation of "the feminine" with women, "hence the perfidious advice not to forget the whip". Adorno thus reverses Nietzsche's formulation: rather than woman requiring submission through violence because of the unruliness of her feminine nature, femininity itself is always already an effect of male violence.

Adorno's provocative formulation has formed the basis for thinking about how a feminist critical theory might be recovered from the canon of the Frankfurt School, in which it appears to be all but absent. Recent feminist accounts of this aphorism have positioned Adorno as holding both radical and conservative views of sex, as both a queer theorist *avant la lettre* (Duford, 2017) and as reproducing the dichotomy between male sadism and female masochism as the only horizon of female sexuality within a heterosexual patriarchal society (Marasco, 2006). I cannot enter into these debates here; instead, I propose to return to this aphorism once more, but through the door opened by de Beauvoir. There is an unexpected experiential dimension—the lived experience

of the body—that Adorno attends to in this aphorism, which complicates his notion of the feminine character.

Adorno recalls the founding psychoanalytic myth of femininity, according to which a woman experiences her body as an effect of castration. Because of castration, a woman's genitals are perceived as a wound, and this wound is reactivated when she begins to menstruate. This experience of the body gives rise to neuroses but also to a certain epistemic privilege: "The woman who feels herself a wound when she bleeds knows more about herself than the one who imagines herself a flower because that suits her husband" (§ 59). The crucial distinction Adorno makes in considering this myth of femininity is that between feeling and imagining, between the experience of one's corporeity and the fantasy that one adopts about it. Adorno suggests that women come closer to knowing their feminine character through their embodiment, through their lived experience, rather than through the assumption of an ideal.

Yet the distinction between feeling and imagining is not so clear in Adorno's analogy, for to imagine oneself as a flower is also at the same time to feel oneself as a site of injury, which in the patriarchal script of womanhood is an injury either on the horizon or one that has already transpired. That is to say, the wound or injury of castration, which is reactivated during menstruation, is reactivated yet again when a woman loses her virginity, when she is *de-flowered*. The image of femininity as a flower is thus not so innocent for it in fact contains a history of bodily injury, the flow of blood as a rite of passage that confirms a woman's purity to her husband.

In Adorno's formulation, to imagine oneself as a flower, as a being-for-others, happens through the male gaze of the husband, and later he gives another example in relation to the gaze of the jealous male:

> The femininity which appeals to instinct, is always exactly what every woman has to force herself by violence—masculine violence—to be: a she-man. One need only have perceived, as a jealous male, how such feminine women have their femininity at their finger-tips—deploying it just where needed, flashing their eyes, using their impulsiveness… (§ 59).

This performative aspect of femininity requires an active form of mutilation, one that requires woman to violently bend herself to the prevailing ideal, an ideal produced by the (male) ego and thus fully adapted to the rationalized order. Adorno presents the she-man as a female form that wields the violence of masculinity, a paradoxical figure of allure and frustration, desire and horror; but does this figure, when flashing her eyes and using her impulsiveness as the jealous male watches, *enjoy* her masculine femininity? For de Beauvoir, enjoyment borne of submission was an obstacle to women's emancipation from the patriarchal order. And surely for Adorno, if the she-man bears enjoyment, it only serves to further will her own submission. In the dialectic between the wound and the flower, between embodiment and the assumption of an ideal, enjoyment is not discussed, but it arrives on the scene.

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Biography

Surti Singh is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Villanova University. Her research interests include Frankfurt School Critical Theory, Global Critical Theory, Psychoanalysis, Feminist Philosophy, and Aesthetics. She is Co-Principal Investigator of the research project, *Extimaces: Critical Theory from the Global South,* and currently serves as President of the Association for Adorno Studies. Recent publications include "Dark play: Aesthetic resistance in Lukács, Benjamin and Adorno," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* (2020), "Adorno's Aesthetic Theory: The Artwork as Monad" in *The 'Aging' of Adorno's Aesthetic Theory: 50 Years Later* (2021) and "Mahdi Amel and the Non-Identical," *Critical Times: Interventions in Global Critical Theory* (Forthcoming).

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Mammoth, or: the Dialectic of Human Afterlife

Stefan Niklas

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Mammoth, or: the Dialectic of Human Afterlife

Stefan Niklas

It is a troubling thought: Humanity might be at its best only in hindsight, when its afterlife will be its sole mode of existence. In other words, only when humanity will no longer exist in the 'actual' sense – not as humanity, at least – but as a retroactive projection, will it finally become the fulfillment of its own Concept. Yet, who will project it?

I find this troubling thought expressed in aphorism 74 of *Minima Moralia*, called "Mammoth". Here, Adorno refers to the reported discovery of a well-preserved dinosaur (not a mammoth, which is in fact nowhere mentioned except for the title[1]). This specimen is said to have outlived its kind, being a million years younger than all other known specimens. How the enormous gap in the timeline of that species could be explained – whether it is due to false assumptions about this specific discovery or the earlier ones – is not Adorno's concern. His focus is rather on the public imagination that absorbs such paleontological information alongside "the repulsive humoristic craze for the Loch Ness Monster and the King Kong film" (§ 74), thus treating all these different phenomena and sources on the same imaginative plane.

There are two functions Adorno ascribes to this occupation of the public imagination. The first one goes roughly like this: In familiarizing themselves with the gigantic images, people imaginatively prepare for the terrors of the "monstrous total State", desperately trying "to assimilate to experience what defies all experience" (§ 74). The result is a happily fatalistic anticipation of the end of spontaneity as the heart of human life.

However, Adorno is quick to admit that this cannot be all there is to it. He therefore adds the second function which confronts happy fatalism with its dialectical inversion: miserable hope. "The desire for the presence of the most ancient is a hope that animal creation might survive the wrong that man has done it, if not man himself, and give rise to a better species, one that finally makes a success of life" (§ 74). It is mostly in this quote that I find expressed the speculative thought about the realization of the suppressed better possibilities of humanity – i.e., the better species which is to arise only after humankind has made way for it by suspending itself. For if a dinosaur can live a million years beyond its official extinction, thereby taking its kind into the future, maybe humankind could do the same.

Admittedly, the quote could also be read as saying that hope for the better species means the abolition of all things human. The animals suffering under the human rule over the world would then be surviving the oppression, even outliving their oppressors, and, finally, be left alone in peace. It would be left in the unoppressed paws and flippers of these animals then to make life a success. This interpretation, however, would not only be prone to a fatalistic kind of romanticism, but it would also jump to a constitutively external standpoint that potentially invalidates the central impulse of *Minima Moralia* to offer *immanent* critique of society and humanity at large. Furthermore, it creates the epistemic and logical problem that this vision of life as either successful or failed (rather than indifferent) is after all a projection of the human mind. And it is the human mind which imaginatively passes on this vision to the animals. If making life a success means

to realize the good life, and if the good life means "entering a truly human[e] state", as the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002, xiv) suggests, then humans – or humanity – cannot yet be ruled out of the speculation entirely. The question, or paradox, is rather how humanity – i.e., the existing human species – could abolish itself without abolishing the claim of humanity – i.e., the humane state which humans, apparently, are themselves unable to enter. In a way, this is a variation, or rather a farewell to the *Übermensch*-theme where the idea of humans uplifting themselves by way of their own will and strength is given up.

Besides the kind of Hegelianism that explains the problem of simultaneously abolishing and not abolishing something in terms of "sublation", I consider the mammoth-aphorism to express a transposition and complication of the Warburgian motif of *Nachleben* – meaning afterlife as material remembrance – which Adorno himself praises in his *Aesthetic Theory* (1997, 5). Early modern Europeans had to know enough about ancient Greek culture to be able to affirm the respective "pathos formulas" (Warburg) while transforming their meaning (including a great deal of misunderstanding and misrepresentation) in its acts of reappropriation. Analogously, though on the scale not just of historical cultures, but of evolutionary (or even cosmic) species, those who will come after the abolition of humanity will still have to be human enough to identify with the conserved remnants of the human life-form; but at the same time they have to be sufficiently beyond humanity – or in any case beneath it – to make a fresh new start in realizing the hitherto unrealized better possibilities of that human heritage. The unmentioned mammoth of Adorno's aphorism might indeed be an adequate image to describe this: Returning from the ice in one piece, this specific specimen is still dead, but its life-form can be re-enacted (to borrow a concept from R. G. Collingwood) in more than one sense. It can be re-enacted theoretically by using the evidence the specimen provides for understanding and learning from the kind of life the mammoth was leading. Beyond that, the mammoth may even be reconstructed genetically, meaning that the mammoth as an organic life-form could literally be resurrected as a living species. Its appearance in a world in which the mammoth had been extinct, however, would still amount to a real-life re-enactment, a simulation, or a performance of mammoth-life in a non-mammoth-world.

So, what could this mean for the question of humanity outliving itself in the (metaphorical or cryonic) ice? As with all transgressive consequences of thought, it is not only the understanding but mostly the imagination that must do the job here. It does so by calling on the nexus of speculative possibility. What the human mind needs, in other words, is a medium that offers the seemingly impossible standpoint of thinking and complementing humanity in hindsight; a way of imaginatively experiencing the afterlife of humanity in order to make the better possibilities, which remained suppressed, tangible In speculative fiction the imagination has indeed found a powerful medium for doing just that.

Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series (which, among other things, is about creating a necessarily selective archive as the eponymous foundation for the reconstruction of humanity after its psychohistorically prognosticated downfall); Liu Cixin's *Death's End* (the concluding novel of the *Trisolaris* trilogy which, among other things, radicalizes

the problem of gathering material that can be stored for the future remembrance of humankind, and which also spells out the fate of humans that are no longer human without being sub- or superhuman); Joanna Russ' *We Who Are About To [Die]* (which amplifies the troubling nature of the problem of human afterlife, by having the protagonist, among other things, meditate about how pointless a record of human history would be which nobody will find, or which will be found by creatures that will not be able to understand it at all); or Dietmar Dath's *The Abolition of Species* (which takes the subjunctive standpoint of the advanced animal kingdom after humanity's irrecoverable downfall), and many, many other science-fictional artworks may each be interpreted as contributions to taking the impossible vantage point of anticipated hindsight from which the unrealized – often surprising and never definite – possibilities of the human species can be explored.

The minimal morale of this, I believe, is that through speculative fiction – which, for sure, is an outlet of the culture industry – we can in a way experience humanity in hindsight already. In other words, a vital sense for the better possibilities – which, presumably, will remain unrealized – is itself not only possible but actual, and is in no way compelled to surrender to the dogmas that claim to already know how to tell the better possibilities from the worse. It is only speculation! And luckily so, because speculative fiction – despite speculation's bad name in unimaginative society – does not mistake itself for "the way things truly are", as some non-fictional metaphysics may have done. As fiction it is the playful try-out behavior of rigorously imaginative minds. The thought that humanity might become humane only in hindsight does not appear any less troubling in this way, but at least its conscious fictionalization has more to offer than just fatalism (happy or not), or the stale kind of solace that is attractive only to the fanatics who comfort themselves by holding that life will truly begin only after it has ended.

For as long as the promise of humane humanity remains constitutively unfulfilled, we will have to be content with hope. And as far as Adorno is concerned, this hope is miserable. It will still be enough to defy complete surrender.

Notes

1 Not only does joking about the 'mammoth in the room' force itself onto the mind or the reader of this aphorism, also was "mammoth" in fact the nickname of Max Horkheimer, to whom Adorno, the "hippo", had dedicated the *Minima Moralia*. (Thanks are due to Josef Früchtl for reminding me of Horkheimer's nickname.)

Biography

Stefan Niklas is Assistant Professor in Philosophy at the University of Amsterdam where he is part of the Critical Cultural Theory group. His work focusses on aesthetics and the critical philosophy of culture.

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The Eyes of the Ape

Matthew Noble-Olson

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The Eyes of the Ape

Matthew Noble-Olson

What life is implicated in the question: 'Is life still damaged?' How do we reckon with the question of a damaged life in the face of global climate catastrophe and the sixth extinction, which threaten much of the earth's animal and plant life, in addition to human life? In the seventy-fourth aphorism of *Minima Moralia*, titled "Mammoth," Adorno notes the discovery of a fossil in Utah from an animal that had survived millions of years past any previously known similar species. For Adorno, the interest in life long since extinct expresses a hope that something might survive humanity: "The desire for the presence of the most ancient is a hope that animal creation might survive the wrong that man has done to it, if not man himself, and give rise to a better species, one that finally makes a success of life" (§ 74). The life that survives past its moment provides a hope that a better version of life might still appear even in the face of catastrophe and suffering. Do we still desire the hope provided by such ancient creatures? Does the presence of such monstrous nature still offer the hope of a better species? One of the exemplary expressions of this desire identified by Adorno is Merian Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack's 1933 film, *King Kong*, which combines "gigantic images" with the desire for the ancient.[1] What can we learn of the present condition of the damaged life in the shift from the earlier portrayal of natural monstrosity to more recent instances of such?

One recent example appears in Jordan Vogt-Roberts's 2017 film, *Kong: Skull Island*. The film follows a team of scientists on a mission to find Kong. As in the 1933 film, Kong is not the only ancient life on the island. In the earlier film, he battles dinosaurs and other creatures in defense of his romantic interest before being subdued, kidnapped, and taken to New York, where his inability to survive the violence of humanity is cast as a tragic sacrifice to progress. In *Kong*, Kong is enlisted as a defender of humanity against more vicious and dangerous monsters, which are no longer simply sideshows on the way to the grand spectacle. While in *King Kong* (as well as the 2005 remake by Peter Jackson), Kong is afforded a tragically romantic and spectacular end atop the Empire State building following his kidnapping and imprisonment, in *Kong* he communes with the male and female leads, who decide to save him from the more vicious human intruders on the island. Rather than falling to his death amidst heartbreak and bullets, he defiantly watches as the humans with whom he has reconciled secure their escape, waiting to be called upon to protect humanity again in the already expected sequels.

Kong portrays a humanity that saves Kong and is, in turn, saved by him. Each relies upon the other in this version of the myth. The harmonious relationship between humanity and Kong stands in stark contrast to the violence and domination portrayed in the earlier versions. But Adorno reminds us that the solace offered in this semblance of reconciliation is illusory: "The more purely nature is preserved and transplanted by civilization, the more implacably it is dominated" (§ 74). The tragic portrayal of humanity's violent domination of nature in *King Kong* has been reformulated as a tenuous alliance, where enlightened humans must defend Kong against the violence within humanity so that a now civilized Kong can survive to repel the threat that nature poses to humanity's self-exception.

The mutual recognition reached between Kong and the enlightened element of humanity involves a forgetting of the original and ongoing violence which puts Kong at the service of his own domination. In contrast to the closing shot of *King Kong*, where the audience is left with the dead, lifeless eye of Kong in the foreground after his final fall, the audience of *Kong* leaves Skull Island by way of a zoom into Kong's face and ultimately his eye as he defiantly roars and beats his chest. This confrontation with the eyes of the monstrous ape invites a reconsideration of what life is damaged and how some species might make "a success of life" under the conditions of the present catastrophe. In *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno associates the expressive capacity of the artwork with the eyes of animals: "…there is nothing so expressive as the eyes of animals—especially apes—which seem objectively to mourn that they are not human" (Adorno 1997, 113). In this understanding, the ape's eyes serve as a model for those elements of the world that are external to humanity and yet exist in its thrall. It is telling, then, that as Kong survives, waiting to defend humanity, the confrontation with his eyes is not the final image but merely a prelude to the film's nostalgic imagination of humanity reconciled to itself. In this revision the hope for survival beyond extinction is lost amidst an imagined repair of the past itself, and the moment when such a hope for the survival of something beyond the damage of humanity could still be rendered. The tragic death of Kong which served as a reminder of humanity's damage done to nature is no longer tenable. The fate of nature is now understood as tied to our own. Humanity now welcomes Kong as an honorary ape among men, a benevolent defender against the violent threat of nature; he will not survive us.

Notes

1 For a recent consideration of such "gigantic images", see Doane 2021.

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Biography

Matthew Noble-Olson is a scholar of visual culture with interests in film theory, avant-garde cinema, digital cinema, moving-image installation, and aesthetics. He is currently completing a manuscript titled *Exile, Trauma, Ruin: The Forms of Cinematic Lateness*, which theorizes lateness in twentieth- and twenty-first-century cinema. His writing has appeared in *Discourse*, *Modernism/Modernity*, *New German Critique*, and *Cultural Critique*. He teaches film studies at the University of Michigan.

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Either Or

Oshrat C. Silberbusch

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Either Or

Oshrat C. Silberbusch

> The a priori reduction to the friend-foe relationship is one of the Ur-phenomena of the new anthropology. Freedom would be not to choose between black and white but to step out of such prescribed *choice*.(§ 85)

Either Or, which holds such sway these days, is about much more than political polarization. It is about a strangely contracted imagination, about thought broken off, freedom crushed by prescribed choices. The prescription is all the more inescapable as, by all accounts, there is no prescriber. In their stead, there is paucity: the reduction of an infinitely complex reality to the black and white of the Either Or, the squeezing of the messy, unruly phenomena into a neat binary. Red or Blue, Pro-Life or Pro-Choice, Free Markets or Servitude, Live Free or Die, Pro-Vaccine or Antivaxx. Binary thinking is identity thinking on steroids. Everything is either friend or foe, A or not-A. There is no need for reflection, only sorting. The answer is already given. Just check the box.

