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One in Seven and a Half: Local Activism against the Global Climate Crisis

Bionote: Zdravko Saveski (1976), PhD in Political Science, is a researcher at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje. He is author of *Democracy: Models and Dilemmas* (2011) and *Beyond Uniform Thinking: Rediscovery of the Left* (2006), co-author of several books including *No pasarán: Participation of Fighters from Macedonia in the Spanish Civil War (*2016) and *Nationalism In/Inside Context: Cooperation of Albanians and Macedonians from the Ilinden Uprising until the People's Liberation War (2014)*, and editor of *Strike: Experiences and Actualities* (2011) (all in Macedonian).

Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje
zdravko.saveski@isshs.edu.mk

Abstract: The climate crisis has become not only serious but urgent problem too. A lot of years have been wasted in palliative measures that have not solved the problems. And those wasted years have closed the space to search for solutions inside the framework of some kind of Green capitalism. At the present time, solutions to the climate crisis are still possible, but they will require drastic, even systematic measures. This article analyzes the role of capitalism in creating and deepening climate crisis. Capitalism is not only a type of economy but a type of society. It has achieved hegemony in the field of ideas and values, socializing people and internalizing its values among the losers of the system, as well as among its beneficiaries. Due to this, overcoming capitalism is not an easy or simple task. However, as it is argued in the article, the only humane alternative to overcome climate crisis is to overcome capitalism as a type of economy and a type of society.

Keywords: climate crisis, capitalism, system change

Introduction

As the climate crisis accelerates faster than expected,[1] an increased number of people from across the globe are growing concerned about its effects and realizing that something has to be done.[2] With the majority of people continuing down the path of business as usual, and governments acting as if they are "actually" doing something, calls for action are mounting by scientists and activists. The urgency of the moment is illustrated by Greta Thunberg's diagnosis that it is time to "start panicking about climate change,"[3] and David Attenborough's conclusion: "We cannot be radical enough."[4]

What can and should be done? In countries like North Macedonia, where people are acutely disappointed by politics, where nihilism reigns, it is very difficult to motivate them to take action on any issue, including the climate crisis. This inactivity is further reinforced by the realization that this is an issue that should be tackled globally, that the contributions of big industrial countries are far more crucial and that actions taken by politicians and corporation owners can affect far bigger change than the actions of single individuals. After all, there are more than 7.5 billion people living on the planet, surely what an ordinary person does in his/her everyday life is irrelevant from the standpoint of preventing the climate crisis from escalating. It is easy to fall into the trap of this atomistic, pessimistic and demobilizing way of thinking. However, such views ignore some basic facts. First, when a single person begins to act, they are far from being alone in a world of 7.5 billion passive people. Many dozens or even hundreds of millions of people are already taking, at the very least, modest action in this global struggle with huge environmental and societal repercussions. So, when someone begins to act, it is far from being an isolated act. Even when the passivity of people in their immediate circles creates the illusion that they act alone.

[1] William J. Ripple et al., "World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency," *BioScience*, biz088 (November 5, 2019). https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biz088.
[2] Sandra Laville and Jonathan Watts, "Across the Globe, Millions Join Biggest Climate Protest Ever," *The Guardian* (September 21, 2019). https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/sep/21/across-the-globe-millions-join-biggest-climate-protest-ever.
[3] Sam Morgan, "Greta Thunberg Urges MEPs to 'Panic Like the House Is on Fire,'" *Euractiv* (April 16, 2019). https://www.euractiv.com/section/climate-environment/news/greta-thunberg-urges-meps-to-panic-like-the-house-is-on-fire.
[4] Adam Vaughan, "David Attenborough On Climate Change: 'We Cannot Be Radical Enough,'" *New Scientist* (July 9, 2019). https://www.newscientist.com/article/2209126-david-attenborough-on-climate-change-we-cannot-be-radical-enough.

When someone starts to act, s/he joins the ranks of the millions of people who already act, dedicating their time, energy, and, in some cases, their lives to the struggle. S/he becomes one of the millions of active people with his/her efforts adding to their efforts. Realization of this fact should be inspiring, no matter how overwhelming the passivity and conservatism in the immediate circle of the concrete person is.

The second important point is the necessity of keeping in mind that the number of countries in the world is much smaller than the number of people living on the planet. Accordingly, while a single person is only one in 7.5 billion, a single country is one amongst two hundred. Why is it important to keep this proportion in mind? If changes are implemented on the national level, they can still amount to relatively minor contributions, which are nonetheless still much bigger than the contributions of a single person. A country that implements measures combating the climate crisis can be an inspiring example for the rest to follow (as Bhutan has already done)[5] and can act together with other countries to press for more international and meaningful action. Therefore, pressing your own government to act in a responsible way concerning the climate crisis can enhance the effects of the efforts of single persons, no matter how small and "insignificant" the country we are talking about is.

This leads us to our third important point. A person aware of the climate crisis can and should act on a personal level, but s/he also must join forces with other people in pressing for and implementing the measures needed to solve the climate crisis. Collective action has a multiplying effect - it is much more potent than individual action alone. The effects of a number of individuals acting together are greater than the effects of the same number of individuals acting in isolation from each other. Common actions help overcome our sense of individual alienation and aid in the building of communities. This is crucial if the societal roots of the environmental crisis are to be addressed. And they need to be addressed, if substantial measures against climate crisis are to be implemented.

1. The Dynamics of a Crisis

The issue that we deal with here is (still) mostly known as "climate change." However, this phrase has a euphemistic tone which in itself serves to delude people into thinking that climate change is not a pressing issue. In order to get the message through to people that the problem is very serious and urgent, a change in terminology is being implemented by many activists and media outlets, who talk about "climate crisis" instead of "climate change." As the UK *Guardian* has explained regarding this shift in their 2019 environmental pledge:

> We will use language that recognizes the severity of the crisis we're in. In May 2019, the *Guardian* updated its style guide to introduce terms that more accurately describe the environmental crises facing the world, using "climate emergency, crisis or breakdown" and "global heating" instead of "climate change" and "global warming." We want to ensure that we are being scientifically precise, while also communicating clearly with readers on the urgency of this issue.[6]

There are significant changes happening in the climate and they have already reached crisis levels. It is crucial not to avoid this awareness, both in language and in reality. Since words influence thoughts, and not only the other way around.

In order to understand the climate crisis better, it is important to keep in mind what the crisis as a phenomenon is. Crises are non-routine events or series of events that shake up the current state of affairs and create high levels of instability and uncertainty.[7] In most cases they come as unexpected, with little or no warning; the elements leading to a crisis, however, can be latently building for some time. During times of crisis, business as usual is no longer possible. It creates a dynamic state of affairs full of risks, threats and dangers but also simultaneously creates opportunities not otherwise open in regular, non-crisis times. Due to these features, crises are periods

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[5] Tyler Protano-Goodwin, "Bhutan Is the Only Carbon Negative Country in the World," *GVI* (May 2019). https://www.gvi.co.uk/blog/bhutan-carbon-negative-country-world.

[6] "*The Guardian* Environmental Pledge," *The Guardian* (October 15, 2019). https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2019/oct/16/the-guardians-climate-pledge-2019.
[7] See M. W. Seeger, T. L. Sellnow and R. R. Ulmer, "Communication, Organization, and Crisis," *Communication Yearbook*, Vol. 21 (1998), 231-75.

in which power and resources are redistributed either upwards or downwards. As for the effects of a crisis, they can either be reversible and repairable or irreversible and irreparable.

The climate crisis is such type of crisis that is characterized by long latent phase. The temperature is rising slowly, the rain is precipitating slowly, the ice is melting slowly. Sometimes things are getting more pronounced, hurricanes become more frequent and drastic, droughts more severe than before, but the pace of the crisis is still generally so slow that it, if not carefully observed, can easily be considered as a natural phenomenon, having little to no human impact. Even though it can be easily underestimated because of its relatively non-drastic effects during its latent phase, it needs only to deepen a little bit more, before it will have extreme and catastrophic environmental and societal repercussions, with cascading and irreversible effects. And the "zero hour," after which little can be done to reverse the effects of climate change, is quickly approaching. As António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations has stressed, citing the warning from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2018 Special Report, humankind has only 11 years to avoid potentially irreversible climate disruption.[8] This means that we are living in historic times, with our generation being the last generation that can prevent irreparable damage arising from the climate crisis. If we fail our task, if we become aware of how serious the problem really is only after its effects become irreversible, then lamenting the wasted opportunities will be worth nothing. To give only one example, if Greenland's ice melts, the sea level will rise by seven meters,[9] and there will be no way to repair the damage. When it is gone, the ice cannot be recreated anew. The only way to avoid the consequences and cascading effects of Greenland's ice melt is to reverse policies and practices as quickly as possible. As for the consequences, it is also important to keep in mind that they will not be distributed evenly. The poor and global South will suffer the worst hit.

As with any other crisis, the climate crisis will lead to the redistribution of power and resources. Also, as with any other crisis, the climate crisis will open opportunities that are absent in regular, non-crisis times. The Great Recession one decade ago is a useful reminder. The crisis created by unrestrained capitalism has led to an even bigger concentration of capital in the hands of a few. Those who were responsible for the crisis benefited the most from it. Such outcomes are always a possibility when crises happen. The current situation with the climate crisis will also lead to the redistribution of power and resources. Whether it will be an upward or downward redistribution is still an open question. As John F. Kennedy once said: "In a crisis, be aware of the danger but recognize the opportunity." The capitalists know it quite well. The question is whether common people are aware of it?

2. What Happens in North Macedonia?

Most of the people in North Macedonia are not even informed as to the seriousness and urgency of the climate crisis. Even when they get the information, apart from environmental cycles, it does not change their attitudes or behavior. They are consumed by their everyday concerns and concentrated on the day-to-day power struggles of the establishment parties.

An additional motive for inaction is North Macedonia's objectively small contribution to the climate crisis. Due to its small population and territory its ability to produce or curb the causes of climate change are relatively minimal. However, what should be kept in mind is that this is a global struggle in which local contributions are not irrelevant, even when we are talking about small countries. What is even more relevant, however, is the fact that while local efforts contribute to the global struggle, their benefit is first and foremost local. If measures are implemented to curb air pollution in Skopje, Bitola and Tetovo, the global CO_2 emissions will be reduced, but the effects will be primarily local, reducing health hazards for the inhabitants of these cities and increasing their quality of life.

Faced with increased pressure from the public to address environmental problems, the government generally responds by doing as little as possible, implementing, at best, only half-measures which do not solve the problem. Environmental protection is simply not high on their agenda. As a matter of fact, it is on the bottom.

We will take the example of forestation levels, especially because there is longitudinal data available, enabling us to draw conclusions on the actions, dedication and sense of urgency by the government.

[8] "Only 11 Years Left to Prevent Irreversible Damage from Climate Change, Speakers Warn during General Assembly High-Level Meeting," *United Nations* (March 28, 2019). https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/ga12131.doc.htm.

[9] Stephen Leahy, "Greenland's Ice Is Melting Four Times Faster Than Thought - What It Means," *National Geographic* (January 21, 2019). https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/01/greeland-ice-melting-four-times-faster-than-thought-raising-sea-level.

As can be seen from Figure 1, which covers data on forestation over the last 15 years (2004-2018), there was a peak in the period from 2008 to 2010, when the campaign "Tree Day - Plant Your Future" had started with the support of the conservative government of VMRO-DPMNE.[10] Even though this campaign was terminated by the government of SDSM in 2017 (quite indicatively, only a day after the ratification of the Paris Agreement),[11] the level of forestation in the years after 2011 has dropped significantly, reaching its lowest levels in 2017 and 2018.
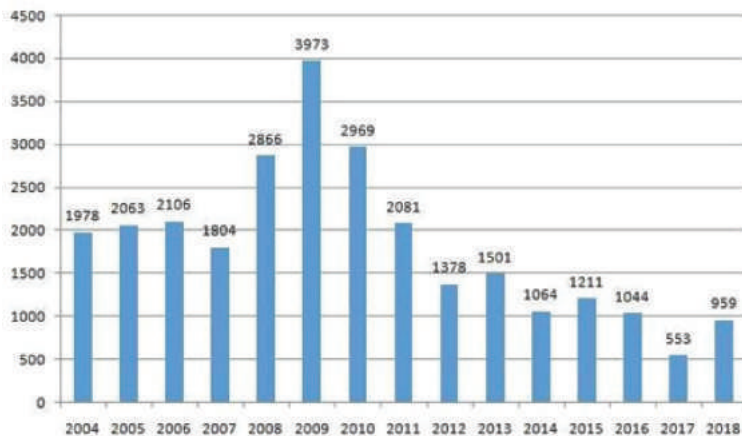
Figure 1. Forestation in North Macedonia (2004-2018), in hectares. Source: *Statistical Yearbooks of the Republic of North Macedonia (Agriculture, Forestry)*; *MakStat Database (Agriculture, Forestry)*.

When we compare these forestation levels with the ones during the socialist period, we see how extremely low the forestation levels in recent years really are. Available data since 1960 shows that the forestation levels in the last two years are not only the worst lev-

els within the last 15-year period, but the worst two years in half a century. There has not been a year with lower forestation levels in Macedonia since 1965! The annual forestation level in 2009, which is the highest in the whole period following the reintroduction of capitalism (i.e., since 1991), is a level that was surpassed in every single year in the 15-year period from 1975 until the fall of socialism in 1990. In 1982, the year with the highest annual level of forestation during socialism, 11,328 hectares were forested. Forestation in 2009, the year with the highest annual level of forestation during capitalism, with its 3,973 hectares, is a minuscule achievement in comparison.[12] And, as can be seen from Figure 2, the total level of forestation achieved in the 28 years after the reintroduction of capitalism is still significantly lower (64,725 hectares) than the level of forestation achieved in the 1980s (76,582 hectares). This makes forestation one of the many areas where the achievements accomplished under capitalism in Macedonia are lower than those achieved under socialism. Other areas include: the living standards of common people, the quality of healthcare, education, culture, and the levels of corruption and criminality. Socialism in Macedonia, and in Yugoslavia more generally, has by no means delivered on its promises. However, this statement is far more true for capitalism than for socialism.
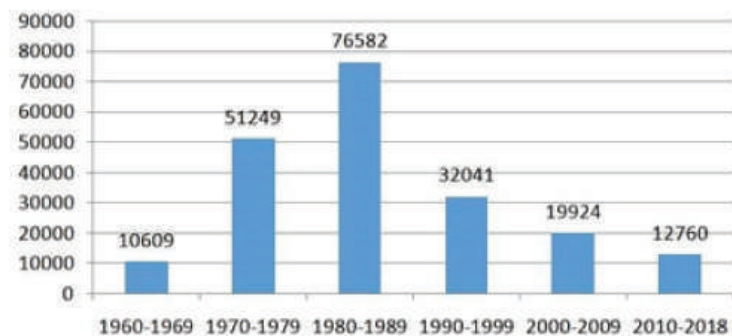
Figure 2. Forestation in North Macedonia by decades (1960-2018), in hectares. Source: *Statistical Yearbooks of the Republic of North Macedonia (Agriculture, Forestry)*; *MakStat Database (Agriculture, Forestry)*.

The struggle against the climate crisis has three levels. The first level requires comprehending that the climate crisis is not only a se-

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[10] Kole Casule, "Macedonians Plant Six Million Trees in Single Day," *Reuters* (November 19, 2008). https://www.reuters.com/article/us-macedonia-trees/macedonians-plant-six-million-trees-in-single-day-idUSTRE4AI49U20081119.
[11] "Владата на Република Македонија ја одржа 36-тата седница: Љубомир Јовески е предлог на владата за јавен обвинител; Заради незадоволителни резултати 'Денот на дрвото' се укинува; Обезбедена е финансиска поддршка за 11 Октомври - Еурокомпозит АД Прилеп" ["The Government of Macedonia Held Its 36th Meeting: Ljubomir Joveski Is the Government's Nominee for Chief Prosecutor; Tree Day Abandoned Due to Unsatisfactory Results; Financial Support for 11 Oktomvri - Eurokompozit Guaranteed"], *Government of the Republic of Macedonia* (November 7, 2017). https://vlada.mk/node/13644; "Закон за ратификација на Договорот од Париз, 6.11.2017" ["Law for Ratification of the Paris Agreement, 6.11.2017"], *State Gazette of Republic of Macedonia*, No. 161 (2017). http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/4b681ad0c79a44d5bd4bf15098f8108e.pdf.

[12] *Statistical Yearbooks of the Republic of North Macedonia (Agriculture, Forestry)*. http://www.stat.gov.mk/PublikaciiPoOblast_en.aspx?id=34&rbrObl=37.

rious but an urgent problem that requires immediate action. The second level requires pressing for half-measures and implementing them on a personal level - realizing that these half-measures are a good way forward and that they have the potential to prevent climate change. And the third level requires comprehending that the half-measures, even though they represent a step forward, come too little too late, meaning that there is a pressing need to address the root of the problem.

Most of the people in North Macedonia are not even on the first level. It also takes time for most people to progress from the second level to the third, since they first need to see for themselves that half-measures promoted by the governments are not solving the problem, that some of them are implemented just to create the impression that something is being done and that their actions are lagging far behind their words. Since the climate crisis has already deepened and urgent action is needed, we clearly need to progress, as soon as possible, to the third level. Unfortunately, in countries like North Macedonia, which are lagging behind in their perception of the urgency of the climate crisis, it is not possible to progress quickly to this level. That is why informing the general public about the urgency of the climate crisis is important. It is also important to convince people to start implementing changes in their personal lives, even when it is clear from the start that these changes are miniscule. Despite being miniscule, these changes produce positive effects in a twofold manner: firstly, they overcome conservative immobility in people and, secondly, they help create awareness that something more than these personal changes should be done. Yet, the whole task cannot be limited to informing and encouraging people to implement changes in their personal habits and behaviors. The root of the problem needs to be addressed too. In other words, the work should be done on all of the aforementioned levels and not only on one of them.

3. Attitude Change or System Change?

Here we come to the question: What is the real root of the problem? Are individuals to blame for causing climate change and thus in need of attitude adjustments or, conversely, is the problem systemic and thus irresolvable without changing the system itself? Or

maybe both changes are needed, with attitude changes enabling, deepening and making system changes more sustainable? This is far from being an academic question. As a matter of fact, it is one of the crucial questions in determining the very strategy with which to deal with the climate crisis.

One example given by Murray Bookchin can help us answer these questions. Bookchin evokes an "environmental" presentation in the 1970s in which the closing exhibit carried a startling sign which read: "The Most Dangerous Animal on Earth." It consisted simply of a huge mirror which reflected back the image of the human viewer who stood before it. Bookchin recalls a black child standing before the mirror while a white school teacher tries to explain the message which this exhibit was meant to convey. He also emphasizes that there were no exhibits of corporate boards or directors planning to deforest a mountainside or government officials acting in collusion with them.

After describing all of this, Bookchin comments:

> The exhibit primarily conveyed one, basically misanthropic, message: people as such, not a rapacious society and its wealthy beneficiaries, are responsible for environmental dislocations - the poor no less than the personally wealthy, people of color no less than privileged whites, women no less than men, the oppressed no less than the oppressor. A mythical human "species" had replaced classes; individuals had replaced hierarchies; personal tastes (many of which are shaped by a predatory media) had replaced social relationships; and the disempowered who live meagre, isolated lives had replaced giant corporations, self-serving bureaucracies, and the violent paraphernalia of the State.[13]

It is easy to blame humans as such, as a whole or as a species, for the climate crisis. But it is also easy to understand why this standpoint (promoted by the very sector of the population that is overwhelmingly responsible for the crisis) is shallow. If humans as a whole, are

[13] Murray Bookchin, "Society and Ecology," *Institute for Social Ecology* (2019). http://social-ecology.org/wp/1993/01/society-and-ecology.

to be blamed, if something inherent to human nature is the reason behind environmental degradation, why then do so many people act contrary to what is claimed by this theory, why do whole peoples, past and present, in the same proportion that they are unaffected by capitalism show care for nature? If we want to get to the root cause of the climate crisis, we cannot satisfy ourselves with the shallow explanation that humans as such are causing it. Our geological epoch is far from being Anthropocene. It is Capitalocene.[14] And, since too many years were wasted avoiding implementing meaningful changes, the space for Green Capitalism has already closed. Drastic measures are required to deal with the climate crisis, drastic measures that presuppose *system change* in order to avoid climate change. It will be Socialism or Barbarism. This choice is even more pressing and deep now than a century ago, when Rosa Luxemburg proclaimed it.[15]

4. What Is the Problem with Capitalism?

So, what is the problem with Capitalism, why is this system problematic, why does it need to be overcome in order to avoid the unimaginable environmental and societal consequences of climate change? It is the practices and values that Capitalism produces and reproduces, which lead not to solutions but to the deepening of the climate crisis. And because it is so, Capitalism should not be left undisturbed, but needs to be restrained or even abolished.

In order to understand why this is so, we should remind ourselves of what Capitalism is as a social and economic system. As every successful and long-lasting social and economic system, Capitalism is not just a mode of production, it does not only determine how the economy functions, but it also produces a kind of society, in which its values are dominant. When a system ceases to be only an economy and becomes a society, then it becomes deeply rooted and cannot be overthrown easily. And Capitalism has succeeded to become such a system.

4.1. Capitalist Economy

What characterizes a capitalist economy, what makes it different from other kinds of economies, is that production is done for profit. The goal of production is not to produce goods because of their use-value. Instead, goods are produced in order to extract profit through their production and sale, through their exchange-value. All that is produced is produced because its production brings profit, and not because there is a need for it. For sure, goods need to have some utility in order to be sold (or to possess perceived utility), but the reason why they are produced is not their utility but the extraction of profit through their production and sale. And the leitmotif is to extract as much profit as possible with as little investment as possible.

With profit on their minds, capitalists are approaching production with quite different goals in mind than independent producers who own their means of production. When independent producers trade their own products, a commodity (C) is sold for money (M), which buys another, different commodity with approximately equal value (C-M-C). The goal here is to produce surplus goods in order to get access to other commodities which the person does not produce. The goal of the capitalist, on the other hand, is to gain profit. In order to do this s/he invests money to buy means of production, labor power and raw materials. Through the process of production (P), a commodity of more value is produced which is then sold on the market, bringing even more money to the capitalist (M-C...P...-C'-M').[16] In this process, buying cheaper labor and cheaper raw materials brings higher profits. The maximization of profit requires paying workers as little as possible and acquiring raw materials at the cheapest possible price, no matter the working conditions or environmental impact. This method of profit maximization is pursued by the capitalists not only because of pure greed but in order for them to "survive" on the market, in order to remain "competitive." As such, profit maximization is a systemic feature of capitalism and not something pursued by some individual, greedy capitalists.

Production for profit presupposes instrumentalization, seeing everything (people, nature) through the lens of profit extraction. Profit

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[14] Jason W. Moore (Ed.), *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Oakland, California: PM Press, 2016).

[15] More correctly, she has renewed it. See Ian Angus, "The Origin of Rosa Luxemburg's Slogan 'Socialism or Barbarism,'" *Climate and Capitalism* (October 22, 2014). https://climateandcapitalism.com/2014/10/22/origin-rosa-luxemburgs-slogan-socialism-barbarism.

[16] Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, Ch. 4. *Marxists.org* (1999). https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch04.htm; Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 2, Ch. 1. *Marxists.org* (1997). https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1885-c2/ch01.htm.

over people and profit over nature - this is the rulebook of capitalism. "Seizing the opportunity" also means focusing on the short-term and disregarding the long-term consequences, not only with regard to environmental devastation, but also as it concerns the future downfall of profit margins. Emptying the oceans of whales is a good example. Whales were hunted on such a large scale that it was clearly in the whaling industry's best interest to limit the accelerating predation of whales. However, the competitive dynamics of capitalism make conservation nearly impossible and the industry simply could not restrain itself. Several species of whale have already gone entirely extinct because of whaling, while others have been reduced to such an extent that they are too rare to be worth hunting. The International Whaling Commission banned commercial whaling in 1986. One of the reasons for the ban was that the number of great whales were reduced so drastically that it was no longer commercially lucrative to hunt them.[17] The impossibility of even considering long-term profits (not to mention other issues!) is a feature ingrained within capitalism: due to its chaotic character, if some individual capitalist(s) tried to see beyond the short-term and limit their hunting of whales, what they would witness is other capitalists profiting from their "mistake"; meanwhile the whales would continue being hunted on the same scale. The intrinsic logic of capitalism demands focusing on the short run. Extract as much profit as possible and, when there are no profits left to extract, move the capital to another, more "profitable" industry. Capitalism has predatory features. You enter, extract profit and move along. What you leave behind is not your concern.

The externalization of costs[18] is another powerful tool of capitalism. Every production has its economic and environmental costs. If the environmental cost is not included in the price of the product, it becomes cheaper. Thus, more products can be sold, increasing the profit. Take, for example, plastic bags. Their production on the large scale makes single plastic bags so cheap that sellers give them away for free. Yet, plastic bags have a huge environmental impact. If this is taken into account, it would increase the cost of producing plastic bags, thus negatively affecting profits. But, as long as the possibility of externalizing the cost is there, it will be utilized by the capitalists in their efforts to maximize profits. Until now, environmental costs could be ignored in most cases. However, with the climate crisis looming, this can no longer be the case.

All of these negative impacts of capitalism are augmented by globalization. The celebrated freedom of the movement of capital, unleashed by globalization, has enabled capital to enter those countries (markets) where labor and environmental standards (or the lack thereof) promise the largest profits and to exit them, as easily as possible, whenever crisis looms or a new government is formed with less "business friendly" policies. Globalization has unleashed a global "race to the bottom," pressuring countries in the global south into a cutthroat competition for investments, providing foreign capital with ever lower labor and environmental standards.[19]

Where is the state in all of this? Surely the state can establish some sort of restraints on capitalism. But, as long as we talk about the capitalist state, these restraints are not endangering in any meaningful sense the way capitalism functions. And these restraints, following the big push of market fundamentalism in the 1970s, have become even weaker than before. Laissez-faire capitalism and market fundamentalism have brought lower taxes, deregulation and privatization. Regulated capitalism during the welfare state phase has been dismantled. Free market capitalism has regained its previous position. The state, the supposed Leviathan, had to retreat in order for the market, the real Leviathan, to have as much free reign as possible. State action has been delegitimized. Under ideological dominance of the extreme center,[20] the state became shy,[21] weary of interfering with the market. In some countries, the state has remained brutal in its dealings with political opposition, but in dealing with market failures, the neoliberal state has willingly abdicated from its powers. With the climate crisis in mind, as Naomi Klein emphasizes, the triumph of neo-liberalism could not have come at a worse moment. It came at a time when tackling climate change

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[17] Ashley Dawson, *Extinction: A Radical History* (New York: OR Books, 2016), 43-45; Franz J. Broswimmer, *Ecocide: A Short History of the Mass Extinction of Species* (New York: Pluto, 2002), 67-69.
[18] R. Budny and R. Winfree, "Some Simple Arguments about Cost Externalization and its Relevance to the Price of Fusion Energy," *Office of Scientific and Technical Information* (September 27, 1999). https://www.osti.gov/servlets/purl/12125-3l47Lq/webviewable.

[19] Jason Hickel, *The Divide: A Brief Guide to Global Inequality and Its Solutions* (London: Penguin Random House, 2017).
[20] Tariq Ali, *The Extreme Centre: A Warning* (London and New York: Verso 2015).
[21] Philippe Séguin, *En attendant l'emploi* (Paris: Seuil, 1996). Macedonian edition: Филип Сегеน, Есеј за кризата (Скопје: Култура, 1997), 136.

demanded collective action and increased regulation, the reverse of what market fundamentalism insists.[22]

4.2. Capitalism's System of Values

Capitalism functions against the interests of the majority, but the majority is (still) not against Capitalism. One of the major factors contributing to this paradox is capitalism's capacity to successfully legitimize itself, to be perceived as a system without alternatives, as a lesser evil and/or a system that more or less provides an acceptable life for the people, even if it functions, in the last instance, against their interests. As mentioned previously, Capitalism is not only a kind of economy but a kind of society too. It has achieved hegemony over ideas and values, nurturing people and internalizing its values among the losers and beneficiaries of the system alike. And as long as it is so, capitalism as a system cannot be questioned seriously. Overcoming the ideological hegemony of capitalism is a *sine qua non* of abolishing Capitalism.

What are the values that Capitalism seeks to internalize among people and the values that enable its stabilization and legitimation?

First of all, Capitalism seeks to establish a system of values which attributes worth according to the monetized value of things. What is considered valuable is what costs a lot of money and what is not monetized - is worthless. The plastic bag received free of charge is perceived as worthless and, in most cases, is thrown away immediately after its first usage - often directly onto the streets. Throwing away plastic bags does not mean that they magically disappear. It has environmental consequences, affecting many people, including those who throw the bags away in the first place. But people who throw away bags do not bother to think about that. The economic cost of the plastic bags is for them, as consumers, zero or extremely marginal. If a thing costs money, it has value, proportional to its monetary value. If it does not cost anything, it is worthless.

Ignoring the environmental cost becomes even easier through the internalization of egoistic ethics and the legitimation of egoism, which is also in line with Capitalism. It breaks solidarity and compas-

sion. Every person for himself! If s/he is capable, s/he will succeed. If s/he is industrious, s/he will succeed. And s/he will enjoy the fruits from her/his capabilities and laboriousness. Additionally, every person has the legitimate right to do whatever s/he wants with her/his money, provided that they are legally obtained. Does s/he have enough money to travel by plane, to buy an expensive car, to eat meat freely? No one should force her/him not to spend the money as s/he wants. When capitalist values are successfully internalized in a society, every effort to limit this kind of things is perceived as an intrusion into personal liberties, with totalitarian motives.