Either Or forces thought into a corner, a corner in which reflection is stifled or worse: a threat, a dangerous concession to the other side. Just like in the One Drop Rule – the paroxysm of America's primal binary – the most infinitesimal trace of not-A erases A, turns it into its opposite. There is no in-between, no nuance, no new coming out of the old, no infinity of possibilities, only a jealously guarded Either Or for which intransigence is strength and humility a weakness. Lost is the possibility of true reflection, the richness of an argument not decided in advance. Lost is the fragile freedom in which thought blossoms, the quest for a truth that can only be found because it can be lost. For Adorno, the ability to think, to reflect, hinged on the ability to see in the small difference a *Differenz ums Ganze* – a difference that changes everything. In the world of Either Or, there are no small differences, only the Big One, and there is no change either, certainly no change of mind –only fixity, ever-sameness, and the unshakeable conviction to be on the right side.

Either Or is the language of power. It tends to be most forceful where power needs to be consolidated or feels under threat. In America, British settlers, at the forefront of their white supremacist times, created a black-white binary so rigid that it would outdo all its colonialist peers in exploitative power and longevity. Spanish settlers, on the other hand, relied on a complex nomenclature of intermixtures (negros, mestizas, mulatas, moriscos, castizas, albinos, barcinas, cambujos, zambaigas, and many more) whose multiplicity undermined the very hierarchy it aimed to construct. Power relies on the constriction of the possible, on the withering of social and political imagination. Complexity, multiplicity, ambiguity, and nuance feed the imagination. They are the beginning of freedom, just as Either Or is its end. Those who trumpet the prescribed choices know that all too well. They do not want you to be free; they do not even want you to choose. They want you to believe that there is no alternative.

Either Or thrives on fear. "Either" it ominously rumbles, "or *else*… ". War, imagined or real, is its terrain of choice. In the United States, the protracted Cold War, with McCarthyism as its brief but revealing ideological paroxysm, has led to a withering

of the collective political imagination whose legacy continues. But America, as Adorno knew all too well, is not an exception – it is the exaggeration that is the medium of truth, always one step ahead. The thought-structure that the One Drop Rule and McCarthyism relied on and perpetuated, the merciless A or not-A, is alive and well and can be found everywhere. As the prescribed choices become ever more entrenched, the capacity to step out of them wilts away. For the sake of that very freedom whose name is so often fraudulently invoked by the Either Or, we need to relearn, urgently, not to choose between black and white.

Biography

Oshrat C. Silberbusch holds a PhD in Philosophy from Tel Aviv University and an MA in German Studies from the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris. She is the author of *Adorno's Philosophy of the Nonidentical. Thinking as Resistance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) and has written articles on Theodor W. Adorno, Jean Améry, W. E. B. Du Bois, George Orwell, Günther Anders, post-Shoah thought and German-Jewish history. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and three children.

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Knock Knock

Henry W. Pickford

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Knock Knock

Henry W. Pickford

> The individual owes his crystallization to the forms of political economy, particularly to those of the urban market. Even as the opponent of the pressure of societization [*Vergesellschaftung*] he remains the latter's ownmost product and its likeness. What enables him to resist, that streak of independence in him, springs from monadological individual interest and its precipitate, character. The individual mirrors in his individuation the preordained societal law of exploitation, however much mediated. This means too, however, that his decay in the present phase must itself not be deduced individualistically, but from the societal tendency which prevails by means of individuation and not merely as its enemy. (§ 97[1])

Adorno's "urban market" has become today's digital domain, and its forms of political economy and ubiquitously reticulated "veil of technology" mark a new phase in the decay of the individual. "Bourgeois walking" (§ 102) has been eclipsed by the coarse gestures of scrolling, swiping, and hitting, requiring only the four compass points of left/right, up/down and target buttons: with these gestures 'users' consume content (a mass noun) and choose people and wares alike in a similar mode of solipsistic distraction that blithely and mercilessly caricatures Walter Benjamin's now seemingly wistful collectivist vision. One is dispersed phenomenologically before one is reconstituted virtually. Each person is delivered products – screeds and stories, toothpaste and pharma adverts, candidate pets and sexual partners – "chosen just for you" with more speed and less answerability each day. Pseudo-individuation – "have it your way" – has advanced to the point where the almost innumerable harvested data points for each singleton "end-user" ensure the delivery of a mixed concoction of mass-produced mediocrity with planned obsolescence that is perfectly suited to his "profile," a term that tellingly reduces the human being to a silhouette. The fineness of the grid's mesh by which our authenticity is packaged and sold to us preempts genuine experience and growth more than any self-help book ever could: "werde, was du klickst" and "to thine own bot be true."

But a qualitative reversal has taken place. The exchange principle remains in force, of course, but now reaches further into the subject, transforming him into a social object, for the user-profile is the actual commodity that is traded in the "digital handshake." The individual is dissolved – "rendered" – into a set of data points, input for Markov-chain algorithms, "black box" routines that yield behavioral expectations for each data set. Individual autonomy and interiority, the process of weighing goals and conflicting values that animates the Kantian picture of the will, seems now as quaint and kitschy as a creaking Black Forest cuckoo clock. Individual subjectivity is epiphenomenal; idiosyncratic deviation, ambivalence and inner struggle, conscience, are statistically insignificant; the algorithmically aggregated is nowadays the rational, and only it is the real. The bearer of an 'ethics of conviction' is a mere screen-memory of an earlier phase of capitalism, the afterglow of a device permanently powering down. "Through this dissolution of all the mediating elements within the individual himself,

by virtue of which he was, in spite of everything, also a part of the societal subject, he regresses, impoverished and coarsened, to the state of a mere societal object" (§ 97).

A primal phenomenon of "the social *principium individuationis*" is the further dissolution of an integrated self as theorized by Freud. Alongside making each individual the executor of repression of his impulses, including those impulses required for any genuine happiness, neo-liberalist ideology elevated each individual's rational ego into the manager of his own assets: natural talents, and the acquired skills and credentials that insidiously constrict and subordinate his realm of possible experience to the logic of return on investment. At the same time, this ideology insinuated that each individual was wholly responsible for his economic fate, rather than the systemic "laws of motion" that constitute an increasingly overwhelming second nature confronting him. The cruelty and aggression that one inflicted upon oneself for being a "loser'" could easily be redirected, by charismatic self-promoting "winners," onto any out-group: immigrants, elites, political opponents. Part of the psychic regression is precisely this reduction of others into friend or foe (§ 85). Anonymity online, the use of pseudonyms or avatars, ratifies the disintegration of the self; the autonomization [*Verselbständigung*] of semblance in online "screen identities" both masks and reveals the autonomization of unchecked, unrepressed impulses IRL: countless Underground Men impotently seething within the Crystal Palace.

In this development the capacity of people to speak with each other is further degraded, not only by the atrophying of "experience worth communicating" but also because the means of expression are being replaced "by a societally prepared mechanism" (§ 90). Adorno, who castigated the use of slogans, catchphrases, and so on as symptoms of reified thought, also foresaw the further development into what bears the deceptively harmless, infantilized name of "emoji." "The omnipresent images are none, because they present the wholly general, the average, the standard model, as something unique or special, and so at the same time deride it. The abolition of the particular is turned insidiously into something particular. The desire for particularity has already sedimented in need, and is reproduced on all sides by mass culture, on the pattern of the comic strip [*Funnies*]" (§ 92). Emojis are the death masks of the comic strip, frozen rigor mortis in the service of utmost efficiency in the simplest communication, the quickest means to signal good and bad, friend and foe.

And yet as all language has a double character, so too this picture language contains within it what might transcend it (§ 97). Underneath the anodyne image personifying the rationalized signal as stripped of noise as possible, the labored smile of the salesman heeding the command to "always be selling," the cartoon-like images at the same time suggest the reassuring *imago* of the child's world as a room full of toys; they at once evoke and mockingly betray the delicate intimation of what it would feel like to be genuinely at home, bei sich im anderen, in a sheltered space where a self still *in statu nascendi* can wondrously lose and find itself within an artful second nature populated by playful possibilities.

Notes

1 All quotations, often modified by me, are from T.W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, translated by E.F.N. Jephcott. London: Verso, 1974.

Biography

Henry W. Pickford is Professor of German and Philosophy at Duke University. He is the author of *The Sense of Semblance: Philosophical Analyses of Holocaust Art* (Fordham University Press); *Thinking with Tolstoy and Wittgenstein: Expression, Emotion, and Art* (Northwestern University Press; forthcoming in Russian translation with Academic Studies Press); co-author of *In Defense of Intuitions: A New Rationalist Manifesto* (Palgrave Macmillan); co-editor of *Der aufrechte Gang im windschiefen Kapitalismus: Modelle kritischen Denkens* (Springer Verlag); editor and translator of Theodor W. Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords* (Columbia University Press) and *Selected Early Poems* of Lev Loseff (Spuytenduyvil Press); and author of over twenty-five articles and book chapters. He is currently co-authoring the book *Adorno: A Critical Life* and co-editing the *Oxford Handbook to Adorno*. More information about his work can be found on academia.edu.

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Conciliation "Out of Sheer Egoism"

Rolando Vitali

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Conciliation "Out of Sheer Egoism"

Rolando Vitali

In aphorism 97, Adorno states: "The individual owes his crystallization to the forms of political economy, particularly to those of the urban market. Even as the opponent of the pressure of socialization he remains the latter's most particular product and its likeness". Particularly resonant today, this observation does not simply declare the dialectical codetermination of the individual by the dynamic of the capitalistic economy – an awareness present not only in Marx, but even in Hegel before him – it also points at the contradictions within which even the different possible forms of resistance are entangled in the context of our society. In fact, even "what enables him", i.e. the individual, "to resist […] springs from monadological individual interest and its precipitate, character" (§ 97). How does this observation affect Adorno's own political theory as well as our present struggles?

The first point to highlight is that Adorno clearly recognizes the social constitution of the individual: the mediated character of its essence makes its objective effectiveness on the political level illusory and misleading. But Adorno does not resort to a collective subject either. Although Adorno substantially accepts the dialectical materialist interpretation of liberal society as a class-based society, he also traces the concept of class back to bourgeois forms of individuation, stretched between a false totality and an illusory particularity. In this sense, the concept of class itself is unveiled as an ideological construct that merely "designates the unity in which particular bourgeois interests are made real" (2003, 99). Class is a product of the division of labour and of class society itself. This particularistic origin holds not only for the class of the exploiters, but also for those of the exploited. As a result, the oppressed "are unable to experience themselves as a class" and even those among them "who claim the name mean by it for the most part their own particular interest in the existing state of affairs" (2003, 97). Individuals and classes are thus equally predetermined by their social embeddedness, which makes them, at the same time, products *and* functions of the existing social order. In both cases, the possibility of resistance stems from individual interest, from the conditions of the political economy.

Despite the apparent equivalence of the concepts of class and of the individual, and despite the radical critique of the very presupposition of any form of individual self-determination ("not only is the self entwined in society; it owes society its existence in the most literal sense. All its content comes from society, or at any rate from its relation to the object" (§ 97)), Adorno seems to assign an implicit primacy to the individual: not only because, as we have seen, he explains both the concept of class and the one of bourgeois, i.e. individualistic, subjectivation as results of modern political economy, but also because when it comes to challenging the falseness of the totality Adorno mostly resorts to individual resistance and *not* to collective organization. It is only the irreducible nonidentity of the particularity that contradicts and thus resists the false reconciliation of the totality. However, "individuality" is "not the ultimate either" (2004, 161) and nonidentity must not be understood as an ontological substance: both only emerge within the dialectical process, i.e. as moments of the social totality. That

is why "he who wishes to know the truth about life in its immediacy must scrutinize its estranged form, the objective powers that determine individual existence even in its most hidden recesses" ("Dedication"). Yet, not only do both the concept of nonidentity and that of the individual share a common (and indelible) moment of immediacy, but "the substance of the contradiction between universal and particular is that individuality is not yet – and that, therefore, it is bad wherever established" (2004, 151). Dominion is first and foremost described as the false identification with totality of the irreducible individual – i.e. the forced subsumption of the qualitative non-identical particularity under the dominion of the universal – and not as the class violence of the few exerted over the many. In this sense it is qualitative particularity, and not the collective subject, that can allow the possibility of a reconciled totality to emerge.

Adorno is well aware that both contradictions cannot be resolved on a purely theoretical level: only true praxis would be capable of resolving them. However, since the necessary *presupposition* of praxis – i.e. subjectivity – is in both cases unveiled as a *product* of the false totality, then praxis primarily means critical self-reflection: this alone can set free the nonidentity within the falseness of identity. Theory and praxis thus overturn into one another: the only possible praxis seems to be theoretical self-reflection, able to reveal nonidentity within the false identity.

To face this dialectical paradox, we might do well to address it dialectically: this *Sackgasse* can be considered as both true and false at the same time. True, insofar as it conceptually deduces the objective impossibility of "true praxis" from the contradictions within which all forms of individuation (both singular and collective) are entangled; false, insofar as from the untruth of praxis in the given conditions it deduces its impossibility *as praxis*. The recognition of its moment of untruth does not necessarily imply its integral falseness. Individual resistance can become true even if it is codetermined by the dynamic of political economy. Even more so, the collective struggles of the subaltern classes – such as those for better working conditions – are not reducible to a corporatist defense of particular interests. In fact, both would require overcoming our current mode of production to be truly fulfilled. Even in their untruthfulness, both individual distress and collective needs include a moment of truth that points beyond their particularity. Is it then that true universality can be envisioned by following dialectically the particular need – both individual and collective – to its most radical consequences? As Engels wrote to Marx with regard to Stirner, the "egoistic man is bound to become communist out of sheer egoism" (Engels 1982, 12), just as the working class can overcome class society only out of sheer self-interest.

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Biography

Rolando Vitali has studied philosophy at the Universities of Bologna and Berlin. Between 2017 and 2017 he has been fellow in residence at the Nietzsche-Kolleg in Weimar and in 2019 research fellow at the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici in Naples. At the Friedrich Schiller Universität in Jena, in partnership with the University of Bologna, he has discussed his doctoral thesis entitled *Macht und Form - Individualität und* ästhetische *Kathegorien in der Philosophie Nietzsches*. He writes regularly on Italian newspapers such as *Alias*, the cultural supplement of *Il Manifesto*. His interests focus on German philosophy and culture, modern aesthetics and Frankfurt's critical theory.

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Adorno on the Dialectics of Love and Sex

Stefano Marino

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Adorno on the Dialectics of Love and Sex

Stefano Marino

"Love is the power to see similarity in the dissimilar".
"Love you will find only where you may show yourself weak
without provoking strength".
"There is no love that is not an echo".
(§ 122; § 139).

"Sexuality is the *strongest force* in human beings," claims Joe, the main character (portrayed by Charlotte Gainsbourg) in Lars von Trier's famous and much discussed 2013 film *Nymphomaniac*. And "love is strange: how can something so wonderful bring such great pain?", asks Murphy of himself, the main character (portrayed by Karl Glusman) in Gaspar Noé's controversial film *Love* from 2015, thus pointing out what we may call the antinomical character of the experience of romantic love, oscillating as it is between the greatest of all joys and sometimes the greatest of all sufferings; (as Nick Cave sings: "Well, I've been bound and gagged and I've been terrorized / And I've been castrated and I've been lobotomized / But never has my tormentor come in such a cunning disguise / I let love in"). Although one could surely put this primacy into question and wonder whether love and sex are really *the strongest forces* in humanity, as claimed by the protagonist of *Nymphomaniac*, it is anyway impossible to negate their being at least *some* of the *strongest forces* in our lives.

When one thinks of philosophies of love and sex, certain names may come easily to mind, beginning with Plato's conception of eros and arriving at Kierkegaard's intense meditation on the role of love in the aesthetic, ethical, and religious dimensions of human life; and, more recently, coming to Foucault's influential work on the history of sexuality. Scholars of philosophy and the history of ideas such as Anders Nygren and Clive S. Lewis, in turn, have investigated the nature of love and paid attention to such differentiations as those between eros and agape, or between affection, friendship, eros and charity (I thank my colleague and friend Donato Ferdori for these references). Broadening the picture beyond the limits of the Western tradition, in his recent book *Ars Erotica. Sex and Somaesthetics in the Classical Arts of Love* Richard Shusterman has investigated this topic by focusing not only on the Greco-Roman context and on Medieval/Renaissance Europe, but also on Chinese, Indian, Islamic and Japanese theories of erotic pleasure, politics, culture, religious beliefs, and habits. Thinkers belonging to other traditions in contemporary philosophy have also sometimes paid great attention to these questions, and in this context it can be worth noting the Frankfurt School's attempt to emphasize the relation of sexuality with domination in the *unreconciled and administered world* and, at the same time, its relation to potential emancipation and freedom in the perspective of a future *reconciled condition*.

In reflecting on the Frankfurt School and the role played by the dimension of *eros* in the history of human civilization, most readers will probably spontaneously, and understandably, think of Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*. However, Horkheimer and Adorno also emphatically suggested in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that "sexuality is the

body unreduced", "it is expression", and, as such, it bears the trace of a potential transformation to promote *human* liberation. It is especially in *Minima Moralia* that Adorno offered significant observations on love and sex. Among the penetrating, and sometimes truly illuminating, meditations on love in *Minima Moralia*, we can find, for example:

> Someone who has been offended, slighted, has an illumination as vivid as when agonizing pain lights up one's own body. He becomes aware that in the innermost blindness of love, that must remain oblivious, lives a demand not to be blinded. He was wronged; from this he deduces a claim to right and must at the same time reject it, for what he desires can only be given in freedom. […] [H]e who has lost love knows himself deserted by all, and this is why he scorns consolation. In the senselessness of his deprivation he is made to feel the untruth of all merely individual fulfilment. But he thereby awakens to the paradoxical consciousness of generality: of the inalienable and unindictable human right to be loved by the beloved (§ 104).

Or further:

> If love in society is to represent a better one, it cannot do so as a peaceful enclave, but only by conscious opposition. […] Loving means not letting immediacy wither under the omnipresent weight of mediation and economics, and in such fidelity it becomes itself mediated, as a stubborn counterpressure. He alone loves who has the strength to hold fast to love. Even though social advantage, sublimated, preforms the sexual impulse, using a thousand nuances sanctioned by the order to make now this, now that person seem spontaneously attractive, an attachment once formed opposes this by persisting where the force of social pressure, in advance of all the intrigues that the latter then invariably takes into its service, does not want it. It is the test of feeling whether it goes beyond feeling through permanence, even though it be as obsession. The love, however, which in the guise of unreflecting spontaneity and proud of its alleged integrity, relies exclusively on what it takes to be the voice of the heart, and runs away as soon as it no longer thinks it can hear that voice, is in this supreme independence precisely the tool of society. Passive without knowing it, it registers whatever numbers come out in the roulette of interests. In betraying the loved one it betrays itself. The fidelity exacted by society is a means to unfreedom, but only through fidelity can freedom achieve insubordination to society's command (§ 110).

Not only romantic love, however, but also sex is significantly present in *Minima Moralia*, Adorno's collection of "ingenious aphorisms" and "vivid scenes taken from […] apparently unassuming or remote subjects" that, because of its nuanced writing style, "fascinated […] even Thomas Mann" (Müller-Doohm 2005, 344). For example, in critically discussing some Freudian ideas about eroticism, reason, and society, Adorno establishes a connection between sexual pleasure, truth, and utopia: here, indeed, the Frankfurt thinker claims that "he alone who could situate utopia in blind somatic pleasure, which, satisfying the ultimate intention, is intentionless, has a stable and valid idea of truth" (§ 37). In a sense, Adorno's aphorism seems to suggest that the "intentionless" nature

and the intensity that characterize the experience of pleasure is able to satisfy the "ultimate intention" of life, namely happiness and the achievement of a non-suffocating and non-coercive but rather liberating unity between different human beings. The joy of lovemaking, with the somehow "blind" character of the somatic pleasure that it brings, is nonetheless capable of "opening our eyes" (also at a philosophical level) more than many concepts and argumentations can do, if only we are able to overcome certain preconceptions and to fully understand the power and significance of erotic experience in all its nuanced richness.

For Adorno, the relation between *eros* and the aesthetic dimension was also a fundamental and indeed constitutive one. As he claimed in *Aesthetic Theory*, his great but unfinished masterpiece in the philosophy of art: "[a]esthetic comportment assimilates itself to [the] other rather than subordinating it. Such a constitutive relation of the subject to objectivity in aesthetic comportment joins eros and knowledge" (Adorno 2002, 331). A passage from Müller-Doohm's biography of Adorno is also revealing about the relation between the aesthetic and the erotic dimensions in the Frankfurt thinker's philosophy. In fact, apropos of Adorno's extramarital affair "with Charlotte Alexander, the wife of his friend and doctor, Dr Robert Alexander", Müller-Doohm quotes a passage of a letter sent by Adorno to Hermann Grab in May 1946, in which he talked "of his love for Charlotte" and wrote: "The term 'fornication', which by the way refers to something the reverse of contemptible, is a far from adequate description of what has taken place – terms such as 'aura' or 'magic' would be more apt. It was as if the long-forgotten childhood promise of happiness had been unexpectedly, belatedly fulfilled" (Müller-Doohm 2005, 61-2). The constellation of the ideas of aura, magic and *promesse du bonheur,* that famously play a fundamental role in such works as *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Aesthetic Theory,* is fascinatingly connected here to the erotic dimension.

Above all, what is surely remarkable in the context of a discussion on the dialectics of love and sex in Adorno's thinking is the fact that in *Negative Dialectics,* his main work in theoretical philosophy, he precisely used an erotic metaphor to formulate what he considered to be the final aim of philosophizing, saying that "in philosophy we literally seek to immerse ourselves in things that are heterogeneous to it, without placing those things in prefabricated categories. We want to adhere […] closely to the heterogeneous" (Adorno 2004, 13). Pietro Lauro, the Italian translator of *Negative Dialectics*, has argued that Adorno, in using the verb *sich anschmiegen* in this passage (translated as "adhering to", and actually indicating a kind of "amalgamating oneself with the other", or also a kind of "coming together", inasmuch as an *anschmiegende Umarmung* is an amalgamating embrace, i.e. the union of two or more human beings in a sexual encounter) aimed to claim that "an erotic metaphor was able to express the fundamental question of non-identity" (Lauro 2004, 370). As Lauro writes in his Glossary to the Italian edition of *Negative Dialectics*, "just as in sexual intercourse the individuals are united together but still different from each other, without cancelling their individuality", in a similar way a negative-dialectical form of philosophizing should promote a form of non-coercive union or fusion with the non-identical, without aiming anymore to arrive at "a Hegelian form of synthesis" (Lauro 2004, 370-1). Hence sexual intercourse is *not* viewed as a one-sided activity, comparable to a boring monologue of an

active subject with a passive recipient, but is rather comparable to a *dialectical* relation of simultaneous "entering in" and "being-received in" or "being-welcomed in", in which all the partners involved, experimenting an enchanting sense of *affinity*, take part in an exciting intersubjective *dialogue* and quite often exchange their roles in a spontaneous and pleasurable way.

As once noted by Marcuse in *The Aesthetic Dimension*, art as such "cannot change the world, but it can contribute to changing the consciousness and drives of the men and women who could change the world" (Marcuse 1979, 32). Shifting our discourse from artistic experience to erotic experience, we can perhaps paraphrase and reformulate Marcuse's convincing maxim by saying that perhaps a joyful sexuality as such cannot change the world (in an emphatic meaning of the idea of "changing the world"), but it can surely offer a glimpse of freedom and reconciliation even in an unfree and *unreconciled* world, perhaps pointing to a gradual transformation of existing reality and human relations starting from our most intimate, delicate, beautiful, communicative and, for this reason, powerful and sometimes life-changing experiences of unity, fusion, mutual permeation and interpenetration (or, so to speak, of merging together) with other human beings. From this point of view, observations like those offered by Adorno disclose the possibility of conceiving of sexuality in a radically non-reductive way as a sort of actualization of something that, in the radiant fleetingness of an intercourse, also bears in itself a trace of the utopia of reconciliation between human beings.

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Biography

Stefano Marino is Associate Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Bologna. His main research interests are focused on critical theory of society, phenomenology and hermeneutics, neopragmatism and somaesthetics, philosophy of music, and aesthetics of fashion. He is the author of several books on Theodor W. Adorno, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Martin Heidegger, Radiohead, and Frank Zappa. He has translated from German into Italian four books by Adorno and Gadamer, and from English into Italian a book by Carolyn Korsmeyer. He has published as co-editor several collections (books and special issues in journals) on Kant, Nietzsche, Gadamer, Adorno, deconstruction, popular culture and social criticism, popular music and romanticism, aesthetics and affectivity, fashion, and feminism.

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For Felicitas

Jelle P. Baan

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For Felicitas

Jelle P. Baan

Paragraph 135 of the *Minima Moralia,* in which Adorno draws our attention to the formal advantages of the "technical aid" of dictating for the dialectical procedure, could be read as an ode to Gretel.[1] She was the one who helped during those first phases of writing by translating, as it were, his spoken words into written form. The advantage of this technique is that you can fall in the middle of the dialectic without having to worry that the burden of the beginning, in which you make naïve and ungrounded assumptions, will start to weigh as bad conscience later on. Because whoever starts dialecticizing will almost immediately realize that the dialectical movement had always already begun. How to catch up with the dialectic? Instead of being caught up in it, you want to be engaged in the dialectic, to participate in it.

The technique of dictating functions like a dialectical trampoline that allows the latecomer to arrive just in time by catapulting him directly towards that middle. Its paradoxical logic lets Adorno outwit the dialectic. For "dictation makes it possible for the writer, in the earliest phases of production, to maneuver himself into the position of critic", he explains. "What he sets down is tentative, provisional, mere material for revision, yet appears to him, once transcribed, as something estranged and in some measure objective. He need have no fear of committing something inadequate to paper, for he is not the one who has to write it […] In face of the difficulty, now grown to desperate proportions, of every theoretical utterance, such tricks become a blessing" (§ 135). By exteriorizing himself through Gretel, he does not have to feel the pain of those first torsions of dialecticizing. Before he has to put his thoughts on paper, he is first already his own second reader. She allows him to mediate immediately, and thus to begin in the middle. The middle of the beginning is posited or *gesetzt* by that first draft of the transcript which is both his own and not his own, as if he was his own *souffleur*. But this contradiction is immediately sublated and in that sense gets to the bottom of the text, to formulate it in Hegelian terms, because the transcripts reveals itself to be a palimpsest. This first version does not register the first moment of the dialectic, but the virtual trajectory before that. Thanks to their shared ruse Adorno is not the first of the dialectic, which is impossible, but the one before the first. Thinking after Hegel is for Adorno the heroic attempt to think before him. In that sense the dialectical trick of dictating, too, is a ruse of reason, but then one that wrestles itself from the magic circle of identity-thought.[2] And that is precisely why "… thanks are due to the person taking down the dictation, if at the right moment [s]he pulls up the writer by contradiction, irony, nervosity, impatience and disrespect" (§ 135).

As Müller-Doohm demonstrates in his biography, Adorno used to call this intensive dialectic between him and Gretel in those first phases of the writing process *lämmergeieren*. This is confirmed by the original German title of this fragment: *Lämmergeier*. "Why this word?", Müller-Doohm asks himself. As "a keen visitor to Frankfurt Zoo", he suggests, "he presumably saw lammergeiers or bearded vultures there (*Gypaëtus barbatus*). They feed mainly on carrion, but also on small mammals and birds. They are particularly partial to bones. Very large bones are dropped from a height onto rocks to

break them; the marrow can then be devoured. This method of arriving at the kernel of a problem which at first appears too difficult or inaccessible, of 'cracking' it in order to extract its essence, may well have been the reason for choosing this word" (2005, 57). Combining this vital anecdote with Adorno's own interpretation of the activity of *lämmergeieren* reveals why any thinker who wants to taste the marrow of the dialectic can never work entirely alone. Even the *Sprechstimme* of the couple Teddy-Gretel is only the dominant voice in the contrapuntal composition of a philosophy in which the faculties enter into a new dissonant accord.

Adorno does not mention Gretel by name once in a fragment that seems entirely devoted to her ("thanks are due to the person…"). What interests him in this fragment is not so much his wife Gretel, but only her formal function as a transcriber in "cracking" the bones of the dialectic. More than a personal ode to Gretel then, this is a conceptual reconstruction of the remarkable role of what we could call the Felicitas-effect within the formal dynamics that keeps the chess-machine of negative dialectics running. The head of this thought-machine is not Adorno himself but Horkheimer. He is the director who administers the dialectic and keeps a close watch on its practical applicability. He plays the role of the Understanding. Adorno himself is the incarnation of Reason. He's the man of Ideas, and in that sense the very heart of the dialectic. This necessary division of labor is the secret behind what Adorno once described as their *gemeinsame Existenz*. And yet that shared existence is supported by even more intimate relations. Because the intuition of this dialectic falls apart in two uneven halves, which could never fit together, even though they do belong together: Felicitas and Detlef [3] (cf. Adorno and Benjamin 2014) which is to say Gretel Karplus and Walter Benjamin. They represent feeling and imagination, even if it would be impossible to separate the two, since they are always entangled. Only together they constitute the exact fantasy that according to Adorno is the organon of the *ars inveniendi* that philosophy should be (cf. Adorno 1977, 131). Gretel is the representative of the couple Detlef-Felicitas, while inversely Feli*z*itas, as Benjamin wrote, is what binds Benjamin to Adorno and in a sense compensates for the latter's absence. Without their aid, Adorno would indeed remain a "*Sorgenkind*", a problem child, as Gretel frequently wrote in her letters to Benjamin (Müller-Doohm 2005, op. cit. 56). Whenever she wrote "be careful, T.W.A." in the margins of a transcribed manuscript this was from keeping their problem child of infinite reason to lose itself in the wild speculations that characterize the *Ideenflucht* of the dialectic.

The process that Adorno called *lämmergeieren* is the schematism of the dialectic. It is the soul of the dialectic. During this intensive process reason and intuition enter into direct contact and start to resonate; Adorno improvises and dictates, while Gretel makes notes, but also directly comments and sometimes even corrects him.[4] The notes taken are so much more than a mere representation of what was said. What the transcript should capture are the traces of the dark precursor of the dialectic, [5] the "non-identical" that both animate it and keeps it moving, yet never finds its proper place within it. This primary torsion of the dialectic, its original *twist* so to say, forms an aberrant movement (cf. Lapoujade 2017), a "wavering, deviating line" (Adorno § 60) by which the whole vertiginous trajectory of his "unleashed" dialectic is intagliated. Only together were

Teddy and Felicitas able to crack the biggest bone of the dialectic, Hegel's skull, in order to devour the marrow inside, the cerebrospinal fluid that is the lifeblood of this thought. What they crack by way of negative dialectics as a logic of disintegration is the skeleton of identity; the marrow which is released however, is the element of difference that nourishes their inventive schemas for tracing the aberrant movements of the non-identical that secretly animate this dialectic. Thus, the trick of dictating is the ruse of a metaschematism[6] in which the dialectic (Reason) and the aesthetic (Intuition) enter into an immediate union, temporarily short-circuiting the analytic (Understanding).[7] Only together do they think those thoughts that do not comprehend themselves.[8] And those thoughts alone are true, claims Adorno.

That's why thanks are due to Gretel-Felicitas. She operates as the organ of the non-identical that picks up on the traces of the differential element that precedes the dialectic. The Felicitas-effect is the direct mediation by which reason and the "exact imagination" (cf. Weber-Nicholsen 1997) produce schemas together that pick up on the perplexities of the non-identical. Only by exteriorizing himself through her and writing with her, could Adorno make the Ideas tangible. The irresistible charm of Felicitas is that she operates as an *intercesseur* (Deleuze 1990), a mediator that helps Reason orientate in thought, even in those distinct-obscure zones where the virtual spasms of the dialectic are almost imperceptible. It's in a very literal sense then that we should think of her as Adorno's ghostwriter that prefigured his thought, and allowed him to materialize the Ideas. Dialectics in its purest form.

Notes

1 Thanks are due to Gijs van Oenen for functioning as the head of my dialectic.

2 This idea of a *Zauberkreis*, a "magic circle" of identity-thought refers to a formulation used frequently by Adorno himself, cf. Adorno 2007, 145; 177; 406.

3 Cf. Lonitz & Gödde, 2014, 6: "In her correspondence with Benjamin, Gretel Karplus adopted this name which belonged to a figure from Wilhelm Speyer's play *Ein Mantel, ein Hut, ein Handschuh* [A Coat, a Hat, a Glove], in which Benjamin had been a collaborator".

4 This is alluded to in the fragment by Adorno himself: "… thanks are due to the person taking down the dictation, *if at the right moment* [italics added] he pulls up the writer by contradiction, irony, nervosity, impatience and disrespect".

5 For the dark precursor, cf. Deleuze 2004, 145, 146.

6 On metaschematism, cf. Deleuze 2004, 316. He discusses the term in relation to Leibniz who borrowed the term from Francis Bacon's *Novum Organon*.

7 I take this formulation directly from David Lapoujade who explains Gilles Deleuze's logic in these exact terms: "what characterizes transcendental empiricism is the immediate relation between aesthetic and dialectic, between the sensible and the Idea […] There is in Deleuze only one aesthetic of intensities and one dialectic of ideas, and no more" (Lapoujade, 2017, 113). A similar, yet not the same, immediate relation between a dialectic of Ideas and an aesthetic of intensities is alluded to here.

8 "True are those thoughts alone that do not comprehend themselves" (§ 122).

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Biography

Jelle P. Baan (1986) studied sociology and philosophy in Rotterdam and Paris and wrote *Adorno, noch einmal. Een partituur voor esthetische theorie* (2015, Klement). He's a Barthesian epigone who works on a *mathesis singularis*. His current research is focused on metaschematism, panoramic intelligence, late style, firstness, and what a soul is capable of.

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Rattled

Samir Gandesha

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Rattled

Samir Gandesha

Dedicated to the memory of Rosemary Bechler

> In being seen as no more than the exit of a living creature from the social combine, death has been finally domesticated: dying merely confirms the absolute irrelevance of the natural organism in face of the social absolute. (§ 148)

Fascism, it is said, is a death cult. National Socialism incubated within the habitus of the thinkers of the so-called Conservative Revolution, in particular, Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt and Martin Heidegger. In each of these writers, one finds an undeniable glorification of death and what Adorno mockingly calls the "soldierly man" (*der soldatische Mensch*). For Jünger, death formed the core of the *Fronterlebnis* or "experience of the trenches." For Schmitt, the essence of politics, "the political," is disclosed the moment the enemy—the one who threatens "our" very existence—comes into view as such. And, finally, in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, the "authenticity" (*Eigentlichkeit*) of the situated human being (*Dasein*) is defined explicitly as being-towards-death (*Sein-sum-Tode*). In the awareness of this—its "ownmost possibility"—Dasein experiences an "ecstatic" standing-out from a leveling, abstract everydayness. In response to a young female student rather besotted with Heidegger who, as Adorno wryly notes in his *Jargon of Authenticity*, remarked that "Heidegger had finally, at least, once again placed men before death, Horkheimer replied that Ludendorff had taken care of that much better."

Against the fascist cult of death is counterposed the fetishization of human life in liberalism. This means that life, defined and understood abstractly as mere duration, is to be valued above everything else. Liberalism's motto is simply: The more the better. Yet, paradoxically, it fervently hides the aged, the infirm, the dying and the dead ever further from the gaze of the living, as in Beckett's *Endgame*, in which Hamm's parents are confined to trash cans, and therefore anticipate the fate of contemporary nursing homes which became like morgues during the early stages of the unfolding Coronavirus pandemic.