And what about taking responsibility for your actions, especially on issues which concern everyone? Capitalism nurtures a culture of irresponsibility, a culture of transferring the burden of responsibility onto others. This culture is strengthened in Capitalism through several factors. The first one is the already mentioned egoism. The egoistic logic is to take the benefits for yourself and to transfer as many responsibilities for your actions onto others. Then, there is instrumentalization. Everything (other people, nature) is viewed through the lens of personal gain. When it is so, the effects of our actions are something "externalized," something that someone else should deal with it. Here too, the chaotic character of Capitalism comes into play. There are a lot of actors partially contributing to the creation of the problem. The damage inflicted by everyone her/himself is small, but the damage which is aggregately done cannot be easily dismissed. In such cases, it is easy to put the blame on others. On the other hand, it is difficult to implement solutions, especially when the actions taken by the state are delegitimized in advance by market fundamentalism. Yet another factor is the direct disempowerment of the people. When democracy de facto excludes people from the decision-making process, when there is widespread perception that the people does not influence policies in any meaningful way, people lose their sense of responsibility, auto-determining that their actions are meaningless. This culture of transferring responsibility onto others is the same among the common people and the capitalists alike. When a common person uses her/his car as their main mode of transportation, s/he transfers the blame and responsibility for pollution onto others. The same is true with capitalists. When a construction capitalist bribes politicians in order to build some ed-

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[22] Oliver Tickell, "Naomi Klein: A Crisis This Big Changes Everything," *Ecologist* (January 21, 2015). https://theecologist.org/2015/jan/21/naomi-klein-crisis-big-changes-everything.

ifice, her/his action can contribute to pollution by preventing wind from dispersing polluted air away from the city. However, the building of a single additional edifice contributes only marginally to this problem. And, as such, it is easy for the construction capitalist to put the blame onto others and exclude her/himself from any responsibility. What should be kept in mind here is that, even though common people and capitalists draw the same conclusion from the capitalist system of values, the effects of the behavior driven by this system of values is much greater in the case of capitalists than in the case of common people.

Lastly, but maybe most importantly, the capitalist system of values stimulates consumerism. The increased consumption of goods stimulates an increase in production through which capitalists receive increased profits. The negative feature of this plan is that consumption, if left alone, can easily reach levels of oversaturation, at which point both production and profits drop. To avoid such scenarios, various marketing strategies are increasingly implemented; goods are produced to be easily spoiled and consumers are sensibilized to yearn for newer and ever better versions of their products. In order for the capitalism to function smoothly, the system needs not only consumers but *consumerists as well* - people who dance in accordance with capitalist tunes. Consumerism is not only a part of capitalist culture; it is a *sine qua non* of the capitalist economy and society. Through consumerism, many people above the poverty line, get their small piece of Capitalism. A good indication of how well the consumerist ethos is ingrained in people, is their instant accusation of asceticism whenever consumerism is criticized. For sure, consumerism can be criticized from ascetic positions. However, not every criticism of consumerism is made from ascetic positions. Between the extremes of consumerism and asceticism lies a huge space, which can be identified neither as consumerism nor as asceticism. But for the well sensibilized consumerist everything that is not pure consumerism is automatically asceticism.

5. The Way Forward

The climate crisis is entering its final phase. It has become clear that modest, non-systemic changes are, to a large extent, no longer options. The time during which it was possible to implement Green

Capitalism has already passed. All efforts to introduce it have come against the wall of capitalist logic. It is now clear, as Klein has put it, that

> our economic system and our planetary system are at war. What the climate needs to avoid collapse is a contraction in humanity's use of resources; what our economic model demands to avoid collapse is unfettered expansion. Only one of these sets of rules can be changed, and it's not the laws of nature.[23]

At the present moment, there are no non-radical options left.[24] Either we will destroy Capitalism or Capitalism will destroy us.

Of course, understanding that Capitalism is the problem represents a huge step forward for many people who are not accustomed to questioning capitalist hegemony. Fighting Capitalism itself is an even bigger step forward. But the climate crisis is not something that can be ignored indefinitely. As a matter of fact, it will soon force its urgency upon us. In such times, new, unorthodox thinking is required. It is good here to remind ourselves of the words of Jawaharlal Nehru: "Most of us seldom take the trouble to think. It is a troublesome and fatiguing process and often leads to uncomfortable conclusions. But crises and deadlocks when they occur have at least this advantage that they force us to think."[25]

The new paradigm of thinking - appropriate for the upcoming turbulent times - will require modernizing and integrating the "red" and "green" discourses. The red should be made greener, and the green should be made redder. The red forces should notice that for the first time since World War Two, Capitalism is being seriously questioned, that, because it is leading most of humanity towards disaster and is incapable of internally thwarting the climate crisis through its own functioning - it is quite clearly historically overcome system. But the masses cannot be convinced that it is so by repeating many of the old formulas and strategies. Socialism is the only real alternative in the face of the climate crisis, but only as *Green* Socialism. And the

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[23] Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 21.
[24] Tickell, "A Crisis."
[25] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Unity of India: Collected Writings, 1937-1940* (New York: The John Day Company, 1942), 94.

Reds should not treat their ideologies as relics to be religiously cherished but as tools to help them better understand and explain their reality. On the other hand, the Greens should remind themselves of their red roots, forgotten in their shift towards the center of the political spectrum. They should acknowledge that nearly all ecological problems are social problems,[26] that pushing only for the green agenda (without red features) will alienate the poor who often feel threatened by it and, most importantly, should acknowledge that climate change demands nothing short of system change. In this process of mitigating and overcoming the climate crisis the Reds and the Greens can learn a lot from each other and can become the force that can prevent humanity from slipping into barbarity and unimaginable suffering.

Within this general battle strategy, people must pressure the state into enacting policy changes across many fields as well as implementing of changes in their own personal behavior. The latter should not be underestimated. People can and should use more public transportation and bikes; should eat less meat and towards more vegetarian and vegan diets; should stop throwing away food; should reduce the usage of energy and water in their households; should reduce their own production of plastic waste; should sort their trash; should stop smoking, etc. Finally, they should reject the ideology of consumerism. Even though these changes can seem too big on a personal level, they are, clearly, very small contributions overall. Still, these measures have two important effects on the people who have started to implement them. Firstly, these people start to understand that something more than individual actions are needed in order to overcome the climate crisis and that changes should be implemented not only in consumption but in production too. Secondly, through the implementation of these measures, persons overcome their capitalist socialization. For example, if a person who has enough economic means to drive her/his car as much as s/he wants, still chooses to use a bike (due to the environmental costs of using a personal vehicle), s/he contributes marginally to the reduction of air pollution, but, more importantly, s/he exits the capitalist logic.

In these historic times we should not succumb to apathy and lethargy. We are the last generation that can still make a real difference.

We have power both as citizens and as consumers, both individually and (far more importantly) collectively. The climate crisis is not only a serious but an urgent problem. We all know the fable about the boiled frog. If you put a frog into a pot of boiling water, it will leap out right away to escape the danger. But, if you put a frog in a kettle that is filled with water that is cool and pleasant, and then gradually heat the kettle until it starts boiling, the frog will not become aware of the threat until it is too late. Let us hope that *Homo Sapiens*, the Wise Humans, will have enough wisdom to understand the existential threat that s/he is facing and that s/he will act accordingly. If not, it will be the greatest tragicomedy in the history of humanity: the species that is so proud of its intelligence will react as a simple frog, becoming aware of the threat to its life when it is already too late.

As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said during this year's Climate Action Summit: "The climate emergency is a race we are losing, but it is a race we can win."[27] In this moment, when we are running a race which we are losing but which is still possible to win, Gramsci's approach can serve us the best. We need pessimism of the intellect, but optimism of the will. Hopefully, our actions will not only overcome the climate crisis but finally bring about a much better world than the present one.

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[26] Bookchin, "Society and Ecology."

[27] Climate Action Summit 2019, *United Nations* (September 23, 2019). https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/assets/pdf/CAS_main_release.pdf.

Andreas Vasileiou |

Exploring the Practices of Greek Municipalities with Left-wing Majorities between 2014-2019: The Battle for the Commons and the Limits of Action

Bionote: Andreas Vasileiou is member of the Council of the Hellenic League for Human Rights and former Communications Officer and Campaign Manager for the Greek Green Party.

Independent Researcher
andrvasiliou@gmail.com

Abstract: Transcript of the presentation by Andreas Vasileiou, held in Skopje on September 14, 2019, within the framework of School for Politics and Critique 2019: Municipal Organizing and Left-wing Environmental Solutions.[1]

I will speak about the period of 2014 in Greece, when left-wing parties came to power in many municipalities and/or left-wing mayors were elected - where they remained in power until 2019. This was a good period and we had big expectations. In 2014 we had the expectation that SYRIZA would form a government and fight against the EU memorandum and its neoliberal policies. We had some, let us say, "emblematic victories" in some municipalities. I will speak about two and a half cases. One case I would like to deal with here is that of Kozani, a town very near the northern border, which has serious problems with the lignite exploitation taking place there. I will also speak about the island of Corfu, which is still suffering through waste management problems. I will also refer to a more emblematic case, one that is also very simple - the municipality of Aristotelis, in Chalkidiki, where the Canadian company Eldorado, is currently operating a gold mine.

These electoral victories reflected the will of the voters. In some of these municipalities it was the first time that there was a left majority in power. This novelty was the expression of the will of people to fight for the commons. We will see how much we have succeeded in this respect. The left-wing mayors in these municipalities ended their terms in office in August 2019. We will attempt the first assessment of their work in the environmental field and summarize a narrative of small steps. Despite the economic conditions, against an outdated institutional framework and in the absence of any common ground with organized ecological grassroots movements, these municipalities attempted to carry out left-wing governance. So let us go to our first case, which is Kozani.

As we have already said, it is near the border with Macedonia. It was a surprise victory in 2014 for Mayor Lefteris Loannidis who was the choice of SYRIZA and a member of the Green Party. Though he did not win in the first round of the local elections, with a margin of around 20%, he managed to win the second round by forming a majority based precisely around the predominant environmental issue of the local community - the transition to a long-awaited post-carbon/post-lignite era. The previous mayor was considered to be very friendly with the Union of Public Power Corporation called in Greek PPC (which is how we will refer to it from here on) and was a local supporter of the use of lignite. Before I introduce what the new mayor's plans were and what actions this red-green coalition would take in the municipality of Kozani, we need to first present the local social and financial conditions during that time and briefly examine the energy policies of the Greek state.

Kozani is at the center of an area with a long history of power production, mainly due to the presence of lignite. There are now six lignite plants in the greater area of Kozani, Ptolemaida, Amyntaio and Florina which all draw from the same deposit that reaches as far as Bitola, where the REK plant is. The first plant in the area was founded in 1956 and opened in 1959. Nowadays, the six plants employ around 16,000 people in the prefecture Dytiki (West) of Makedonia or the western part of Greek Macedonia. It is one of the poorest areas in the EU. We said there are 16,000 employees. However, there is also a population of 300,000 in which the general unemployment rate is 30%, which rises to a staggering 70% for those aged 25 or

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[1] This transcript is based on a recording of an oral presentation and has not been formally authorized by the speaker.

younger. It is not difficult to assume that the power plants have created a lot of jobs, but at the same time, they have contributed vastly to the lack of development in/of any other sector of the local economy. For example, at least ten villages have been evacuated during the last couple of decades due to the opening of mines, and the creation of acid-containing landfills. It is like a lunar landscape with a black depressing color. They have taken over more than 16,000 hectares; land that was left uncultivated was taken by the PPC for mining. The company refused to cover any expenses for the necessary removal of the village, as it claimed that it did not use the land under the village's houses: "we did not touch your houses - we have left you without any other recourse - but we did not touch your houses and we have no obligation to you."

There has not been a single act of epidemiological research done in the area to measure the public health effects resulting from lignite exploitation. At the same time, everyone knows that the area is polluted and that the water is contaminated with chromium. Everyone there has lost at least one relative to some type of cancer. On the other hand, there is plenty of data pointing to the importance of lignite for the Greek power system and, therefore, the importance of Kozani, Florina and their plants. Throughout the country there are a total of fourteen plants, six of them, as I mentioned are in Kozani, which produces around 4,500 megawatts of energy. Lignite remains the main source of the Greek energy system covering around 30% of the country's needs.

The investment in green energy in Greece could be described as "too little, too late." With all this in mind, we must understand that the passage into the post-lignite era is not an easy transition. Lignite exploitation and extraction has deep roots and cutting them would obviously damage the local community and the Greek economy. This situation seemingly went on forever, with the main pressure to change it coming from the EU, which was pressing for many years to stop the use of lignite.

Initially, Greece decided to shut down their older plants, which were causing the most harm to the environment. The reason for this was not to actually respect the environment, but the fact that back in 2013 the Greek energy plants entered the Gas Emissions System,

which meant that they had to pay costs relative to the amount of CO_2 they produced. Because they were not environmentally friendly, they had to pay large sums of money. Thus, what climate change and/or a sharp decline in public health had failed to produce, the financial measures of the EU began to achieve. But at the same time, when Greece started to reduce the number of old plants, including those in the Kozani area, they already had plans for creating new lignite plants, modern ones like Ptolemaida station, which is famous in Greece. It was supposed to employ 3,000 people. Even if the plants survive, I will come back to that later, they still would not cover more than 30% of the jobs. The lack of EU funding led the new government to announce, just a few days ago, that the plan for Ptolemaida would not go on. The post-lignite era now looks to be one step closer, which brings us back to our topic of the role of municipalities and the example of Loannidis, the local mayor.

During his five years in office he focused on building a plan for the social and environmental recovery of the area. In my opinion, he did exactly what he had to do, or perhaps it is better to say - what he could do. He cooperated with big organizations like the WWF and others and they worked together on creating this plan. He took care of his international allies, and the city of Kozani entered the coalition of European Citizens, who are part of the same platform. Of course, he pressed the PPS, the power company, the government and the EU for funding his plan. He proposed that it should be funded, in part, by a percentage derived from the gas emission system. At the same time, the mayor had to defend himself from the criticism he received for not fighting for the existing power plants and the jobs of his citizens. A lot of the people, employees mainly, did not seem convinced about the new era and were unaccepting of the changes. The PPS union leader has recently called the transition "a violent procedure." His mayor's plan was based mainly on the idea of keeping Kozani as an energy center while also using a lot of the land fields for solar panels to produce clean energy. However, the answer from the locals was: "His plan will not create enough jobs to cover the investment" - which is more or less true. The second pillar of his plan was agriculture. It is difficult for people who have grown used to a standard salary and all of the benefits they received by working in the PPS to accept the mayor's new vision. They know

that all of that will be lost if they become farmers, that they will have the uncertainty of a farmer's life. The population of Kozani thought they had left all of that behind, some decades or even generations before.

Having all this in mind, in 2019 Mayor Loannidis and the Green coalition lost the elections. The plan has now been reformed by the new mayor. So people have gone back to fight for the stability provided by the factories that are damaging the environment and human health. The majority has spoken. This was our first example of how Green politics fails in underdeveloped countries.

The second case study I will speak about is the island of Corfu, which has a strong history of leftist tradition. However, before 2014, when left-wing Mayor Kostas Nikolouzos - supported by SYRIZA - was elected, it had been a decade since Corfu had its last left-wing mayor. He has a background as a bank manager. The island is one of the most famous travel destinations worldwide. It is 585 m2 and provides the grounds for a gigantic tourism industry. According to official statistics, in 2018 Corfu accepted two million visitors.

Over there, the environmental battle is about waste management. This is a problem which was created throughout many decades, as there had never been pressure from either local activists or organizations. There had never been a serious plan for waste management from the local authorities either. Of course, the waste management industry would be completely privatized. There was also a tricky term in the agreement concerning the minimal number of kilos or tons of waste that would have to go to the waste plant on a daily basis. We have experienced that when something like this is applied, every recycling program would intentionally mischaracterize their materials in order to meet the necessary requirements amount to be processed in the waste plant. This is how recycling programs are being destroyed - with such agreements.

So he did the right thing and stopped this plan. Generally speaking, recycling is still a challenge in most Greek cities. Most communities and local authorities have given little interest or investment. Almost everywhere there are only two choices, either the green or the blue box, green is for all garbage and blue is for all recycling material,

such as glass and paper; everything goes into this one box and we claim that we are recycling. In order for such a thing to work, you need a facility that creates jobs and allows for the separation of materials. In Corfu, they do not have either. This is a fact in most Greek cities. Just now, we are starting to see in some cities the use of underground boxes. They do not take up too much space, so they can use three or four different systems for recycling. Apart from this, we had not had a system, or any idea of separating materials at the source. This is the main reason why they cannot significantly reduce the amount of disposals, and thereby create a positive long-term effect on the environment of the island.

When Nikolouzos took over as left-wing mayor of the municipality, he had to deal with both long-term and short-term solutions. What happened is that the left-wing majority of Corfu was trapped into managing the urgent part of the problem and pursued short term solutions.

A short-term solution was chosen, a landfill site at the southern part of the island, the place called Lefkimmi. Initially, it was supposed to be part of a more ambitious plan according to which, along with two additional landfill sites, it was supposed to provide a solution for the rest of the island - a station for separating the recycling materials. Eventually, due to the change of plans, court rulings and things like this, Lefkimmi was left as the only landfill site. Adding to this bad planning, there were a lot of technical problems that made the Lefkimmi landfill site an environmental hazard. For instance, they did not have enough security concerning liquid run-off that would enter the water. But with no other choices available, the government and the municipality decided not to use it. This is what I call being trapped in the short-term situation.

A massive local movement, which was created around the decision of making this landfill, grew in the last few years during our left-wing government and the red-green coalition in the municipality. It had big support from vast parts of the political spectrum: the Communist Party was there, even the Golden Dawn, and the Nazi party, all participated in this movement. There have been violent battles, losses of lives. Around 600 policemen were stationed in the area until this summer, but the Lefkimmi plant started to operate nonetheless.

You can imagine what political cost it had for the local left-wing authorities. The repetitive argument of the locals is that the choice of Lefkimmi was the choice of downgrading the quality of life of the poor, while protecting the life of the rich. One can assume that this was one of the reasons why Nikolouzos was eventually left without allies in the local community. He paid the price in 2019 elections.

Eventually, toward the end of August 2019, about twenty days ago, and a few days before he handed over power to the new mayor, his plan for waste management was approved. It contained all of the necessary stations, but still no source separation - except in some very touristic centers. We do not know if this plan will be followed by the new mayor. I hope it will, but the real glimmer of hope, for me, comes from initiatives that were born in the last two-three years. Since 2017, volunteers have created green corners in private ownerships that have been offered to the public. This has caused more and more residents of Corfu to start separating waste at the source and functions as an example of the sorts of measures they must demand from authorities.

The third case is a half case. It is half because it is a very simple story, about the municipality of Aristotelis in Chalkidiki. Over there, there is a long history of gold mining for synthetic minting. Gold deposits still exist, but only in small percentages and it has become very difficult to extract. Over the last few years, a Canadian company, "Eldorado", has taken over the gold mines. This has been perceived as a hazard by the local community. The Green Party was the first to support the local population's opposition to the mining. Syriza very soon joined in and there was a huge movement growing, with big support all over Greece.

The battle in Chalkidiki became the center of the environmental discussion in Greece. Although it was a local thing, it was very important for the country as a whole. It functioned as a symbolic battle, pitting a big international company against a small local community. There has been a big battle over public opinion, meaning that the system, the company, the media and all right-wing governments did everything to stop them and to defame the movement. They created rioting incidents and made huge campaigns to defend them. The green initiative aimed at implementing pedagogical practic-

es in non-violence adopted from a Belgian teacher. Local activists were trained in how to state their point of view, and make their presence felt, without giving the system the right to stop them. All local movements did what they had to do; they connected with people from everywhere, with initiatives from everywhere and they made very good policy in the local field. They used the law, sued the mayor for everything, and wrote papers.

In 2014, a left-wing mayor won with a big margin for first time in this area. We had a leftist mayor and, along with it, a left-wing government which was elected one year after. They continued the fight against the gold mine. The government lost this battle, which was easy to predict. Eldorado is a Canadian company and Canada plays a strong role in the International Monetary Fund. The government became politically weak after its confrontation with the EU and the International Monetary Fund. So, every plan for rescuing the Greek economy was connected underneath by the need to protect investments coming from foreign countries. This was one way to tie the situation, the other way was the decision made by the previous government. Of course, there was also the option of international trade deals, agreements which allowed the left government to try to follow the law and make their life a little bit difficult without stopping foreign investments. This was not enough to stop gold mining in the area. In a very short time, the local movement turned against the government and against the mayor. The elected mayor had to resign, and another SYRIZA member became the new mayor, who followed the strategy of the government, which was not enough to stop the company. So, another loss.

So in 2019, we are witnessing three cases of former red-green mayors who lost in the next elections from the right.

Transcribed by Iskra Gerazova-Mujchin

Akis Gavriilidis |
Billy Wilder as a Critic of Humanitarian Intervention

Bionote: Akis Gavriilidis is a translator and independent researcher (PhD from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in legal philosophy, post-doctoral research in political anthropology). He has published several books and articles for journals and collective volumes in Greek, English, and French, *inter alia* on Spinoza, Greek nationalism, popular music and culture, censorship, and the management of the traumatic memory of the Greek civil war and the 1922 population exchange, as well as translations of books and articles by others.

Independent Researcher
hgavriilidis@gmail.com

Abstract: What follows is a chapter from a book originally published by the author in Greek, under the title *Μπίλι Ουάιλντερ. Η (αυτο)κριτική του χολιγουντιανού θεάματος* [*Billy Wilder: The (Self-) Criticism of the Hollywood Spectacle*] (Athens: Aigokeros, 2009). The book was translated into English but was never published. The version published here contains some inevitable additions and adaptations.

A film that contains Wilder's most bitter criticisms of the American way of life is *The Big Carnival/Ace in the Hole*,[1] released in 1951. Wilder himself was the producer and also the writer in collaboration with Walter Newman and Lesser Samuels. This was a "serious" film, which was poorly received by the studios and at the box office, and this certainly has something to do with the fact that, thereafter, the director only made comedies.

Its plot can be summarized as follows:

Charles "Chuck" Tatum (Kirk Douglas) is a go-getting reporter who, having been fired from several New York newspapers for various

[1] At different times and in different places, both titles were used.

unethical practices, ends up on an obscure provincial publication in Albuquerque. One day, while on a routine assignment in a backwater called Escudero, he hears by chance at a deserted gas station that the owner, Leo Minosa, has become trapped by a cave-in while looting an old Indian tomb. Tatum immediately sees that this incident can be turned into a scoop that will enable him to bounce back, restoring his wounded pride (and career). Through blackmail and manipulation, he convinces the sheriff, the wife of the trapped man and local bigwigs to let him report the event in exclusivity and manage the rescue effort. Moreover, when Chuck promises to give him favourable coverage so that he can be re-elected, the sheriff makes him his assistant.

At a secret meeting, the head of the rescue crew says that the rocks can be removed in about sixteen hours. Chuck, though, demands that he find a more time-consuming solution, so that the story that has put him back in the limelight can be kept alive for as long as possible. The sheriff is also in favour of this solution, hoping to keep the suspense going so that he will gain even greater glory when Leo is finally released. They therefore suggest that he drill through the roof of the cave, which will take a week. This option is indeed imposed finally.

During this week, a large crowd gathers around the theatre of the rescue operation by people wanting to express their solidarity: villagers from other places around Escudero, passers-by, even holiday-goers. Caravans, tents, canteens, and makeshift amusement parks are installed to serve them, and Leo's café/gas station make in few days the money it had not made the whole year.

On the last day of the rescue operation, the trapped man dies.

In this highly acerbic depiction of the American (and by extension every other) cinema-going public, I think it would be no exaggeration to see an early critique of humanitarianism, and a critique that is purely political at that, rather than moralistic.

Firstly, the "big carnival" at Escudero, i.e., the motley assemblage is organized on the basis of a voyeuristic and passive relationship to human misery. A group of people have gathered there; they do not know one another and the only thing that unites them is their inter-

est (if that is the right word) in the life of another person who they similarly do not know, had never laid eyes on before his adventure, and will never see again once it is over. It is the kind of interest that readers have in the outcome of a novel: Leo's life interests them as the object of the narrative, a narrative that thus forms an *imagined community.*[2]

Even more, this community is organised around an abstract philanthropy or generosity that is effected *through a representative*. Its members engage someone to "save" a person who is in danger, while they themselves are limited to observing the spectacle and applauding, as if they were in an arena or football stadium, without actually doing something themselves to help.[3]

The "representative" is appointed precisely because he manages to handle the emergency effectively (or rather to convince the community that he can handle it effectively) and deal with the life-threatening danger. He thus manages to command respect as an expert and (therefore) as the leader of the imagined community.

The carnival is thus an emergency.

The connection between the emergency and the carnival is explicitly made by Giorgio Agamben in a fascinating lecture of his, entitled "The State of Exception," in which he analyses the Roman institution of the *iustitium*. He writes:

> The specific quality of the state of emergency appears clearly if we examine one measure in Roman Law that may be considered as its true archetype, the *iustitium*.
>
> When the Roman Senate was alerted to a situation that seemed to threaten or compromise the Repub-

lic, they pronounced a *senatus consultum ultimum*, whereby consuls (or their substitutes, and each citizen) were compelled to take all possible measures to assure the security of the State. The *senatus consultum* implied a decree by which one declared the *tumultus*, i.e., a state of emergency caused by internal disorder or an insurrection whose consequence was the proclamation of a *iustutium*.

> The term *iustitium* - construed precisely like *solstitium*-- literally signifies "to arrest, suspend the *ius*, the legal order." The Roman grammarians explained the term in the following way: "When the law marks a point of arrest, just as the sun in its solstice."[4]

He then goes on as follows:

> The structural proximity between law and anomy, between pure violence and the state of emergency also has, as is often the case, an inverted figure. Historians, ethnologists and folklore specialists are well acquainted with anomic festivals, like the Roman Saturnalia, the charivari, and the Medieval carnival, that suspend and invert the legal and social relations defining normal order.[5]

On the basis of this emergency, therefore, a new (or a new type of) power is formed.

What type of power, we shall see in more detail in the next section.

1. Constituent Power

The above observations suggest that the film's ambitions go beyond a social critique of the United States in the 1950s. *The Big Carnival* can be seen as an allegory of the formation of *sovereignty* and the very establishment of the American nation-state.[6] In the film,

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[2] This recalls the well-known thesis of Benedict Anderson, according to which "the birth of the imagined community of the nation can best be seen if we consider the basic structure of two forms of imagining that first flowered in Europe in the eighteenth century: the novel and the newspaper." Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, [1983] 2006), 24-25.
In the birth of the imagined community of *The Big Carnival*, the role of the novel has simply been replaced by another, completely analogous narrative structure that first flowered in America in the twentieth century... As for the role of the newspaper, there is no need to labour the point.
[3] One of the temporary structures erected in *The Big Carnival* is a large circus tent.
Wilder also makes direct reference to sport as spectacle in T*he Fortune Cookie*, in which Jack Lemmon plays a cameraman (a profession that has always attracted filmmakers, from Dziga Vertov to Buster Keaton), who is injured while covering a football game.

[4] Giorgio Agamben, "The State of Emergency," extract from a lecture given at the Centre Roland-Barthes (Université Paris VII, Denis-Diderot), *Generation Online* (2002). http://www.generation-online.org/p/fpagambenschmitt.htm.
[5] Ibid.
[6] In one scene of the film, Tatum says of the people who have flocked to Escudero: "To me, they are Mr. and Mrs. America."

the moment when the crowd assigns its affairs to an expert marks the point at which it becomes an "imagined community." To borrow from Rousseau, it is the act by which a people becomes a people.[7] Except that the act is far from an agreement to participate in the common good, as Rousseau would wish, or even a "democratic covenant," as American society sees itself;[8] it is much more an act of *abdication* allowing (semi-)voluntary manipulation.

Reading the events of the film in terms of power, a leading group emerges from the community that forms for a week around the tunnel. This group, consisting of the rescue crews, the sheriff and the reporter, protects and handles the community's affairs. The person "running the show" within the group is the reporter.

Wilder essentially shows *the formation of a hegemonic bloc* at the heart of American society, a bloc of *experts and technocrats*, *the forces of order* and *the entertainment industry*, with the entertainment industry very much leading the other two. Indeed, it is this particular Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), to use Althusser's term, through Charles Tatum, the reporter/entertainer, who has sovereignty, as it is he who ultimately decides on matters of life and death.[9]

In this sense, I claim that the film can be seen as an *unorthodox Western*. Westerns, in my view, are the *American equivalent of natural law theories*. The role played in European political philosophy by the social contract and the emergence of a sovereign, the Leviathan, was played in the USA by the iconography of the six-shooter and the sheriff's star. What is the Western other than *the narrative of the occurrence of the law in a place where there is no law*, the narrative of the formation of human society as a way out of the chaotic state in which everything (land, animals, etc.) belongs to everyone, and everyone fights everyone else in order to acquire it?

One of the most eminent representatives of the (normative) social contract theory, John Locke, searching for an image of what he imagined a state of nature to be, offered the view, impressive in its simplicity, that "in the beginning, all the world was America."[10] This shows, apart from anything else, that in the European imagination, America represented a virgin land perfect for occupation and exploitation.

This representation, as is well known, ignores at least one very important fact: that before the coming of the white man, America was not exactly a land "in a natural state" but was home to various cultures. From this point of view, it is extremely significant that in *The Big Carnival*, the man trapped in the cave whose life is in danger (and is ultimately lost), was there to loot an Indian tomb.[11]

This sheds a different light on the story, which acquires an additional level of meaning if we consider whose is the "bare life"[12] on which the techno-power of the journalistic ISA is exercised and on the basis of which the class alliance is formed and the passage to "statehood" brought about. Wilder is telling us that the "miniature society" formed out in the New Mexico desert is founded on the loss of a human life. This human sacrifice, whether brought about through negligence or malicious intent, is, in my view, a clear refer-

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[7] "It would be better, before examining the act by which a people gives itself to a king, to examine that by which it has become a people." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses*, trans. by G. D. H. Cole (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1923), 13.