The drive for a mythic "fountain of youth," as hinted at, for example, by Herodotus in Book III: 23 of his *Histories*, is pursued with unparalleled zeal by liberalism via the most advanced forms of biotechnology and genetic engineering. Pharmaceutical companies invest massive sums in tiny pills designed to forestall the detumescence of that most universally archaic symbol of youthful potency—the phallus. While the multi-million-dollar fitness and diet industries, drawing upon the best available medical science, aim to abolish the finitude of the body, technicians of the soul such as Ray Kurzweil take aim at the mortality of the mind by treating it as software, as so many digital files to be transferred into endlessly replaceable, fungible machines, mimicking the reduction of individuals to scarcely more than the empty social roles and functions they mechanically perform.

If liberalism wages war on death in pursuit of the banal, routinized, and

comfortable life of Nietzsche's "Last Man," then, in opposition, fascism aggressively embraces the heroic cult of death as the means of accessing "concrete" and hence meaningful experience. Can there be any more noble an act than to lay down one's life in service of the community? In their respective projects to embrace and repudiate death, however, it escapes the notice of fascists and liberals alike that the sharp line that once separated death and life had already been erased, to the further embarrassment of both.

Damaged life is life that has ceased living. Capital is, as Marx teaches, nothing if not dead labour, and, in the form of the exchange relation, it dominates living labour. Capitalism always, therefore, had something of the monstrous about it in the sense that the dead dominate the living. The death camps—whose ghosts haunt *Minima Moralia*—reveal *in extremis* the logic of wage slavery. Particularly unfortunate inmates referred to as *Musselmänner* were reduced to the condition of a living death. Perhaps this is what explains our morbid fascination with Zombies. In the halting, aimless yet persistent shuffling of the "walking dead," we see reflected our own impoverished lives as if pathetically parodying Odysseus' heroic homecoming. The only possible way for the subject to survive in capitalism in its late stage is to mimic the deathly state to which it compulsively reduces sensuous nature. To preserve its life, the subject must enervate itself. The unfolding ecological catastrophe tells the story, allegorically, of the human species' own eventual extinction: *De te fabula narratur*. What may once have been possible as an emancipatory promise understood as the negation of all forms of human negativity or alienation, becomes, itself, the teleology of a catastrophic history—species-being-towards-death.

If life is lifeless, death loses its substance and therefore sense. Consequently, understood as the event that once gave shape and meaning to the life of an individual, death is no longer possible. As Weber put it with reference to Tolstoy, while in the past it might have been possible to die, having felt "satiated by life," on the disenchanted landscape of the "steel-hard shell" (coffin?) (*stahlhartes Gehäuse*) we grow "tired of life," we seize up and keel over, when, as the saying goes, "our number is up."

The primal origin of human meaning lies in the attempt to make the event of death speak in eloquent terms. The earliest origin of hominid sense-making lies precisely here. As the conceptual refinement of such a response to life's end—understood as both simple cessation and what Aristotle called final cause or purpose—Socratic, Epicurean and Stoic philosophy was understood as preparation for death. Recall, here, Socrates' final words to Crito: "We owe a cock to Asclepius; pay it and don't forget."

Facing death with equanimity was amongst the highest ancient ideals and informs the image of the redeemed condition: a life without fear. Today, such an ideal has withered. It now seems impossible to die a meaningful death because it is not possible to live life rightly, though, in truth, it never really has been possible to do so. Perhaps the word "nihilism" signifies not the inherent nothingness or meaninglessness of an indifferent universe, as was once suggested by Turgenev's famous protagonist, Bazarov, but rather the fact the death has, itself, died.

Biography

Samir Gandesha has been a post-doctoral fellow at the University of California at Berkeley (1995–97) and an Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow at the Universität Potsdam (2001–2002). He is currently Associate Professor in the Department of Humanities and the Director of the Institute for the Humanities at Simon Fraser University. He specializes in modern European thought and culture, with a particular emphasis on the relation between politics, aesthetics, and psychoanalysis. He is the author of numerous refereed articles and book chapters and is co-editor with Lars Rensmann of Arendt and Adorno: Political and Philosophical Investigations (Stanford, 2012). He is co-editor with Johan Hartle of *Spell of Capital: Reification and Spectacle* (University of Amsterdam Press, 2017) and *Aesthetic Marx* (Bloomsbury Press, 2017). He is editor of the recently-published *Spectres of Fascism: Historical, Theoretical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Pluto, 2020). In the Spring of 2017, he was the Liu Boming Visiting Scholar in Philosophy at the University of Nanjing and Visiting Lecturer at Suzhou University of Science and Technology in China. In January 2019, he was Visiting Fellow at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Karlsruhe.

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Almost

Vivian Liska

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Almost

Vivian Liska

"Toward the End,"[1] *Minima Moralia*'s final aphorism (§ 153), plays a vital role in the controversies about the theological dimension of Adorno's thought. It famously invokes the "standpoint of redemption" and its "messianic light," which alone can reveal both the total negativity of things as they *are* and, in a dialectic "mirror writing," disclose how they *should be*.

"Toward the End" is studded with expressions that suggest totality: "the *only* kind," "*all* things," "*no other* than the one," "*everything* else." Of course, there are minor mitigations: the vagueness of "*similarly*" and "at *some* point" briefly challenge the "*wholly*" and the "*this alone*." But the "*irrefutable*," the "*completed*" and the "*fully* captured," the "*entirely* impossible," and the "*every* possible" prevail. There is only one stark exception: to perceive the utter blackness of the world, Adorno writes, would "require a standpoint removed, even if only *by the most minuscule degree*, from the sphere of the spell of being." But Adorno presents this necessity as the epitome of the impossible.

Both the totalizing gestures and Adorno's characteristic dialectical somersaults culminate in the aphorism's final sentence, where the imperative addressed to philosophy to stare into the depths of the abyss is deprived of its initial theological perspective. Here the "standpoint of redemption" is nothing but a chimera designed to ensure the totality of the demand. Yet a single word in this final sentence slightly but fundamentally unsettles this revocation: "the question concerning the reality or unreality of redemption itself" is, Adorno writes, "*almost* irrelevant."

The rich and variegated afterlife of *Minima Moralia*'s final aphorism—and with it the very question as to where not only redemption, but God himself resides in Adorno's thought—can be measured by the fate of this "almost," especially where it is most tellingly absent. Those who seek to recuperate the aphorism for a Christian "Theology of the Cross" (*Kreuzestheologie*, Thaidigsmann 1984) ignore the "almost." So do those who take the diametrically opposite view that ingeniously undoes any trace of transcendence in arguing that "the messianic light in which the world will one day appear need not shine from an outside source at all" (Truskolaski 2017, 210) Giorgio Agamben likewise ignores the "almost" in accusing Adorno of politico-theological quietism and his aphorism of a "melancholic reverie" (Truskolaski 2017, 208), a conjuring-up of a merely aesthetic "seat of divine grace" (Agamben 2005, 35-38). Jacob Taubes explicitly ignores the "almost" in his sharp critique of Adorno's text and of his thought altogether. For Taubes, Adorno's aphorism presents redemption as an aestheticizing "empty fiction" and offers the entire idea of the messiah as "a *comme-si*," a mere "as if." Blind to the wording of the text, Taubes writes that, for Adorno, it is "*ganz* gleichgültig, ob es wirklich ist" (Taubes 2003, 104) – "it is totally irrelevant whether it really exists."

Adorno may have left the exact function of his "almost"—a word that inherently undoes totality—deliberately in the dark, as though to deny the book any finality or closure. It can be conceived in light of a Kantian idea of God as a metaphysically

groundless yet necessary postulate to warrant the moral life. But it can also point to a less enlightened illumination: to say that the *Wirklichkeit* (reality) of a "*Standpunkt der Erlösung*" is only *almost* irrelevant is to open a crack through which the messianic light can shine through. At the end of *Minima Moralia* Adorno might thus be opening up a minimal space in which he concedes the possibility that a divine standpoint matters. And, almost, that it exists.

Notes

1 I use Gerhard Richter's English translation in (2006). All the references to "Zum Ende" are taken from this text, which offers a valuable corrective to the English version of "Zum Ende" in Adorno 2005.

Biography

Vivian Liska is Professor of German literature and Director of the Institute of Jewish Studies at the University of Antwerp, Belgium as well as Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Faculty of the Humanities at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is the editor of the book series "Perspectives on Jewish Texts and Contexts" (De Gruyter, Berlin) and co-editor of *Arcadia. International Journal of Literary Studies.* Her books include *When Kafka Says We. Uncommon Communities in German-Jewish Literature* (Indiana UP, 2009) and *German-Jewish Thought and its Afterlife. A Tenuous Legacy* (Indiana UP, 2017).

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J'Accuse

Antonia Hofstätter

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J'Accuse

Antonia Hofstätter

"First and only principle of sexual ethics: the accuser is always in the wrong." (§ 29) – What was once a daring line, written to challenge waning sexual mores and emerging erotic conventions, has today become dubious. To ears attuned in an age of moral outrage and viral tweets, the lines' hubris is resounding: Seemingly oozing self-righteous masculinity, it takes its impulse not from the ubiquitous demand for "safety" that echoes across campuses from Berlin to Boston, but from a sexual utopia in which power relations are divested of their scarring force. In reserving its ire for the accuser, it appears to deny those who have been violated justice and restitution and to let the predator off the hook. In the political and intellectual climate of today, this line would not have been written.

But here it is, existing out of its time. Empowered singlehandedly to strip *Minima Moralia*, the ultimate highbrow coffee-table book, of its liberal credentials. Yet, this line is no mere provocation; what it provokes is regard for its enigmatic appeal. It calls upon our capacities for intellectual generosity and tenacity to tend to scars, and to pursue a thought until cultivated sensitivities and fortified values begin to shake and open themselves up to question. It is here that a truth might admit to the untruth that it also is, and an untruth to a truth. The dim light of ambiguity that nourishes Adorno's outrageous line is inseparable from its promise: the promise of a wealth – however murky and repellent – that exists beyond the conscious life of the subject, a wealth in which it nevertheless partakes. And yet, this ambiguity, if it remains unacknowledged, fuels our outrage. It touches us where we refuse to be touched. Whoever has tried to teach *Death in Venice* to students in recent years, only to be met with a blanket rejection of the book, hardly needs to be convinced of this point.

The prickly remnant from the past has arrived just in time. Under the guise of the outdated and surpassed, it contains a scathing critique of the currency of today's thought, politics, and its societal forces. Condemning the discipline of "sexual ethics" as futile, it takes wider aim at the drive of capitalist societies to incorporate and make palatable even that which draws its power from transgression: sex. Without the thrill of transgression, a sexual act degenerates into mere sport, or so Adorno would say. The thrill feeds on the allure of the forbidden, the violation of manifest social conventions; ultimately, it lives off the desecration of the most cherished of contemporary myths, that of the integrity of the "self". Two decades after *Minima Moralia*, Adorno spelled out what is implicit in his earlier aphorism: "It is a piece of sexual utopia not to be yourself, and to love more in the beloved than only her: a negation of the ego-principle. It shakes that invariant of bourgeois society in the widest sense, which since time immemorial has always aimed at integration: the demand for identity. At first, it had to be produced. Ultimately it would be necessary to abolish [aufzuheben] it again. What is merely identical with itself is without happiness." Pleasure lies in the gaze, the touch, the play that arouses what is repressed, in the tremble with which the remnants of the polymorphous escape integration. Latent in every sexual act is a reminder that subjecthood is a forcefield of becoming and dissolution, and that its closure, identity, comes

at a price. Every "I accuse you", be it just or unjust, arrests a subject and an object in a relationship of static reciprocity. Every "I accuse you" drags into the sphere of sexuality the expectations and entitlements of conscientious consumers and those citizens who know their rights.

It is the privilege of an aphorism not even to raise a brow at the gun held to its head by inveterate literalists. Our line remains silent if pressed for solutions, indifferent if asked to take sides. (It is thus mistaken to impute to the line the joyful celebration of fluid identities. *Minima Moralia*, this much is certain, will never be "woke"). It is not much more than a reminder of that which falls prey to even the most progressive causes, of the hidden sacrifices we make not only in political praxis but every time we raise our voices and begin to speak. Yet, the line's intention is not to silence but to provoke self-reflection. This splinter from the past hits a nerve: almost eerily, it accentuates our peculiar moment in time in which the anxious guarding of intimate borders unites otherwise antagonistic political forces, in which the fear of being pricked by a needle enters a curious alliance with the allergic backlash against divergent opinions. Once identity is the highest good – or rather, the last resort – the wound on the skin becomes intolerable. The fortification of the self is also an assault on what it seeks to protect – it eradicates, with the last pockets of somatic resistance, the hope that the dialectic of enlightenment may grind to a halt. This hope is inseparable from that for a subject which emerges in the remembrance of its other. Yet, whether we may hope at all hinges on the question of whether we are still capable of engaging with what hurts, of unfolding the ambiguities that lend a thought, a phenomenon, or a line their dubious and enigmatic air. This is not the first and only principle of critique; it might, however, be its last.

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Biography

Antonia Hofstätter is a teaching fellow in German studies at the University of Warwick. Her research focuses primarily on early critical theory and aesthetics, and she has published widely on the work of T.W. Adorno. Recent contributions appeared in *The 'Aging' of Adorno's* Aesthetic Theory: *Fifty Years Later* (Mimesis International, 2021) and *Theodor W. Adorno: Ästhetische Theorie* (De Gruyter, 2021). Together with Daniel Steuer she is the editor of *Adorno's Rhinoceros: Art, Nature, Critique* (Bloomsbury, 2022).

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Democracy Beyond the Human

Jamie van der Klaauw

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Review of

Schinkel, Willem en Rogier van Reekum. 2019 *Theorie van de kraal: kapitaal-ras-fascisme.* Amsterdam: Boom uitgevers.

Schinkel, Willem. 2020. *De hamsteraar: kritiek van het logistiek kapitalisme.* Amsterdam: Boom uitgevers.

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Democracy Beyond the Human

Jamie van der Klaauw

Willem Schinkel, als socioloog verbonden aan de Erasmus School of Social and Behavorial Sciences, is een zeer productief schrijver. De laatste jaren schrijft hij sneller dan ik kan lezen, of eigenlijk sneller dan ik zijn boeken verwerken kan. Hoofdzakelijk keert Schinkel zich tegen de bestaande laatkapitalistische (neo)liberale orde. Orde is bij uitstek een sociologisch onderwerp, en ook zijn antikapitalistische gedachtegoed is te situeren in de Marxistische/sociologische traditie, dit alles doorspekt met dekoloniale en antiracistische inzichten van denkers uit verschillende tradities. Een academicus met een activistische inborst die zich de laatste tijd meer en meer roert ook binnen die bestaande orde. Bijvoorbeeld door middel van zijn bijdragen aan politieke nieuwkomer BIJ1. Zo'n liminale positie neemt hij vaker in. Waar hij zich in *Theorie van de kraal* (2019) nog keert tegen het doelloze concurreren van academici die maar willen voldoen aan de publicatiedruk (het *publish or perish*), zo publiceert hij sindsdien zelf in moordend tempo. Schinkel wil met zijn werk vooral een knuppel in het hoenderhok gooien om ons allen zo te confronteren met de spanningen en tegenstellingen die spelen in de samenleving en die maar al te vaak bedekt worden met de mantel der geleerdheid en beschaving. Uit de vele woekeringen van het leven ontwaart Schinkel een woekering die zich opwerpt als iets ánders, als orde. Vanuit die positie claimt het andere woekeringen te kunnen beoordelen, hun plaats te wijzen. Of problematischer: te kunnen beknellen en zelfs verstikken. Maar, hoe verhoudt Schinkels theoretische keer tegen de orde zich tot zijn eigen politiek? Wat blijft er dan nog over van de democratie?

Willen we een antwoord formuleren op de bovenstaande vragen, is het eerst noodzakelijk om de theoretische basis waarop Schinkels programma steunt te expliciteren en nader te beschouwen. En waar beter te beginnen dan in het boek dat de laatste jaren het theoretische zware werk doet voor Schinkel, een coproductie met collega-socioloog Rogier van Reekum: *Theorie van de kraal*. In dit werk worden de begrippen woekering, als aanduiding voor het vrije leven, en kraal, de aan orde gelieerde term voor de ruimte die aan leven wordt gelaten, geïntroduceerd. Centraal staat de spanning tussen de begrippen en hoe deze tot uiting komt in hoofdzakelijk de domeinen van de politiek, economie en ecologie. Voordat Schinkel en Van Reekum dit begrippenpaar inzet in dienst van de analyse daarvan en kritiek van de huidige orde, wordt de toon in het boek meteen gezet door een zogenoemd nulde hoofdstuk. Een herkenbare toon voor wie Deleuze & Guattari's *Mille Plateaux* (1980) heeft gelezen, maar een sprekende toepassing niettemin. Het nulde hoofdstuk houdt zich bezig met het onderwerp in de redekundige zin, en dan specifiek: het wij. Dat 'smerige woordje', aldus Schinkel en Van Reekum (2019, 7) doet hier dienst als beginpunt voor een kritiek op kantiaanse leest geschoeid met een benjaminiaanse twist. Het expliciteert en problematiseert het 'wij' dat impliciet vervlochten is in het verhaal dat wij over onszelf vertellen. Wij is namelijk geen neutraal woord, maar een politieke daad, een woord dat verdoezelt en wordt verdoezeld. Een mogelijkheidsvoorwaarde voor de politieke operatie waarlangs het geweld in de samenleving wordt verhuld en het gewelddadige van de samenleving wordt goedgepraat. Allemaal in naam van een wij dat inclusief klinkt, maar vooral dient

als het beginpunt van een onderscheid tussen wij en zij. Een 'wij' dat hoofdzakelijk buitensluit.

Dit is naast een aantijging tegen de bestaande orde, waarin het 'democratische' wij dienstdoet als legitimering van geweld, ook een ontologische conditie. Taal is ons medium en die mediatie is onontkoombaar. Sinds de val uit het paradijs — wat Schinkel het meest uitgebreid beschrijft in zijn later gepubliceerde proefschrift *Aspects of Violence* — beschikken wij niet langer over de onmiddellijke toegang tot de natuur der dingen (2010, 88-90). Taal is daarmee innig verbonden met verschil, met goed en kwaad, maar ook een performatieve daad, het medium waardoor goed en kwaad gerealiseerd worden. Geweld moeten we dan ook niet strikt opvatten in de fysieke zin — dat is hoe de staat geweld definieert —, maar in verhulling, in het benoemen van en het onderscheiden tussen — klassieke operaties van zowel de sociologie als de filosofie. Hier openbaart zich de spanning in het werk van Schinkel in zijn meest abstracte vorm. Want, enerzijds zijn dit soort operaties voor de mens per definitie zondig, bij gebrek aan directe toegang tot de dingen zijn wij verdoemt tot het in het leven roepen van (re) presentaties van dingen. Anderzijds poogt Schinkel de verdoezelende gewelddadigheid van het hedendaags taalgebruik als historisch gegroeid onrecht te vatten.

Kortom, woorden doen ertoe, volgens Schinkel. Affecten van taal, van taalgebruik, staan centraal in het werk van Schinkel niet alleen vanwege de mogelijke verhullingsoperaties die ermee gepleegd kunnen worden, nee, woorden, zinnen, spreken, het zijn daden op zich. Die vervolgens hun weerklank en effecten hebben op de organisatie van het leven. De taal, als strijdtoneel, als situering van geweld, is dus niet slechts zondig. Het kan gebruikt worden om nieuwe affecten in te brengen en oude vastgeroeste connotaties weer los te weken. Dit komt naar voren in Schinkels paradoxale verhouding tot politieke correctheid. Waar Schinkel in 2007, rondom de publicatie van *Sociale hypochondrie,* zijn werk nog promoot met een pleidooi voor politiek incorrect denken[1], vóór het benoemen van de verhullingsoperaties van de (neo)liberale orde, is hij de laatste jaren juist bekend geworden om zijn pleidooi voor politieke correctheid, of eerder voor de verwerping van de tegenwerping van politieke correctheid. Deze keer moet worden gelezen als een herpositionering ten overstaan van een veranderende wereld. In de bijna vijftien jaar sinds *Sociale hypochondrie* heeft het politieke strijdtoneel namelijk een inversie ondergaan. Probeerde de bestaande orde in eerste instantie nog met woorden te verhullen, nu probeert ze met woorden te benoemen, de keerzijde van dezelfde operaties. Schinkels eerdere tactiek, om in naam van vrijheid en waarheid durven te benoemen, is daarmee gecoöpteerd in dienst van de bestaande orde.

Deze herpositionering werkt specifieke theoretische overwegingen op. Wat betekent dit voor de hegemoniale positie van het politiek correcte en voor de kracht van de woorden zelf? Taal op zich werkt ordenend. En politieke correctheid, evenals de aantijging ervan, zijn altijd zowel operaties van verhulling en openbaring. Wat maakt deze paradox dan (tijdelijk) ondergeschikt aan de politiek-strategische keuze één beider zijden te benadrukken? Ofwel wat maakt het één eigen, een woekering van het leven, en het ander oneigenlijk, kraal in naam van de bestaande orde?

Fascisme: mens, kapitaal, aarde

Het antwoord op die vraag heeft een filosofisch en een politiek component. Het filosofische component betreft het onderscheid tussen de proliferatie van het leven en de beknotting ervan, tussen een bijdrage aan de verscheidenheid van levensvormen, levensvatbare vormen, en de inperking van levensvormen in naam van een specifieke levensvorm, in naam van een orde. Sterker nog, is er één rode draad door het werk van Schinkel te vinden dan is het wel dat precies orde zelf problematisch is. In *Sociale hypochondrie* heeft dit nog voornamelijk betrekking op de sociologie in haar poging van wat in feite een fluïde massa is een oneigenlijk geheel te maken door middel van benoemen en onderscheiden, via het gebruik van het woord maatschappij en het oordeel wie daar wel of niet deel van uitmaakt of mag uitmaken. Welk bevolkingselement *heimlich* is en welke dan wel via integratie dient te worden opgenomen, dan wel via uitzetting moet worden verwijderd — voor Schinkel innig verbonden met de poging politiek te bedrijven op het niveau van het maatschappelijk lichaam. Is dit in *Sociale hypochondrie* nog in koelbloedige analyse gesteld, wordt dit vooral vanaf *Theorie van de kraal* een kwestie van affect en inzet van een politieke strijd, het tweede component. Een strijd die zich afspeelt in de taal en de affecten, maar waarvan de inzet juist de weerklank van die taal en affecten in het sociale leven behelst: de materiële condities, politieke hiërarchieën en sociale systemen. Door het leven in de bestaande orde te benoemen als kraal, een omsloten ruimte voor vee, wordt onze verbeelding aangesproken om die systemen en hiërarchieën weer te expliciteren. De kraal is het gebied dat de orde aan ons toelaat. Niet langer als vrije ruimte voor het leven, door Schinkel en Van Reekum woekeringen genoemd, maar als oneigenlijke toe-eigening daarvan (2019, 11). Orde is een woekering die zichzelf niet meer herkent als woekering, maar als iets dat daarbovenuit komt en zich het recht toe-eigent om andere woekeringen te remmen in hun groei, te beknellen, of zelfs te verstikken. Overigens bedoelt Schinkel ons hier niets nieuws mee te vertellen, wij kennen het namelijk allemaal al onder de noemer fascisme.

Fascisme ligt binnen de theorie van de kraal ten grondslag aan de verhullingsoperaties van het (neo)liberalisme. Niet slechts het fascisme als politieke beweging, of zelfs het fascisme dat Schinkel zelf veelvuldig aanhaalt in de woorden van Benjamin: mobilisatie zonder verandering van de productieverhoudingen. Nee, eerder het fascisme dat Foucault besprak in het voorwoord van Deleuze & Guattari's *L'anti-Oedipe* (1972): het fascisme dat in ons allen schuilgaat, waardoor wij verlangen naar datgene wat ons onderdrukt en exploiteert. Dit wordt over drie schijven behandeld, elk via een eigen hoofdstuk en elk symbool voor aspecten die Schinkel consistent terug laat komen in zijn werken: politiek, economie en ecologie.

Het eerste hoofdstuk in die driedeling is 'Randmensen', dat een combinatie is van een 'kritiek' op klassiek politiek denken, specifiek liberalisme en zijn wortels in het denken over de 'natuurstaat' en het sociaal contract dat ons moet leiden naar beschaving. Randmensen zijn namelijk niet mensen aan de rand van de samenleving, maar mensen die vinden dat ze zelf een rand hebben, een individueel contour. Neoliberale subjecten die randen, contouren, of scherpe grenzen waarderen en ambiëren op individueel en maatschappelijk niveau. Dit gaat langs verschillende aspecten van kolonisatie, marginalisatie, identiteit, om uit te komen op een enkele tweespalt: waar een bepaald

liberaal-fascisme — verpersoonlijkt in de witte man — vanuit haat vertrekt en op haat uit is, zoeken Schinkel en Van Reekum zijn tegenstelling niet in vrijheid (dat is niet de tegenhanger van haat) maar in vreugde en vooral liefde. Kritiek schreef ik zojuist tussen aanhalingstekens omdat Schinkel en Van Reekum dit expliciet afwijzen. Kritiek is namelijk verankerd in een dialoog van de bestaande orde, moet zich altijd al daartegen verhouden, en dat is nu juist precies niet waar Schinkel en Van Reekum op uit zijn. Maar, als het niet kritiek is, wat is het dan nog wel? Zoals we zullen zien, geen politiek meer, maar theologie.

Het volgende hoofdstuk, schulden, verplaatst het speelveld naar de economie. Theoretisch het sterkste hoofdstuk waar ook de basis wordt gelegd voor het latere *De hamsteraar* (2020) en ook doorklinkt in *Pandemocratie* (2021). Dit hoofdstuk van *Theorie van de kraal* zit vol van interessante observaties en pakkende karakteriseringen daarvan. Bijvoorbeeld over de politieke aard van het economisch 'boekhouden', een langlopende lijn in Schinkels werk, van hoe de economische dimensie door de hele maatschappij gedrongen is en daarmee niet alleen mensen op waarde schat, maar tegelijk ook tot die waarde verdoemt: "[…] de schuld is zowel een indicatie van wat we waard zijn als ons verdiende loon. Bewijs en straf ineen" (Schinkel en Van Reekum 2019, 117). Dat boekhouden is dus het systeem dat bepaalt wat waar in de samenleving staat, de economie heeft, in de Europese context, de rol van de Bijbel overgenomen. Niet langer lees je de Bijbel om je plaats in de wereld te kennen, zoals het beroemde citaat van Hegel luidt, maar je bankafschrift, de balans van je rekening. Economische schuld is daarmee ook een soort 'originele zonde', aldus Schinkel, de verrekening waar het leven in dienst van gaat staan. En dit heeft een tekenende terugslag op het voorgaande hoofdstuk: migratie is een nooit te vereffenen schuld. De migrant staat namelijk in het rood bij de samenleving waar naartoe gemigreerd is, maar hoewel deze morele schuld economische aflossing vereist, kan hij nooit helemaal worden afgelost. Ten slotte is de mogelijkheidsvoorwaarde van dit alles, van het hele economische systeem, en daarmee het begrip dat het zwaarste werk verricht: schaarste. Een begrip waarop ik zal terugkomen aangezien het een sleutelbegrip is in niet alleen *Theorie van de kraal*, maar meer nog in *De hamsteraar* en ook in *Pandemocratie*. Schaarste is precies het type (kunstmatige) woekering dat zichzelf als (natuurlijke) orde presenteert. Schaarste is namelijk geen ontologisch feit, maar het effect van verdeling.

De derde en laatste schijf in *Theorie van de kraal* is 'Aarde': een hoofdstuk over de menselijke verhouding tot de (natuurlijke) wereld. Problematiseren Schinkel en Van Reekum het idee van de verloren natuurstaat nog in het eerste hoofdstuk, opent dit hoofdstuk met een theologische conceptie van de aarde als verloren natuurstaat: "Er is geen weg terug naar de aarde. Aarde is de permanente en wilde productie van verschil. Aarde is woekering, wordende aanwas van Geschiedenis. Voor zover wij woekeren, zijn wij aardlingen. En voor zover we ordenen, zijn we eenlingen" (Schinkel en Van Reekum 2019, 163). Om hier vervolgens aan toe te voegen: "Maar als eenlingen zijn we altijd al aardlingen, want in weerwil van de hallucinaties van de orde, is ordenen een modaliteit van woekeren" (ibid.). Een poging dus om de mens te ontdoen van zijn illusies, van zijn oneigenlijke vervreemding. Maar, hier botst Schinkels marxisme met het ontologisch feit van die vervreemding als immanente mogelijkheid van de

'menselijke natuur'. Juist Schinkel doet ook aan (filosofische) vervreemding, zoals we zullen zien bij *De hamsteraar.* Juist ook Schinkel heeft een vorm van orde voor ogen. En juist ook woekeren is verstikken, beknellen en ruimte innemen.

Maar, voor ik daar verder op inga, nog een laatste hoofdstuk uit *Theorie van de kraal.* Wellicht de meest bijzondere, maar tegelijk een logische theoretische uitkomst van Schinkel en Van Reekums houding. Namelijk, een keer naar het abstracte en protestants aandoende idee van 'pure liefde'. Deze 'liefde' is puur abstract omdat het alleen in deze vorm geweldloos gemaakt kan worden. Schinkel en Van Reekum verzanden in de klassieke problematiek van theoretische schoonheid en (on)toepasbaarheid die al sinds Kant wordt besproken. Theoretisch schoon omdat, inderdaad, vuur met vuur bestrijden niet werkt, de enige manier om de vicieuze cirkel van het haat en geweld te doorbreken, is liefde en geweldloosheid. Maar, ontoepasbaar, want hoewel we het hier theoretisch over eens kunnen zijn, heeft dit praktisch geen uiting. Niet slechts omdat, zoals Schinkel en Van Reekum zelf zeggen, wij nog niet weten hoe te leven, maar ook omdat de praktijk nooit pure theorie is. De weg naar de hel is geplaveid met goede bedoelingen en een oproep tot liefde is slechts de ideologische bevestiging in naam waarvan alles altijd al wordt gedaan — ook het fascistische, ook het slechte.

Logistiek kapitalisme en de hamsteraar

Eindigt *Theorie van de kraal* in 2019 nog in de impasse van de abstractie, begint met het in 2020 verschenen *De hamsteraar* Schinkels poging om dit theoretisch raamwerk desalniettemin direct toe te passen op de hedendaagse samenleving, weer langs de schijven van politiek, economie en ecologie, ditmaal gespecifieerd naar de politieke economie in tijden van een biologisch-ecologische crisis. Centraal in dit publiekswerk staat de figuur van de hamsteraar, wat ten opzichte van de liberaal-kapitalistische orde een karikaturale uiting is van hoe de burger altijd al wordt gezien: "iemand die participeert door naar willekeur en uit vermeend eigenbelang zich op geïndividueerde manier een leven bijeen te kopen" (2020, 21). Schinkels punt is duidelijk, hamsteren is in de huidige context een probleem, de vraag die hij opwerpt: voor wie is het nu precies een probleem en waarom?

Hamsteren kan uiteindelijk niet beoordeeld worden langs de meetlat van solidariteit, want het consumentisme waar het hamsteren een uitwas van is, is bij uitstek "die vorm van subjectiviteit die zich op geen enkele manier nog via solidariteit vormgeeft" (ibid., 41). Schinkel betoogt dat er een hypocrisie in het verwijt van 'hamsteraar' ligt, namelijk de hamsteraar doet precies wat hem verteld is te doen: zich veilig kopen als consument. Hier verbindt Schinkel een krachtige boodschap aan: "die moraliserende kritiek op het hamsteren is precies daarom verdacht. Want het is een kritiek die gericht is op consolidatie van kapitaalaccumulatie door die subjecten tot de orde te roepen die, paradoxaal genoeg, precies doordat ze de perfectste belichaming van het kapitalistisch subject zijn, zand in de wielen van de logistieke productie- en consumptiemachine gooien" (ibid., 42). Hoewel Schinkel terecht de hamsteraar opvoert als 'vlek' op het blazoen van logistiek kapitalisme, had dit betoog sterker geweest als het expliciteerde hoe consistent het tegelijkertijd ook is. In het neoliberalisme is het morele appel altijd in dienst van de markt, die dienstbare rol verschuift dus in de tijd en de omstandigheden

naarmate de markt dat vereist. Het kopen van Mark Rutte — "Koop die auto!" — van 2013 is niet hetzelfde als het 'leegkopen van winkels' in 2020. Juist omdat de hamsteraar niet de perfecte belichaming is van het kapitalistisch subject, juist omdat de hamsteraar de informele regels van het spel niet helemaal begrijpt, legt hij dat systeem bloot. De boodschap van Schinkel is interessant, als een soort apologie van de hamsteraar. Hoewel niet een echte apologie, want hamsteren is altijd reactionair, in dienst van het oude systeem, van de oude spelregels. Moraliseren is echter niet het devies, juist omdat de hamsteraar het eigenlijk doelwit openbaar maakt: de just-in-time economie (ibid., 43). Het doel van het boek is dan ook: een bijdrage leveren aan een analyse van de mogelijkheidsvoorwaarde van het logistiek kapitalisme op grond van de manier waarop de productie en distributie van levens-middelen — in de breedste zin van het woord — georganiseerd worden, in een enkel woord gevat als: biologistiek (ibid., 43; 50).

Die hamsteraar wordt in het tweede en wellicht 'grappigste' hoofdstuk in een tour de force van taalkundig-cultureel onderzoek naar de 'hamster' geduid. In een aaneenschakeling van beelden over mens en dier legt Schinkel ons haarfijn uit hoe het dierlijke als irrationeel problematisch tegenover het rationele menselijke wordt gezet. Zo ook de figuur van de hamster, die transformatieve tegenstrijdigheid kent. Hoewel de hamster al lang bekendstaat als een lieflijk huisdier, is het beeld dat in een hamsteraar nog doorechoot die van de 'korenwolf' of eerder de 'wolf', die gierigaard die uit eigen belang voorraden aanlegt en daarmee anderen het leven onmogelijk maakt. Tegenstrijdig echter is de tijdloosheid waarmee deze beelden worden verbonden. Als dit universele operaties zijn, wat helpt het dan nog om de onderliggende instituties in dienst van kapitalisme aan te pakken? De historisch-ontologische conclusie van Marx, dat met de opkomst van de moderne bourgeoisie de klassenstrijd als principe van de geschiedenis kenbaar wordt, wordt hier ogenschijnlijk oppervlakkig gesteld, maar niet in zijn volledigheid doordacht.