[8] The only time that the issue of democracy is touched on in the film is when Wilder, with merciless sarcasm, has the sheriff address the county's residents via a television camera, telling them: "[W]hen Election Day comes around, I don't want what I'm doing here to influence your vote one little bit. Because all I'm doing here is my duty as your Sheriff." In fact, he is urging them to do the exact opposite. One does not need to be acquainted with psychoanalytical theory to realize that when we tell someone to forget something, that alone is enough to imprint it on the memory.
In general, throughout the film the sheriff has the "star" and Chuck is officially only his deputy. In reality, however, the power relationship is precisely the reverse, with Kretzer acting as Tatum's puppet.
Here, the mechanisms of the spectacle do not simply "distort" those of representative democracy; they constitute them. They do not convey a false image of their elected officials but construct their "genuine" - or rather their only - image.

[9] According to Foucault, "[f]or a long time, one of the characteristic privileges of sovereign power was the right to decide life and death." Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Volume I: *An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 135.

[10] John Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, § 49, ed. by C. B. McPherson (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, [1690] 1980), 29.

[11] In addition, the sign at the store/gas station/motel he ran with his wife at the entrance to the ancient cliff dwelling says "Minosa - Indian curios." In life, he was the personification of the transformation of historical memory into commerce.

[12] I use the term in the sense given to it by Giorgio Agamben in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). According to Agamben, sovereign power (and, therefore, the political arena) is formed through the construction of what he calls the "bare life," namely the production of forms of human life that are seen as sacred and, at the same time, up for grabs for anybody to take away without punishment and without any sacrificial value - just as was the case with *homo sacer* as an institution in Roman law. According to somewhat complex reasoning, which it is not possible to reproduce here, the sovereign has one common point with the condition of the *homo sacer*, as he is located both *outside* and *inside* the human polity; he constitutes the exception that defines normality and the law.

ence to the *genocide of the native Americans*,[13] which was historically a pre-condition and a "blind spot" for building the state - or the United States - of America. Guilty of desecrating the earlier culture's sacred sites and its dead, Leo Minosa is essentially buried alive in the foundations of an edifice under the indifferent - or hypocritically interested - gaze of the American public - very much in the same way as the wife of the master builder in the well-known Balkan myth about the construction of the bridge. There could be no better illustration of the "inclusive exclusion,"[14] of the state of exception that establishes the normality of the new (bio)power.

Leo's sacrifice, even if it is made unwillingly, is an extension of the primitive and general model of the scapegoat that is loaded with the sins of the community in order to purify it and secure its cohesion; at the same time, however, it functions as a more specific allegory of the foundation of a modern country, the United States, and of the repression and suppression peculiar to it. Because, indeed,

> If there is a line in every modern state marking the point at which the decision on life becomes a decision on death, and biopolitics can turn into thanatopolitics, this line no longer appears today as a stable border dividing two clearly distinct zones. This line is now in motion and gradually moving into areas other than that of political life, areas in which the sovereign is entering in to an ever more intimate symbiosis not only with the jurist but also with the doctor, the scientist, the expert and the priest.[15]

It is striking that the figures identified by Agamben as being in symbiosis with the sovereign are precisely those who, along with Tatum, manage the life (and/or death) of Minosa in *The Big Carnival*. Indeed, the only people who enter the cave are the sheriff, the crew technicians, the doctor and, just before the end, the priest.

In this sense, after the death of the community's hero, Leo, the Indian burial cave will now function as a type of "cenotaph" to cement the unity of the new nation.[16]

It is of course true that, speaking literally, the grave is not a cenotaph, since it is occupied by a man who is known and has a name, and not by an "unknown soldier." But for the people who flock to this open-air town he is unknown - as they are unknown to each other. They had never seen Leo until then and *cannot see him even now*. What unites them, and establishes their community, is a *desire to see*, which remains unfulfilled. Their community is thus genuinely imagined, in the sense that Anderson uses the term: the way in which they are linked - and identify - with the victim of the accident, and through him with each other, is exactly the combination of visibility/non-visibility that characterizes the mechanisms of the nation-state and print-capitalism.[17]

2. Exodus in the Desert

Another interesting fact is that in *The Big Carnival*, the formation of the imagined community and of power takes place outdoors, not in the city.

This is not because the community is exiting a previous "natural state." The exodus of the American people into the open landscape of New Mexico and its "convocation" by the prophet newsman is based on another narrative/iconographic precedent: the Old Testa-

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[13] Throughout the film, the crowd watching with bated breath is haunted by the rumour that, according to Indian tradition, there is a curse on the mountain where the cave-in took place. The radio and television media do not fail to exploit this rumour to arouse the curiosity of their listeners and viewers. However, this cynical use, this "instrumental rationality" (or rationalization), cannot ward off the thought that the Indian spirits are obviously the remains of the guilt of the society under formation. The survival of Indian culture, even in a distorted and unrecognizable form, bears witness to the indirect recognition by the new state of the fact that before it existed, there was not "nature" but *another culture*.

[14] "Inclusione esclusiva" is how Agamben characterises the state of exception that establishes sovereignty (see previous footnote).
 "We shall give the name *relation of exception* to the extreme form of relation by which something is included solely through its exclusion" (Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 18). And, further on:
 "*The exception is what cannot be included in the whole of which it is a member and cannot be a member of the whole in which it is always already included*" (ibid., 21; italics in the original).

[15] Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 122-23.

[16] See Anderson, *Imagined*, 9-10: "No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely *because* they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them, has no true precedents in earlier times. [...] it may be useful to begin a consideration of the cultural roots of nationalism with death."

[17] In the same work, Anderson stresses "the central importance of print-capitalism" (ibid., 18) and gives the example of the hero of a novel reading in the newspaper that "A destitute vagrant became ill and died on the side of the road from exposure." Anderson's comment on this is: "Finally, the imagined community is confirmed by the doubleness of our reading about our young man reading. He does not find the corpse of the destitute vagrant by the side of a sticky Semarang road, but imagines it from the print in a newspaper. Nor does he care the slightest who the dead vagrant individually was: he thinks of the representative body, not the personal life." Ibid., 31-32.

ment. The film thus acquires yet another level of meaning: it is an actual *crossing of the desert by the chosen people*, who gather around the new Mount Sinai where the unwritten but highly effective laws of the new state are produced.[18]

The theological character is also underscored semiotically by a series of other elements: the film's story lasts seven days, and the cave - at the Mountain of the Seven Vultures - is cordoned off by the police, a "sacrosanct" place which no one can enter apart from the "high priest" reporter. And of course, above all, by the fact that the film's action revolves around a rescue or *salvation*.

These parallels are not evident, because biblical mythology is in any case one of the basic sources of the ideology of the Founding Fathers of the United States, a historical analogy through which they liked to view their creation of a new state in a new land.[19] But the twist here, containing an obvious dose of underlying irony, is that it is a reporter - and a fraud and a blackmailer at that - who is the "Moses" of this journey to the Promised Land, bringing about the transition from nomadism to law.

Apart from anything else, this allows us to say that this new law not only does not prohibit idolatry, but is actually based on the sovereignty of the image and of the representation.

This lends yet another characteristic to this formation of the nomadic scattered multitude into a united people.

Initially, as we have seen, the attendance of the chosen people to the call, and so the transition to an organized polity, is rooted in *curiosity,* or the "lust of the eyes" - the quintessential "media passion."[20] Here, however, we are not quite dealing with Bentham's Panopticon, on which Foucault based his famous analysis of prison and systems of control and discipline.[21] A better word to describe what is going on in the film would perhaps be "Synopticon," a version of the shape developed by Thomas Mathiesen.[22] According to one description, "The Synopticon is a system in which everyone watches the same thing together (mass media). Without having to resort to any coercion to influence behaviour, synoptic devices work by seduction, acculturation, entertainment (Pascal's diversion) and the transmission of fear."[23]

We said earlier that in this film there functions a materialist/constructionist view of spectacle as a practice that transforms the world and does not reflect it, as production and not as false consciousness. It is time to ask, however, what this production produces.

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[18] From this point of view, there is an analogy with Spinoza's analysis of how the Hebrew people came together after the exodus from Egypt: "After their liberation from the intolerable bondage of the Egyptians, [the Hebrews] were bound by no covenant to any man; and, therefore, every man entered into his natural right, and was free to retain it or to give it up, and transfer it to another. *Being, then, in the state of nature [in hoc statu naturali constituti] ... .*" Benedict De Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise*, Ch. 17, trans. by R. H. M. Elwes (London: George Bell and Sons, 1891), 218-19. In Spinoza too, statehood is not the beginning, because there is always something that comes before it; the state of nature is not a prehistory that is located definitively outside (pre-) the state of politics, but a marginal case that might reoccur within history, as an exodus from a previous state, and lead to the establishment of a new state. A *state of exception*, we might say. I have developed this point in: Akis Gavriilidis, Η δημοκρατία κατά του φιλελευθερισμού. Η έννοια του φυσικού δικαίου στη φιλοσοφία του Σπινόζα [*Democracy Against Liberalism: The Notion of Natural Law in Spinoza*] (Athens: Ellinika Grammata, 2000), 143.
[19] The use of this framework continued, of course, in American cinema. As Gilles Deleuze says in the first of his two books on film: "Finally, the American cinema constantly shoots and reshoots a single fundamental film, which is the birth of a nation-civilisation, whose first version was provided by Griffith. It has in common with the Soviet cinema the belief in a finality of universal history; here the blossoming of the American nation, there the advent of the proletariat. ... If the Bible is fundamental to them, it is because the Hebrews, then the Christians, gave birth to healthy nations-civilisations which already displayed the two characteristics of the American dream: That of a melting pot in which minorities are dissolved and that of a ferment which creates leaders capable of reacting to all situations. Conversely, Ford's Lincoln recapitulates biblical history, judging as perfectly as Solomon, bringing about, like Moses, the transition from the nomadic to the written law, from nomos to logos, entering the city on his ass like Christ (*Young Mr. Lincoln*)." Gilles Deleuze, *The Movement-Image*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minnesota, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 148-49.

[20] According to Paolo Virno's analysis in "Idle Talk and Curiosity" in: *A Grammar of the Multitude. For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life,* trans. by Isabella Bertoletti (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), 88*sqq*. Interestingly, this particular text appeared for the first time in a collection of Virno's articles published by Ombre corte (Verona, 2002) with the general title *Esercizi di esodo* (=*Exercises in Exodus*).
[21] It is nonetheless worth noting that in the relevant chapter (the third, entitled "Panopticism") from *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault explicitly points out a strange connection between the plague (and so biopolitical control) and the *festival*, on the one hand, and the *state of nature* on the other. "A whole literary fiction of the festival grew up around the plague: suspended laws, lifted prohibitions, ... individuals unmasked, abandoning their statutory identity and the figure under which they had been recognized..." - participating in a big carnival, one might add. Further on, he writes: "The plague ... is the trial in the course of which one may define ideally the exercise of disciplinary power. In order to make rights and laws function according to pure theory, the jurists place themselves in imagination in the state of nature; in order to see perfect disciplines functioning, rulers dreamt of the state of plague." Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 197, 198-99 respectively.
Here too we see a striking coincidence in the linking of four elements: a humanitarian crisis, a state of exception ("nature"), the emergence of sovereignty (as being best able to regulate this state) and the formation of a new (or a new type of) state.
[22] Thomas Mathiesen, "The Viewer Society: Michel Foucault's Panopticon Revisited," *Theoretical Criminology*, Vol. 1, No 2 (May 1997), 215.
[23] Mathieu Bietlot, "Du disciplinaire au sécuritaire. De la prison au centre fermé," *Multitudes*, Vol. 11 (2003), 66.

The answer is, it produces the Law. Not as a universal rule, but in the form of sovereignty, i.e., inclusive exception.

3. What Is the Law Doing?

Indeed, the formation of the community on the basis of the Synopticon is not the way in which the gathering at Escudero differs from the model of "disciplinary societies." There is another factor, which allows us to say that for Wilder, as for Agamben, the model of the modern capitalist state is the concentration camp rather than the prison.

In *The Big Carnival,* the birthplace of the new state, the site of the territorialization of the nomadic multitude, is a campsite. In English, the word "camp" is used in "concentration camp" and in "campsite."[24] It also appears in the Indian "encampment" which is part of the film's plot. The Indians, in the myth of the birth of the new state, are ignored, as if they do not exist, precisely because they had no cities but lived permanently in tents; they were a nomadic civilisation - an oxymoron that can essentially be equated with the phrase "non-civilisation." That is precisely why it was the state of nature/exception that simultaneously constitutes the *obstacle* and the *pre-condition* for the occurrence of statehood, normality and the law.

From this point of view, the introductory scene in which the basic dramatic conflict first appears is very interesting. Shortly after the

film begins, Chuck and his young colleague and driver stop to fill up with gas at a deserted service station. They park under a sign that reads "VISIT OLD INDIAN CLIFF DWELLING - 450 YEARS OLD" and search in vain for the owner. While they wonder where everyone has got to, a black sheriff's car disturbs the sun-baked desert landscape with its screeching siren, creating an unexpected spectacle.

The young man wonders "Now what would the law be doing up there?," to which Chuck answers sarcastically: "Maybe they've got a warrant for Sitting Bull for that Custer rap."

Some time later, when Chuck has guaranteed that he has exclusive coverage of the events thanks to his alliance with Sheriff Kretzer, we see a conversation between the Sheriff and rival reporters from big-city papers, who protest at being excluded.

> KRETZER: Look, boys, I don't care where you come from - New York, Philadelphia, Chicago or the Moon. Nobody goes down to see Leo.
>
> JESSOP: What about Tatum?
>
> KRETZER: It's out of bounds, boys, because it's dangerous down there. Because a wall could fall on you. Because I'm Sheriff and because I'm responsible for everybody's safety.
>
> MORGAN: What about Tatum?
>
> KRETZER: Out of bounds. You heard me.
>
> McCARDLE: What about Tatum?
>
> KRETZER: You're repeatin' yourself[25].

This "repetition" is the *repetition of a traumatic meeting with the Real*, as Žižek, following Lacan, would say: the Law comes about through the establishment of an unjustified exception which, as such, is not explained and cannot be explained, and through the demarcation of a territory, the placing of a border between the permitted and the

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[24] "We do the concentrating, and the Poles do the camping" is a wonderful line from Ernst Lubitsch's *To Be or Not to Be*, on which Wilder had worked as a scriptwriter at the beginning of his career. These words are spoken by the SS officer 'Concentration Camp' Erhardt, when asked about the existence of German concentration camps in Poland.
Strikingly, Slavoj Žižek recalled the line in an article about detainees held at the US Guantanamo Bay naval base, placing it directly after his claim that "Concentration camps and humanitarian refugee camps are, paradoxically, the two faces, 'inhuman' and 'human,' of one sociological matrix." Slavoj Žižek, "Are We in a War? Do We Have an Enemy?," *London Review of Books*, Vol. 24, No. 10 (May 23, 2002). An even more striking coincidence - perhaps not, ultimately, that much of a coincidence - is that Žižek had just referred directly to *homo sacer* in the sense given to the term by Agamben in his aforementioned book. This term, he says, "can be seen to apply not only to terrorists, but also to those who are on the receiving end of humanitarian aid (Rwandans, Bosnians, Afghans), as well as to the Sans Papiers in France and the inhabitants of the favelas in Brazil or the African American ghettoes in the US."
Finally, it is worth noting that Wilder's next film was *Stalag 17*, which, as the title suggests, is about concentration camps. In a tragic irony, the question of whether the concentration camps were run by Poles or Germans came to be of crucial importance. Paramount suggested a "small change" to Wilder so that it could be distributed in Germany: making the head of the SS in the film (Otto Preminger) of Polish origin so as not to offend the German public. Wilder refused, which was ultimately the reason for his departure from the studio.

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[25] Excerpt from the dialogues of the film between Walter Newman/Lesser Samuels/Billy Wilder: *Ace in the Hole*, also known as *The Big Carnival*, dir. by Billy Wilder (Paramount Pictures, 1951).

prohibited.[26] In this dialogue, "the Law" marshals a series of reasons which both he and his interlocutors know are not genuine - because quite simply *there are no genuine reasons.* "It follows, from this constitutively senseless character of the Law, that we must obey it not because it is just, good or even beneficial, but simply *because it is the Law* - this tautology articulates the vicious circle of its authority, the fact that the last foundation of the Law's authority lies in its process of enunciation."[27]

4. Putting the Sovereign to Death

The Big Carnival is thus a festival/state of exception - and at the same time the confinement/exclusion of the "bare life" - with which a prophet "produces its own people."[28] In contrast, however, with the "materialist teleology that Spinoza proclaimed," which Hardt and Negri cite, not only is the desire of the prophet here not identified with that of the multitude, but is in conflict with it, with the ultimate result *that the prophet is also put to death (sacrificed).*

At the end of the film, Wilder cannot of course allow the anti-hero to live after all that he has done, which is why he kills him off. It is interesting to see how exactly he does it, though.

The means used to dispose of him is the film's "erotic triangle" - or rather, as it would be more correct to say, the "unerotic triangle": in this relentlessly cold film there is not one positive emotion, nor any passion of joy, and desires never coincide.

Leo has a wife, Lorraine, who is the joint owner of the trading post. Lorraine clearly married him out of necessity, is disappointed in her marriage and has attempted on several occasions to escape to New York from the literal and metaphorical desert of Escudero. When the accident occurs, she is ready to leave once and for all, abandoning her husband to his fate. Tatum dissuades her, not of course through any moral arguments, but by pointing out to her that if she stays and

plays the worried and distraught wife, she will be able to sell more hamburgers than the business had previously sold in the whole of its existence. And at the same time, of course, she will be a useful pawn in the production that Tatum is directing, because a story sells better when there is a love interest.

So Lorraine stays, and finds that Chuck was right. She begins to express a clear sexual interest in him, on the one hand because he is now the alpha male and on the other because she sees in him an opportunity to leave her dead-end small-town life for the bright lights of the big city.

For his own selfish motives, however, Chuck remains coldly indifferent to her. In any case, he is so dedicated to his obsession, to "the pursuit of the truth," that his life has no time or space for any woman - it is prohibited by what Nietzsche would call his "ascetic ideals."[29] More to the point, he cannot get involved in a relationship which would be contrary to conventional morality (and therefore to the expectations of the public), and which would prevent him from telling (and therefore from selling) his story.

In this triangle, desire is never reciprocated: the trapped Leo loves and thinks of Lorraine, Lorraine wants Chuck, while Chuck is interested in nothing but success and fame - i.e., himself. Desire always flows one-way.

Chuck not only rejects Lorraine's desire, but also interferes peremptorily in her life, constantly telling her how to behave, how to dress, who to talk to and what to tell them - just as if he were directing an actress. And to confirm the old link of power with the negative passions, he is schooling her in *misery*: his directorial and costuming instructions constantly remind Lorraine that she must look sad, not dress up, not care about her body, and go to church and pray even if she does not believe in it.[30]

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[26] By an interesting coincidence, the Sheriff's phrase "out of bounds" is also the title of the series from University of Minnesota Press edited by Sandra Buckley, Michael Hardt and Brian Massumi, which has published works by many of the writers referred to here (Negri, Agamben, Virno, Deleuze, Badiou, etc.).
[27] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London and New York: Verso, [1989] 2002), 37.
[28] "Perhaps we need to reinvent the notion of the materialist teleology that Spinoza proclaimed at the dawn of modernity, when he claimed that the prophet produces its own people. Perhaps along with Spinoza we should recognize prophetic desire as irresistible, and all the more powerful the more it becomes identified with the multitude." Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2000), 65.

[29] "What do ascetic ideals mean? - With artists, nothing, or too many different things; ... with priests, the actual priestly faith, their best instrument of power and also the 'ultimate' sanction of their power; with saints, an excuse to hibernate at last, their *novissima gloriae cupido*, their rest in nothingness ('God'), their form of madness." Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. by Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 68. The Latin phrase, according to an endnote in the above edition, means "'the desire for glory, which is the last thing they will rid themselves of' (Tacitus, *Histories* Iv.6)."
[30] Here, Chuck more or less paraphrases Pascal's well-known paradox "Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and *you will believe*," which Althusser quotes in his famous essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *On the Reproduction of Capitalism,* trans. by G. M. Goshgarian

This plain look is, of course, artfully achieved in order to fool people. In Tatum's view, as in that of Hollywood and/or advertising in general, women are used decoratively in order to sell things.

The market economy is disrupted, however, when a *free gift* is suddenly introduced.

On the seventh day of the rescue attempt, when Leo realizes that there is no longer any hope, he calls over Chuck (whom he naively believes to be absolutely trustworthy - his best friend, in fact, having no suspicion of the game that he has been playing with his life) and asks him a favour: to give Lorraine a fur that he has bought her as a gift for their fifth wedding anniversary.

In a climactic scene, Chuck enters the couple's bedroom (without knocking), where Lorraine is standing in front of the mirror cutting her hair with a pair of scissors. He finds the fur where Leo has told him it will be and gives it to the woman, who, scornful and unmoved, refuses to wear it. Chuck, who is now in a state of crisis with the collapse of his plan, and full of remorse at the fact that he has essentially killed a man, angrily grabs the fur and violently wraps it around the woman's neck (obviously viewing the faithful execution of the dying man's last wish as some kind of atonement, however small). She begins to shout, "Don't, Chuck, don't. I can't breathe" to which he retorts "He can't breathe, either," continuing to strangle her. To escape from his grip, Lorraine then stabs Chuck in the chest with the scissors that she is still holding.

Figure 1. Scene from *Ace in the Hole / The Big Carnival*, dir. by Billy Wilder (Paramount Pictures, 1951). The journalist Chuck Tatum (Kirk Douglas) on the mountain, dictating the Law for his people who are camping at the foothills.

The ruthless reporter will eventually die from this wound. However, he first has time to do two things:

- he is carried to the top of the hill in a hoisting cage - in a scene that resembles an ascension - and announces by microphone to all the people gathered there: "Leo Minosa is dead. He's dead. There's nothing you can do now. There's nothing anybody can do. Go on home - all of you. He's dead."

- He phones the editor of the New York paper to give him - free - "the story behind the story," which nobody knows and of which he was the unwilling protagonist, while deluding himself that he was its director.

It is precisely at this moment when he ascends to the top of the hill and reveals the truth and the law to the people gathered in the desert below, that *Tatum is "between two deaths"*: already mortally wounded but not yet dead. Perhaps, however, that which occurs in a literal fashion at the end of the film was actually true all the way through. Tatum was essentially already dead and had not yet realized it.[31] Similarly between two deaths is the other *homo sacer*, Leo

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(London and New York: Verso, 2014), obviously without being aware of it. (A good question would be whether Wilder himself had it in mind.) Lorraine responds to the request with one of the film's great lines: "I don't go to Church. Kneeling bags my nylons."

[31] In connection with this point, it would be very useful to read the following witty observations

- who is trapped between the decision of the sovereign that his rescue will last seven days (essentially his sentence), and his biological death.

The announcer of the new law is himself ultimately sacrificed. His death, however, does not prevent the acceptance of the religion that he preaches nor the formation of the state on the basis of the principles that he stands for. On the contrary, they are conditional upon it. This repetition (as farce?) of the story of Moses, has the same end as the real Moses, at least according to Freud's version.[32]

The sacrifice of the innocent but sacrilegious Leo is balanced by the obliteration of the other *homo sacer*, the sovereign but sinning Chuck, who in any event was living dead, a kind of zombie or werewolf. His life is as bare as that of the *homo sacer* who performed the sacrilege - and so is both sacred and can be sacrificed without consequences.[33]

What is significant is that this symmetrical sacrifice consolidates even more the principles of *faith* (credo) in the image and in money. The people's seven-day stay under canvas ends not in any kind of creation but in the failure of the humanitarian operation. However, the disappointment of the gathered multitude's expectations and the disillusionment with which it hurriedly leaves the scene of the action reinforces the charge made against it by the dominant ideology: Wilder thus shows the viewer even more clearly - the viewer who wishes to see, of course - that what binds this community together is faith in the fidelity of the image and of its transmission; acceptance of the truth of the spectacle on the one hand, and financial faith, or credit, on the other.

As was noted at the beginning, after the commercial failure of *The Big Carnival*, Wilder never made another drama. His criticism of American society continued, however, focussing more on the micro rather than the macro level. In a series of films which we could generally classify as satires, the Austrian director attempted to highlight various aspects of the binary pairs trust/deception and authenticity/pretence, and their effect on personal (and especially sexual) relationships.

Nonetheless, through this apparently innocuous genre he continues to analyse the role played by spectacle in forming American society, and its organization/commodification. The analysis simply becomes more particularized and he attempts to develop the same basic idea, showing the effects of the process on the life and the daily existence of specific individuals. From one point of view, this makes his films even more interesting.

Translated from the Greek by Paul Edwards

of Slavoj Žižek:
"the place of the Stalinist Communist is exactly between the two deaths. The somewhat poetic definitions of the figure of a Communist that we find in Stalin's work are to be taken literally. When, for example, in his speech at Lenin's funeral, Stalin proclaims, 'We, the Communists, are people of a special mould. We are made of special stuff,' it is quite easy to recognize the Lacanian name for this special stuff: *objet petit a*, the sublime object placed in the interspace between the two deaths. In the Stalinist vision, the Communists are 'men of iron will,' somehow excluded from the everyday cycle of ordinary human passions and weakness. It is as if they are in a way 'the living dead,' still alive but already excluded from the ordinary cycle of natural forces - as if, that is, they possess another body, the sublime body beyond their ordinary physical body. (Is the fact that in Lubitsch's *Ninotchka*, the role of the high Party apparatchik is played by Bela Lugosi, identified with the figure of Dracula, another 'living dead,' expressing a presentiment of the described state of things, or is it just a happy coincidence?) The fantasy which serves as a support for the figure of the Stalinist Communist is therefore exactly the same as the fantasy which is at work in the Tom and Jerry cartoons: behind the figure of the indestructibility and invincibility of the Communist who can endure even the most terrible ordeal and survive it intact, reinforced with new strength, there is the same fantasy-logic as that of a cat whose head is blown up by dynamite and who, in the next scene, proceeds intact his pursuit of his class enemy, the mouse." Žižek, *The Sublime*, 162-63.
Another "coincidence" is of course that Ernst Lubitsch's *Ninotchka* was written by one Billy Wilder.
[32] According to which the Jews killed Moses because they were not mature enough to accept his teachings and were displeased, and only much later embraced monotheism, which gradually returned as the repressed after a latency period, undermined the religion of Yahweh and ultimately merged with it and prevailed over it. See in more detail Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. by Katherine Jones ((London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1939), esp. 89*sqq*.
[33] "We have seen that the state of nature is not a real epoch chronologically prior to the foundation of the City but a principle internal to the City, which appears at the moment the City is considered *tanquam dissoluta*, 'as if it were dissolved' (in this sense, therefore, the state of nature is something like a state of exception). Accordingly, when Hobbes founds sovereignty by means of a reference to the state in which 'man is a wolf to men,' *homo hominis lupus*, in the word 'wolf' (*lupus*) we ought to hear an echo of the *wargus* and the *caput lupinem* of the laws of Edward the Confessor: at issue is not simply *fera bestia* and natural life but rather a zone of indistinction between the human and the animal, a werewolf, a man who is transformed into a wolf and a wolf who is transformed into a man - in other words, a bandit, a *homo sacer*. Far from being a prejuridical condition that is indifferent to the law of the city, the Hobbesian state of nature is the exception and the threshold that constitutes and dwells within it. It is not so much a war of all against all as, more precisely, a condition in which everyone is bare life and a *homo sacer* for everyone else, and in which everyone is thus *wargus, gerit caput lupinum*. And this lupinization of man and humanization of the wolf is at every moment possible in the *dissolutio civitatis* inaugurated by the state of exception. This threshold alone, which is neither simple natural life nor social life but rather bare life or sacred life, is the always present and always operative presupposition of sovereignty." Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 63-64.

Refusing the False Choice between Individual and Collective Liberation: Interview with Blair Taylor

Bionote: Blair Taylor is program director of the Institute for Social Ecology, a popular education center for ecological scholarship and advocacy founded in 1974. He holds a PhD in Political Science from the New School for Social Research, and has written on U.S. social movements, contemporary far-right politics, political ecology, and the history of the left. His work has been featured in *Les Temps Modernes, American Studies*, and *City:* analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action. He is co-editor of the Murray Bookchin anthology T*he Next Revolution: Popular Assemblies and the Promise of Direct Democracy* (Verso, 2014).

Institute for Social Ecology
social-ecology@mail.mayfirst.org

Abstract: The following interview is an email exchange with the author, which was conducted as a follow up to the School for Politics and Critique 2019: Municipal Organizing and Left-wing Environmental Solutions. The questions were prepared by Katerina Kolozova and Zdravko Saveski.

Question: As a response to the crisis of neoliberal ideology, often equated with the global multinational capitalism and "deregulation" - even though authors like David Harvey, Ian Bruff and others have demonstrated that "neoliberalism" was a political project, heavily regulated, enabling what *appears* as mere "elemental force" of capitalism - the term "liberal" (and with it "libertarian") has become despised on both ends of the political spectrum. Now that "liberal" has become a slur even liberals avoid, now that everyone shies away from the "l" word, how are we to understand "libertarian socialism" as anti-capitalist, emancipatory, and of transformative potential

(vis-à-vis the capitalist global order)? Libertarian socialism is anti-capitalist and radically transformative when it comes to economic inequality, political organization, the dialectics of political power, but it is "liberal" when it comes to individual freedoms and collective freedoms of marginalized social groups. In short, is it possible to vindicate the notion of "liberal" from within socialist, Marxist and anarchist discourses, and advocate for libertarian socialism without facing an enormous (false) preconception against the notion?