Vervolgens komen we aan bij de hoofdmoot van het werk. Dit derde hoofdstuk borduurt voort op het principiële idee van *Theorie van de kraal*, namelijk dat in naam van de meritocratie een artificiële schaarste is gecreëerd die dienstdoet als ultieme drijfveer voor het zogenaamde 'rennen' — ofwel concurreren — in de kraal. Want, wat is de rol van de figuur van de hamster in dit alles? In de woorden van Schinkel: "Hamsteren leidt wellicht tot tekorten aan bepaalde waren op sommige plaatsen en op sommige momenten, maar met de creatie van schaarste, zou ik hier duidelijk willen maken, heeft het niets te maken. Het hamsteren kan veroordeeld worden omdat het levens-middelen schaars maakt, maar in wezen wijst het hamsteren ons op het dieperliggende feit dat 'schaarste' altijd een sociaal geproduceerd gegeven is" (ibid., 119). Overigens geen origineel punt, Hans Achterhuis betoogde in 1988 nog iets soortgelijks met zijn *Het Rijk van de Schaarste*. Maar de hamsteraar toont ons nogmaals aan dat schaarste niet het uitgangspunt van de economie is, maar juist een effect. Het gevolg van de specifieke indeling van de economie zoals die in het logistiek kapitalisme is vormgegeven. Kritiek die ook al door Horkheimer en Adorno is geformuleerd: kapitalisme is burgerlijke berekendheid, reductie tot abstracte kwantiteiten.

In hoofdstuk vier wordt hier verder op ingegaan, onder de noemers just-in-time-kapitalisme, of ook wel logistiek kapitalisme. Het probleem van onze

huidige economische situatie is namelijk niet slechts het kapitalisme in de zin van financialisering van meerwaarde en het kenmerkende gegoochel van geldcirculatie door banken, investeringsmaatschappijen, etc. maar ook en vooral de logistiek die achter de geglobaliseerde toevoerlijnen schuilt. Deze analyse is tegelijk een kracht en een zwakte in het betoog van Schinkel. Het is namelijk performatief, middels zijn benaming van logistiek kapitalisme probeert Schinkel zowel onze situatie te duiden als een construct in het leven te roepen dat een bepaalde coherentie moet verlenen aan wat anderzijds wellicht losse aspecten zijn. Zo schakelt het betoog tussen verschillend ietwat fragmentarische kritiek als de klassieke marxistische op automatisering, waarbij een problematische vorm van vervreemding optreedt, tot een meer immanente kritiek dat just-in-time logistiek eigenlijk niet echt just-in-time is, dat het niet echt efficiënt is omdat het slechts de voorraden die nog kenmerkend waren voor het Fordistisch kapitalisme naar 'achteren' duwt, onzichtbaar maakt voor de consument. Hier wordt de verbinding met het hamsteren gemaakt, omdat nu juist aan de zichtbare kant van de 'supply chain' bij de 'handelaren' (zoals Schinkel ze dubbelzinnig duidt) het beeld wordt opgeworpen van een schaarste die eigenlijk geen schaarste is. Een schaarste die altijd al artificieel was en in dienst is van de circulatie van geld, goederen, mensen, et cetera. Deze analyse en het daarmee innig verweven pleidooi kan niet afgedaan worden als een simpele terugkeer naar fordistische voorraden. Hoewel Schinkel enigszins verwijtend wijst naar het gebrek aan voorraden in de zorg tijdens de corona-pandemie maakt het vooral pijnlijk duidelijk hoe diep het logistiek kapitalisme ons bestaan heeft gepenetreerd (ibid., 119).

Politiek spel of theoretische gevolgtrekking?

Schinkels poging is wat zijn doeleinde betreft noemenswaardig. Niet alleen is de hamsteraar als figuur, zoals Schinkel het zegt, een vervreemdend affect, een moment waarin wij ons niet helemaal één voelen met de just-in-time-organisatie van onze maatschappij, maar ook is deze figuur op zich niet veel kwalijk te nemen. Zonder de hamsteraar te bagatelliseren werpt Schinkel zich op tegen de burgerlijke reflex de hamsteraar voor 'idioot' uit te maken, of erger: parasiet. Niet de hamsteraar, die uit gevoelde noodzaak een eigen voorraad aanlegt is parasitair, nee, de architecten van het systeem, de eigenaren van de globale ketens, middels hun artificiële schaarste en zogenaamd noodzakelijke ordening, zijn de echte parasieten. Schinkels betoog moet dan ook zo gelezen worden, als een verschuiving van de aandacht naar deze vaak in het narratief van de hamsteraar buiten schot gebleven figuren. Hoewel dit werkt in een positionele strijd om aandacht, is het theoretisch lastiger vol te houden. Acceptatie van het begrip schaarste leidt volgens Schinkel tot een acceptatie van het historisch gegroeide systeem zoals deze is. Tegelijkertijd is dit ogenschijnlijk in strijd met het idee dat niet alleen bepaalde natuurlijke bronnen eindig zijn, maar ook dat het menselijke begrensd is. 'Begrensd' in zijn onvolledigheid, zoals ook in de *Theorie van de kraal* wordt benadrukt. Dit ontkent namelijk niet het probleem van de menselijke en natuurlijke eindigheid, wat zou neerkomen op een klassiek modernistisch betoog, maar situeert het probleem juist op zo'n manier dat het niet onterecht ten koste gaat van een deel van de mens of van het leven in het algemeen. Net zoals schaarste geen beginpositie, maar resultante is, zo ook overvloed.

Voor Schinkel is dan ook niet de vrije markt het probleem, die heeft namelijk nooit bestaan. Nee, de 'macht' is het probleem. Zoals Schinkel zelf zegt: "achter alles wat 'markt' heet, staat de macht, en uiteindelijk het geweld" (ibid., 225). Het zijn dus niet de globale markten die invloed uitoefenen op overheden of andere pogingen tot democratisch zelfbestuur, die daar dus niet in de ban van zijn geraakt, maar andersom. Andermaal volgt Schinkel hier Adorno en Horkheimer, de vrije markt en de burgermaatschappij in zijn algemeen zijn slechts werktuigen van staten, wiens rol tegelijkertijd beperkt is tot borg staan voor de metriek: zoals er in de 19de eeuw nog ergens in een Franse kluis een platina staaf lag die de meter garandeerde. Hoewel Schinkel daarmee terecht wijst op de ideologische dimensie van het kapitalisme, dat het geen natuurlijk fenomeen is, verdwijnt een belangrijk inzicht. Namelijk, het idee dat bestuursvormen via instituties van de staat, behorende tot de parlementaire democratie, pogingen zijn tot collectief zelfbestuur, maar tegelijkertijd, op het moment dat het strijdveld daar gelokaliseerd wordt, onder constante spanningen staan precies vanuit de 'instrumentele wereld' in habermasiaanse zin. Spanningen die inherent zijn aan de democratie als poging antagonistische krachten op enigerlei wijze te situeren en mediëren, zodat zelfbestuur überhaupt mogelijk wordt. Hoogmoed echter, vanuit Schinkels perspectief, want dat vereist ogenschijnlijk het soort scheiden en berekenen dat intervenieert in het leven. Operaties die alleen aan het leven zelf, gelezen door een omkering van een spinozistische formule, ofwel alleen aan God zijn besteed. *Natura sive Deus*.

Om het probleem in de termen van *Theorie van de kraal* te bespreken, fascisme, kapitalisme en neoliberalisme, zijn precies het soort 'vrije woekeringen' dat Schinkel theoretisch gezien interessant vindt. De consequentie ervan echter is dat wanneer wij vrije woekeringen op zijn beloop laten gaan, deze bijna altijd parasiterend of verstikkend werken op andere woekeringen. Snel vermenigvuldigende woekeringen (zoals onkruid, of voor dierlijke organismen: kanker) nemen de ruimte, zuurstof en energie van de woekeringen eromheen in. Een pleidooi voor vrije woekering is daarmee niet voldoende, een pleidooi voor een gelijke, eerlijke, of gemeenschappelijke woekering is meer op zijn plaats. Maar, hoe zo'n woekeringsvorm te realiseren als niet via een bepaalde vorm van democratische politiek die op het niveau van een orde werkt? Schinkel zelf neemt ook zo'n (super)positie in, met als nieuw ordeningsprincipe: woekeringen mogen niet ten koste gaan van andere woekeringen.

Deze impasse wordt duidelijk in het laatste hoofdstuk van *De hamsteraar*, waarin Schinkel van leer trekt tegen het RIVM en het OMT specifiek. Hij verwijt hen zich in te laten met calculaties over leven, elke ingecalculeerde dode is er één te veel. Daarmee toont Schinkel zich andermaal protestants-kantiaans: het leven is te kostbaar om mee te rekenen. Toch wordt dit betoog problematisch als Schinkel besluiten over het open houden dan wel ondersteunen van specifieke sectoren of instituties bekritiseert. Kritiek op de te grote invloed van het economisch belang is terecht, de nationale luchtvaartmaatschappij kreeg bovenmatig veel steun, maar om vervolgens in naam van specifiek leven — aan te duiden als naakt leven in de termen van Agamben — te betogen dat er geen enkele dode mocht worden ingecalculeerd laat vervolgens andere aspecten van dat leven, van de kwaliteit van het leven, buiten beschouwing. Schinkel noemt daarbij de mogelijke heropening van de scholen, bij uitstek een politiek besluit, waar het RIVM

en het OMT specifiek overwegingen probeerden te maken hoe de kwaliteit van leven van een grote groep jongeren niet permanent schade aan te richten, een onvermijdelijk antagonistische overweging tussen verschillende levens – niet tussen leven en kapitaal.

Schinkel eindigt zijn *Hamsteraar* dan ook met een eigenaardige wende, een bijna paternalistisch lijstje van richtpunten, een "tienpuntenlijstje dat we op toiletpapier zouden kunnen schrijven, zoals op het keerpunt in de film *V for Vendetta*" (ibid., 244). Wat volgt zijn tien 'al bekende punten' die ter herinnering worden ingebracht en tegelijk erg lijken op de zogenaamde nostalgie voor de sociale welvaartstaat die Schinkel een paar bladzijden daarvoor nog afdoet. Op zich allen overtuigend, zoals bijvoorbeeld: democratisering van productiemiddelen en communicatiemiddelen, garantie van inkomen, groene energievoorziening, planning in plaats van prijsmechanismes in de economie, etc. (welke hij overigens herhaalt in het laatste hoofdstuk van *Pandemocratie)*. Maar de bescheidenheid en abstractie van het lijstje, gekoppeld aan de nadruk op herhaling, doen vermoeden dat het zware mediërende werk van de democratie, waarin erkenning en overtuigingskracht tussen radicaal verschillende perspectieven centraal staat, slechts vooruit wordt geschoven.

Naar de pandemocratie

Uiteindelijk is Schinkel met recht niet alleen socioloog, maar ook echt een filosoof te noemen. Precies omwille van wat hij zelf nu juist zo problematisch vindt: het kunnen scheiden. Dat betekent niet alleen het onderscheid maken op hoog theoretisch niveau, het op begrip kunnen brengen van de hedendaagse conditie van de mens. Maar, ook juist als affectieve operatie, als vervreemding. Schinkel probeert ons te vervreemden van de alledaagsheid van het onrecht veroorzaakt door de systemen die wij hebben opgetogen om zelf om te gaan met die moderne conditie. We mogen daarin juist niet al te erg met deze systemen samenvallen, maar moeten altijd een beetje vervreemd zijn en daarmee vragen kunnen stellen bij wat vanzelfsprekend lijkt.

Maar, Schinkel lukt het niet om daar consistent in te zijn, waarop hij overigens meteen zal antwoorden dat consistentie op zich helemaal geen doel is of kan zijn. Sterker nog, het devies is eerder: wees hypocriet, spreek je uit tegen de praktijken waar je zelf deel van uit maakt. Maar het soort inconsistentie hier is anders. Het theoretisch model dat is opgetuigd staat ergens haaks op de meer ecologische, socialistische en antiracistische leest waarop de inhoudelijke lijnen van zijn recente werk is geschoeid. De vervreemding is namelijk niet alleen de preconditie van kritiek, maar op zich de menselijke conditie, dat wat eigen is aan mensen, dat ze nooit echt samenvallen met de zelf-opgetogen systemen of de natuur. Anders gezegd, orde is te ontmaskeren als woekering, maar menselijke woekeringen zijn per definitie niet slechts woekeringen, kennen ook altijd een dimensie van 'orde' — de menselijke reflectie, overweging, calculatie, is altijd ingebed in zo'n woekering. Ook Schinkels programma is uiteindelijk een woekering die zichzelf als orde op zal stellen, een orde die weliswaar meer ruimte laat aan de pluriformiteit van leven, maar als het niet zelf weer slechts verstikkende blinde wildgroei is — om met de woorden van Slavoj Žižek te schermen, die een uitspraak van Lynn Margulis op zijn kop zette: Moeder natuur is een wrede moeder — een orde niettemin. Schinkel heeft daarin veel weg van een rousseauiaans romanticus, terug naar

de 'amour de soi' voordat deze gecorrumpeerd werd door de maatschappij, specifiek het kapitalisme. En zelfs optimistischer over 'consensus' dan Habermas, want waar consensus bij Habermas een mogelijkheid is die nog verwerkelijkt moet worden via het zware werk in instituties en de pogingen een ander te begrijpen, is dat voor Schinkel klaarblijkelijk iets dat vooral verschijnt als we er niet aan werken, als we niet proberen te begrijpen, maar als we leven maar leven laten zijn en woekeringen laten woekeren. Daarmee slaat Schinkels theoretische betoog de onderbouwing voor zijn praktische programma compleet weg.

Tegelijk zal Schinkel zeggen dat zijn programma dit ook juist ingecalculeerd heeft, dat het einde ervan niet door hem, maar door de democratie zal moeten worden geschreven. Maar, hoe verhouden we ons dan tot de uitkomsten van het democratisch proces als die ook weer onrecht gedeeltelijk verankeren als recht? Omdat Schinkel voornamelijk in wat Hegel de negatieve vrijheid van het denken noemt blijft hangen, is de tweede stap van elk denken, de 'positivering', ofwel dat elke begrenzing tegelijk eigenlijk mogelijkheidsvoorwaarde is, bij Schinkel een oppervlakkige constatering. Nergens wordt dit zo duidelijk als in zijn analyse van de natiestaat. Of de duiding hoe de Europese Unie dit reproduceert. In een interview met Lex Bohlmeijer voor *De Correspondent* vertrekt Schinkel voornamelijk vanuit het idee dat solidariteit wordt begrensd, letterlijk, door de natiestaat en tegenwoordig door de Europese Unie.[2] Met alle gevolgen, alle verloren levens aan de Griekse kust van mensen die mee willen delen in het veilige en welvarend leven dat Europa voor zijn burgers heeft opgetogen, van dien. Kritiek op de huidige staatsvorm is meer dan terecht ook gegeven zijn historische opkomst, die innig is verweven met de opkomst van nationalisme en kapitalisme, twee van Schinkels belangrijkste theoretische doelwitten.

En passant noemt Schinkel echter een belangrijk aspect van die staat, namelijk dat het zelf juist een poging of mogelijkheidsvoorwaarde tot solidariteit was. Waaraan ik zou toevoegen: omdat er daarvoor nog veel minder solidariteit was, omdat solidariteit geen natuurlijk gegeven is, maar geconstrueerd moet worden. Met de tot nu toe meest grootschalige poging tot zo'n solidariteit, de natiestaat en in het verlengde de Europese Unie, ontstonden ook de grootste praktijken van uitsluiting en de vooropplaatsing van het eigen belang van het politiek subject als resultante van solidariteit. Anders gezegd, ruimte voor de kritische boodschap van Schinkel is er zeker en terecht wijst Schinkel ons op de mogelijkheid en de noodzaak van een grotere solidariteit, in lijn met de internationale, in de geest van de oproep van Marx en Engels aan het eind van het communistisch manifest, en zoals Schinkel ook in *De hamsteraar* oproept: een vereniging aller hamsteraars (ibid., 255). Een constructie blijft het echter wel.

Vandaar ook de titel van zijn meest recent werk op het moment van schrijven, *Pandemocratie.* Hierin neemt Schinkel eenzelfde houding aan tegenover de complotdenker als tegenover de hamsteraar. Andermaal hebben ze gelijk dat er iets niet pluis is aan de bestaande orde, maar hun antwoorden zijn fascistisch. *Pandemocratie* is niet slechts een analyse van de democratie in pandemische tijden, waarin het biologistieke rekenen omklapt in een necropolitiek, een politiek gekenmerkt door dood (laten gaan), maar ook een oproep tot een democratie voor allen, een democratie die niet alleen de buitengesloten mensen, maar al het leven includeert (2021, 17-18). Zoals Schinkel zegt:

"de democratisering van alles (pan) en voor iedereen (demos)" (ibid., 256). Dit mondt uit in een drievoudige 'uitbreiding' langs de domeinen die wij al terugzien in *Theorie van de kraal*: 1. Naar rechtelozen en onderdrukten, 2. Naar collectieve vormen van economische democratie, 3. Naar wat tot nu toe slechts bekend stond als 'natuur' (ibid., 257). Een rizomatische weergave van inzichten van figuren als Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway, en Cedric Robinson. Maar, meer dan een opsomming van die inzichten wordt het ook weer niet. Juist omdat dat programma van inzichten niet logischerwijs volgt uit het theoretisch raamwerk dat Schinkel al sinds *Sociale hypochondrie* op probeert te zetten.

Schinkel is een verrijking voor het Nederlandse publieke debat. Zijn moedige pogingen om ondanks bedreigingen — Schinkel werd genoemd door Vizier op Links, een van de Nederlandse alt-rightgroepen — perspectieven toe te voegen aan het debat in naam van rechtvaardigheid rondom precies de drie hiervoor benoemde domeinen politiek, economie en ecologie, is prijzenswaardig. Maar, de weg daarnaartoe is niet overtuigend en kent een onvoorzien effect. In zijn theoretische zoektocht naar de ultieme bevrijding onder het juk van de liberale orde vandaan en zijn programmatische activisme die gedeeltelijk gestoeld is op precies dezelfde ideologische operaties, blijft er weinig over van democratie. Want wat voor soort democratie is er nog bij Schinkel als ons zelfbestuur eigenlijk alleen aan God zelf toevertrouwd is? Als elke poging orde aan te brengen in Gods natuurlijke woekeringen per definitie fascistisch is? Een onmenselijke democratie.

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Biography

Jamie van der Klaauw is promovendus 'politieke theorie en zijn geschiedenis' aan de Erasmus School of Philosophy. Zijn proefschrift gaat over (politieke) representatie als mediatie, waarin hij probeert het concept tot zijn radicale eindpunt te doordenken. Daarnaast houdt hij zich bezig met sociale en culturele filosofie. In 2021 verscheen van zijn hand het artikel: "Conspiracy Theories as Superstition: Today's Mirror Image in Spinoza's Tractatus Theologico-Politicus."

Notes

1 Zie bijvoorbeeld: https://bij1.org/speech-willem-schinkel/

2 Zie voor het interview: https://www.felix-en-sofie.nl/boeken/536/willem-schinkel--denken-in-een-tijd-van-sociale-hypochondrie/

3 Zie voor het gesprek met Lex Bohlmeijer: https://decorrespondent.nl/12188/welkom-in-de-eeuw-van-de-necropolitiek-waar-bedrijven-en-staat-over-lijken-gaan/859165661376-5b62f7fb

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The Dark Underbelly of Capitalism: Exploring the Capitalism-War Connection.

Marius Nijenhuis

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The Dark Underbelly of Capitalism: Exploring the Capitalism-War Connection.

Marius Nijenhuis

Kant famously wrote that "the spirit of trade […] cannot coexist with war" and that liberal capitalism creates "perpetual peace" (1795, 92). More recently, it has again become popular to argue that liberal capitalism is 'the best' system of government. Fukuyama (1992) famously heralded Western liberal democracies as "the end of history", and proponents of democratic peace theory argue that liberal capitalism creates peace and prosperity (see for example Mousseau 2019). The well-known post-workerist Maurizio Lazzarato approaches the capitalist system from the opposite angle by exploring the connection between capitalism and war. Over the last decade, Lazzarato (2012; 2014; 2015) has explored the subjectivation and enslavement inherent to capitalism and the way in which financialization and indebtedness operate as particularly insidious mechanisms of control. In *Capital Hates Everyone: Fascism or Revolution* (2021), Lazzarato takes a particularly radical approach. In this book he draws on Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault, and Marx, among others, to argue that capitalism has an inherently violent and conflictual nature. He uses the book to argue that capitalism cannot be understood separately from historical and contemporary fascisms.

One reason for why capitalism continues to appear so peaceful and non-violent is specific to the neoclassical economic theory that dominates our contemporary understanding of capitalism. Within neoclassical economics, capitalism is typically understood as a system of free and (formally) equal economic actors that enter into peaceful and mutually beneficial exchanges. Graeber (2011, 21-41) argues that this view of the economy results from "the myth of barter", the idea that capitalism originated when one farmer needed milk and the other needed vegetables, leading these equal parties to barter their goods for mutual benefit. However, in practice capitalism has a dark underbelly of violence and exploitation which it hides through its veil of formal freedom and equality. Marx already noted that a prerequisite for capitalist relations was "primitive accumulation", the expropriation of land and property and their concentration in the hands of the few (1867, 873-876). In this regard, Marx (1867, 878-895) used the famous example of the British "enclosure movement" and the violent expropriation that this land-grabbing of the commons by the wealthy constituted.

More recently, various scholars have noted how violent dispossession continues to function under capitalism (see Harvey 2003; Li 2014). Thus, many capitalist exchanges, especially those done in and through the Global South, are made possible via violence or the threat thereof. Moreover, private property is itself constituted and maintained through violence and coercion. As Graeber (2011, 160) remarks, "think about what would happen if you were to insist on your right to enter a university library without a properly validated ID". Under capitalism there exists a comprehensive juridico-political system of coercion and force without which existing property relations would break down (Cohen 2011). Moreover, real-world capitalist relations are almost always characterized by unequal power relations due to past oppression, rendering racial, sexual, and other forms of exploitation possible through the vehicle of the 'free' and 'equal'

capitalist system (Mills 2017, 113-135). Is it any wonder, then, that many academics in Western Europe are white, whereas the cleaning staffs in the universities often consist of people of color?

In *Capital Hates Everyone*, Lazzarato takes inspiration from Foucault's 1975-1976 *Society Must Be Defended* (2003) lectures, in which Foucault approached power relations through the prism of civil war. Lazzarato contrasts this approach with how Foucault analyzed neoliberalism in his 1978-1979 lectures on *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008) as a predominantly non-violent governmentality, viz., as a non-violent "art of government" (Foucault 2007, 92), that mostly relies on incentives and stimuli, rather than coercion and force, to govern behavior. Foucault argued that neoliberalization entails the subjectivation of individuals into "entrepreneurs of the self", always concerned with growing their 'human capital' by becoming fitter, happier, more productive (2008, 226). In this way, neoliberalization transforms how we operate within the economic system and within (formerly) non-economic realms of life like health, fitness, and relationships. Lazzarato criticizes authors such as Dardot and Laval (2014) and Brown (2015; 2019) who, inspired by *The Birth of Biopolitics*, understand neoliberal capitalism as predominantly non-violent (Lazzarato 2021, 27-28). Lazzarato, in contrast, argues that all capitalisms, including neoliberal capitalism, have a violent undercurrent which consists of interrelated but irreducible (literal and figurative) wars on the basis of class, race, and gender. In the words of McClanahan (2017, 512), the idea that neoliberalism is characterized by subjectivation rather than force seems to be the standpoint of "the subject who polishes her college application, who selects among schools for his kid, who improves her scholarly CV through obtaining national grants". It is emphatically *not* the standpoint of a Chinese worker screwing in backplates of iPhones for 29 days a month.

Lazzarato uses the first two parts of *Capital Hates Everyone* to construct a post-workerist conception of capitalism that is influenced by Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) theory of machines. Lazzarato understands capitalism as "a series of devices for machinic enslavement and […] social subjection" (2006). These machinic assemblages are not technological per se, as there are various kinds of machines (technological, social, economic) that shape our lives. In Lazzarato's conception of capitalism, capital and labor are always at war, with putative social stability only being the result of one faction's temporary dominance. Lazzarato argues that within contemporary neoliberalism, which is characterized by the far-reaching financialization of our everyday lives and a dominance of capital over labor, our democracies are rendered increasingly illiberal by the dominance of the "capitalist war machine" that turns everything and everyone into cogs of capital's machine (2021, 165). Thus, Lazzarato explains how even leftist parties like Brazil's Worker's Party have become unable to escape the logic of financialization, as it has relied on debt as a means to give the poor access to essential services (31-40). Lazzarato argues that the resentment, frustration, and isolation of the "indebted men" that are created by this financialization only fans the flames of the new fascisms of Trump, Bolsonaro and friends (see Lazzarato 2012; 2015). Given the logic of war underlying capitalism, Lazzarato argues, these new fascisms are "the other face of neoliberalism" (2021, 9), and they are not some perverse neoliberal side-effect or

"neoliberal Frankenstein", as Brown (2019) argued. In this regard, Lazzarato points to the affinity of some neoliberals for right-wing dictators – Hayek infamously preferred a "liberal dictatorship to a democratic government devoid of liberalism" (Caldwell and Montes 2015, 44; Lazzarato 2021, 46-47) – and Lazzarato points to older syntheses of capital and fascism (like Nazism) to argue that the new fascisms are merely the other side of neoliberalization (2021, 41-46).

Lazzarato's examination of capitalism via the prism of war helps underscore the looming conflicts, the violence and exploitation, as well as the possibilities for revolution, that underly a capitalism of ever-deepening cleavages between winner and loser, subaltern and dominant, colonized and colonizer, man and woman, Dalit and Brahmin. Thereby, he lays bare the nasty and brutish side of capitalism. At the same time, and perhaps due to his Marxist sympathies, Lazzarato also risks developing a kind of totalizing theory which Foucault (2007, 6), as well as other postmoderns like Lyotard (1984), rightly criticized as inadequate for understanding social reality. The attempt to collapse all instances of capitalism into an all-encompassing theory of 'capital' and 'war', of 'fascism' and 'revolution', creates an understanding of society which is not equipped to cope with the multiplicity of social reality. It renders both capitalism and war as unitary and monolithic processes with always and everywhere the same underlying dynamics. One could therefore ask Lazzarato: How should we understand the "varieties of capitalism" and the "varieties of neoliberalism" which exist in different countries in regard to his seemingly totalizing theory of 'capitalism' (Hall and Soskice 2001; Birch and Mykhnenko 2009)? Has there been no relevant improvement between the capitalism of, say, the colonial period, and the capitalism of the twenty-first century? And does Lazzarato not underestimate the power that certain players have under neoliberalism to influence the underlying capitalist dynamics for the better, and to rein capital in a bit, as one could argue might be reflected by the recent agreement on an international corporate tax rate by the G7 (Rappeport 2021)?

Lazzarato uses the third and final part of the book to critique the limitations of the 'post-68 movement' in philosophy, by which he refers to, among other things, French Theory and Postcolonial Theory. What Lazzarato argues for, in our current predicament, is not just a social revolution that contests contemporary subjectivities and normalization processes, which is the focus of much post-68 thought, but also a political revolution 'beyond capitalism' (2021, 233). Making the Chinese workers at Foxconn or the Bangladeshi slaves in Qatar aware of their subjectivity and the normalizing forces at play, in so far as they are not already aware of these things, is in itself insufficient for freeing them from their predicament and will only make their lives appear more miserable. Hence, the exploited and enslaved (the Global North's precariat and proletariat, the Global South, people of color) do not just require a "revolutionary theory" which exposes relations of domination and subjectivation, they also need "a theory of revolution" which contains "strategic principles" to successfully establish the new world (Lazzarato 2021, 235).

There is a certain risk in revolutionary theories becoming disconnected from theories of revolution, which can be seen clearly under neoliberal capitalism. The social revolutions that have been brought about by the post-68 movement, however

emancipatory they may be, have again and again been co-opted by the dynamics of capitalism and put to use to hide capital's ugly face. Thus, the struggle against racism is co-opted for promoting one's global sports organization whilst simultaneously sponsoring large-scale slavery; LGBTQI+ rights are turned into something for selling electronic devices which are made on the backs of Chinese workers; and women's emancipation is deployed as an electoral slogan to push neoliberal economic policies that disproportionately harm welfare dependents. Lazzarato in this respect criticizes techno-optimists by arguing that technology and automation also will not free us from the "capitalist war machine" (2021, 165). Any technological machine, Lazzarato argues, is always already embedded in, and put to use by, the social machine (the "war machine") of capital (2021, 119). What we need is thus a social and political revolution away from capitalism, not merely 'technological innovation' by way of capital. Capitalism, then, is in some sense akin to 'The Blob': it is a depersonalized monster that consumes everything (technologies, social movements, etc.) in its path only to become stronger, bigger, and more dangerous for it. At the same time, real social change tends to disappear somewhere over the horizon.

In my view, Lazzarato should be careful of creating the impression that the post-68 movement has failed to connect its problematization of subjectivation with systematic critiques of capitalism and with revolutionary theories directed at toppling capitalist power relations. Whereas Foucault has mostly kept a 'safe' distance from Marxism, many post-68 scholars have never hidden their affinity for, and connection to, Marxism. The important task, then, should not be to chastise this or that social movement or intellectual for failing to focus on how to move beyond capitalism. Rather, we should attempt to find a space where "revolution", viz., a movement for bringing about a society beyond capitalism, and "becoming-revolutionary", viz., creating the revolutionary subject aware of his or her domination, can come together in a fruitful manner (Lazzarato 2021, 232). What we need in this regard is a 'revolutionary theory' that is produced by "future revolutionaries", and which enables these 'victims of capital' to become a revolutionary body whilst simultaneously offering "specific strategic principles" for reaching a world beyond capitalism (2021, 235). Given the multiplicity of cross-cutting cleavages that run through the social groups which potentially form the revolutionary social body, however, this will be an extremely difficult task, but considering the urgency of what Lazzarato (2021) calls our "apocalyptic times" (7), it might well be the most pressing task within social and political philosophy today.

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Biography

Marius Nijenhuis is a Research Master's student in Philosophy at the University of Amsterdam. He is currently writing his thesis on the justifiability of private debt under liberalism

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Enough with the Caricatures: Now is the Time for Solidarity

Janneke Toonders

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Enough with the Caricatures: Now is the Time for Solidarity

Janneke Toonders

In *Marxism and Intersectionality: Race, Gender, Class and Sexuality under Contemporary Capitalism* Ashley J. Bohrer argues that the "work of changing this world will have to be done in conversation with both of these theories" (27). The book is a monograph dedicated to bringing Marxism and intersectionality into a – long overdue and very welcome – conversation. Bohrer's personal motivation stems from her dissatisfaction with how these traditions usually approach one another; for, although both are theories on "the structure of injustice in the world" (19), they tend to approach each other with derision, resulting in caricaturist (mis)understandings. The book aims to "move beyond this intra-left stalemate" (14), since a more active engagement between Marxism and intersectionality could create the basis for a "theoretical coalition between perspectives" (23).

The main objective of the book is to understand how gender, race, sexuality, and class are constituted under capitalism. Capitalism, in this sense, is understood as "the grammar" of the world, insofar as it produces and maintains a whole range of oppressive and exploitive practices (14). These practices are particularly structured by the connections between race, class, gender, and sexuality. To be clear, Bohrer does not argue that phenomena such as colonization, racism, or heteropatriarchy can be fully accounted for in an analysis of capitalism. Nevertheless, she contends that such an analysis is needed for challenging, and hopefully uprooting, contemporary systems of exploitation and oppression.

Importantly, Bohrer does not believe in the rigid distinction between academia and activism. Marxism and intersectionality are two intellectual projects that are dedicated to causing a radical intervention in the world (21). Noteworthy is the consideration of the history of activism that is present in both Marxism and intersectionality throughout the book. Thus, while the book is mainly a theoretical exploration of the two traditions, a deliberate effort is made to consider actual struggles and movements. Bohrer's appeal to activism is also reflected in her own account of a possible shared future of the two traditions. Ultimately, the book works towards a "coalitional politics" (253) grounded in a particular understanding of solidarity that will be able to mobilize a true transformational power.

The desired theoretical coalition is built up in three stages: "Histories", "Debates", and "Possibilities". Since Bohrer must first demonstrate how the two traditions can be drawn together, the first two parts of the book are mainly devoted to providing a survey of both perspectives' thinkers and their theoretical positions. It is important to keep in mind that Bohrer treats both Marxism and intersectionality as internally heterogeneous traditions. According to her this allows for a much broader scope, one which includes thinkers who have contributed to, are in dialogue with, and have been influenced by, either Marxism or intersectionality.

The first chapter especially – cleverly called "Chapter Zero" – lays the groundwork for the book by giving a broad overview of different thinkers who had affiliations with both traditions. In doing so Bohrer wants to demonstrate in what sense there

is a certain historical and theoretical overlap. The main focus of the first chapter lies on the period between the 1920s and the 1980s, where critical thinkers came into contact through shared struggles (41). Bohrer traces the connections between the two traditions in early twentieth century activism, where there was a "massive upsurge in black partition in socialist, communist and Marxist organizations in the United States" (42), to the late twentieth century, where new approaches such as the jeopardy approach and standpoint theory were developed. Additionally, Bohrer considers the precursors of intersectionality, since this was only fully developed during the 1980s. The positions of thinkers such as Claudia Jones, W. E. B. Du Bois, Audre Lorde, bell hooks, and many more, testify to a certain common ground between the two traditions.

Subsequently, the second chapter explores the full-blown theories of intersectionality, by discussing several "positions shared by most if not all intersectional theorists" despite "internal debates" (85). After discussing five definitions of intersectionality (respectively offered by Kimberlé Crenshaw, Leslie McCall, Patricia Hill Collins, Ange Marie Hancock, and Vivian May), Bohrer reconstructs "six postulates" that serve as broad principles on which nearly all intersectional thinkers agree (84, 91). These postulates are also central to Bohrer's own argument. Insights such as the "inseparability of oppressions" (i.e. viewing oppressions as "mutually constitutive"; 91), or the claim that "oppressions cannot be ranked" (i.e. the "rejection of primacy"; 92) are crucial for the arguments she makes later on.

Demonstrating that Marxism and intersectionality are not "two completely exogamous traditions" (78) allows Bohrer to engage more specifically with why and how these traditions diverge in contemporary debates. After all, despite their somewhat shared history there have been numerous debates between the two traditions. Chapters three through five elaborate on these debates, and how they have been dominated by mutual misunderstanding. Bohrer attempts to show how these misunderstandings are grounded in certain caricatures rather than in accurate comprehension. She thoroughly engages with the Marxist critiques of intersectionality which rely on the arguments that the latter is a form of identity politics, that it is postmodern, and that it is liberal. This is followed by her discussion on intersectionality's critiques of Marxism, according to which Marxism is class reductionist, essentially Eurocentric, and homogenizing of the proletariat.

Surely these caricatures may be true for some Marxists and for some intersectional thinkers, and as such, Bohrer's point is not that these caricatures are completely unfounded. Rather, she believes that the "best versions" of these two traditions have a certain affinity, while the caricatures are much closer to the worst versions (20). These caricatures – as exacerbated tendencies existing within both traditions – should therefore be taken as a warning; in this sense, Bohrer argues, their mutual misunderstanding could actually be quite informative.