Blair Taylor: At a moment when authoritarian nationalism is pitted against the superficial cosmopolitanism of neoliberalism, it is important to defend the gains of democratic struggles which are falsely attributed to "liberalism." As we have also seen in recent years, neoliberalism is a political and cultural project defined by commitments to market society and the presumed "meritocratic" rule of those who succeed within it - thus its democratic pretensions are quickly jettisoned in favor of stability of the status quo. The New Yorker's widely-shared "These Smug Pilots Have Lost Touch with Regular Passengers Like Us. Who Thinks I Should Fly This Plane?" cartoon comes to mind.[1] Although neoliberals today often pose as the champions of the oppressed, they have never been at the vanguard of these movement victories. So we should not give neoliberals credit for the gains of struggles now subsumed under "liberalism" - freedom of speech, minority and anti-discrimination legislation, expanded voting rights, etc. - both for reasons of proper accreditation and to avoid creating a false association wherein these concerns are portrayed as opposed to the project of social protection for the majority. The right has been successful in this project, aided by those who defend "progressive neoliberalism," Nancy Fraser's description of the Clinton/Blair third way.[2] These neoliberals are largely responsible for the sadly transatlantic sentiment that understands cosmopolitanism and diversity as fused to and perhaps even a result of austerity and inequality, that the bargain was to trade one for the other. The rise of a left populist flank fueled by the multiracial working class (in the case of Sanders/Corbyn) has finally begun to destabilize this unproductive binary. The mainstream liberal defense - especially in America by critics of Sanders - has tended

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[1] Will McPhail, "These Smug Pilots Have Lost Touch with Regular Passengers Like Us. Who Thinks I Should Fly This Plane?," *The New Yorker* (January 2, 2017). https://www.newyorker.com/cartoon/a20630?verso=true.

[2] Nancy Fraser, "The End of Progressive Neoliberalism," *Dissent Magazine* (January 2, 2017). https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/progressive-neoliberalism-reactionary-populism-nancy-fraser.

to double down on this binary, trying to pit minoritarian grievances against an allegedly race-blind and "reductionist" economic populism. Adolph Reed and Nancy Fraser[3] have usefully critiqued the class politics lurking behind this discourse.

Liberalism, like all political terms, must always be articulated and defined; it is not a static given. The critique of *neo*liberalism has been essential, including the left articulating a critique of the limits of liberalism. But at the same time, it has never simply repudiated liberal values or aims, but rather used this language to move them beyond abstraction towards a concrete universalism. A dialectical apprehension of the problem must defend the gains of liberalism while illustrating how liberalism systematically blocks social potentialities by understanding freedom in purely formal and abstract terms, defining the material/economic factors out of existence. Andrew Yang's presidential campaign, predicated on UBI plus STEM/TECH fetishism, is a thoroughly capitalist attempt to grasp this problem. Liberalism must be negated, but only by incorporation into a dialectical synthesis that resolves the false antinomy between individual and collective liberation. We must refuse this false choice and offer a better one offering both freedom and security collectively and individually. This desire is at the heart of the libertarian socialist project.

As reactionary forms of social protectionism are on the rise (Poland being perhaps the clearest case), it is important to remember that not all anticapitalist sentiments are equal, and that there are indeed worse things than even (neo)liberalism. Social ecology has long attempted to point out these important distinctions, from distinguishing emancipatory as opposed to reactionary analysis of ecological problems (Staudenmaier and Biehl's sadly prescient book *Ecofascism* in the 1990s[4]) to attempts to articulate an anti-capitalist rather than simply anti-corporate/consumerist economic analysis within the alterglobalization and Occupy Wall Street movements.[5]

[3] Gabriel Winant, "Professional-Managerial Chasm," *n+1* (October 10, 2019). https://npluso-nemag.com/online-only/online-only/professional-managerial-chasm.
[4] Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier, *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience* (Edinburgh and San Francisco: AK Press, 1995). Available in *The Anarchist Library*: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/janet-biehl-and-peter-staudenmaier-ecofascism-lessons-from-the-german-experience.
[5] G. B. Taylor, "Seven Left Myths about Capitalism," *Institute for Social Ecology* (2012). http://social-ecology.org/wp/2012/09/seven-left-myths-about-capitalism.

Question: The previous decade was marked by horizontal movements against the detrimental socioeconomic effects of neoliberal governance: the Occupy movement, the Arab spring, Gezi Park resistance in defense of the "right to city," anti-austerity student riots in the UK, and the same protest style and philosophy could be witnessed in the countries of Southeast Europe (SEE) too (as the reaction to more or less the same socioeconomic problems as in the rest of Europe). Popular assemblies, direct democracy, communalism were the values we based on our student and professors' plenums (in Skopje, Zagreb), as well as "Ne da(vi)mo Beograd" (Serbian for "Let us not drown/give up on Belgrade"), and they have amounted to some temporal and superficial changes (some positive changes in legislation, even though modest, change in government) followed by regress (more authoritarian legislation or style of governance or elections that brought a populist right-wing party in power). This method of resistance has proven to be a failure, at least in the region of SEE, whereas its discursive success consisting in disparaging the notions of "liberal," "European integration," has (unwittingly) contributed to the creation of the grounds for the surge of populist right-wing authoritarian parties. Are we correct to compare this experience of SEE to that of the US (the trajectory being: the Occupy movement, mobilization around Bernie Sanders in 2016 and then a populist movement and a conservative party in power led by the strongman Donald Trump)? Have these movements (and the method and values behind them) failed, and for what reasons?

BT: The trajectory does sound similar, although there are differences. First, the North American alterglobalization movement (AGM), while often theoretically incoherent, was not antiliberal or anti-global, despite the misnomer. At its core were primarily antistate ecological anticapitalists organizing via the Direct Action Network (DAN). For all its faults (more on this below), the AGM must be credited for first problematizing neoliberalism in the public sphere, but using an internationalist rather than protectionist language (contra right figures like Pat Buchanan). In the wake of 9/11 this movement was superseded by the reactive and ineffectual anti-war movement, characterized by a return of New Left Maoist/Marxist reactive and unfortunately largely ineffectual front groups that organized mass marches instead of utilizing direct action. The anti-war movement

also often engaged in crude binaries that uncritically valorized the "resistance" of right-wing actors like the Iraqi resistance and Hamas. This was a very different left from that of the AGM. During this time the left also became inundated with conspiracy theories, via 9/11 and unfortunately Green Party figures open to this discourse. Occupy Wall Street represented a return to the discourse and tactics of the AGM, but framed not on behalf of peasants, indigenous, and sea turtles, but the millions impacted by neoliberal austerity post-2008 crisis. It was the return of the AGM with a class analysis, if you will, and with much larger numbers. An older cadre of organizers, including DAN veterans like David Graeber, came out and wrested control and direction of the movement wrested control of the movemen to give it the modular, direct action-oriented "neoanarchist" flavor it assumed.

So, my second point is that I would not depict this as the causal sequence your narrative implies, a.k.a. a chain of left failures leading through Sanders and Trump. Sanders emerged as outsider who challenged both the authoritarian nationalist and neoliberal paradigms, and his criticism of Clintonite neoliberalism and embrace of the working class had some limited crossover appeal to Trump voters. Thus, he was not truly part of the phenomenon Trumpism responds to. The AGM and OWS certainly paved the way, discursively, for the Sanders insurgency as well as other progressive/anti-inequality Democratic politicians like NYC Mayor Bill DeBlasio (whose wife, Chirlane Irene McCray, it might interest *Identities* readers, was a member of the Combahee River Collective). These movements successfully "changed the conversation," which was then taken up by progressive politicians.

But this is a very low bar for success for self-described revolutionary movements. It underscores what is in my view the deeper failure of these decentralist antistatist, what I call "neoanarchist" movements - their tendency to be recuperated into neoliberal forms and discourse. On the one hand, their emphasis on political form - assemblies and the occupation of public space - rather than content was modular and easily reproducible across the world. But it also made it made it rather open in terms of political content - what are they for? What are the counter-institutions they propose? What are the organizations that carry this vision forward? These ideas of direct democracy and councils remained at a tactical level, never articulated as a coherent political alternative to the neoliberal state. This would require a vision and organizations to carry it out, anathema to the pluralistic ethos of the movement of "one no many yeses."

What else purports to enable "one no many yeses?" The market - no to the state, yes to everything else, so long as you can pay for it. Neoanarchist notions of "the journey is the destination" or "changing the world without taking power" were endemic, but few realized how much it resonated with neoliberal ideology. If both agree government is bad, and only one offers a purportedly non-state mode of social organization - markets - it is obvious which will win the day. For this reason, anarchist mutual aid projects like Occupy Sandy were literally praised by a report by the hated Office of Homeland Security, which noted: "Unlike traditional disaster response organizations, there were no appointed leaders, no bureaucracy, no regulations to follow, no pre-defined mission, charter, or strategic plan. There was just relief." The report concluded that "We can learn lessons from Occupy Sandy's successes to ensure a ready and resilient nation." Thus despite Occupy's noted fear of cooptation by political elites, one of the most feared offices of the U.S. federal government lauded these anarchist revolutionaries and held them up as a model to be emulated. This was the dominant mode of recuperation for Occupy - its scrappy communitarianism easily became ideological cover for the shortcomings of neoliberalism.

In the AGM 15 years earlier, it was the emphasis on corporate social responsibility and ethical consumption that accompanied the anti-consumer ideology of figures like Naomi Klein and *Adbusters* magazine. Instead of changing the world, they changed corporations, which simply incorporated these demands into the growing niche market of socially responsible consumption/investment/etc. Capitalism has increasingly taken up the language of social movements: sustainability, fair trade, authenticity, freedom. How did the language of the left become the language of business? I have argued elsewhere that it was not 9/11 but recuperation - the process of incorporating oppositional movements and discourse into power - that killed the AGM, constructing a "new spirit of capitalism" in the process that addresses growing demand for an ethical lifeworld while neutralizing critique, channeling oppositional energies iinto market solutions, systemic innovation, and stabilization.

The ascendancy of neoanarchism on the left was largely a response to a real problem - the need to develop antiauthoritarian alternatives to Marxism, such as the prefigurative political orientation that emerged from the New Left and New Social Movements and became the neoanarchism hegemonic within the alterglobalization and Occupy Wall Street movements. Post-Occupy this has shifted into older forms of recuperation, namely incorporation into social democratic political campaigns a la Sanders and the rise of Democratic Socialists of America. As a DSA member, however, I will say that the 2016 experience has soured many of the 60,000 who have recently joined the organization on electoral politics, favoring instead a movement-based "class-struggle social democracy" approach instead that overlaps significantly with right to the city/Communalist/libertarian municipalist organizing. In fact, unlike in the late 1990s, the ideological divisions between Marxists and anarchists have never felt less salient than today. As Bookchin once said, "*There is nothing that can't be, at least hypothetically, co-opted, including anarchism,*"[6] so better if we are just aware of radical history and the various dead ends. Problems aside, the combination of Sanders and DSA has created a new framework for a national left that is capable of speaking outside the choir, something that has not existed in the US for a long time. My hope is that this proliferation of progressive political content will be accompanied by demands for radical form. This is my hope for Symbiosis, which has launched an exciting new federation of dual power-oriented groups and individuals that are a complement/alternative to DSA.

Question: Murray Bookchin once wrote: "To separate ecological problems from social problems - or even to play down or give only token recognition to their crucial relationship - would be to grossly misconstrue the sources of the growing environmental crisis."[7] The climate crisis is an increasingly pressing issue and the systematic neglect of our global capitalist order has had huge environmental and societal repercussions. On a positive note, there is growing awareness that this issue cannot be ignored, that something should be done. What should be done, according to you, who should do something?

[6] "Interview with Murray Bookchin," *Open Road*, No. 13 (Spring 1982), 8-9. http://www.zisman.ca/openroad/1982-Spring/index.html.

[7] Murray Bookchin, "Ecological Problems Are Social Problems," *Climate and Capitalism* (March 25, 2011). https://climateandcapitalism.com/2011/03/25/murray-bookchin-what-is-social-ecology.

BT: Once again, Murray was right, and ahead of the curve! I think the Yellow Vests have done the environmental movement an enormous favor by injecting class analysis in one fell stroke - no more green austerity for the working class, no moralistic finger-wagging environmentalism. It really transformed what was a pretty common response in the North American left ecological milieu almost overnight. I think pushing for a Green New Deal is a vital opening, one that - for all the criticisms - presents an historical opportunity to address social (material reproduction/capitalism) and ecological (climate) issues at the same time. Sure we need to go beyond the national frame, beyond green growth, etc.... but is it more likely for this to emerge from nothing, or from the failures and partial successes of a mass mobilization united around this vision, one which redefines who gets to be an ecologist? Bookchin, like Marx, sought to identify and build on dialectical potentialities in the real historical moment, rather than utopian schemes to jump from this world into the pure one overnight. We can keep our theoretical critiques of various shortcomings, but we must undertake strategic actions in a deeply compromised world. The pure movementism of the past 40 years has proven totally inadequate. My hope is for a fighting alliance of Green New Deal actors, Indigenous groups, direct action activists, unions, and regular people who desire a better future, with social ecologists pushing for a progressive form - confederated directly democratic councils.

Question: Turkey has recently invaded the Federation of North and East Syria (Rojava). After the invasion, Turkey struck a deal with Russia concerning the territories of the Rojava. What do you think of this development in the long-lasting Syrian Civil War?

BT: Since the US withdrawal, the Kurds were left with few options, and now it seems things are constantly shifting there between the Kurds, Turkey, Russia and Syria. It is too early to tell how all this will impact the incredibly important experiment in confederal democracy there. One perhaps hopeful byproduct of this experience is that it has - I hope - conclusively demonstrated the inadequacy of a crude antiimperialist analysis that denounces the U.S. but ends up supporting other imperial players like Russia and Iran. Hopefully the left can acknowledge a far more complex world of power relations going forward. The global Rojava solidarity movement continues

to work to defend the revolution there, so we will see how things evolve under these new conditions.

Question: The Kurds in Syria, under the leadership of The Democratic Union Party (PYD), in very difficult military and political circumstances, have established a political system that is highly progressive not only by Middle Eastern standards but by Western standards too. They are inspired by Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), who in turn was inspired by the ideas of Murray Bookchin. What can you tell us about the concrete measures of social transformation implemented in Rojava, in particular about their eco-socialist and feminist aspects?

BT: There has been a lot of excellent work on this, I would refer folks to the various books and articles on the topic, *Make Rojava Green Again*, *Revolution in Rojava*, etc....[8] Their example of a pluralist and feminist model of democracy rooted in popular assemblies would be inspiring anywhere, but especially in that region. The fact that this project, one directly inspired by Bookchin's ideas, was also partly dependent on U.S. military support shows how wild and complex the world is, in contrast to most left sloganeering.

Question: Would you say it is in the interest of every major world power to suppress the "Rojava experiment"?

BT: Ironically, various world powers in fact supported it, of course for their own geopolitical reasons. It has been bizarre to see various Republicans and professional soldiers quit the Trump administration or write passionate op-eds defending our allies the Kurds. I do not think global powers - aside from Turkey - are too worried about what remains a relatively small project. And it is surprising how many have been inspired by it, we should not underestimate the power of popular opinion to act as a brake on what is and is not possible. Unfortunately for us, our current president prides himself exactly on being unconstrained by public opinion, not to mention decency, reason, or most other categories of human behavior.

Question: What is the way forward according to you, and is Bookchin's doctrine in need of some adjustments to the global context of the third decade of the 21st century?

BT: I think the political vision of social ecology offers an important political alternative that speaks to many of the problems identified above, in particular resolving the pendulum of the streets/the state that the left has been bouncing between for so long. It offers a radical analysis of the overlapping political, economic, social, ecological crises we face, and a political vision for moving beyond them. This vision of confederal direct democracy addresses the need for lasting institutions that democratize power rather than unproblematically wielding it in state/party form or rejecting it entirely, reconciling the historical deadlock between the anarchist and Marxist traditions.

That said, it is only a general picture to orient our struggles. While social ecology/communalism offers a broad political vision to orient our struggles, many details need to be fleshed out and adapted to local conditions. As all our efforts have failed and the left remains weak, we should be flexible and experimental in terms of our strategy to achieve it. Bookchin developed most of his core ideas from the 1960s to the early 2000s, and while many things changed, sometimes quite dramatically, other things remained the same and bear the marks of that historical era. His theorization of hierarchy and domination was essential to introducing non-reductionist analytical concepts to the New Left. At the same time, his definition of hierarchy as "institutionalized relationships of command and obedience" describes Fordism better than neoliberalism, and is arguably too agentive to describe the systemic dynamics of capitalism, which happens "behind the backs of men" rather than at their command. As much as Bookchin criticized Marx, I think he accepted a large portion of his theoretical critique of capitalism; he was, after all, an anarcho-communist.

Bookchin shifted over time from an anarchist antistatism, to a broadly extraparliamentary dual power position, to later in life advocating more narrowly for running campaigns for popular power within existing local municipal government. But what is the essential difference between participating in local elections but not national ones? Instead of ceding an important (and, yes, problematic) field of struggle to conservatives and centrists, why not push nationally - then

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[8] Internationalist Commune of Rojava, *Make Rojava Green Again*, intro. by Debbie Bookchin (London: Dog Section Press, 2019); Michael Knapp, Anja Flach and Ercan Ayboga, *Revolution in Rojava: Democratic Autonomy and Women's Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan* (London: Pluto Press, 2016).

internationally - for a progressive *form* in addition to progressive content? This was often connected to a somewhat rigid insistence on face-to-face deliberation that overlooks spatial/geographic challenges, disability access, and new potentially emancipatory technologies. Why be a purist on the how? For example, I have had my mind changed in online debates. Another element I think is worth reviewing is his insistence on a quasi-Athenian politics centered on "the general interest" over the particularism/sectoralism of class and other social axes. In my view, this concept overlooks the ongoing centrality of concrete interests accruing to different classes and other forms of particular hierarchies, not to mention affinity with centrist or Habermasian discourses that dissolve political conflict into deliberation and compromise. We certainly want to transcend those interests to achieve a common good, but to jump from the present into a premature and abstract universalism replicates the problems of utopian socialism Marx and Engels identified in 1848 (i.e., its middle class nature of offering a politics of class compromise and false unities which overlooks divergent objective interests).

But these are minor theoretical quibbles. Bookchin's work remains an incredibly important resource that speaks to the ongoing failure of oppositional movements across the globe confronting inequality, political authoritarianism and climate change to articulate any coherent political alternative. Communalism offers a political framework that resonates with what many of those movements are already calling for - Chile's calls for councils to draft a new Constitution, the assemblies of the Yellow Vests, Extinction Rebellion's advocacy of citizen's assemblies - and pulls it together into a new form of democratic revolutionary politics.

II. ARTICLES

David Roden |
Subtractive-Catastrophic Xenophilia

Bionote: David Roden's published work has addressed the relationship between deconstruction and analytic philosophy, philosophical naturalism, the metaphysics of sound and posthumanism. His book *Posthuman Life: Philosophy at the Edge of the Human* (New York, 2014) explores the ethical and epistemological ramifications of Speculative Posthumanism: the thesis that there could be agents originating in human social-technical systems that become posthuman as a result of some technological alteration of their powers. His current work considers posthumanist theories of agency and their implications for aesthetics and philosophical method. He teaches at the Open University, UK.

The Open University
david.roden@open.ac.uk

Abstract: Subtraction is a critical method whereby a cognitively inaccessible reality is thought in terms of its inaccessibility or "subtraction" from discourse. In this essay I begin by considering the role of subtraction in Alain Badiou's work, where the method receives its most explicit contemporary articulation. I then generalize subtraction beyond Badiou's ontology to explore a productive aporia in posthumanist theory. The implicit subtraction of posthumanist epistemology and ontology, I claim, confronts theorists of the posthuman with an inescapable tension between their philosophical language and its deployment within the historical situation I call the "posthumanist predicament." This reveals an equivalence between ontological subtraction and an empty compulsion to become what one cannot yet think, or "xenophilia." That is, between a philosophy of limits that forecloses the thought of the posthuman (*qua* defined structure or subject) through subtraction and an implicit desire to construct or "become" this subtracted, unpresented posthuman.

Introduction

If the real is independent of thought (as realists aver) we can presume no correlation between them. "Thought," Ray Brassier remarks, "is not guaranteed access to being; being is not inherently thinkable."[1] To think the real, then, is not to represent it but to exhibit representation's constitutive inefficacy.

Subtraction is a procedure for exhibiting this constitutive "gap" between thought and reality. In Alain Badiou's ontological writings - where subtraction has been most rigorously explored and formalized - it is pursued in tandem with a rationalist conception of ontology as the pure mathematics of multiplicity - specifically Set Theory. On the one hand, set theoretical language has a good claim to theorize ontological invariants for any situation.[2] On the other, certain results and antinomies of set and model theory formalize its inability to conceive multiplicity with complete generality or to comprehend certain infinite (generic) multiplicities in the language of a well-defined model (or interpreted theory).

It follows that even if, with Badiou, we grant that the real is multiple, it is not bound by any particular discourse of the multiple, such as Zermelo-Frankel Set Theory. It is thought only in terms of traces that imply its subtraction or unobjectifiability. Subtraction consequently allows us to think the possibility of an "Outside" that cannot be represented in discourse, which is thus thought *only through the operation of subtraction itself*.

The task of subtraction, accordingly, is to demonstrate that the most rigorous project of description or representation (as in the case of axiomatic set theory) implies its limit with respect to an implied Outside.

In his anti-realist phase, Hilary Putnam argued that even given the existence of a determinate set-theoretic multiplicity corresponding to a world, there is no uniquely adequate mapping between theo-

[1] Ray Brassier, "Concepts and Objects," in *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, ed. by Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek and Graham Harman (Melbourne: re:press, 2011), 47.
[2] "Set theory, considered as an adequate thinking of the pure multiple, or of the presentation of presentation, formalizes any situation whatsoever insofar as it reflects the latter's being as such; that is, the multiple of multiples which makes up any presentation." Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. by Oliver Feltham (London and New York: Continuum, 2006), 130.

ry and reality because it is possible to permutate even the Lord's Theory, shuffling around the meanings of the symbols to produce a distinct but equally true and empirically adequate theory.[3] However, subtraction goes further than Putnam's or Willard Quine's claims for semantic undetermination; proposing constitutive gaps in thought which expose it to the *principled possibility of the unthinkable* or "the event." This is a direct implication of a realism that denies that correlation between thought (or discourse) and Being. For example, in Speculative Posthumanism (see below) this allows the possibility of a disconnection from the human state that cannot be predicted or conceived prior to its effectuation.

For Badiou, it follows, that even the most rational ontology must confront a gap between representation and the unsayable or indescribable.[4]

Any philosophy which purports to "say," "show" or "exhibit" the unsayable or unrepresentable exposes itself to the charge of express or performative contradiction. Badiou, for example, has been criticized for incoherently stating both that ontology (in the form of mathematics) delineates the topic-neutral structures of any situation (presentation) while holding that these consistent multiplicities are the result of an operation (the "count-as-one") applied to "inconsistent" or *untheorizable* multiplicities, and that these alone constitute the real of ontological theory.[5]

My aim here is not to resolve this supposed aporia within Badiou's system, even less to arbitrate in debates about his fascinating ontology. Rather, I want to use the methodology of subtraction as tool to explore a productive aporia in posthumanist theory. The implicit subtraction of posthumanist theory confronts theorists of the posthuman, I will argue, with an inescapable tension (if not outright contradiction) between their philosophical language and its deployment within the historical situation constitutive of posthumanist theory ("the posthuman predicament"). This, I demonstrate, reveals an equivalence between ontological subtraction and an empty com-

pulsion to become what I/We cannot *yet* think, or "xenophilia." That is, between a philosophy of limits that forecloses the thought of the posthuman (*qua* defined structure or subject) through subtraction *and an implicit desire to construct or "become" this subtracted, unpresented posthuman.*

Badiou's ontology creatively exploits this tension in his idea of fidelity to the unknowable event.[6] I will argue that the posthumanist project can, likewise, only be understood in terms of an operation that disconnects the human from any stable or tractable condition of life. Posthumanism consequently leave us no relation to the future beyond the febrile, uncertain eros of the very historical constellation which constitutes its condition of possibility - a perverse mechanism, reformatting bodies and transforming or destroying worlds. This is not a psychological "desire for" but a groundless, self-extirpating and necessarily contentless vector of biomorphic change.

Posthumanism is consequently not - as some claim - an ethics committed to releasing the world from the philosophical grip of anthropocentricism. A sedentary, relatable world against which anthropocentrism once appeared tenable or well-motivated is subliming away in the heat of undirected technoscientific and environmental change - that is, in what Rosi Braidotti and I call our shared "posthuman predicament" or "posthuman condition."[7]

Since posthumanism recapitulates the effects of this predicament discursively - through subtraction - it is not an ethics but the organon of a "counter-ethics" (a term I owe to Claire Colebrook[8]). Posthumanism, of itself, does not offer a new form of life that might end the perverse counter-finality of the posthuman but only a space in which to release (thus implicitly and insidiously affirm) the erotic potentials it discloses, an affirmation that, as Colebrook argues, can no longer be bounded by any transcendental subjectivity or norm.[9]

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[3] Hilary Putnam, *Reason, Truth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
[4] Tracy McNulty, "The New Man's Fetish," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 51, Issue S1 (September 2013), 32-33.
[5] Adrian Johnston, "Phantom of Consistency: Alain Badiou and Kantian Transcendental idealism," *Continental Philosophy Review*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (2008), 352-54; Badiou, *Being and Event*, 28.

[6] Ibid., 327-43.
[7] David Roden, *Posthuman Life: Philosophy at the Edge of the Human* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014); Rosi Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge* (Cambridge: Polity, 2019), 2, 41.
[8] Claire Colebrook, "A Globe of One's Own: In Praise of the Flat Earth," *SubStance: A Review of Theory and Literary Criticism*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2012), 38.
[9] Claire Colebrook, "How Queer Can You Go? Theory, Normality and Normativity," in *Queering the Non/Human*, ed. by Myra J. Hird and Noreen Giffney (London and New York: Routledge, [2008] 2016), 29.

1.

In *Being and Event* Badiou proposes to unbind Being from Leibniz's dictum that "What is not *a* being is not a *being*."[10] Where traditional thought sees beings as unities, Badiou argues that any whole is derived from an operation, a "count" applied to an inconsistent (non-unitary) multiplicity that cannot be described by ontology without inducing "paradoxes of totality" familiar from set theory.[11] Being *as such*, then, is not merely uncountable but lacks even a definite uncountable numbering of the Alephs: Cantor's ascending orders of infinity. It is without unity and thus cannot be presented or described in ontological discourse.

Consequently, Being - considered as the unpresentable precondition of presentation - is "no thing" in that it is not "a being."[12] It cannot be described or presented in ontology - understood here as the mathematics of multiplicities - but thought only through its various symptoms, the empty places furrowed by the articulatory power of mathematical discourse.[13] This is only to say, as Becky Vartabedian emphasizes, that the inconsistent multiplicity supposed by the count is not a term presented in a situation (including the situation that constitutes ontology itself). It is thus traceable only as a lacuna.[14]

For Badiou, the "name" of this absence is the null set or void set - symbolized as "∅." In axiomatic set theory, ∅ is defined as the set such that nothing belongs to it. Since nothing is presented by it (not even nothing!) the null set to refers to Being only through its lack of unity. It is a kind of splinter of "unpresentation in presentation":[15]

> The name I have chosen, the void, indicates precisely that nothing is presented, no term, and also that the designation of that nothing occurs "emptily," it does not locate it structurally.

The void is the name of being - of inconsistency - according to a situation, inasmuch as presentation gives us therein an unpresentable access, thus non-access, to this access, in the mode of what is not-one, nor composable of ones; thus what is qualifiable within the situation solely as the errancy of the nothing.[16]

This exemplifies the method of subtraction in Badiou's thought perfectly insofar as the void set presents *nothing through subtraction*. It also demonstrates that subtraction is an event within a definite situation (mathematics) yielding no epistemic access to the Outside thereby subtracted (e.g., as would be the case if what were presented were some defined set theoretic structure).

There are other ways in which mathematics, according to Badiou, exhibits the errancy of Being with regard to ontological discourse. Among these symptoms is the demonstrable existence of the generic set that - while adjoinable to an ordinary situation - is anonymous and unspecifiable within it by a comprehending property, instantiating only the generic property of belonging to it alone. The existence of a generic multiplicity - whose members lack any common feature discernable within the situation - furnishes the elbow room for a "Subject" to emerge and link its members in ways that the situation, *ex hypothesi*, cannot prescribe. In short, the errancy of Being exhibited by the generic supports a space of radical freedom that can transform a situation utterly.[17]

In summary, subtraction cuts away that which it thinks by capitalizing on various weakness discerned within thought, at the same time allowing space for the construction of the Outside it "unpresents."[18]

Wherever posthumanism is committed to exhibiting this inefficacy, it is consequently a subtractive operation that, however incremen-

[10] Badiou, *Being and Event*, 53.
[11] Joshua Heller and Jon Cogburn, "Meillassoux's Dilemma: Paradoxes of Totality After the Speculative Turn," in *New Perspectives on Realism*, ed. by Luca Taddio (Milan: Mimesis International, 2017).
[12] Badiou, *Being and Event*, 23.
[13] Tzuchien Tho, "The Consistency of Inconsistency: Alain Badiou and the Limits of Mathematical Ontology," *Symposium: Canadian Journal for Continental Philosophy*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Fall 2008), 70-92.
[14] Becky Vartabedian, *Multiplicity and Ontology in Deleuze and Badiou* (New York: Springer, 2018), Kindle location 1968.
[15] Badiou, *Being and Event*, 55.
[16] Ibid., 56.
[17] See ibid., 338-9; Olivia Lucca Fraser, "Nothingness and Event" (unpublished manuscript), *Academia* (2009), https://www.academia.edu/858888/Nothingness_and_Event. Meillassoux argues, along similar lines, that the absolute represented by science is not a thing but the absolute contingency that follows from the lack of any sufficient reason for the laws or structures of appearance. Again, citing set-theoretic considerations similar to those adduced by Badiou, he claims that this contingency does not belong in any space of possibilities - like a set of all possible worlds (see Heller and Cogburn, "Meillassoux's Dilemma"). There is no all, only a groundless, hyperchaotic time in which all laws and regularities can be overthrown.
[18] Subtractive ontologies can be contrasted to those which ascribe positive characteristics to thing. Being as formed matter, as object of lived experience, as the duration felt or lived by biological creatures, as the material thing as described by mathematical natural science.

tally or indirectly, supports the construction of the unpresented, uncognized Outside.

This can be readily discerned in the work of a philosopher more regularly associated with the academic posthumanities than Badiou: Jacques Derrida. In Derrida's work, the deconstruction of a definite structure cedes to the "structurality of structure": an absolute decentering that cannot be secured within any historical situation.[19] Rather than losing the world among texts or signifiers, Derrida addresses rudimentary inscriptional and temporal relations - such as iterability - that he proposes as conditions for life, meaning and intentionality.[20] As with Badiou, these imply an ideal and incipient weakness in the status of systems as such.

The deconstructive event is consequently not a radical alien or Other - alien or other to what? Deconstruction unbinds the structurality that would otherwise determine alterity and ipseity, sameness and difference, because no system can totalize, "arrest or ground" the play of meaning and function.[21] Deconstruction does not, then, reveal or "represent" a kind of slippery underside to meaning, function and performativity, but, functions as what Drucilla Cornell terms a "philosophy of the limit," peeling away the constraints that render a notional world in our image through the presumption of meaning, etc.[22] What remains, as in Laruelle's non-philosophy, is not a world, and perhaps something weaker than philosophy.[23]

Unbinding and subtraction recur in more fleshy, libidinal posthumanisms. For example, critical posthumanists appeal to a passionate non-unitary "cyborg" that composes its world by affiliating with other systems. Not a transcendental subject but dispersed singularities, transversally hybridizing and crossing "species, categories and domains."[24] Braidotti refers to this power of lively affiliation with the ancient Greek for non-human/non-political life (*zoe*) - as opposed to *bios*, the cultivated, discursive life of the human citizen.

By contrast, the "alien vectors" of Rational Inhumanism (Prometheanism) are discursively mediated norms that engender active, self-modifying technological intelligences. In Ray Brassier's neorationalist futurism, this formal idea of a "self-conscious rational agent" is central to any conception of general intelligence as a "self-correcting exercise."[25]

Inhumanists reject the critical posthumanist primacy of life and sensate matter. Such vitalisms and materialism, they argue, violate Wilfred Sellars's stricture against the epistemic given: that is, claims to self-authenticating insight into reality which bypass the space of discursive reason.[26]

Here, observe, the first posthumanism unbinds a filter (a constraint on posthuman possibility) retained by the second and vice versa: the *sapience filter* identifying agency with linguistic and conceptual aptitudes; the *sentience filter* identifying agency with felt duration or incipient life.

As in subtractive music synthesis, the more Filters you remove, the closer the output to inharmonic noise.

The inhumanist cannot survey which materialized subjects (organic or post-organic) will instantiate the diagrams of rational subjectivity. The vitalist cannot pre-empt the diversity of life - its "Great Outdoors." Indeed, as Carol Cleland reminds us, there may well be no features common to living things - no life *as such*. Perhaps, living entities compose an irreducibly generic multiple; one that cannot be comprehended under any salient common features.[27]

[19] Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 162-3, 278.; Suhail Malik, "Materialist Reason and Its Languages. Part One: Absolute Reason, Absolute Deconstruction," in *Genealogies of Speculation: Materialism and Subjectivity Since Structuralism*, ed. by Suhail Malik and Armen Avanessian (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016).
[20] These "infrastructures" purportedly abstract from anything recognizably human or subject-like: yielding an a-subjective, topic-neutral difference that articulates such discrepant regions as Freudian unconscious, the theory of neural networks or semiotics. See David Roden, "Naturalizing Deconstruction," *Continental Philosophy Review*, Vol. 38, No. 1-2 (2005), 82.

[21] See Derrida, "Structure," 288-9; Malik, "Materialist Reason."
[22] Roden, "Naturalizing," 82.
[23] Drucilla Cornell, *The Philosophy of the Limit* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 1; Katerina Kolozova, *Cut of the Real: Subjectivity in Poststructuralist Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 99; François Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, trans. by Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

[24] Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 60, 193.
[25] Ray Brassier, "The View from Nowhere," *Identities: Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Summer 2011a): 7-23; Reza Negarestani, *Intelligence and Spirit* (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2019); David Roden, "Promethean and Posthuman Freedom: Brassier on Improvisation and Time," *Performance Philosophy*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2019), 510-27.
[26] Matija Jelača, "Sellars Contra Deleuze on Intuitive Knowledge," *Speculations: A Journal of Speculative Realism*, Vol. 5 (2014), 111.
[27] Carol E. Cleland, "Life without Definitions," *Synthese: An International Journal for Epistemology, Methodology and Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 185, No. 1 (2012), 129; Eugene Thacker, *After Life*

The synthesis metaphor acquires further traction if we consider posthumanism primarily as an orientation to time. The Speculative Posthumanism (SP) elaborated in my book *Posthuman Life* is specifically concerned with conceptualizing our relation to hypothetical agents in technological deep time. For SP, becoming posthuman is conceived as the disconnection of hypothetical posthuman agents from the human socio-technical system or "Wide Human" (WH).

The Disconnection Thesis (DT) is also conceived abstractly and anonymously. It says nothing about how posthumans are embodied or disembodied; only that they possess the power or functional autonomy to become independent of WH.[28]

Other posthumanisms, Xenofeminism (XF) and Accelerationism (ACC) or Prometheanism are explicitly futural; concerned with the production of novel, less oppressive gender relations or sexualities. Even a critical posthumanism that, like Braidotti's, eschews futurism, is concerned with power relations in the contemporary world and thus with whatever futures their transversal becomings might induce.[29]

Each posthumanism, then, pre-empts *an abstract disconnection space, unbounded by whatever Filters it removes.*

Moreover, all Filters are espistemically contestable.

The Sapience Filter, to give one example, assumes that "serious" agents participate in shared linguistic and inferential functions.

I have argued elsewhere[30] that this pragmatist vision - most recently and extensively articulated in Reza Negarestani's *Intelligence and Spirit* - is incomplete. It supposes sapients capable of interpreting normative statuses within the social game of giving and asking for reasons. However, this interpretationist model unbinds subjectivity by supplementing it. It accounts for a pragmatist subject$_1$ able to follow shared practices; but leaves us a dangling interpreter subject$_2$. This spectral figure is not accounted for by normativity because it is a condition of it. Thus, normative functionalism leaves what counts as a text or practice, hence agency and subjectivity, undetermined; marked, as in Derrida's work, by the "absolute absence" of any finite or notionally human reader.[31]

Given the futural orientation of positions which buy heavily into functionalism - including XF and Brassier's Prometheanism, this voids their deep-time horizon by subtracting their agent from discourse.[32]

Even the irreducibility of the normative to the material - frequently offered in defences against eliminative or reductive materialism - portends the dispensability of normativity and the fragility of agency concepts. Making our obeisance to Lovecraft and the unknowable, alien thing of Weird literature, this can be figured in the unreadable monstrosity of the hyper-agent: a being whose functional autonomy (or power) has been expanded to a critical point at which agency ceases.

Maximizing agency implies its discursive subtraction because the irreducibility of the normative implies that hyper-agents could not use intentional idioms for self-understanding. Given the irreducibility of the psychological to the physical or functional states of such a system, any self-intervention could delete any belief, desire or emotional attitude ascribed by auto- or hetero-interpretation. Such being would have to use forms of control other than human forms of reflection, discourse or first-person narrative.[33]

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

28 Some empirical content is retained, however, because this version of SP works with a minimal concept of self-maintaining agency that is psychology-free - giving no account of its modes of thought or feeling.

29 Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge*, 4.

30 David Roden, "On Reason and Spectral Machines: Robert Brandom and Bounded Posthumanism," in *Philosophy After Nature*, ed. by Rosi Braidotti and Rick Dolphijn (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), 99-119.

31 Deborah Goldgaber, "Plasticity, Technicity, Writing," *parallax*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (2019), 147; Roden, *Posthuman Life*, 128; Roden, "On Reason," 111-12.

32 See Helen Hester, "SAPIENCE+CARE: Reason and Responsibility in Posthuman Politics," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2019), 67-80. Another filter is the tacit or explicit appeal to invariants of experience like embodiment or temporal duration. However, this "sentience" filter is vulnerable to what I call the "dark phenomenology" objection. A facet of experience is "dark" (or intuition-transcendent) if having it confers either no or a very minimal understanding of its nature. See David Roden, "Nature's Dark Domain: An Argument for a Naturalized Phenomenology," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements*, Vol. 72 (2013), 169-88. If there is dark phenomenology, experience offers no yardstick for its proper description. Thus, even the most sophisticated philosophical accounts of experience (transcendental phenomenology, say) may leave us with little grip on disconnection space.

33 For details see Roden, *Posthuman Life*, 100-2; David Roden, "Reduction, Elimination and Radical Uninterpretability," *Academia.edu* (2015), www.academia.edu/15054582/Reduction_Elimination_and_Radical_Uninterpretability; David Roden, "Letters from the Ocean Terminus," *Dis Magazine* (2016). http://dismagazine.com/discussion/81950/letters-from-the-ocean-ter-

This limit (or non) agent is subtracted from any consistent theory of agency - it occupies a kind of hole in the space of reasons. As a consequence of this subtraction, the transhumanist dream of a technologically compliant nature maximizing subjective autonomy recrudesces as "advanced non-compliance": *Cthulhu-Prometheus*.[34]

If posthumanism has a founding axiom, then, it is the subtractive claim that the Outside is not radically "other" to the human but merely unconstrained by invariances we might once have attributed to humanity or to the idea of a rational subject or sensate subject. "The human" as transcendental constraint is effectively broken.

Consequently, a maximally unbound posthumanism can think its Outside not through a positive account of subjectivity but only by making its subject up: producing, becoming, adjoining it. In Colebrook's terms, disconnection is not a matter of decision or deliberation but of determinedly queer encounters which cannot be determined in advance by recognition or reproduction.[35] The posthuman, then, is *thought as performance*, amid the biomorphic debris of disconnection space.[36]

2.

Braidotti is correct when she claims that a subject is necessary to provide a normative response to the posthuman predicament that entangles life in its divergent, counter-final process.[37] The subject *just is* the source and address of normative claims. But, as we have seen, the most rigorous response to the posthuman predicament addresses the multiplicity of disconnection space by subtracting any ethically salient conceptions of subjectivity.[38]

Xenophilia and subtraction are thus correlative. Subtraction xeno-thinks the posthuman by removing the normative filters that,

however fragile, allowed us to keep the Outside at a philosophical remove. The posthuman "It thinks" and "It feels" operating not with transcendental arguments or dialectics - the epistemic frailties of the Filters preclude this - but with biomorphisms: simulating, producing, mixing with or encountering bodies; an unruly productivity like the unoccupied factory that populates a wasteland with hideous novelties in Thomas Ligotti's masterpiece of objective horror "The Red Tower."[39]

Xenophilia/Subtraction is here not only a conceptual operation but an input to the Red Tower's desolation of anthropocentrism.

It follows that posthumanism must recuse itself from any positive ethical role. Since there are no filters on the noise from the future, the Outside is produced before it is empirically determined or subject to a moral or political decision. The effectuation of posthumanist subtraction expresses xenophilic desire because the operation exposes critical reason to these acephalic processes of biomorphic disruption.

Posthumanists often ground their position in an ethics of alterity that seeks to recognize nonhuman life in its difference rather than as a resource for exploitation.[40] But the portals of alterity swing wider than Justice - as is evident in awkward attempts to distinguish the "perverse" post-anthropocentrism of advanced capitalism - its constant disruption of boundaries and species, etc. - from an "ethical" posthumanism which acknowledges life's "constant disruption of boundaries and species, etc."[41]

Posthumanism operates at this juncture between contestable life and the Unbounding/Unbounded. Its notional "bodies" are uncertain experiments without the vitality or integrity accorded by the

minus-david-roden; Roden, "Promethean"; Germán Sierra, "Metaplasticity," *Šum: Journal for Contemporary Art Criticism and Theory*, Vol. 12 (2019), 1797-1809. http://sumrevija.si/en/german-sierra-metaplasticity-sum12.
[34] Roden, "Letters."
[35] Colebrook, "How Queer," 30.
[36] See David Roden, "Posthumanism, Critical, Speculative, Biormorphic," in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Posthumanism*, ed. by Mads Rosendhal Thomsen and Joseph Wamburg (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020) (forthcoming).
[37] Colebrook, "A Globe," 37; Roden, *Posthuman Life*, 186, 150-65; Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 42; Braidotti, *Posthuman Knowledge*, 41.
[38] Colebrook, "A Globe," 37.

[39] Thomas Ligotti, "The Red Tower," *Weird Fiction Review* (December 19, 2011). http://weirdfictionreview.com/2011/12/the-red-tower-by-thomas-ligotti.
[40] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 140.
[41] Roden, *Posthuman Life*, 184-85; Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 60-61; Francesca Ferrando, *Philosophical Posthumanism* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 123. All functions and values supervene on fragile vessels or contexts whose transactions are perpetually open to technical, political or erotic contestation; the indetermination of life itself. The game is the same in the sedentary cultural re-use of highly discriminate human cortical maps for reading script - that could never have been evolved for this purpose - over a short timescale of millennia; to the rapid production of transgenic organisms, whose usable traits may traverse biological "kingdoms." Both forms of re-use (cultural and technological) exploit the functional indeterminacy of life's "plug and play" components.

sapience and sentience Filters. The biomorphic body is constituted by technical forms of supplementation and repetition; its status politicized and eroticized by mobile or porous borders.[42] As in Derrida's work, this structural opening pre-empts ethics with its subtracted counterpart - "the majestic and simple notion of otherness itself."[43]

Subtraction thus recapitulates through theory (or post-theory or performance) the queer indetermination of biomorphic bodies encysted in rapacious planetary engines: an ontological catastrophe that is both global and intimate. In J. G. Ballard's short story "The Terminal Beach" this savage modernity unbinds a void that a hallucinating former airman exploring the bunker landscape of Eniwetok Atoll (a former Pacific H-Bomb test site) experiences as an "ontological Eden." Its "historical and psychic zero" all that binds a biomorphic space littered with encyclopedically injured human dolls, anagrammatized by the overkill technologies of modern wars; the conceptual auto-disasters endlessly reiterated Ballard's *Crash*.[44]

lae of bricolage and "demontology," untying even the minimal conceptual framework with which SP originally sought to regiment our relation to the deep future. Its scope is correspondingly indeterminate, perhaps closer to hand, and philosophically mute.

3.

Insofar as Xenophilia is satisfied it cannot be. Insofar as Xenophilia is, it cannot be satisfied.

Lacking subjective satisfaction conditions, the Xenophilic desire expressed in posthumanist subtraction 1) does not represent a goal state and 2) cannot oppose a present state on the grounds that it fails to optimize them - it is thus an input to the Posthuman Predicament upon which it purports to reflect. Posthumanism thus exacerbates the acephalic counter-finality of the Predicament, an effect of self-catalyzing technological circuits too vast and profligate to predict or control.

As noted, this operation is functional and self-defining, albeit without the assurance that Philosophy finds even in its perennial defeats.[45] This broken posthuman performance converts the DT from abstract ontology to seriated operations; to multiple mobile formu-

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[42] Goldgaber, "Plasticity," 139; Roden, "Posthumanism."

[43] Patricia MacCormack, *Posthuman Ethics: Embodiment and Cultural Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, [2012] 2016), 16.

[44] J. G. Ballard, "The Terminal Beach," in *The Complete Short Stories*, Vol. II (London: Fourth Estate, 2014), 30-31; J. G. Ballard, *Crash* (London: Vintage, 1995), 179.

[45] Roden, "Posthumanism."

Ekin Erkan |
Laruelle Qua Stiegler: On Non-Marxism and the Transindividual

The New Center for Research and Practice
ee2447@columbia.edu

Abstract: Alexander R. Galloway and Jason R. LaRiviére's article "Compression in Philosophy" seeks to pose François Laruelle's engagement with metaphysics against Bernard Stiegler's epistemological rendering of idealism. Identifying Laruelle as the theorist of genericity, through which mankind and the world are identified through an index of "opacity," the authors argue that Laruelle does away with all deleterious philosophical "data." Laruelle's generic immanence is posed against Stiegler's process of retention and discretization, as Galloway and LaRiviére argue that Stiegler's philosophy seeks to reveal an enchanted natural world through the development of noesis. By further developing Laruelle and Stiegler's Marxian projects, I seek to demonstrate the limits of this vantage of "compression." In turn, I also seek to create further bricolage between Laruelle and Stiegler while also further elaborating on their distinct engagement(s) with Marx, offering the mold of synthesis as an alternative to compression when considering Stiegler's work on transindividuation. In turn, this paper seeks to survey some of the contemporary theorists drawing from Stiegler (Yuk Hui, Alexander Wilson and Daniel Ross) and Laruelle (Anne-Françoise Schmidt, Gilles Grelet, Ray Brassier, Katerina Kolozova, John Ó Maoilearca and Jonathan Fardy) to examine political discourse regarding the posthuman and non-human, with a particular interest in Kolozova's unified theory of standard philosophy and Capital.

Introduction to Non-Marxism

Within the nexus of contemporary philosophers who prioritize immanence - Giorgio Agamben, Jean-Luc Nancy, Tristan Garcia, Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, and Roberto Esposito - there remains a certain tendency to retain the univocity of Spinoza, often filtered through the Deleuzian aperture of generic multiplicity. Consequently, these contemporaneous philosophers articulate immanence vis-à-vis the individual modes of material and political life as expressions of the same substance. This metaphysical typology of abstraction can be traced back to German idealism's emphasis on the relationship between cognition and deduction. Epitomized by Kant's "transcendental decision," or the ability to draw universal claims from particulars as the "engine" for ontogenesis, the transcendental configuration's confluence between Identity and Difference is rooted in Plato's breakage from Parmenides. Surveying the contemporary philosophical topology, we see that even in Meillassoux's arche-fossil sci-

entific ontology - where matter can be traced back to a primordial ontological order that emphatically discards the necessity of Kantian "correlationism" - the ahistorical reliance on mathematics as an empty sign results in a series of philosophical "blind spots," with the most marked political predicament being a poverty towards the modes of production. In François Laruelle's "non-standard" philosophical method, however, we find something altogether more radical: an absolutely singular withdrawal from the metaphysical precept that separates the world into (often paradoxical) binarisms.

Laruelle's method altogether rejects Being, described by Heidegger as the foundation for philosophy's "standard model" (*Ereignis*). In its univocity, Laruelle's immanence of the "One" radicalizes Spinoza's substance-monism of the mind; in turn, Laruelle's non-standard philosophical method challenges the Kantian thesis, whereby mind is not a "mirror" of the world, but, instead, mediates and restructures the passage of phenomena vis-à-vis its own internal structure. For Laruelle, the "Real as One" precedes the philosophical decision, as the Real is foreclosed to epistemic access. Therefore, philosophy is aligned with both "fictionalization" and fractured synthesis, as it cannot adequately conceptualize the univocity of the superposition of the Real without dividing it along terms of intelligibility - Identity and Difference. Unlike the diffracted multiplicity of Deleuzian immanence, within Laruelle's plane of the Real, the "One," immanent to itself, cannot be divided (into the "two," or the riven relationship) - it is solely on the plane of the transcendental that the Real can be divisible.

The consequence of the Kantian transcendental decision, which Laruelle terms the Principle of Sufficient Philosophy, is that cognition is directed by the noumenal Real, which is removed from any possibility of cognition. Thus, under Kant's system - and those of neo-Kantians such as Carnap, Sellers, Gadamer, Heidegger, and Reichenbach - the "real world" is substantiated as "unattainable, unprovable, unpromisable."[1] It is through cognition that the Kantian transcendental exacts its cardinal reign upon empirical knowledge, thereby predetermining the conditions of possibility.

Following Laruelle, however, there is an idealist ideology that besmirches the Philosophical Decision, as it seeks to discover that which "is determinant of the Real"[2] and, consequently, "hallucinates" material-idealist instantiations of the Real. Laruelle does not castigate the impulse of decisionism *prima facie* but, instead, uses non-philosophy to forward a *pure decisionism* that deters from making determinate distinctions regarding the uncovering of the Real. Thus, the "'principle' of non-Marxism is that theory contains an essential part of decisions, rightfully axiomatic (and) transcendental … determined-in-the-last-instance by the Real."[3] Laruelle's non-Marxism is an affront to the economy of transcendence that begins with Plato's Being (psychophysical/immaterial essence) and eidetic intelligibility (formal/material causation). Therefore, Laruelle's Real is idempotent. In *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, Laruelle demonstrates how thought submits to the Real (while not transforming it into a philosophical truth), describing how "capital in the totality of its philosophical functioning" produces an "economico-philosophical mixture" that concentrates and binds transcendence with "'alienation.'"[4] For Laruelle, "[t]hat which Marx denounces as fetishism after a, perhaps, incomplete analysis of philosophy itself" can be projected "beyond the market," for "there is an over-fetishism which is not specially 'theological,' but is that of the philosophical."[5] Drawing from Laruelle and further developing this position, philosopher Katerina Kolozova distinguishes the relationship between standard philosophy and capital, as they both operate through the acquisitive domain of appropriating materials. This position, of a unified theory of Capital and standard philosophy, was originally stoked by Gilles Grelet's work on "Proletarian Gnosis"[6] but truly formulated by Katerina Kolozova in particular (and, subsequently, adopted by Laruellean scholars such as Jonathan Fardy). In *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals* (2019), Kolozova describes the practice of the totality of "philosophical functioning" - or "standard philosophy" - as homologous to the ethos of capital.

It is according to this account regarding the constitution of empirical mastery that Laruelle's Marxist verge reveals itself as a kind of "non-standard" critique, whereby non-philosophy is not mere-

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[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. by R. J. Hollindale (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 20.

[2] François Laruelle, *Introduction to Generic Sciences*, trans. by Jeremy R. Smith (2019), 9.
[3] François Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, trans. by Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Univocal, 2014), 85.
[4] Ibid., 9.
[5] Laruelle, *Generic Sciences*, 7.
[6] Gilles Grelet, "Proletarian Gnosis," trans. by Anthony Paul Smith, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2014), 93-98.

ly directed towards the dominion of the transcendental decision's relativization of the *a priori*, but, in turn, towards how philosophy has trans-historically constituted its own terms of capitalist alterity, "proper to mastery."[7] In comparison to traditional Marxism, Laruelle's non-Marxist formulation is grounded by the principle of physicality being independent from representations - therefore, "[t]he real is given in essentially passive experiences, and cannot ground a metaphysical and political activism or voluntarism [....] The real is not a vague instance, the jewel of ideology; it is 'individual' experiences."[8] In Laruelle's "non-Marxist" system, humanity is conceived of as an "identity-in-the-last-instance," and as "one amongst many," through which the human becomes central, "as a category of contingency rather than an Absolute."[9] In response to philosophy's possessive acquisition of the Real via its ethics of decisionism, Laruelle's ethico-political praxis emancipates raw materials and exchange-based economic practices from Standard Philosophy's possessive domination. Thus, contra Meillassoux and other speculative realists' flat ontologizing (e.g., Ian Hamilton Grant's generative program of emergence, whereby "speculation is entailed by natural productivity"),[10] Laruelle's system is radical specifically because it is fundamentally materialist *and* historical. Following Marx's materialist formalism, within Laruelle's "Non-Marxist triptych"[11] we can visually map the identification of "[s]pecific causality in class struggle" with the "empirical world" and the "ontological existentiality of terrestriality."[12] In turn, Laruelle emancipates Marx from Marxism, unconfounding man from the subject (*anthropos*) and, thereby, establishes a unilateralizing presupposition of genericity. As we will further demonstrate by way of Katerina Kolozova and John Ó Maoilearca's contemporaneous work on Laruelle, this proves to be a most promising non-Marxist position for further

establishing an alternative to not only anti-humanism but also posthumanist/transhumanist discourse, proffering the non-human as the "science of man more universal than all philosophy."[13]

However, prior to this undertaking, I will further distinguish Laruelle's utopian non-Marxism alongside Bernard Stiegler's markedly communal and exchange-based project, which is carved along lines of epistemophilia and transindividuation. Rather than merely accentuate the distinction between the two philosophers, which I posit as purely methodological, I will seek to create propinquity between Stiegler and Laruelle by way of their political philosophies. With the exception of Alexander Galloway and Jason Lariviere's work on "philosophical compression"[14] - a project that seeks to set the two philosophers as entirely non-compliant - and a sentence in Ian James' *The Techniques of Thought*,[15] this endeavor has, hitherto, gone unendeavored.

Bridging Laruelle and Stiegler

Stiegler's engagement with the material conditions of contingency is related to the political embodiment of public powerlessness by way of the cosmological dimension of noesis, or the intellectual faculty of imagining alternative material world-conditions

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[7] François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia at the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. by Drew S. Burk (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Univocal, 2012), 239.
[8] François Laruelle, *A Biography of Ordinary Man*, trans. by Jessie Hock and Alex Dubilet (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), 144.
[9] Katerina Kolozova, *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals: A Non-Marxist Critique of Capital, Philosophy and Patriarchy* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 139.
[10] Ian Hamilton Grant, "Presentation by Ian Hamilton Grant," *Collapse*, Vol. III: *Unknown Deleuze [+Speculative Realism]*, ed. Robin Mackay (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2012), 343.
[11] François Laruelle, *Tetralogos: Un opéra de philosophies* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2019), 195.
[12] Anne-Françoise Schmid, "The Tryptychs of Non-Philosophy," trans. by Joevenn Neo, paper presented at the conference "François Laruelle and Non-Standard Philosophy: The Path of Least Resistance" (Bruxelles: Maison des Sciences Humaines of the Université libre de Bruxelles, February 8-9, 2019).

[13] François Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers: Science des hommes, démocratie, non-psychanalyse* (Paris: Kimé, 1995), 110.
[14] In Alexander Galloway and Jason Lariviere's work on philosophical compression, the authors delineate two distinct forms of metaphysical compression: "abstract compression" and "generic compression." They begin by examining the use of compression and decompression in media artefacts as it applies to informational richness or loss but seek to modify compression to examine how metaphysics recasts "philosophy as a kind of media theory." They define "abstract compression," which applies to Stiegler, as a philosophical position in which "compression is an undesirable by-product of the metaphysical contract." Galloway and Lariviere describe "generic compression" as a "slightly different position in which compression is a positive tactic of material indifference," with Laruelle's non-philosophy identified with "signal-processing," whereby immanence eliminates all superfluous "philosophical data." While both kinds of compression describe the deletion of "something, be it formal, material, auric, or essential," both modes apply deletion to distinct registers. The authors further qualify that while "abstract compression" assumes that "real phenomena appear as selective deletions of a superlative nature," "generic compression reveals the basic insufficiency and indistinction of the real phenomena of everyday life." Throughout the paper, I retain this vantage of compression, with "decompression" understood as a reversal of this deletion/discretization process, but also challenge the eliminative terms of this model - chiefly that this description neither accounts for what becomes of "deleted" information nor for the generative or reproductive recursivity of the discretization process. See Jason Lariviere and Alexander Galloway, "Compression in Philosophy," *boundary 2*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2017), 127-28.
[15] James states that "the image of philosophy that Stiegler presents also, as it does with Laruelle, implies a thorough rethinking of the conditions of knowledge and a concomitant questioning of the distribution and interrelation of different modes of knowledge." See Ian James, *The Techniques of Thought: Nancy, Laruelle, Malabou, and Stiegler after Naturalism* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 42.

as it relates to technics. In order to better understand Stiegler's Marxism, which is explicitly concerned with today's capitalist subject, we must historically situate it alongside a tripartite mold.

If, following the traditional Marxian framework, the subject (or "victim") of the first form of capitalist "proletarianization" was the producer then, in particular, it was epitomized by the industrial worker. If we consider virtualization as a topological configuration, then this moment was also accompanied by spatial privatization, as the means of work was configured via the factory, a "giant industrial 'workhouse,'" so disparate from other spaces of confluence that it was identified as a "House of Terror."[16] Distinguished by the Decade of Prosperity and post-World War II economic expansion, the second epoch of proletarianization primarily concerned the consumer and, in particular, those members of the middle class who flocked to retail areas - "the department store and the supermarket, then the shopping center and the online retailer."[17] The third moment, of "generalized proletarianization," colors today's epoch and is characterized by mass propagation, the rise of the amateur's unwittingly performed digital/immaterial cognitive labor and diffracted spatio-geographical distinction, such that this labor seeps into all annals of everyday life. Following the "first moment" - railway networks/the steam engine - and the "second" - Taylor-Fordism, the oil and car industry - this "third industrial revolution" is, specifically, that of the financialization of society and debt, the rise of cognitive capitalism and the information economy, which is often termed post-Fordism. Unlike the first two moments, "generalized proletarianization" does not demonstrate any radical historical breakage, but, instead, is better defined by the hybridization with, and intensification of, the previous two socio-historical modes.