While continuing to engage extensively with other thinkers, Bohrer explicates her argument in the book's third part. The general aim of this last part is to map new possibilities for theory (academia) as well as for the organization of movements (activism) by shifting beyond the supposed stalemate. In order to do this, Bohrer begins by examining

the relation between oppression and exploitation for fully understanding the system of contemporary capitalism. This is followed by a discussion of the method of dialectics as a way of reading capitalism's mechanisms and operations. Finally, in the last chapter, the question of organization and the notion of solidarity is revisited.

In the sixth chapter, Bohrer rethinks the relation between exploitation and oppression. On the one hand, structures of exploitation are usually understood as the systematic taking advantage of workers' labor and their products. On the other hand, structures of oppression are seen as forms of systematic subjugation based on race, gender, sexuality and so on. Generally – though there are certainly exceptions – Marxists have seen oppression as a consequence of exploitation, while intersectional thinkers have viewed exploitation as a form of oppression (187, 193). Inspired by intersectionality's rejection of hierarchizing oppressions, Bohrer proposes to render exploitation and oppression as "equiprimordial" (196). From this perspective, capitalism is a system which has both as its constitutive logics: "they are equally fundamental, equally deep-rooted, and equally anchoring of the contemporary world" (198-199). Hence, no analysis of a phenomenon will ever be complete without taking into account the interplay between oppression and exploitation.

To demonstrate why we should understand oppression and exploitation as equiprimordial, Bohrer offers the historical example of chattel slavery. Without doubt, an analysis of chattel slavery must take into account the exploitation of the enslaved's labor; this analysis cannot be complete, however, without also considering the racist ideologies that were equally fundamental in sustaining slavery. Chattel slavery was racialized exploitation, but the capitalist profit motive cannot fully account for the structures of racial oppression. Furthermore, the logics of oppression and exploitation distinctive of chattel slavery were also permeated with gender and sexuality. Hence, Bohrer asserts: "neither exploitation nor oppression can separately capture the phenomenon" (200). An equiprimordial analysis can do justice to the multiple yet related shapes of oppression and exploitation under chattel slavery (without reducing one to the other). Considering both oppression and exploitation as co-constitutive logics of capitalism (in all its historical formations), Bohrer thus paves the way for a non-reductive approach.

The following chapter elaborates on how we can understand capitalism's complexity, since its logics produce all sorts of real contradictions. For example, it "produces *both* enormous wealth *and* abject poverty at one and the same time" (original emphasis; 209). According to Bohrer it is the dialectic method that is capable of navigating us through capitalism's muddied waters. First, however, dialectics is critically reconsidered in order to arrive at the "dialectics of difference" (225). Bohrer wants to get rid of two misconceptions concerning the nature of difference. According to her, both the liberal tendency to entirely erase difference, and the neoliberal notion to render us all completely unique, are dangerous. Such one-sided approaches are incapable of recognizing how capitalism differentiates and homogenizes us at one and the same time. A dialectic of difference, however, can grasp how capitalism is "bringing us simultaneously, sometimes painfully, closer together and farther apart" (226).

Capitalism's tendency of concurrent homogenization and differentiation is, according to Bohrer, a crucial piece in the puzzle of organizing "political relationships

of coalition" (232). The last chapter – "Solidarity in the House of Difference" – turns towards the question of solidarity, and how it can recognize both difference and relation. The title is a reference to Lorde's assertion that connection and alliance is found in the "house of difference" (2018, 268). While elaborating on Lorde's claim, Bohrer writes: "we do not have to bridge our difference; we already live together in the house of difference" (254). In the final chapter, Bohrer starts by discussing the orthodox Marxist idea that solidarity ultimately relies on a notion of "commensurability" (233). From this perspective, however, solidarity is thought to be an articulation of a shared condition or a unity. The issue with this is that a coalition would only become possible at the very lowest level of commonality. As a result, moments of difference or non-unity are either thought to be secondary or completely irrelevant.

One of intersectionality's substantial insights is that "solidarity does not have to be based in commensurability" (249). Indeed, the non-commensurability of positions is often central to intersectional thinking. As an example, Bohrer briefly elaborates on Crenshaw's (1989) discussion of the momentous case of *DeGraffenreid v. General Motors* from 1976. After they were fired, five black women accused the automobile company of specifically discriminating against black women. However, because not all women (i.e. white women) had been fired, nor all black people (i.e. black men), the claim was rejected. Hence, the court did not recognize the particular ways in which black women were marginalized, and instead assumed that the "black women's position is essentially *commensurable* with black men and/or white women" (original emphasis; 250).

Not all experiences of oppression and exploitation are similar, shared, or equally affecting everyone. The problem with a mobilization strategy that assumes a certain minimum level of commonality, Bohrer claims, is that it can only recognize "the ways oppression and exploitation affect all of 'us'" (259). Understanding solidarity as an expression of shared situation then quickly becomes what she calls a "politics of the lowest common denominator" (251). Instead of a politics that only requires action when 'everyone' is affected, Bohrer proposes a "coalitional politics" (253) where solidarity is constructed through both difference and relation. Arguably, one would not need to form a coalition at all if everybody already shared the same position. The value of a coalition lies in its capacity to relate to one another, *despite* certain differences that may exist between communities. A relational solidarity is therefore capable of truly mobilizing a transformational power:

> Capitalism thus links us together, in a tie that binds us, often painfully, in relation to one another. This moment of relation is the true ground of solidarity. […] Solidarity is thus the name for affirming the differences that exploitation and oppression produce within and between us; it is also the name for recognizing that every time I fight against anyone's oppression or exploitation, I fight against my own, I fight against everyone's (259).

With this plea Bohrer concludes her inspiring book. To stand in solidarity means to recognize that there are different experiences of oppression and exploitation, of silencing and marginalization. It is the realization that we are all affected by capitalist structures of domination, but in particular and distinct ways. Solidarity, Bohrer writes, is about "mobilizing

the transformational power of differential communities" (260). Understanding that various groups and communities have different strengths can help us gain a more complex and complete understanding of what might be possible. By putting Marxism and intersectionality into a conversation Bohrer begins a dialogue that might offer a deeper understanding of capitalism's structures of oppression and exploitation. In doing so she charts a creative and exciting path for an anti-capitalist politics.

Marxism and Intersectionality provides an insightful and varied overview of texts, concepts, and thinkers. Even though the reader is exposed to a sometimes overwhelming amount of information, the book is incredibly easy to follow. Bohrer harnesses insights from 'both sides' at every step of the way. She is therefore, while making her own arguments, in dialogue with a tremendous range of thinkers and their positions. In general I believe that Bohrer accurately examines the two traditions, and successfully undermines a number of caricatures, which certainly invites further discussion. In doing so the book succeeds in clearing a path that begins to move beyond the stalemate. Since Bohrer is not interested in constructing an "uber-theory" (23), the relationship between Marxism and intersectionality is one of (theoretical) coalition too.

The book makes an interesting case for why these two traditions should further engage with each other, and hopefully this will be the start of a much longer and stimulating conversation. The book is especially interesting for those academics and activists who are concerned with thinking and articulating new opportunities for an anti-capitalist politics. For those who are already well-acquainted with Marxist theory or with intersectional thinking, or with both, the content of some sections in the first and second part might already be familiar; the third part, however, is unquestionably appealing to anyone who wants to unsettle the structures of domination.

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Biography

Janneke Toonders is enrolled in the Research Master in Philosophy at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. She specializes in social and political philosophy, with a focus on topics such as post-Marxism, (symbolic) political representation and solidarity.

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Yvette Wijnandts

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Rejecting Animal Exploitation: A Case for Interspecies Solidarity

Yvette Wijnandts

Katerina Kolozova's book *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals: A non-Marxist critique of capital, philosophy and patriarchy* explores capitalism's exploitation of animals. Kolozova positions her argument in response to posthuman ideas grounded in the works of scholars such as Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, Katherine Hayles, and Cary Wolfe. Kolozova identifies posthumanist theories as often falling into three potential traps, namely that they follow a teleological narrative, continue to place humans as main points of reference, and lean toward transhumanism. Kolozova argues that a Laruellian approach offers a strong alternative to these apparent shortcomings. Specifically, she uses Laruelle's framework of "non-Marxism" to prove that the exploitation of animals for human profit is philosophically indefensible.

The title of Kolozova's book is immediately striking and calls for explanation. Throughout *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals*, Kolozova's actual use of the word "Holocaust" is sparing, and when it is used is done so in a way that could be considered provocative; while the term 'the Holocaust' usually evokes images of the Jewish Holocaust, Kolozova does not reference the Jewish Holocaust at all. Instead, in *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals*, the word "Holocaust" is used in a literal sense. Kolozova supports this kind of usage by noting that a holocaust was "originally a sacrificial burning of animal flesh […] by men" (110). Within the argument presented in *The Holocaust of Animals*, the Holocaust is thus first to be understood as the sacrifice of the physical animal body for the purpose of pure reason. Kolozova integrates this use of the concept of "Holocaust" within Marxist theory. In its simplest form, capitalism, Kolozova explains, works to sell commodities for money that can be used to purchase more commodities: the C-M-C equation. However, as Marx points out, within capitalism money has become its own commodity. Therefore, he proposes the M-C-M' equation: Commodities are circulated for the purpose of increasing money, and money has become a goal in itself. Kolozova continues this line of thought and argues that within capitalism, where capital should be produced purely for capital's sake, materiality will be the ultimate sacrifice. In other words, Capitalism in its purest form will eventually demand the Holocaust of materiality itself.

It is in Laruellian theory that the sub-title of *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals* finds its roots. Kolozova explains Marxist, Laruellian, and non-Marxist theory in the introduction of her book. She outlines Marx's and Laruelle's shared ambition of replacing "philosophy" with "realism". The philosophy Marx and Laruelle aim to displace is a philosophy that desires "to create a reality of transcendence of the real, or sublimation of the real into sense, meaning, intellect as perfected form of the real, as if a more evolved plane of realness" (5-6). As an alternative, Marx turns to materialism, which he referred to as "realism" or "naturalism". In doing so, he suggests a 'scientific' treatment of philosophy; philosophy should be derived from the material, not the abstract or the transcendental. Marx, as well as Laruelle and Kolozova, agree that science, as meant by Marx, offers a valuable alternative to philosophy's desire for transcendence; science accepts the finitude of thoughts, and thus also the finitude of itself. Non-Marxism is where Laruelle

continues Marx's "scientific" approach to philosophy and adds that Marxism itself, along with philosophical theory in general, will always be incomplete. Here Laurelle agrees with Marx's prioritization of materiality and the real, but insists that this must be applied to Marxism itself. In other words, "non-Marxism" does not step away from Marxist thought but rather applies it to itself to ensure that it does not succumb to the transcendentalism it seeks to overcome. Kolozova agrees with Laurelle here and thus attempts to ground her critique of capitalism's holocaust of animals on "non-Marxist" theory.

The first chapter of the book positions capitalism in philosophy and uses linguistics to explore how non-capitalist understandings of species can form. The dyad between the physical and the automaton, or 'signifier' in traditional linguistics, is central in this chapter. Following Saussure's argument that language is both structural and arbitrary (in that it adheres to a structure but that the words within that structure are arbitrary), Kolozova makes the argument that linguistic theory allows thinkers to return to the "real," and therefore approach the world in a non-philosophical, i.e. scientific, manner. In other words, while philosophy has prioritized the signifier, or the automaton, in its explanations of the world, a linguistic approach explores how these signifiers became meaningful by going back to the signified, or 'real.' The chapter continues to position capitalism on the side of value, rather than the physical because, as Marx explained, within capitalism, value (monetarized or fetishized) has become a goal in and of itself. Thus, human and non-human animals are understood in terms of value rather than their physicality within capitalist frameworks. A non-philosophical approach prioritizes the physical over the automaton, which is required to envisage life in non-capitalist terms. A non-philosophical approach to capitalism, therefore, also leads to a non-Marxist approach to capitalism. Kolozova agrees with Marx that thought is finite, and a return to the material is necessary to break away from capitalism. However, Marx places revolt within the human classes whose labor is exploited and fetishized. Kolozova takes this a step further and decenters the humanist perspective. She proposes the development of "consciousness of the exploited" rather than the Marxist development of "class consciousness" to form a more-than-human inclusive approach to resistance against capitalism and exploitation. To change the treatment of the exploited requires a new shared consciousness of the exploited "of and against the exploited animal, body, nature, real economy, and reality in the name of projected values and virtues" (48). In other words, non-capitalism can only exist if non-humans are included within its framework.

Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals' second chapter positions its argument in broader philosophical and linguistic theory. In this chapter, Kolozova identifies similarities between Marx's materialist formalism and structural linguistics. Formalism's strength lies in its acknowledgement that it is self-reflexive and will not provide definite, all-encompassing answers. Due to these abilities, formalism allows philosophy to depart from transcendentalism and enter the realm of the material and real, argues Kolozova. The second part of the chapter then applies Marx's formalization to philosophy and argues how feminism, through this framework, is allowed to return to a universal approach rather than one defined by difference. Through formalization, difference becomes a richness rather than a reason for division.

In "Subjectivity as inherently philosophical entity and the third person's perspective", the third chapter of *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals*, Kolozova argues that the concept of subjectivity is disconnected from the physical/real. The chapter starts by positioning itself within Marxist and Laruellian theory; philosophy should not aim to offer universal truths but position itself within the world. Thus, philosophy and the world should be studied unilaterally rather than in their totality. Kolozova connects this instruction to Marx's claim that philosophy's fundamental problem is its subjectivity and denial thereof. Because philosophy is inherently subjective, it will inevitably be limited to partiality. Therefore, philosophy can never offer universal answers to the questions it aims to answer.

The penultimate chapter carves out how the arguments presented in the book differ from other scholarly explorations of critical theory, specifically theory situated in feminist philosophical arguments. The first half of the chapter centers on Luce Irigaray's work, using it to explore how "[i]n the capitalist world, the excess commodity production is solved through the Holocaust of use-value – literal destruction of products – to preserve the mathematical projection of surplus value" (120). This Holocaust affects not only commodity products; within capitalism, "a spectacular entity of the Transcendental [is] enabled by the *holocaust* of its physicality" (ibid.). Consequently, the chapter argues that different feminist critiques are still complicit in remaining within capitalism, thus repeating the same narratives that maintain patriarchal and anthropocentric power structures. Kolozova draws upon examples such as transhumanism, xenofeminism, and Haraway's figure of the Cyborg to make this argument. In summary, as long as feminist theory does not take a radical stance against capitalism, rather than abolishing patriarchy, feminism will unassumingly but inevitably contribute to power structures that oppress and marginalize human and non-human animals.

The fifth chapter, which concludes Kolozova's argument, establishes the value of Laruellian theory in critical animal studies. Kolozova relates it to Haraway's position that animal rights should be understood in terms of "instrumentality". This instrumental approach towards animal rights is outlined in *When Species Meet*. Haraway proposes approaching animals as fellow laborers for their roles as lab animals, food animals, and service animals, and argues that humans must learn to treat non-human animals responsibly. This does not mean that humans cannot kill or work with animals but that humans should recognize and respond to the sacrifices non-human animals make. Kolozova, however, argues that the shift Haraway proposes is value-based and guilty of "philomorphising" animals. In other words, perceiving non-human animals as laborers focuses on how they are valued by human animals, without having much impact upon the non-human animals' lives themselves. In addition, any argument based on labor rights falls short, as laborers are consistently losing their status and rights; non-human animals will not gain anything by being lifted to "laborers" if human laborers are increasingly being turned into resources themselves. Kolozova instead proposes that humans acknowledge non-human animals as companions first and foremost. It is only in this way that their lived, material circumstances can and should be improved.

Furthermore, Kolozova argues that acknowledging the need for humans to stop making animals suffer is not only important for animal welfare but is also key for

the posthuman endeavor. She explains that "only by the emancipation of the animal [is it] that the marginalized and exploited parts of humanity can be free from suffering and killing. Posthumanism can accomplish its goal of human decentering only by way of emancipating the non-human, beginning with the animal […] They do not possess a self as they do not possess reason" (148). In other words, philosophy can only be escaped by emancipating materiality for the sake of being material. Other attempts at emancipation will inevitably fail to address the structures that are at the root of oppression.

Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals would be most valuable for scholars of Kolozova's work, as well as scholars of Marxist and Laruellian theory. It is strongly informed by the works of these two scholars to build upon posthuman arguments regarding the exploitation of animals. In so doing, Kolozova's exploration and explanation of Marxist and Laruelle's thought is of great value for both new and experienced scholars of their works. Experienced Marxist and Laruellian theory scholars will enjoy Kolozova's original and interesting interpretations of their works. Early scholars of their work will likely be intimidated by Kolozova's thorough readings of these theories. Still, they will find that the book offers valuable and in-depth explanations of where and how these theories inform her own thinking.

In summary, Kolozova offers a new approach to responding to philosophical questions of animal exploitation. Her commitment to the rejection of animal exploitation is admirable. *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals* does not, however, offer many tools to help translate Kolozova's argument into action or change; it is first and foremost a theoretical exploration of the field of animal philosophy. In addition, it is important to note that Kolozova presents a *Laruellian* critique of animal exploitation. While the book explores other forms of animal theory, most notably posthumanism, this is predominantly done to situate her argument. However, depending on the reader's aims for taking up this book, this may not be a significant loss. At times, the approach towards the main argument of *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals* feels a little slow, but this is also one of the book's main strengths. Kolozova offers carefully constructed and essential arguments that are novel and particularly interesting for those positioned in animal philosophy.

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Biography

Yvette Wijnandts has studied cultural studies, political studies, and feminist philosophy in Maastricht, Utrecht, and Singapore. Currently, she is a PhD student at the University of Adelaide. She explores relationships between human and non-human animals and the ethical norms that are constructed within these connections.