In his most recent work, Stiegler is particularly interested in digitality and "generalized proletarianization," or immaterial cognitive labor - which he terms "psychopower" or "neuropower" - as it is often performed on the internet, by way of metadata collection and self-annotating data aggregation by the "Internet of Things" (e.g., GPS tags, "smartwatches," mobile phones, embedded home automa-

tion systems). This widening of materiality, whereby "generalized proletarianization" is induced by our asymptotic movement towards transhumanism, captures the bind of φιλία (*philia*) and *savoir-faire* (or "know-how") under capitalism's ludic conditioning. Thus, this is why Lariviere and Galloway regard Stiegler as the philosopher of "decompression" par excellence - Stiegler's understanding of capitalism, today, is in terms of the informatic compression of thought, nature and technology, with Stiegler's means of transcendence as determined through psychic individuation (decompression). This is cyclic, as the "decompression of consciousness through engagement with mnemotechnical devices" finds itself followed by an aporetic "[e]xpansion via psychic individuation," which "occurs, only to be reexteriorized, grammatized, and disindividuated again."[18]

However, here, too, we see a bridge between Stiegler and Laruelle's non-Marxism - in Laruelle's non-Marxist system, the labor of the cognitariat falls within the domain of materialism, as "materialism is a style of identity" incorporating that which is "sensible and intuitive without practice," "practice without matter," and "material without form."[19] Standard philosophy is exploitive through the exchange-based economy of acquisition. Since non-Marxism relates to immaterial cognitive labor, it is perhaps most lucidly exemplified in the realm of art. As Jonathan Fardy demonstrates, there is a distinct intersection between Laruellian non-aesthetics (which demonstrates how ethics, aesthetics, and philosophy is irreducible to any one of these categories) and non-Marxism via the labor of art. With "standard aesthetics" we see how art appropriates and extracts a "surplus value" in "the form of an increase in the cultural capital of standard philosophy."[20] The labor of art - its sensuous and intellectual (immaterial) work - is exploited when it is turned into a subject of philosophy, which is diffracted, or "generalized," through the art-object's cultural reticulation, exacerbated by online circuits, whereby this perceptual-cognitive labor is generalized. Consequently, we can see how Stiegler's "generalized proletarianization" is undoubtedly concerned with the very same notion of philosophically-determined labor that is the object of Laruelle's non-Marxist conception of materiality.

[16] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, trans. by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1999), 171.
[17] Benoît Dillet, "Proletarianization, Deproletarianization, and the Rise of the Amateur," *boundary 2*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2017), 86.
[18] Lariviere and Galloway, "Compression," 128-29.
[19] Laruelle, *Non-Marxism*, 114.
[20] Jonathan Fardy, *Laruelle and Art: The Aesthetics of Non-Philosophy* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 95.

As Stiegler examines "generalization" as a consequence of becoming-subject vis-à-vis digitality, Kolozova and other Laruellian scholars' unified theory of philosophy and Capital is similarly concerned with "generalization." Ray Brassier associates Laruelle's "generalization" with the "radicalization" of entity and unity, or the "de-objectification" and "de-phenomenologization" of the singular through non-thetic universality. This allows for Laruelle to effect a "transcendental universalization of materialism," severing the idealist presumption of a link between entity and unity - whether it be phonological, apperceptive, apophantic or apophatic - by underdetermining empiricity.[21] Thus, Stiegler and Laruelle both arrive at an immanently theoretical mode of phenomenality.

Stiegler and *Geistig*: The Transdividual Considered

As we closely examined Laruelle's non-philosophy and non-Marxism, let us, similarly, meticulously analyze Stiegler's work on transdividuation and its metaphysical suppositions. While Lariviere and Galloway use Stiegler's work to demonstrate "compression" and "decompression" as "two ways of defining representation,"[22] they systematize Stiegler's process - between dividuation and individuation - as cyclic and exchange-driven. However, we can use synthesis as an alternative model to describe the recursive materialization of memory and material habit - which is socialized - as the integral element that eludes Lariviere and Galloway's critique. For Stiegler, material habit is a critical formation informing nature and all biological living systems but, also, some nonliving artefactual/technical systems that have a prosthetic relationship with organicity. This is why, according to Stiegler (though most clearly articulated by his protégée, Alexander Wilson), "material habit formation... is already protomnemotechnical."[23] Following this functionalist and materialist account, habituation is what constitutes our experience of temporality as the accumulation and exteriorization of knowledge, with "knowledge" understood as the pre-exteriorized characteristic of technology.[24]

Drawing from Deleuze's "control society,"[25] for Stiegler our epochal turn towards "dividuation" reduces the subject to data-capture, or total datafication, resulting in the ruination of both identity and collective bonds. Conceiving of a new era of "hyper-control," Stiegler has coined "psychopower," or "neuropower," as a more subtle and severe form of operational control than biopower, as it results in the destruction of libidinal energy alongside psychic and collective bonds. The "dividual" allots for projective derivation and, thus, introduces non-arbitrary subsidiary interpolation, consequently instrumentalized for extrapolation.[26] In contrast to "dividuation," "individuation" is normatively positive as it permits for the discovery of subjectivity through collective bonds and contributory politics.[27] For Stiegler, within our digital milieu, the possibility of collective individuation, or transindividuation, is formalized by the participatory horizon of existential protentional thought via creative constraints: with a marked interest in epistemophilia and the commons, Stiegler poses that certain kinds of technologically-directed "confrontations" can be hermeneutically staged, as it is φιλία that prompts the unconscious process of "becoming-produced" through assemblages and circuits.

Qua Simondon, Stiegler's transindividual is psychosocial, for it is within our technical-artefactual "reality that the individuated being transports with him, this charge of being for future individuations."[28] Transindividual memory transits across individuals and

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[21] Ray Brassier, "Behold the Non-Rabbit: Kant, Quine, Laruelle," *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 12 (2001), 52.

[22] Lariviere and Galloway, "Compression," 127.

[23] Alexander Wilson, *Aesthesis and Perceptronium: On the Entanglement of Sensation, Cognition, and Matter* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 151.

[24] This is, also, quite similar to the position posed by Donna Haraway's oft-paraphrased claim that we have always been cyborgs, as materiality cannot be apportioned from the automaton of sense-production and signification. In a recent interview with Hari Kunzru, Haraway specified that we have not *always* been cyborgs, however, and that this is, in fact, historically situated: "the cyborg is not about all possible relationships between humans and technology - it is in fact a very specifically historically located figure and practice and embodiment and form of hybridity between human beings and other kinds of actors, both machinic and animal and each other." However, as Katerina Kolozova demonstrates, and through both Stiegler and Laruelle, we can better illuminate how the issue of materiality and unification can still be understood trans-historically while emphasizing that these conditions have been exacerbated through industrialization. See Hari Kunzru, "Donna Haraway Interview Transcript (1996)," *Hari Kunzru's Website* (May 14, 2009). www.harikunzru.com/donna-haraway-interview-transcript-1996; see also Kolozova, *Holocaust of Animals*, 70.

[25] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," in *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 177-82.

[26] As metadata is collected, it is structured into a ternate model: descriptive (keywords), structural (content) and administrative (file type/creation date). Metadata subtly determines one's online profiling, marketing, search engine optimization, and dynamically structured content, retrofitting a purposive world view.

[27] "The heart of the contributory economy... also becomes the condition of transindividuation as the realization of a political noesis - establishing a new epoch of political debate, giving rise to the emergence of new psychosocial individuations of citizenship and defining new democratic and republican rules and laws." Bernard Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption: Technology and Madness in Computational Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), 195.

[28] David Scott, *Gilbert Simondon's Psychic and Collective Individuation: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Pres, 2014), 139.

generations, engaging within the cross-generational social sphere of protosocial non-verbal encoding: it is this *synthesis* and its relationship with the transduction between the subject's elementary "vital" force and the collective that can serve as an alternative to Lariviere and Galloway's "decompression." While Lariviere and Galloway describe how Stiegler's conception of ludic capitalism, "in its current 'cognitive' or 'informatic' iteration, has compressed life itself in a way that is extremely lossy,"[29] the aperture of *synthesis* provides for the unity of both loss and generation as not simply cyclic but, instead, also oriented alongside a historical continuum, disenthralling the experiencing subject from epistemic access to the full circuitry of their technical reality. While conceding to the Hegelian influence of reflexivity, through this vantage of Stiegler we can postulate the trans-historical processes of technicity in tandem with alienation - we have always been cyborgs, albeit not always phenomenologically aware of it, as we previously considered ourselves more "in control" of our cyborg-ization. Stiegler's is an analysis of metaphysical interaction as it applies to the "concrete-abstract" conjugation defined by materiality as it is relationally conceived; Stiegler confronts what Brassier terms the challenge for materialism, by acknowledging the reality of abstraction (via technics) without conceding to the idealism that reality possesses "*irreducible conceptual form.*"[30] It is not that reality takes the form of technical artefacts - Stiegler's materialism does not hypostatize a particular formal constitution of reality - but instead that the artefactually-bound process of technesis gives a description of labor's subsumption through the logicization of social reality by value-form.

Lariviere and Galloway's alternative model, the exchange between "compression" and "decompression," neglects the development of infinitude that informs the entirety of Stiegler's work on transindividuation, as it identifies proletarianization with a process of de-grammatization whereby φιλία and *savoir-faire* are neatly *extricated*, rather than further subsumed and *synthesized* within the circuit(s) of automatization that constitutes our post-biological "surplus of life."[31] Stiegler's Marxian stance is an objective critique that

operates in advancing what Hegel saw as the exteriorization of the Spirit through *geistig*,[32] which amounts to an "*exo-psychic discernment*"[33] of discrete material elements. As Stiegler notes, he modulates Hegel's system by introducing an indissoluble play - "elements are discretized through the exteriorization and reproduction of living flows that is *grammatization* - whether of bodily movements, gestures, speech, images, calculations or dreams."[34] The imperishable endurance of these vestiges indicates something quite distinct from "individuation understood as an uncompressed process of becoming"[35] because it also deals with their socialized *synthesis*.

Further related to Hegel's grand synthesis of absolute knowledge under world spirit is Stiegler's concept of noetic dreaming, or the inspiration of the intellectual imagination that cannot be realized *materially* but subsists as an idea (and "[i]t is for that reason that it is a dream").[36] We can consolidate Stiegler's nexus of "anti-entropy" - or, as it is ecologically structured, "the Neganthropocene" - as the ideal index of pure *becoming* in Hegel's pragmatic "world spirit" (*weltgeist*), which serves as a sociohistorical asymptote. Consequently, we see how Stiegler's conception of technics engages with Hegelian synthesis by countering entropic loss through idealist becoming - negentropy is articulated through shared potentiality.

Proceeding after philosophers of technology and general organology (such as Ernst Kapp and Georges Canguilhem), Stiegler identifies exosomatization (or the externalization of noesis) with Hegel:

> As Hegel taught in the nineteenth century - at the moment when exosomatization suddenly accelerated into machinic becoming (the first steam

[29] Lariviere and Galloway, "Compression," 131.

[30] Ray Brassier, "Wandering Abstraction," *Mute* (February 13, 2014). www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/wandering-abstraction.

[31] Stiegler's synthesis is more akin to Marx than Hegel, as, denuded of spiritual negation, technical life bears a constitutive "surplus" that extends beyond biological or teleologically-de-

termined ends but, also, circumvents the fallacy of Kant's noumenon (whereby there exists some radical "outsidedness" that cannot be recounted, as it is made artefactually manifest in Stiegler's system).

[32] In place of "geistig," Stiegler uses noesis and trans-individuation to account for a functionalist and deprivatized account of mind; Stiegler's logic of externalization vis-à-vis technological supplement is based on synthesis with the World through socialization. Thus, Stiegler's identification of socialization with noesis maps on quite adeptly to Reza Negarestani's neo-rationalist account of Intelligence as socialized *geistig*. See Reza Negarestani, *Intelligence and Spirit* (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2019).

[33] Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 240.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Lariviere and Galloway, "Compression," 131.

[36] Bernard Stiegler, *The Automatic Society 1: The Future of Work*, trans. by Daniel Ross (Cambridge: Polity, 2016), 427.

engine arriving in Berlin in 1795), thereby inaugurating the Anthropocene era - the life of the mind is the life of its exteriorization. Through exteriorization, the mind enters into a contradiction with itself that Hegel believed to be dialectical, leading to the great synthesis of absolute knowledge through which it would regain peace with itself.[37]

If Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* is a precursor to biological organicism, as Yuk Hui demonstrates,[38] Hegel's determinate logic of becoming anticipates the machinic organicism of cybernetics - second order cybernetics to be specific. For Hegel, nature is an "object of observing reason from the outset,"[39] whereas for Schelling, nature is pre-consciously sensed and detected prior to becoming an object of reflection. Unlike Schelling's emphasis on an external force's giving form to nature's production, Hegel's departure from preformation towards immanent negativity re-introduces contingency into the system of nature. We can map this onto second-order cybernetics quite neatly as, for Hegel, there are two forms of contingency: 1) chaotic nature; 2) the logical category (of being).

Following Stiegler, after the introducing of the steam engine, capitalism has become associated with revealing the materially transgressive principles of containment vis-à-vis technical archaeology, with automatization fomenting a process of growing anti-social disinhibition (or "disruption"). As Hegel's synthesis demonstrates the collapse of determinate distinctions between the negative whole and the Absolute, in this early moment of industrialization we find both forms of contingency involved in mutually entangled self-regulatory feedback qua nature. Following Stiegler, such processes of "trans-dividuation" are heightened by today's predictive processing algorithms that incorporate continuous computation and automatization vis-à-vis their neuro-inferential schema, as in the case of elastic graph-bunching facial recognition technologies (and other biometrics) as well as the outpouching of actuarial finance to High Frequency Trading (HFT) with AI. Drawing from Marx, Stiegler identifies the historical effectiveness of relations of production with the infrastructural-causal model of superstructural relations, whereby the latter can be considered within the terrain of probabilistic "calculation(s)"[40] that disrupt transindividuation. According to Stiegler, it is through the "science of technics" that capitalism is able to fundamentally damage the phenomenological vitality expressed as noetic dreaming, or "lived immanence."[41] While Stiegler makes no explicit reference to noumena, or the "thing-in-itself," his engagement with disruption evinces "the reality principle," or the constitution of the real. For Stiegler, disruption "sets the real outside the law [*loi*] by realizing the real beyond any right [*droit*] - through the creation of legal vacuums, which amount... to a de-realization of reality that leads to entropic decomposition."[42] For Stiegler, the cerebral materiality that produces noetic activity is beyond full epistemic access, but our ontological conditioning reveals how it is artefactually mediated and processually unfolds. Unlike the quantum superposition of Laruelle's Real, for Stiegler the real (which is dynamic, as with Hegel's world-spirit) is identified with its effects - particularly those meta-empirical artefactual traces produced between the noetic activity of consciousness and the retentional phenomenology of material immanence. As such, the exo-somatic artefacts of Capital bear the brunt of synthesizing technization with ontogenesis. Thus, Ian James befittingly terms Stiegler's Simondonian system "organological naturalism."[43]

For Stiegler, in order to uncover the socially constitutive role played by originary technics is to pose the question of technologically-mediated access to knowledge. Here, Ian James makes a shrewd connection between Stiegler and Laruelle: "[i]n this context, the image of philosophy that Stiegler presents also, as it does with Laruelle, implies a thorough rethinking of the conditions of knowledge and a concomitant questioning."[44] Having now distinguished both Stiegler and Laruelle's ethico-political Marxist approaches and identified the Hegelian roots of Stiegler's system, let us return to Laruelle's non-philosophy. Moving forward, we shall further analyze Laruelle's non-Marxism through a historical frame, forming linkages and distinctions with Stiegler's account of lived material immanence as

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[37] Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 122.

[38] Yuk Hui, *Recursivity and Contingency* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019).

[39] Wolfdietrich Schmied-Kowarzik, *Hegel in der Kritik zwischen Schelling und Marx* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), 138.

[40] Stiegler. *The Age of Disruption*, 202.

[41] James, *The Techniques of Thought*, 217.

[42] Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 292.

[43] James, *Techniques of Thought*, 212.

[44] Ibid., 42.

they appear. With this methodology in mind, we will consequently cull two contemporary Laruellian philosophers who have engaged with both non-Marxism and the issue of the post-human: Katerina Kolozova and John Ó Maoilearca. As much of Stiegler's recent literature problematizes posthumanism, transhumanism and the accelerationist project (particularly that of Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams), this will probe distinct inquiries, while further scrutinizing the methodological fulcrum of compression and decompression.

Superposition and the Real-as-Artefact

> [N]on-philosophy has two aspects. On the one hand, it reduces philosophy to a state of whatever material; on the other hand, it announces new positive rules (which are non-philosophical but deduced from vision-in-One) of the labor of this material. By presenting these rules without yet founding them, we are giving a very succinct and elementary idea of their founding, which is vision-in-One.[45]

Seeking to overcome the problems of metaphysics and empiricism, Kant's transcendental critique, as developed in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, seeks to evince how all "objects must conform to our cognition."[46] With one swift move, Laruelle's univocal immanence superimposes the Kantian analytic *a priori* as noumenon. Termed "the Real as One," Laruelle's thesis of the Real is "determinant-in-the-last-instance," and, consequently, everything proceeds irreversibly from the *a priori* of the Real. This is a radical move as, even in the case of Deleuzian immanence, we can notice a tendency to reserve "difference" as an immanent noumenon that legitimizes the phenomenon of diversity and heterogenesis.

Laruelle's superposition of identity with commonality reverses the classical metaphysical lineage that runs from Plato to Badiou, where the transcendental is upheld as a necessary precondition for grounding reality. Instead, Laruelle deprioritizes prioritization and asserts the "One" as an axiomatic. If philosophy has always used difference

and dualities as its fulcrum, Laruelle's determination-in-the-last-instance (DLI) allows for us to liberate the Real (which is identified with the One) from how it has historically been determined vis-à-vis being. As a theory of "minimal causation," the DLI signifies Laruelle's conviction that, although we are denied epistemic access to the Real, it is determinant of every instance and every thought immanent to it. Consequently, the Real is causal in the last instance but there is no way to trace this "last instance" back to its source - the Real - "for the Real cannot be grasped in terms of what it is."[47]

In *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, Laruelle traces the DLI before Althusser, as it was "invented by Marx and Engels for historical materialism," while problematizing that Marx and Engels "did not give us the adequate conception of it, capable of producing all the simultaneously theoretical and critical effects possible for it."[48] In turn, Laruelle modifies the DLI in order to make its "Marxist forms appear as simple symptoms or models of a more radical concept of causality."[49] Laruelle's conception of the Real is (over)determinant "in the last instance" because it simply cannot be reduced to a philosophical determination (idealism, rationalism, materialism, etc.) or structure (historical, economic, and so on), yet it contains all such "effects" of the Real. However, as Jonathan Fardy notes, Laruelle is somewhat indebted to Althusser's theory of "symptomatic reading," as Laruelle argues that "philosophy symptomatically reduces the Real to an object that stands outside a subject,"[50] as the philosophical decision determines what is determinant of the Real.

Laruelle terms his non-philosophical foundation as a "matrix"[51] outstripped of representational functions, as in the case of visual art, which functions as a metonymic index of visuality and perception. Detaching materiality from metaphoricity, Laruelle's engagement with perception is not directed by moving *through appearance*, or representation, but, instead, testing how perception is, in fact, a "mathematical mode of organization and a presentation of the data" that occurs through superpositioning "at least two heterogeneous,

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[45] François Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, trans. by Taylor Adkins (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Univocal, 2013), 11

[46] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by John Miller Dow Meiklejohn (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2016) 21.

[47] Fardy, *Laruelle and Art*, 12.

[48] Laruelle, *Introduction to Non-Marxism*, 41.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Fardy, *Laruelle and Art*, 146.

[51] François Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction, A Non-Standard Aesthetics*, trans. by Drew S. Burk (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Univocal, 2012), 4.

conceptual, and artistic data."[52] Superpositioning is critical to understanding Laruelle's Real, which is directly informed by quantum mechanics, and, most pointedly, from the Copenhagen Interpretation of quantum behavior where observation, termed the "observer-effect," resolves the indeterminacy of atomic systems. Laruelle's "idempotent operation," or the principle of superposition, "produces the same result no matter how many times the original application."[53]

This is not to say that the generic frontier precludes heterogeneity (in fact, quite the opposite) but, instead, to avoid lapsing into problems that accompany what Nancy Cartwright, in her description of nomological machines, terms the "frame of theory." According to Cartwright's nomological machinery, laws are not all-encompassing structures of order and regularity (conforming to a "super-science") but, instead, exhibit themselves under certain conditions; accordingly, there are suppositions that elude testability. In conformity with Laruelle's Real, Cartwright remarks that "[r]eally powerful explanatory laws of the sort found in theoretical physics do not state the truth."[54] As a philosopher of science who mends Cartwright's work on nomological machines with Laruelle's non-philosophy, Anne-Françoise Schmid's work on modeling also demonstrates how nonhierarchical heterogeneity and the disciplinary multiplicity of modeling are both placed in relation to and rendered contingent on Laruelle's Real.

Laruelle introduces the term "philo-fiction" into his system, contending there is no way to study both atomic behavior and, in turn, the world without changing it in a non-trivial manner (or "philosophizing"). Thus, Laruelle opens the philosophical tableau to a kind of "gnostic vision." As Fardy remarks, "gnostic vision" is comparable to the mystic's vision, for it is neither true nor false but is "fictive for it envisions 'another knowledge' that cannot be assimilated by the frameworks of philosophical argument or scientific proof."[55] Thus, Laruelle's "non-standard philosophy" accepts the impossibility of coming to terms with the full scope of the Real while offering a terrain of "irreducible" phenomenal content, where "determina-

tion in the last instance" serves as the "specific individual causality of the One."[56] Unlike Kant's juridico-rational deduction, Laruelle's "immediate givens" are simultaneously unreflective while fastened to transcendental experience: they are not intuitions, which are by definition always objective, but are laced by a kind of scientificism that concedes to an inherent imperfection. This is in agreement with Cartwright's description of science not as some unifying amalgam of top-down theories (a "pyramid") but, instead, a pluralist "patchwork." We can liken the conception of science's "written truths" to what Laruelle's Maoist student, Gilles Grelet, calls the "transactional arrangement," or a "bribe," "whereby where what is called truth is in reality the ideal - all of this being just another name for lying."[57]

Similarly, Kolozova states that Laruelle's Real is "obstinately indifferent to the pretensions of language or thought, whereas language continues to unilaterally correlate with the real seeking to mediate it."[58] Thus, this is the difference between Laruelle's correlation and Meillassoux's. Whereas Meillassoux's conception of correlation is based on an extension of subjectivity (whether it be freedom, will, or creativity), with an arche-fossil "ancestral time," or "hyperchaos" pre-dating ontologies of the human, Laruelle's conception of correlation is in direct opposition to Meillassoux's. For Meillassoux "hyperchaos" is time without becoming, or "the absolute absence of reason for any reality... the effective ability for every determined entity, whether it is an event, a thing, or a law, to appear and disappear with no reason for its being or non-being."[59] As neatly described by what he calls "non-analysis" (or "dualysis"), Laruelle's correlation does not describe how thought seeks to correlate with the Real but, instead, how thought (and/or language) correlate and mediate the Real; as Laruelle's conception of correlation, "dualysis" is the unfettering of empirical naïvite.[60]

Laruelle (and post-Laruellians including Grelet, Fardy, Ó Maoilearca and Kolozova) advocate for a categorical withdrawal from the "impotence of thought" and its "infinite culpability."[61] "Infinite

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[52] Ibid.

[53] François Laruelle, "A Science of [en] Christ," trans. by Aaron Riches, *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2014), 28.

[54] Nancy Cartwright, *How the Laws of Physics Lie* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1983), 3.

[55] Fardy, *Laruelle and Art*, 88.

[56] Laruelle, *A Biography*, 125.

[57] Grelet, "Proletarian Gnosis," 95.

[58] Kolozova, *Holocaust of Animals*, 6.

[59] Quentin Meillassoux, *Time Without Becoming*, ed. by Anna Longo (Milan: Mimesis International, 2014), 258.

[60] Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 156.

[61] François Laruelle, "Theorems on the Good News," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Human-*

culpability" describes the complicit precarity of theoretical plentitude with counterfactual reflection and is the byproduct of what Laruelle discerns as philosophy's "impotence of thought,"[62] as philosophy necessarily liquidates the plane of pure immanence by enacting the Decision, thereby introducing terms of difference. In Stiegler's literature, we see an equally definitive and seductive ontological problematization of Kant. Describing the contemporary social context, Stiegler demonstrates how we occupy a purely computational social epoch of desolate time and incommensurable tragedy. In the age of "digital natives," Stiegler argues that we are simply incapable of producing intergenerational and transgenerational collective anticipations, or "transindividuation," except in a purely negative context. For Stiegler, such a "negative teleology thereby reaches its end without purpose (and not that purposiveness without end that provides the motives of Kantian reason)."[63]

Steeped in Heidegger, Husserl, Simondon, Derrida and Leroi-Gourhan, Stiegler's philosophical project has been devoted to uncovering technologically constituted temporalities that endure as ontological structures. While these temporalities are not perceptible and have heterogenous origins, they introduce a transcendent element that directly informs the socialization of truth, with truth's temporality occupying something akin to the scientific "simulation" and nonhierarchization we see in Schmid's modeling: science is pluralistic, conditional, and privy to nonepistemological (recursive) redescription. As Mercedes Bunz adeptly notes, Stiegler's ontological view can be seen as a prolonged critique of the Kantian definition of time as an inner form of intuition and, thus, as a category specific to the humanities[64] or, in Laruellian parlance, the "philosophical decision." Following Laruelle, the "Philosophical Decision" is that which subordinates identity, or "the being of the 1," to intellect, or "the thinking of the 1 as equal to 1," such that "the being" and the "thinking of that being" are equipollent.[65] If, according to Laruelle, the Real is beyond the brink of exteriority and, thus, it can solely be (replicated/cloned as) the object of "fictionalization," for Stiegler, it is the tech-

nological artefact/*technē* that occupies the role of the philosophical decision. Through the reformulation of spectral value-exchange vis-à-vis what Kolozova terms "anthropocentric mythologemes,"[66] we see the emergence of Stiegler's relationship as it relates to Laruelle's non-standard philosophy in how Stiegler regards technics as necessarily formalizing the exteriorization of difference and identity.

In their own ways, Laruelle and Stiegler both problematize the performative philosophical decision, which enacts its own ontic limit conditions on that which is pre-symbolic and pre-linguistic. For Laruelle, it is the speech act that remains decisionist.[67] For Stiegler, who is an unapologetic pupil of Derrida, it is the grammatization between exteriorization and the reproduction of "living flows," or history's making itself discrete (or materially manifest through artefacts), which determines culture - whether these are bodily movements, gestures, speech, images, calculations or dreams.[68] For Stiegler, grammatization is an ortho-graphic condition where the inaugurality of history is deferred, a synthesis which can be understood as temporality materially incarnate. Stiegler's artefactually-bound and trans-historical unfolding of grammatization proceeds from something akin to Laruellian superpositioning, as what pre-exists becomes non-trivially determined through language - technesis is not solely "the faculty of dreaming" but, as Wilson further demonstrates, the very function of perception.[69] For Stiegler, this pre-linguistic and pre-symbolic indeterminate flux is noesis, which is pure and unformulated capacity, or an "unforeseen situation"[70] that is inchoate prior to observation. Following Stiegler, the moment that "analysis" or "critique" is culled into action is the moment of mental schematization, whereby consciousness projects its object - this is what Daniel Ross and Stiegler term "arche-cinema."[71] Not only is the dream the primordial form, the hydrous vat of morphological becoming, but it is also where we see Stiegler's instantiation of what Laruelle terms the "Philosophical Decision," as we see the introduction of "a bifurcation into a state of fact - a state of

ities, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2014), 42.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 12.
[64] Mercedes Bunz, Birgit Mara Kaiser and Kathrin Thiele (Eds.), *Symptoms of the Planetary Condition: A Critical Vocabulary* (Lüneberg: meson press, 2017), 203.
[65] Anthony Paul Smith, *François Laruelle's* Principles of Non-Philosophy: *A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 74.

[66] Kolozova, *Holocaust of Animals*, 25.
[67] John Ò Maoilearca, *All Thoughts Are Equal: Laruelle and Nonhuman Philosophy* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 245.
[68] Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 240.
[69] Wilson, *Aesthesis and Perceptronium*.
[70] Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 284.
[71] Bernard Stiegler, "Organology of Dreams and Archi-Cinema," trans. by Daniel Ross, *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. No. 47 (2014), 7-37.

law being what produces a bifurcation starting from a state of fact, which thereby becomes lawfully and performatively regulated."[72]

Nonetheless, unlike Laruelle, Stiegler indicates some kind of ontic framework that is stilted on difference for, without cerebral materiality, there would be no such conditions for the performative philosophical decision of exosomatization. For Stiegler, superpositioning does not antedate noesis and, therefore, we can consider the brain as the artefactual nexus of epistemological discontinuity, from which all insurrectional flows disperse through the (mental) construction of arche-traces. For Stiegler, the pluralist realm of truths and scientific facticity is, indeed, a patchwork - perhaps even one that stretches into infinitude - but it is a Klein bottle that passes through the organon of perception, thus determined by the unfolding of encephalization and the conditions of observation. Contending with Laruelle's conception of the non-artefactual Real, Stiegler's system would have to make a necessary compromise and relinquish the brain as the ontogenetic site of the (mediated) Real, technically manifest. While Stiegler may, as Ian James states, be aptly categorized as a philosopher of material immanence, he does not commit to an antirealist critique of scientific objectivity the likes of Laruelle, as, for Stiegler, technicity is inseparable from this "discretizing" process. Laruellian non-philosophy is predicated on thinking the Real through a unilateral relation, due to the Real's indifference. While, for Laruelle, thought *correlates* with the Real, in Stiegler's onto-graphic philosophy we see a remnant of world-spirit's recurrent synthesis, the ushering of thought along the historical pull of technesis.

Stiegler and the Posthuman

> ...it is through this such loop - one that passes through exosomatization and which, as organogenesis, transforms, through the artificial organs that it generates, somatic and psychic organs and social organizations - and only through this loop, that noesis properly speaking, that is, thinking, is constituted.[73]

Not only, as aforementioned, is Stiegler's theory of individuation highly indebted to Gilbert Simondon's psychosocial understand-

ing of pre-subjective affects but, also, to Andre Leroi-Gourhan's description of human history's dawn as the point of artificialization between humankind and technical artefacts, termed "hominization." Rather than the artefactual outthrust of Ernst Kapp's "organ projection" or Marshall McLuhan's theory of machines as the continuation of our central nervous system, Stiegler develops Alfred Lotka and Nicolas Georgescu-Roegen's bio-statistical description of exosomatization. This inflected process is bidirectional: the continuation of organogenesis is a characteristic of the evolution of life, both as ontogenesis and as phylogenesis. Exosomatization is an infrastructural configuration that is not only externalized *outwards*, through technics, but, in an inflected turn, commodifies the human capacity for reason and thought. If we describe this process through the aperture of externalization, then we must match it with a commensurate degree of inversion.

In his work with Antoinette Rouvroy, we see Stiegler's most technically rigorous Marxian description of algorithmic governmentality, as the duo describe a turn away from "deductive logic," which we can associate with the database, towards "a purely inductive logic."[74] While the two do not speak of any particular machines, this turn can be characterized by a rich array of case studies that cull probabilistic algorithmic technologies that are based on Hebbian learning. According to this model, recursive negative feedback functions as a new modal input for the instrumental relations between protocol and intermittent change-action.[75] Recall Hebb's adage that "neurons that fire together, wire together" - when neurons are activated together by the same stimulus, their connections are strengthened, eliciting new tangential vectors of integration and mechanism independency. One marked example of this inductive logic is AlphaGo, the Google DeepMind neural network that defeated both the world's highest-ranking Go player, Ke Jie, and 18-time world Go champion Lee Sedol. This was achieved by AlphaGo's using "tree search" pattern recognition and machine learning to probabilistically account for simulative scenarios. By iteratively building partial search-inputs with which to update its "weights" - or the de-

[72] Ibid.
[73] Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 61.

[74] Antoinette Rouvroy and Bernard Stiegler, "The Digital Regime of Truth: From the Algorithmic Governmentality to a New Rule of Law," trans. by Anaïs Nony and Benoît Dillet, *La Deleuziana*, Vol. 3 (2016), 7.
[75] Joscha Bach, *Principles of Synthetic Intelligence: Psi: An Architecture of Motivated Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 232.

fault values of selection - such neural nets are able to start at a root node and recursively create non-terminal values that are revised according to "backpropagation," or how simulated error scenarios unfold as reactive gradient of layering. These multilayer "feedforward" neural networks are based on the binary classification of perceptual negative feedback, which can be recounted to Frank Rosenblatt's 1957 "Perceptron," a rule-based conception of an algorithm that enables neurons to associatively learn and process discrete elements. The slippage between "perceptron" and "perception" is no coincidence: error-correction is accounted for in the same way that visual perception eliminates noise. Perception-based inductive learning marks a significant rift from the era of the database, where evaluation metrics could not deviate from a certain sample-proportion.[76]

While such cognitive architecture - based on active inference and reinforcement through homeostatic balance - marks our era's technological expropriation of sensorimotor perception and counterfactually rich simulative scenarios, Stiegler and Rouvroy also speak of a "post-statistical" and "post-actuarial" epoch "in which it is no longer about calculating probabilities but to account in advance for what escapes probability and thus the excess of the possible on the probable."[77] Unlike David Roden's description of transhumanism, Stiegler and Rouvroy foresee a posthuman outpouching of interpretation and prediction, whereby neurocomputational architecture is able to actively retrofit causality alongside mean-values of incoming data that are precluded to human-statistical aggregation. Transhumanism emphasizes technological extension and libidinal maximization, as demonstrated by transhumanist NBIC fantasies of mind-uploading, life-prolonging and prosthetic extension. However, posthuman "machines" - which are, truly, neither machines nor cyborgs - are able to access the manifold quantum fold of superpositioning and confirm predictive enaction by collapsing this into top-down apperceptual content. The "post" in this conception of the "post-human" - or Stiegler's "post-statistical"/"post-actuarial" - rests upon this conceptual capability to operate in accord to phenomenological information that is occluded from our "human" ability to reflect on and make predictions according to embodied experience.

Stiegler's use of "entropy" is not solely related to political idealism but also environmental denegation, as he recalls the entropic dissipation of resources in the era of the Anthropocene, or "Entropocene." As Wilson recalls, the crux of the "Entropocene" argument is that, as we see a quantum entanglement of integrated synthesis regarding neural nets and machine learning, an increase of integration/synthesis, or "mutual information" between an observed system (the given object of observation) and the environment system will follow. In turn, the entropy (or hidden information) of our world-system will exponentially decrease; this scenario implies the stratification of the emergent levels of material reality. Stiegler advocates for a re-appropriation of these technical systems so as to broaden flexibility and freedom in relation to these stratified causal constraints. This "negentropic," or more accurately "anti-entropic" (as Giuseppe Longo and Maël Montévil remind us) possibility locally resists and delays the incessant movement of the cosmos toward disintegration and entropy. This transpires in the portending of noetic dreaming, or the expansion of the pre-linguistic capacity for transindividuation but, also, in ecological action through environmental legislation. Anti-entropic activity, or the deferral of entropic activity, is Stiegler's definition for "life."[78]

 "Anti-entropy" demonstrates one such further distinction between Stiegler's conception of the Real and Laruelle's. For Stiegler, the inchoate Real of pure potentiality occupies some kind of spatio-temporal limit-case, allowing it to veer towards expansion and multiplicity in the case of a negentropic future or, in the case of further environmental-technological entropy, the Real of "available energy" as it is further deprived. In Laruelle's non-philosophy, due to the pure terms of superposition, the Real is absolutely non-conceivable in schematic or spatial terms - it has no directional flow or boundaries through which the real and the cosmos simplify the realizations of thought itself through the facticity of technics or energetic dissolution.

What, then, distinguishes Stiegler's understanding of the constant and irrespective constitution of omnitemporal conditions - in which the technical form of life is always materially directed vis-à-vis prosthesis - from teleologically-orchestrated transhumanism? As

[76] Bach, *Principles*, 224-240.
[77] Rouvroy and Stiegler, "The Digital Regime," 9.

[78] Bernard Stiegler, "Dreams and Nightmares: Beyond the Anthropocene Era," trans. by Daniel Ross, *ALIENOCENE: Journal of the First Outernational*, No. 5 (2019), 9.

Yuk Hui notes, Stiegler's conception of technology is also a form of *heredity*, as it is subject to mutation and is passed to us as a culture.[79] For Stiegler, contingency remains close to the spatialization of time and artistic creation by rendering the unexpected within epochal constraints. Technology, as such, consists of a means of living but is not handed to as *eternal being* - rather, technology enjoinders, immediately, with the environment in a theory of evolution understood as a dialectical movement between adaptation and adoption. Technesis as transindividuation marks a synthesis of machines' becoming-organic rather than what transhumanist discourses emphasize, which are organs' becoming-synthetic.

However, the contemporaneous locution of post-humanist discourse, which so often veers its transhumanist head, is intent on affirming what Roden terms as the "disconnection thesis." This "unbounded posthumanism" instantiates a disunion between diachronically emergent behaviors and properties, which occur as a result of temporally extended processes but cannot be *inferred* from the initial state of that process. The rift, therefore, is not a further demonstration of the bidirectional cognitive-technological relationship qua Stiegler. Rather, the posthuman moment is defined by machines' co-opting an apophatic "post-statistical" realizability by continually retrofitting unequivocal foresight. As Roden states, the "disconnection thesis" does not entail the rejection of anthropological essentialism but, instead, "renders any reference to essential human characteristics unnecessary."[80] If our technological epoch of predictive processing algorithms and neural nets is based on perception, then the post-human moment will render any reference to perception obsolete.

At this point, before we move on to a Laruellian-inspired terrain of the non-human as a political alternative to the posthuman project's technogenetic tyranny, let us underscore a distinction between posthumanism and transhumanism that is so often elided. The transhumanist itinerary is that of the perfection of human nature and the cultivation of human personal autonomy through technological means. Therefore, transhumanism "makes an eth-

ical claim to the effect that the technological enhancement of human capacities is a *desirable* aim."[81] What Roden terms "speculative posthumanism" (SP), or just "posthumanism," does not make such normative claims or ethical commitments but, instead, criticizes all anthropocentric means of life, making a bold ontological claim about what technology can metaphysically allow. Eschewing machine-human couplings, the posthuman is based on pure difference. In short, posthumans are technologically engendered beings that no longer occupy familiar human morphologies.

From discussions on post-capitalist automatization to discourse on Artificial Generalized Intelligence (AGI), this transhumanist "disconnection" privileges the automaton's making animality obsolete, usurping all recognizable retentional/protentional phenomenological distributions. As demonstrated by predictive processing algorithms and Bayesian neuro-inferential continuous computation, today's technologies are increasingly modelled after the psychic faculty and behavior learning's localist architecture. As in the case of elastic graph-bunching facial recognition technologies, High Frequency Trading (HFT) with AI, and neural networks like AlphaGo, associative memory structures and symbolic cognitive modeling are displacing the storage-and-retrieval model of the database.

If AlphaGo and Bayesian neuro-inference can be considered "post-actuarial" or "post-statistical," as Stiegler insists, it is not because they escape the numeric directive of statistics but, instead, because they widen the aperture for statistics and introduce dynamicity into data-pooling. To call this "post-statistical" is provocative but, truly, this is unambiguously the domain of transhumanism. Terming this as "post-statistical" aptly breaks from our understanding of cognitive neuro-inferential technologies, whereby memory retrieval and elasticity is constitutive but, in turn, also overdetermines the functionalist channeling between a system and its environment, as if some extra-probabilistic synthesis could transpire between an AGI and its appropriated world-image. Within Stiegler's harrowing conception of a "post-actuarial" or "post-statistical" reality, the entropic declension of the human *geistig* is matched by a kind of transhuman Intelligence. Accordingly, Stiegler's negentropy assumes transhuman machines' penetrating the barricade of the Real, hereby departing significantly from Laruelle.

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[79] Hui, *Recursivity and Contingency*, 207-11.
[80] David Roden, *Posthuman Life: Philosophy at the Edge of the Human* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 114.
[81] Ibid., 9.

Lariviere and Galloway assert that Stiegler's pedagogical and phenomenological belief in the value of "revealing nature" allows us to escape from the trans*dividual* circuitry of control by revealing the limits of the thinkable. By "nature" they recall the "uncompressed natural real" while setting aside Stiegler's historical distinctions, as revealed by his work with Rouvroy. The two discern that, for Stiegler, the real is "unknowable" and "technology is nature's compressor."[82] Yet, if, for Stiegler, technesis is so widely diffracted that from mental imagination to artefactual reality, all is technological, do not Lariviere and Galloway inadvertently bridge Laruelle's Real with Stiegler's?

For Stiegler, noesis is a technesis. Stiegler seeks to take into account what Heidegger overlooked in *Being and Time*: that Dasein always projects itself beyond its ends, and inhabits its own mortality only within the primordial projection of a continuation of the world after its own end ("in its beyond").[83] Protention is, therefore, always bound to a structure which is that of a promise, and as such to a mutual engagement that infinitively exceeds the psychic individual.[84]

It is through this "loop" that Stiegler vies for a "noesis proper," or noesis that passes into actuality as *entelekheia*,[85] or fulfilment. For Stiegler, the transcendental is rooted in "the dream realizing itself" vis-à-vis phenomenological time, or time lived within the specific mode of what Aristotle called the "noetic soul," as it is constituted and conditioned by technical exteriorization, resulting in a process of interiorization that exosomatizes existence.[86] Exosomatization, as was originally shown by Lotka[87] and Georgescu-Rœgen,[88] is the organogenesis of artefacts that constitute the underpinnings of knowledge. For Stiegler, organogenesis is the elaborating of technical instruments of emancipatory experiments and relational experiences among technical, physiological, and institutional organs. That which is organogenetic is pharmacological - as human evolution is the result of an exosomatic (symbolic, recorded) organogenesis it is, in fact, what drives evolution (or organogenesis).

Throughout his work, Stiegler (drawing from Husserl) speaks of retentions, whereby primary retentions are sense perceptions, secondary retentions are memories, and tertiary retentions are media (culture mnemonics). While Stiegler is indebted to Simondon, it is through Husserl's phenomenology of time-consciousness and Derridean grammatology that he transposes the logic of the supplement to transfigure "tertiary retentions" or those conditions of possibility that facilitate the interplay between primary retention and secondary retention. Thus, "digital tertiary retentions" are generated by the "conquest of space and time through its technicization,"[89] which we are increasingly inching towards via governmental calculability.

For Stiegler, "tertiary retentions," or media mnemonics (whether they be mechanic, analogue, or digital), introduce both emancipatory possibilities and newfound repressions. For instance, in addition to surveillance and meta-data capture, the internet allows for the possibility of open-source "free software," stimulating new subject positions.[90] This dualism has guided much of Stiegler's work and his more recent application of Giuseppe Longo and Schrodinger's concept of "negentropy" to the Anthropocene, so as to inspire a media-ecological relationship birthed from the commons that can evade our bleak trajectory ("neganthropy"). If entropy indexes the material disappearance of ecological resources, "neganthropy" is always defined in relation to an observer, or "noetic freedom," allotting epistemic and epistemological transitions.

Stiegler's Marxist conclusion is fairly utilitarian, as he ushers legislative and social "communing," as demonstrated by the various projects undertaken by the Institut de recherche et d'innovation (IRI) collective, with initiatives spearheaded by Stiegler, Giacomo Gilmozzi, Patrick Braouezec and a host of economists, philosophers, educators and political scientists. In addition to the Plain Commune experimental learning territory in Saint-Denis, based on open source technologies and an economy of contributive income based on the "collective capabilities" of self-governance, Stiegler has recently launched a macro-ecological United Nations initiative called Internation.World. The Internation.World collective will be present-

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[82] Lariviere and Galloway, "Compression," 132.
[83] Ibid., 20.
[84] Ibid., 21.
[85] Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 84.
[86] Ibid., 61.
[87] Alfred J. Lotka, *Elements of Mathematical Biology* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications), 188.
[88] Nicholas Georgescu-Rœgen, *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971).

[89] Yuk Hui, *On the Existence of Digital Objects* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press), x.
[90] Thomas Pringle, Gertrud Koch and Bernard Stiegler, *Machine* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 40.

ing a proposal at the United Nations 2020 World Summit that attempts to extend the contributory learning project to a global scale.

Having examined how Stiegler seeks to evade the "entropic" transhumanist absorption of technicity, let us turn, once more, to Laruelle's non-philosophy. In particular, by examining contemporary Laruellians such as Kolozova and Ó Maoilearca, who have focused on discourses regarding the non-human and animality, we shall demonstrate how non-philosophy can radicalize the dyad of animality/automaton. This allows for a bridge from Stiegler's politically-directed communal projects to Laruelle's avowedly utopian thinking.

Post-Laruellians and the Non-Human

Antecedent to what Laurelle terms the philosophical decision, there exists a "radical dyad" of Thought and the Real that conveys an "unbridgeable fissure" between the two terms.[91] In *Capitalism's Holocaust of Animals*, contemporary Laruellian and feminist philosopher Katerina Kolozova considers how Laruelle's radical dyad's "identity in the last instance" is determined by the concreteness of its constitution, or the material constitution of the "animal-machine" (or of "physicality-automaton").[92] Kolozova's non-philosophical treatment of the human invites the use of the terms "non-human" and "inhuman," rather than the transhuman usurpation of technesis. As demonstrated by Kolozova's use of Laruelle's radical dyad, the "identity in the last instance" of the non-human is homologous to Donna Haraway's conception of cyborg and the inhuman. The non-human's "determination in the last instance" belongs to the category of the Real insofar as the Real is instantiated as a specific form of materiality.

By liquidating philosophy of its anthropomorphic latticework qua Laruelle's methodological system, Kolozova attempts to reconcile the dyad that transhumanist literature has almost uniformly prefigured. As exemplified by Haraway's bifurcation between animality and the automaton, post-humanist literature insists upon a riven relation between technology on one node and animality on the other node of this dyad. It is this dyad that formulates the fundamental crux of Kolozova's most recent project, as

she transcends Haraway's posthumanism, which urges that the subjugated bodies and "decentered selves" of post-humanist production ought to seize the ordinary means of capitalist militarism, as both the animal and the human have become inextricably hybridized via technological life. However, Kolozova's conception of the non-human as a kind of "radical decentering" is far more radical than Haraway's hybridization. Kolozova prompts a non-Euclidean, non-thetic transformation that grows from Laruelle's "non-Marxist" work, which critiques the decisional transcendental, a presupposition for hybridity, as both ancillary and subservient to the atavist underpinnings of subject-centered language.

By advocating for a material theory of under-determining the human, Kolozova's unique conception of the "non-human" prompts a conception of intellectual and cognitive faculties as being involved in a complicit ascendency to the Real. If Laruelle's work on Marx offers us an altogether radical material praxis, is it not simply because it offers us a retreat from the traditional Marxist terms of mutual exchange and relational reciprocity, as Alexander Galloway contends.[93] In addition to a complete evacuation from humanism as anthropocentric carnality, based on gestures of exchange and convertibility between the Real and thought, Laruelle's "non-Marxist" system conceives of humanity as an "identity-in-the-last-instance" that, coupled with our aforementioned description of "determination-in-the-last instance," demonstrates a kind of fundamentally materialist vulnerability, whereby the (non-)human becomes a category of contingency rather than some kind of Absolute.

Unlike the transhumanist fetishization of the Übermensch-cum-AGI, the cyborg presents Kolozova with a passage towards the non-human. Indeed, the non-human indexes a feminist figure that disrupts standard homologies of ontological exchange (e.g., marriage), but what is critical here is that there subsists a spectral "remainder" that escapes sense-conditioning and the teleological transhumanist purpose of "humanity transcending itself."[94] Haraway's dyad between animal and machine is reproduced in Kolozova's system of the non-human, poised against the "automaton"

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[91] Katerina Kolozova, "Violence: The Indispensable Condition of the Law (And the Political)," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (2014), 109.
[92] Kolozova, *Holocaust of Animals*, 11.

[93] Alexander Galloway, *Laruelle: Against the Digital* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 27.
[94] Kolozova, *Holocaust of Animals*, 12.

of signification. Whereas Stiegler's conception of noesis attempts to arrive at the Real through thought (or, as Laruelle would term it, "philosophizing," proper), Kolozova furthers Laruelle's insistence upon thought as a mere "fictionalized" cloning of the Real.

Recall that, for Stiegler, capitalist "proletarianization" describes a new precariat/cognitariat - an order of "knowledge workers" who are mnemotechnically captured and industrially automated through *noetic hymenoptera*, or the exploitation of social corporeality through cognitive labor. For Stiegler, cognitive ergonomics comfortably seduce and produce the "perfect citizen consumer" who not only shops online but, simultaneously, produces meaningful metadata that is condensed into information and sold as a commodity. The first dimension, the proletarianization of the producer, directly draws from Marx; the worker's knowledge is inscribed in the machine, whereby specialization is reduced to a mere abstraction of activity. As the historical trajectory from the first moment of proletarianization to hyper-industrial postmodernity and "cognitive capitalism" evinces, for Stiegler it is the displacement of intellectual activity that binds noetic activity to Capital flow. These historical processes reveal how Stiegler's real functions, a recursive Spinozist causality establishing contingency between a living being and their milieu.

Kolozova demonstrates how the purpose of Laruelle's "cloning" is not merely to demonstrate how the Real functions but, instead, to demonstrate how proletarianization is manifested through the seizure of abstract labor for wage labor. This is a point of collective closure between Stiegler and Laruelle's conception of proletarianization. However, as opposed to the auto-referential postulation of exchange-value, which determines the Marxist medium of relation, Laruelle's non-Marxist formulation is grounded by the principle of physicality being independent from representations. As demonstrated by the schematization of noesis vis-à-vis entropic and negentropic becoming, Stiegler's is bound to a representational sublation of the Real.

Kolozova also further demonstrates how Laruelle uncovers that philosophy produces an amphibology, whereby sign, thought and truth

are ceded as "indistinguishable from the real."[95] The destruction of brute materiality - the blighting of animality - is the central fixture of Kolozova's metaphor of the rites of *holocaustos*, or, etymologically, the "burning of the dead animal."[96] Where the *enagismata*, or ritual Greek offerings to the dead, were supplementary (e.g., the benefaction of milk, honey, wine or perfumes), the *holocaustos* serves as the foundation of logos, law and order in the polis through "[t]-he destruction of the physical body," thus ensuring the "immortal light of reason."[97] The cycle of Capital invigorates the complete holocaust of all animality and material vestiges so as to insure that the absolute rule of "pure reason," or of "Absolute Spirit," finds its immaterial thrust in its perfected form: capitalism-as-philosophy.

Kolozova identifies "pure value" with the sacrificial burnt body in the *holocaustos*, which represents the subordination of life to philosophy in the name of Reason and light.[98] As Kolozova recounts, within this sacrificial Olympian ritual there subsists the preservation of life and reason, *hiereia*, which remains attached to the physical body as a transcendental product. Thus, the sacrificed burnt body is transformed into the transcendental. This "becoming" of "pure value" is the process of abstraction, whereby a signifying chain encloses around the processual accumulation of exchange and worth-accumulation.

Radicalizing the dyad, Kolozova's work on Laruelle's "Vision-in-One" - manifest as an indifferent determination that is not bound to human-psychological identification, but universal compossibility - radicalizes philosophies of animality based on *différance*. Kolozova recognizes that the reduction of the animal as a general equivalent of the Real - as in Haraway and Derrida's literature - is the exact same reduction that is the foundational gesture of capitalist reciprocity, which "grounds and sustains patriarchy and heteronormative sexuality" as a "general equivalent... reified abstraction."[99] In Stiegler's system, noesis is continually technically synthesized as an automata devoid of epiphenomenal sensoria, appropriated for framing truth claims by instantiating the real.

[95] Ibid., 38.
[96] Ibid., vi, vii, 111.
[97] Ibid., 111.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid., 147.

Ó Maoilearca writes about how, rather than "reduce, replace, or eliminate"[100] philosophical distinctions, Laruellian immanence subjugates and inverts Being to genericity, thus initiating a fully democratic revision whereby no one view is superior to, or transcends, the other. Unlike posthumanist theses that claim that humanity must move beyond contingency, Ó Maoilearca describes how "any Laruellian nonhumanism will always be much messier than this, resting a good deal more on a non-philosophical imperfectability than on man's approximation to the divine, the infinite, and the perfect."[101] However, radicalizing Stiegler's constitution of *noesis as technesis*, we can say that we are always becoming trans-human, as mental apperception is a spatio-temporal relation that demonstrates how the human being is "the fact of technicity."[102] If, for Stiegler, the process of socialization "clones" noesis through trans-generational technical circuits that instantiate the real, for Laruelle this is little more than another example of the Real as it anthropomorphizes Man, "philosomorphizing" both the Real and humanity after its own (dormant and noetic) image.[103]

Stiegler uses the category of the "non-inhuman" to describe the being that realizes itself through the precision of mechanics and, "realizing its dreams," as in materially producing them through artefacts, exosomatizes itself. Stiegler's theory of arche-cinema is based on Marc Azéma's work on Man as the animal who not only has "always 'dreamed'" but, in turn, whose "brain is a machine for producing images" that is "capable of projecting his inner 'cinema' outside himself."[104] By realizing its dreams, the non-inhuman escapes its status as automata and becomes noetic. According to Stiegler, animality's organogenesis "completely escapes them,"[105] and, consequently, Stiegler repeats the same move that Kolozova critiques in Haraway and Derrida as, for all three philosophers, animality simply becomes a stand-in for the instrumental capacity of Capital. In fact, Stiegler collapses animality with anoetic dreaming, whereby animality is pre-linguistic and pre-symbolic, unable to in-

stantiate a typology of difference and precluded from conceiving of the world schematically.[106] In turn, Stiegler "generalizes" animality, just as today's capitalism generalizes proletarianization.

Conclusion

Jason Lariviere and Alexander Galloway remark that

> [f]rom a position alongside philosophy, Laruelle's non-philosophy adopts a different kind of signal processing. Opacity becomes a general condition of the cosmos itself. ... Unlike Stiegler, who strives to reveal an enchanted, natural world through the development of the noetic organs, Laruelle remains encrypted within the radical immanence of generic being. All superfluous philosophical data has been deleted.[107]

However, this description of "generic being" enacts a capitalist fetishization of the Real and the One, which does not adhere to Laruelle's non-philosophical system, whereby there is no such generic being, as non-philosophy is predicated on liquidating Being, which is the amphibology of the Real and thought par excellence. The "generic science" of non-philosophy is generic and immanent insofar as it takes genericity as a starting point from which to rethink the aims and possibilities of philosophy. "Generic science" is the proper name for the non-philosophical cloning of standard philosophy and, consequently, this is by no means a "deletion" but a duplication; there is not a "loss" of data but, instead, a reconceptualization of (philosophical) data.

Furthermore, Lariviere and Galloway remark that "Stiegler uses the term grammatization... to indicate how human experience is compressed into discrete units of mediation" and that Stiegler's argument about the materialization of diachronic memory as exteriorized technics, or "tertiary retentions," speaks to the "compressive

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[100] Ó Maoilearca, *All Thoughts*, 11.
[101] Ibid., 189.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid., 183.
[104] Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 90.
[105] Ibid., 184.

[106] Stiegler's conception of animality as pre-exosomatic reduces the animal as an immaterial source exploitable for commodity-production. Were Stiegler to apply his own logic of exosomatization to animal case studies, however, he would see the fatuity of this distinction. This is demonstrated by the many animals that produce exo-somatic tools: just as orangutans use whistles to communicate and ward off predators, sea otters have been known to use stones to hammer abalone shells off of rocks so as to crack shells open; this is to say nothing of animals that have a mental conception of autonoetic conception, or an arche-cinema.
[107] Lariviere and Galloway, "Compression," 140.

power of grammatization to turn the theoretically infinite layers of experience into discrete, manageable, and archivable units."[108] However, the very fact that there exists a pre-symbolic site that becomes mnemotechnical through the matrixial arche-cinema of the unconscious, in which the dream is the primordial form, demonstrates that human experience is not so "manageable." Processes of trans*dividuation* elude us until they have already exacted their full force, temporally constituting themselves beyond Being. Elsewhere, Stiegler has remarked that "philosophy has repressed technics as an object of thought" and that "[t]echnics is the unthought."[109] While technicity is appropriable, to cast technics under the spell of compression or decompression denies that machines are purely instrumental. In fact, even if today's machines cast an artificial cast so wide as to transfigure Arachnean linealities beyond our conceptual purview, Stiegler's technological inscription provides us with a way to trace the originary co-constitution of the human in parallel with the technical, providing us with a description whereby we can understand human thought's bind with consciousness under an emergent and entirely material dimension of synthesis. Synthesis, as an inflected process that affects both mind and body (or a "general organology"), offers the generative element prohibited by compression or decompression's ahistoricity.

Furthermore, I have tried to demonstrate some linkages between Stiegler and Laruelle, although there are certainly others. Both philosophers, for instance, upbraid politics' insistence on "anthropo-logical difference."[110] For Laruelle, this is a fetish of "[u]-nity par excellence - the State and the other fetishes of political thought,"[111] which is reflected by the fetish of a unitary philosophy that always appeals to some metaphysical and contaminative Other. Stiegler's rejection of "anthropo-logical difference" is in regards to the techno-fetishistic eschatology spurred by automation, as it draws from the superficial transhumanist impulse that seeks enhancement or augmentation,[112] with the cultural industry able to short-circuit transindividuation vis-à-vis the manipulation

of behavior by rendering it calculable/predictable (e.g., predictive processing and neuro-inferential Bayesian modeling). Both philosophers clearly censure the neolibertarian ethos of technological intensification, whether political, rhetorical, or technical.

Both Stiegler and Laruelle's projects deal with the intimate dissection of unconscious drives. In Laruelle's case it is finitude that renders the drive autonomous, as finitude extracts the drive from the unconscious chain, remaining inherent to itself while preserving the "immediacy of acting."[113] Consequently, we can only transform that which has a form through the continuous penetration of activity into raw material; the drive cannot form a body within the world, even if it does affect it.[114] For Stiegler, this fetish is the result of the "unbinding of the drives," which are properly libidinal: the faculty of the drives is the phantasmatic faculty, or that which protains (anticipates), contained in the form of artefactual technicity.[115]

Granted, many of the differences between Laruelle and Stiegler's Marxism are spurred by the non-thetic vantage of non-philosophy's precluding the Decision. Alternatively, Stiegler's interest in trans-generational flows is determined by a kind of temporal unconscious decision-binding between humankind and its diachronic artefactual grammatization. As Laruelle's description of the drive is "non-positional," or that of "Non-thetic Transcendence,"[116] it possesses a certain "correlate" of transcendence. However, Stiegler is much more concerned with using the drive as a cultural diagnostic. After all, where Laruelle is concerned with an ethical system that does not appeal to an Other, or authoritarian vectors, Stiegler is interested in the merge between humanity and its technical prostheses - the artefactual point of contiguity between noetic activity and "becoming-Other."

At its most radical dissimilarity, following Laruelle's non-Marxism, Stiegler's operation of philosophical conceptuality of noesis as arche-cinema does violence upon the real by spatially binding it. Furthermore, in Stiegler's system we see the trace of a kind of

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[108] Ibid., 140, 128.
[109] Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. by Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 11.
[110] Laruelle, *A Biography*, 5.
[111] Ibid., 26.
[112] Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 296.

[113] Laruelle, *A Biography*, 201.
[114] Ibid., 202.
[115] Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 82.
[116] Ibid., 204.

resulting "synthesis, fusion, or *mixte*"[117] between transcendence and immanence, or exteriority and interiority, which prompts a transformation or appropriation. Similarly, this "co-constitution of the real in the form of known Being or existence" effectively enacts another kind of "violent alienation of the real from itself,"[118] repeated in Stiegler's instrumental treatment of animality.

Thus, in conclusion, Laruelle and Stiegler are not entirely in disagreement though they do occupy varied scalar intensities that can be more finely analyzed through the vantage of quantum superpositioning, the Real and, in Stiegler's case, synthesis. While compression and decompression certainly provides us with an interesting perspective with which to consider lossage as it is related to philosophical systematization, it seeks to asphyxiate an entire ontology within a rather limited straightjacket while denying any mutual territory between the two philosophers - for instance, not only do both Laruelle and Stiegler unequivocally agree that the drive is performative but they also both problematize notions of the post-human. However, as post-Laruellians like Kolozova and Ó Maoilearca demonstrate, through Laruelle we may arrive at a more radical (non-Marxist) conception of the non-human. Nonetheless, this is not to suggest that Stiegler does not offer a Marxian material analysis: in fact, for those seeking pragmatic and enacted ethics, Stiegler is one of the foremost living philosophers who consistently supplements his philosophizing with variegated idealist sociopolitical projects. In moving forward and contending with our epoch's most pressing issues - existential risk, ecological catastrophe, and the growing criticality of animal rights - such philosophers provide us with means to generate and portend alternative models that call into question the all-subsuming portrait of unbounded posthumanism.

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[117] James, *Techniques of Thought*, 30.
[118] Ibid.

Davor Löffler, John J. McGraw † and

Niels N. Johannsen |

Weapons in and as History: On the Ontogenerative Function of Materialized Preemption and Intelligence in Weapons Technology

In memoriam John J. McGraw, great scholar and friend

Bionote: Davor Löffler is a lecturer in history of knowledge and epistemology at Leuphana University, Lüneburg, Germany, and a teacher at the interdisciplinary research platform The New Centre for Research and Practice. He earned his PhD in Sociology from Free University of Berlin with an interdisciplinary thesis on the shift of social structures, cognition and temporality in the Techno-logical Civilization. Previously he worked as lecturer in Sociology and Philosophy at the BTK University of Art and Design, Berlin, and collaborated in various interdisciplinary working groups such as the Mind Machine Project at the MIT, Cambridge, Massachu-setts, USA, the Interacting Minds Center, Aarhus, Denmark, and the Role of Culture in Early Expansions of Humans Group at the Institute of Prehistory, Tübingen, Germany. He is author and editor in the field of cultural theory and philosophical anthropology.

Independent Researcher
davor.loeffler@fu-berlin.de

Bionote: John J. McGraw (1974-2016) was an anthropologist who worked in Latin America and studied material and cognitive as-pects of rituals, religion and social interaction. He did long-term field work in the Guatemalan highlands and was intensely inter-ested in divination, knowledge, decision-making and joint action as well as long-term trajectories in the interaction of technology, cognition and social organization in human evolution and history. At the time of his much too early passing, John was an Assistant Professor at California State University, Northridge.

Bionote: Niels N. Johannsen is an Associate Professor at the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies and the Inter-acting Minds Centre at Aarhus University, Denmark. He received his degrees from Aarhus and Cambridge, with research stays in Edinburgh and Oxford, focusing on environmental and cognitive archaeology, the Neolithic of Europe and the relationship be-tween technological and wider cultural change. He is particularly interested in interdisciplinary research efforts - understanding the epistemological and cultural prerequisites of such collaborations and making them work in practice. His current research includes collaborative projects involving palaeogenetics, geoscience, phys-ics and experimental cognitive science.

Aarhus University
nnj@cas.au.dk

Abstract: Weapons technology is a key factor contributing to cultural evolution because it enables humans actively to protect themselves from a variety of natural threats and expand their access to resources. In contrast to non-military technologies, the purpose of which is to subordinate and shape inanimate, non-intentional or trivial, regular states, weapons primarily serve to assert one's own will against self-determined, intentional and non-trivially acting organisms. This functional idiosyncrasy estab-lishes the basis for a continuous arms race, which begins with the need to anticipate phenotypical and mental abilities of animals and other humans through weapons technology before leading to the anticipation of attack and defence capacities of groups and, ultimately, the anticipation of accumulated intelligence and pro-ductive accomplishments of entire political states. The dynamics of development in weapons technology prove that weapons are simultaneously an index and a motor of cultural and cognitive evolution. Weapons reflect the organizational and technical capa-bilities of cultures, indicating special cognitive capacities bound up with the abstract anticipation of enemies as well as the abili-ty to produce mental models of complex adversarial entities. At the same time, weapons relay intercultural and internal selection pressures by playing a decisive role in the processes of general technological and organizational innovation. This innovation also influences the formation of practices, norms, motives and self-im-ages. As such, weapons technology concretizes an integral princi-ple governing cultural evolution and civilizational history.

1. Introduction

In one of the most brilliant transitions in cinematic history, Stanley Kubrick, in his film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, tracks the movement of a tapir femur - depicted in the immediately preceding scenes as humankind's presumptive first weapon - tossed into the sky, whereupon it quickly morphs into an orbiting space station. In this transition, Kubrick compressed 2-3 million years of human evolution, starting with our ancient forebears' first use of tools to the acme of such tool use in the technological conquest of space. A two-fold conceit is implied in this scene, insinuating that, before the advent of tool use, hominids were equal in nature to all other creatures of their time, and, once early hominids began to amplify and extend their bodily powers via technology, they began an ever-accelerating journey that would lead them to escape the boundaries of the Earth itself. This article extends Kubrick's cinematographic compression by arguing that few technological genres have been so central to human evolution, seemingly since the origin of our species, as weaponry.

Although weapons initially likely served to enhance our defence capacities against dangerous animals and to improve hunting abilities, weapons soon became the basic tools for human warfare, surfacing both unforeseeable potential and risk for the species. It is our hypothesis that the dynamics exhibited in the development of weaponry, as well as the larger social and historical processes reciprocally unfolding around these dynamics, represent a fundamental driver of human and social evolution. Even where the pacifist in each of us may seek to eschew this evolutionary precondition (the coevolution of humans and their weaponry), human history is indisputably co-determined by the reciprocal formation of weapon technology and its corresponding mastery of the human body, elaboration of cognitive capacities and organization of society. The significance of weapon technology for cultural evolution here surveyed not

only sketches out a historical and evolutionary anthropology of the weapon; much more, it reveals particular cultural evolutionary principles grounding and uniting various threads of a posthumanist and integrative human science. With this paper,[1] we intend to draw focus to and further instigate theoretical and empirical investigation into what seems to be a key, yet somewhat understudied, mechanism in the development of human societies - one that carries profound implications for human culture, well-being and, ultimately, the existence of our (and some other) species.

This article comprises four sections. In the first section, we examine the essential role played by weapons technology in hominization (para. 2). In the next section, we argue for an entangled understanding of the development shared by human capacities and weapons, showing that weapon usage can be understood as both a driver and index of cultural development up to the present (para. 3). Following up on this insight, we show that the key role of weapons in cultural evolution not only lies in the innovations directly brought forth and triggered by the production and usage of weapons, but also in the ineluctable, unintended cultural consequences to which weapon use gives rise (para. 4). Finally, the impact of weapons on cultural evolution and civilizational history is generalized by showing how weapon use reveals and concretizes a developmental principle, which to date has not been identified and made operational within anthropology and cultural evolution theory (para. 5).

2. Weapons Technology as Inaugural Moment in Cultural Evolution

Niche construction and niche expansion based on technology is the main feature and simultaneously the catalyser of human and cultural evolution.[2] While primitive technological achievements such as simple tool use are widespread in the animal kingdom,[3] a new

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[1] This article is an updated and extended version of an essay previously published in German. See Niels N. Johannsen, Davor Löffler and John J. McGraw, "Waffengeschichte," in *Entwicklungen der Menschheit. Humanwissenschaften in der Perspektive der Integration*, ed. by Gerd Jüttemann (Lengerich: Pabst, 2014), 191-199. The authors thank Nathan Clendenin for support with the translation and an anonymous reviewer for valuable comments.

[2] Cf. Kevin N. Laland, John Odling-Smee and Marcus W. Feldman, "Niche Construction, Biological Evolution, and Cultural Change," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (2000), 131-175.

[3] Cf. Miriam N. Haidle, *How to Think Tools? A Comparison of Cognitive Aspects in Tool Behavior of Animals and During Human Evolution* (Tübingen: Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, 2012). https://publikationen.uni-tuebingen.de/xmlui/handle/10900/49627.

quality can be seen in the instrumentalization of such achievements by human agency: humans are the only living beings that are able to use tools to produce other tools. Thus, the human capability for "secondary tool use"[4] allows the species actively to develop new abilities, to adapt to new problems and to react flexibly to new evolutionary challenges.

The ability to use the body itself as an instrument is essential for the technological domestication of environments by humans, whereby the body itself is the first and primary tool. Flexible, intentional and teleonomic body instrumentalization is oriented toward and guided by the projection of concepts, causalities and functions into the environment. These instrumental behavioural schemes, based on abstract cues, are developed during moments of reflection and self-affection in acts of experimentation and play. Importantly, they are also adopted through social learning. Once a technology is established by an individual, it can be learned by others through observation and then transmitted intergenerationally, thereby establishing the "ratchet-effect" in cultural evolution and resulting in the exclusively human trait of cumulative culture.[5]

Instrumental behaviour schemes, technological performances and concepts are stored in the traditions, practices, knowledge and artefacts, both cultural and technological, of a given cultural collective. They establish a performative scaffold conducing the "insulation"[6] of cultures and providing the ground for ongoing technological "distantiation"[7] of humans from nature. Technology, cooperation and division of labour, therefore, make up the cultural "membrane"[8] that transmits resources into cultural collectives, protects against natural threats and creates a secure zone around a cultural unit. While culture, as a "second nature,"[9] dampens the evolutionary selection pressure directed at phenotypical adaptations, it simultaneously creates a secondary selection pressure influencing *behavioural* adaptation. Social sanctions convey this pressure, enforcing or weakening instrumental manipulation of environmental states concerning cooperative needs and their contribution to the survival of the collective.

Taming and domestication of the processes in the external natural environment, as well as of the internal natural processes within the body and psyche associated with human niche construction and technology, leads to the expansion of concept-based states of order.[10] This expansion of domesticated and ordered spacetime is based on *two categories of technology*. The first category comprises technologies intended to subordinate and shape inanimate objects, trivially behaving regular processes and environmental states, such as hammers or irrigation systems. In fundamental contrast to this category, the aim of weapons technology is to control and dominate *self-determined*, *intentional* and *non-trivially* acting entities.[11] The weapon, thus, is the medium through which human-based forms of order, concerned with the control of *living* entities, emerge. As such, weapons are of chief importance for processes of hominization and cultural evolution. The breadth of the relationship between hominization and weapon technology is illustrated by the following aspects:

- Weapons mitigate "flight mode" and the constraining effects of certain stressors, resulting, for example, in a surplus of time in which play, experimentation and reflection can flourish. New cognitive, emotional and behavioural resources emancipated by this process may promote encephalization.

- The formation of the prefrontal cortex as the "organ of civilization"[12] is likely supported by self-control applied in strategic weapon use as it preconditions and reinforces the capacity of intentional delay of gratification.

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[4] Cf. Jean Kitahara-Frisch, "The Origin of Secondary Tools," in *The Use of Tools by Human and Non-Human Primates*, ed. by Arlette Berthelet and Jean Chavaillon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 239-246.

[5] Cf. Claudio Tennie, Josep Call and Michael Tomasello, "Ratcheting Up the Ratchet: On the Evolution of Cumulative Culture," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, Vol. 364 (2009), 2405-15.

[6] Cf. Dieter Claessens, *Das Konkrete und das Abstrakte. Soziologische Skizzen zur Anthropologie* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1993), 32-37.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Cf. André Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et techniques* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1945), 322.

[9] Arnold Gehlen, *Anthropologische und sozialpsychologische Untersuchungen* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1986), 48.

[10] Cf. Davor Löffler, "Abschied der Räume," in Davor Löffler, *Endlichkeitskaskaden. Fünf Aufsätze über den Rand* (Berlin: sine causa, 2009), 29-52.

[11] We are referring here to the distinction between trivial machines and non-trivial or complex machines introduced by Heinz von Förster. Cf. Heinz von Förster, "Principles of Self-Organization in a Socio-Managerial Context," in *Self-Organization and Management of Social Systems*, ed. by Hans Ulrich and Gilbert J. B. Probst (Berlin: Springer, 1984), 2-24.

[12] An expression coined by the psychologist Alexandr Luria. Cf. Elkhonon Goldberg, *The New Executive Brain: Frontal Lobes in a Complex World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 20.

- Because they neutralize threats, objectify risks and make accessible a wider spectrum of resources, weapons enable forays and migrations into new regions. In this way, weapons increase the possibility of venturing into "outside" environments where new challenges can continue to stimulate the cumulative process of cultural evolution.

- Weapons allow humans to transgress phenotypical limits both to action and strength. Consequently, the use of weapons levels physical differences between members of a collective, changing the fundamental mechanisms by which group hierarchies are formed. This levelling effect has considerable repercussions on the development of status, social roles and self-images.

- Awareness of constant defence-readiness and increased resource security allows for the future to be conceived as an open and projectable continuum of events. Social organization and human cognition are increasingly oriented and directed toward the cultivation and domestication of this open future.[13]

- Increasing dependence on improvements to weaponry leads to the development of more complex devices. Their production requires an increase in the division of labour and an extension of operational chains, resulting in the expansion of individual and collective planning time and an augmentation of instrumental abstraction.[14]

- The organism-weapon assemblage depicted in this coevolutionary tableau contains an implicit "proto-theory" as well as "truth function."[15] In these assemblages, the success or failure of each projected line of attack (obvious in the use of long-range weapons such as spears), and the quantity and quality of strikes, assigns truth value to the entire assemblage, corroborating the theory implied in the function and instrumental causality of the assemblage. Simultaneously, actions sequentially stacked in

time, including functional elements aligned with particular instruments, are unified in a single abstract concept of action.

- The training of muscular choreographies bound up with weapon use, as well as the immediate feedback on the usefulness and sense of instrumental behavioural patterns required by specific weapons, stimulates the reflection, refinement and differentiation of the corporeal scheme.

- The strategic and cooperative use of weapons promotes the capacities for social coordination, perspective-taking and linguistic communication.

- The "counter-structure"[16] (*Kontrapunkt*) or "affordance"[17] of weaponry resides not only in the material or organic properties of a given opponent or prey (such as skin thickness or bone hardness), but, more importantly, in its *mental capacities*. In order to be effective, weapon design must anticipate gaps and blind spots in perception, states of consciousness and the responsiveness of opponents - not to mention incorporating the user's own reflection on his/her strengths and weaknesses. Because of this higher order reflection, weapons manifest our capacity to anticipate the operations of other minds, assuming their perspective for motives of offense and defence, and, with this, imply a presumptive knowledge of other minds. The materialization of the psyche through and within the weapon is one of its most important contributions to hominization, cultural and cognitive evolution. The materialization of the limits of awareness and potential reactions of an opponent in weapon production documents the objectification of the noetic sphere, which now becomes a new worldly ontological category.

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[13] Cf. Thomas Suddendorf, Donna R. Addis and Michael C. Corballis, "Mental Time Travel and the Shaping of the Human Mind," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, Vol. 364 (2009), 1317-24.

[14] See for example Marlize Lombard and Miriam N. Haidle, "Thinking a Bow-and-Arrow: Cognitive Implications of Middle Stone Age Bow and Stone-Tipped Arrow Technology," *Cambridge Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2012), 237-264.

[15] Cf. Peter Sloterdijk, "Anthropogonischer Exodus," in *Umzug ins Offene*, ed. by Tom Fecht and Dietmar Kamper (Vienna: Springer, 2001), 302-312, 306 (translation by the authors).

[16] Cf. Jakob von Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans: With a Theory of Meaning*, trans. by Joseph D. O'Neil (Minneapolis, Minnesota and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 139-46.

[17] Cf. James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1986), 127-143; Alan Costall, "Canonical Affordances in Context," *Avant: Trends in Interdisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2012), 85-93.

3. Weapons as Motor and Index of Cultural Evolution

Existential conflicts between groups are the ultimate filter for fitness levels of collectives, which mark the degrees of complexity inherent to forms of cooperation, technology and intelligence. Thus, the historical evolution of cultures is mainly mediated by intercultural conflicts in which procedures and technologies of attack and defence are selected.[18] Two general principles play a central role in the process of conflictual or agonistic cultural evolution mediated by weaponry: creative innovation and imitation.

Creativity is the basic ability to create something new, albeit a "new" not created *ex nihilo*. Rather, it grows out of novel combinations of existing knowledge, experiences, practices and structures. It is precisely this associativity that constitutes the special character of human creativity, whereby innovative concepts and procedures often prove to be transferable beyond an original domain of application to other areas.[19] Innovation has three types of causes. It is the result of intentional and specific research in relation to defined needs and purposes ("necessity is the mother of invention"); it is the result of failed efforts that randomly bring forth procedures and applications that can be used in domains other than those intended; finally, it derives from playful experimentation without any clearly defined purpose.[20] Due to existential competition in intercultural conflicts, weapons represent a category of technology in which development is primarily based on intentional modes of innovation.

The hallmark of innovation in weapons technology lies in *the need to anticipate the entirety of properties of prey or adversarial entities*. A bow and arrow, for example, not only reflects the operational, manufacturing and productive capacities of the user and its culture, but, simultaneously, it is also designed in relation to the physical properties and mental capacities of a prey animal as conceived by its developer and user. The same goes for the development of the atomic bomb, which is not only based on the intelligence, knowledge, technology and productive power of entire states, but also anticipates the totality of capacities ascribed to adversaries. Since the construction of weapons is always oriented toward a *construct* of the adversarial entity, and since a weapon is always defined by the context of a specific conflict, any kind of process can be converted into weapons, e.g., trade sanctions, viruses or tapir bones. Understood as such, innovations in weaponry permit noetic objectifications of entities or states seen as in need of being controlled by subjects responsible for producing and using weapons. While animals have a defined set of directly observable, concrete qualities constituting a clear attack surface to which specific weapon technology corresponds, the attack surface of the enemy in the conflict between opposing humans or collectives is always subject to conceptual construction. Regarding human adversaries specifically, this construction must also always take into account the *potentialities* of the enemy to flexibly develop counter-measures. The *anticipatory* and *preemptive modelling* of the opponent's assets is therefore the necessary precondition for the production and use of weapons.

Especially in militant conflicts, a heightened necessity to draw up procedures exceeding the reaction and response capacities of the opponent prevails. But, in the course of this process, the *entirety of available technologies* is transformed and carried beyond the prior state of technological development. This very surpassing of previous states is, in fact, the decisive point for technical and cultural evolution. The existence of weapon technology itself establishes an *existential* need for *constantly adapting* to new levels of technological complexity resulting in a cumulation of capacities. The cumulation of preemptive technologies leads to the formation of a history constituted by layers of ranges of anticipation and preemption that are sequentially and hierarchically encapsulated in each other.[21]

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[18] Cf. Heiner Mühlmann, *Nature of Cultures: A Blueprint for a Theory of Cultural Genetics* (Vienna and New York: Springer, 1996), 11-40.

[19] Niels N. Johannsen, "Technological Conceptualization: Cognition on the Shoulders of History," in *The Cognitive Life of Things*, ed. by Lambros Malafouris and Colin Renfrew (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2010), 59-69.

[20] Cf. George Basalla, *The Evolution of Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[21] In the general sense that technology can be defined as storage for triggerable events and any increase of technological complexity can be understood as the condensation or crystallization of time continua containing specific types of triggerable events and causal sequences; cf. Davor Löffler, "Einbruch in die Technosphäre. Skizze eines postanthropischen Technikbegriffs zur weiteren Erkundung der Möglichkeit technogener Nähe," in *"Menschen" formen Menschenformen. Zum technologischen Umbau der* conditio humana, ed. by Bernd Ternes (Berlin: sine causa, 2009), 197-291, 224*ff*. For a detailed explication of the concept of history as a sequence of "layers of preemption and generativity" and its application on cultural evolution and civilizational history, see Davor Löffler, *Generative Realitäten* I. *Die Technologische Zivilisation als neue Achsenzeit und Zivilisationsstufe. Eine Anthropologie des 21. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Velbrück Wissenschaft,

The second principle of technological innovation - imitation - responds to this challenge. In the event of a conflict, it is not only crucial to find new measures of defence against not yet anticipated technologies, and to do so as quickly as possible, but also to emulate advances in weaponry as closely as possible - even to the point of developing counter-innovations - becomes paramount. As advantages in weapon technology amount ultimately to little more than ephemera, an ever-accelerating weapons race, evident at least for all of recorded human history,[22] arises by necessity.

This interplay of innovation and imitation driven by existential stress leads to a certain fateful duality in the features of weapons. While it ensures a degree of safety for its users, and thereby reduces the influence of contingencies in a given environment, the weapon simultaneously generates additional existential dangers and other uncontrollable environmental factors. This duality is the basis of the cumulative and irreversible process of conflict-driven, continuous technological process and, indirectly, cultural evolution.

Thus, weapons technology also indicates stages of civilizational development since it always expresses the quality and structure of developed organizational, technological and cognitive performances; paradoxically, this advanced stage of development is also accompanied by the existential need to innovate, which arises via conflicts initiated by novel weapons. In this cumulative process of enhancement, weapons form the basis and cause of further technological development. Weapons technology, thus, should be regarded as both a motor and index of cultural and social evolution.
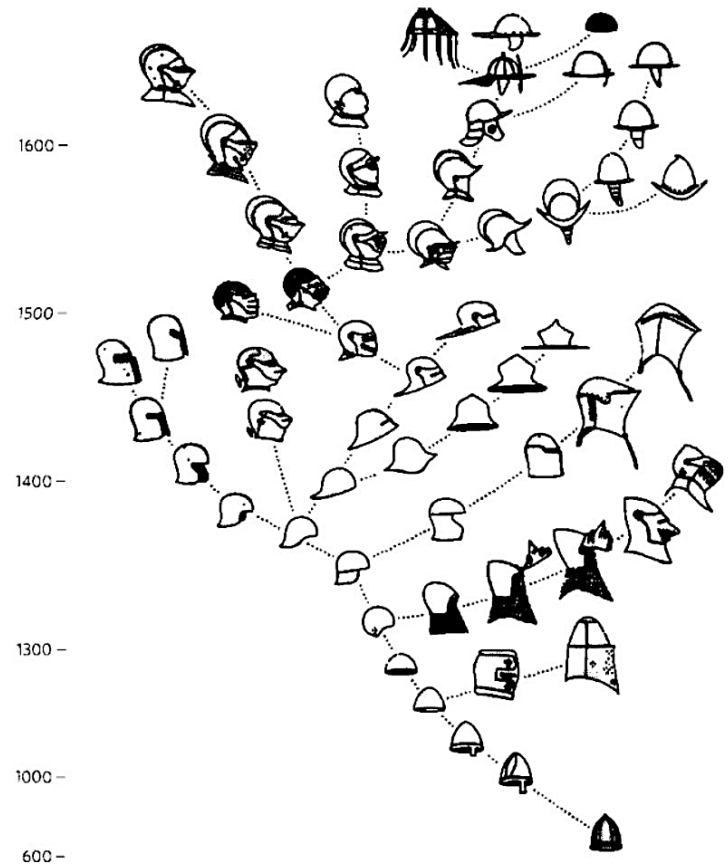
Figure 1. 1000 years of helmet evolution. Source: Kevin Kelly, *What Technology Wants* (New York: Viking 2010), 51; based on Dean Bashford, *Notes on Arms and Armor* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1916), 115.

4. Unintended Consequences of Weapons Technology for Society, Culture and Cognition

Alongside intentional projections of environmental mastery, various unintended and unforeseen consequences triggered by developments in weapon technology also inform the process of cultural evolution. Most obvious here are unexpected events and accidents, which can also negatively impact a weapon's user, thus forcing him or her to adopt a reflexive relationship towards his or her ac-

2019), 204-30.
[22] Cf. Arther Ferrill, *The Origins of War. From the Stone Age to Alexander the Great* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997); Alfred S. Bradford, *With Arrow, Sword and Spear: A History of Warfare in the Ancient World* (Westport and London: Praeger, 2001).

tions and motives. For example, weapon use can result in tragic malfunctions, friendly fire, or collateral damage. Indirect consequences related to the faulty manufacture or unskilled handling of weapons can also come into question. The development of ABC weapons did not only lead to new types of conflicts and strategies, but also to the formation of the entire areas of science and technology concerned with the elimination of consequential effects (*Folgenbeseitigung*) and remedial control of factors related to inadvertent malfunction or user error.

Yet another unpredictable factor concerns the discovery of new materials, as well as technical, communicative, scientific and organizational procedures, which are applicable to fields beyond original weapon-related domains. The history of urban architecture, for example, clearly demonstrates the close relationship between the form of weapons and human habitat, the immeasurable significance of which for cultural history is exemplified by the Greek acropolis, medieval castles, or cities in the Renaissance.[23] Further examples of this can be found in the way the construction of guns influenced metallurgical advances, which were the basis of Gutenberg's printing press;[24] canons and city defence systems initiated the development of ballistics and structural analysis, which influenced the development of the calculus, and, in general, modern mathematics and physics;[25] modern military drills and chains of command developed in the 17th century, which were transferred into various other domains of society;[26] and the need for devices capable of supporting autonomous steering of air defence systems, which led to the development of cybernetics.[27] In a more contemporary context, the role that ARPANET played as precursor to the internet is echoed today in the development of information technologies, machine learning and AI predominantly financed by the military.[28] The consequences

latent to these more recent innovations in weapons technology remain to be seen.[29]

While less conspicuous, the influence of weapons technology on the whole of society, especially on laws and sociopolitical institutions, not to mention norms, virtues and subjectivity, is all the more significant. For example, with the onset of the Enlightenment and the arrival of disciplinary societies, especially following the introduction of firearms, duelling was prohibited, which bore direct consequences on expressions of manhood, status and honour. This also altered the canon of virtues and vice, which shifted from martial aggression, and hotheadedness to sangfroid and "being cool." (Naturally, concepts such as chivalry and courtesy, too, underwent similar transformation.) Closer to our time, nuclear weapons, as well as the need for their strict containment, largely occasioned the development of global ethics and holistic models of morality.

Finally, among the most difficult to identify, yet possessing the greatest import for everyday life, are cognitive schemes and concepts derived from weapon use. Transferred from technological contexts or concrete conflict situations, certain properties of weapons can serve as schemes for structuring assorted cognitive and communicative fields. For example, ancient history shows that the spread of charioteering coincided with new ways for conceptualizing the movement of celestial bodies, transforming the cosmological concepts and metaphysical frameworks of several early cultures.[30] In daily speech, various situations can be grasped figuratively by using metaphors or martial origin, such as "making a breakthrough," "hoisting somebody onto his own petard," "bringing out the big guns" or "close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades." Such adages help to organize or condense situations noetically and communicate situational nuance.[31]

This brief review of certain unforeseen capabilities resulting from particular innovations in weapons technology points to its singular

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[23] Cf. Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[24] Cf. Jarred Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1999), 159.

[25] Cf. Hans Wußing, *6000 Jahre Mathematik. Eine kulturgeschichtliche Zeitreise. Band I: Von den Anfängen bis Leibniz und Newton* (Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer, 2008), 308.

[26] Cf. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

[27] Cf. Peter Galison, "The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1994), 228-266.

[28] Cf. Lars Nielsen, *Computing. A Business History* (Whickford: New Street Communications, 2011), 11-19.

[29] Remarkably, the famous oxymoron uttered by Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense under George W. Bush, describing national security after the events of 9/11 and concerning the existence of "unknown unknowns," characterizes precisely the beginning of a new culture of preemption, a logic now permeating nearly every aspect of life and society.

[30] Cf. Niels N. Johannsen, "Deus Ex Machina: Technological Experience as a Cognitive Resource in Bronze Age Conceptualizations of Astronomical Phenomena," *Journal of Cognition and Culture*, Vol. 14, No. 5 (2014), 435-448.

[31] Curiously often with a droll undertone.

role as driver of cultural, technological, cognitive, and moral development. Cultural history is deeply entangled with the direct and indirect effects that weapons technology has on human existence. Highlighting the fulcrum of weapons technology in human history also underlines the need for conscientiously measuring the possible valences unstable technological forces might express in future civilizations.
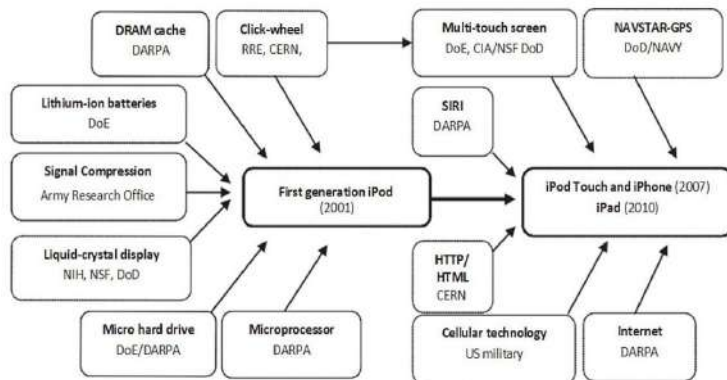

Figure 2. Origins of popular Apple products. Most of the main components used in first developing the iPod, iPhone, and iPad originated in research undertaken by military institutions such as DARPA, the Department of Defence or the CIA. Source: Marianna Mazzucato, *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking the Public vs. Private Sector Myths* (London: Anthem, 2014), 124.

5. The Weapon as Medium of Ontogenerativity in Cultural Evolution

All technologies are means for domesticating nature and reducing contingency. The specificity of weapon technology is found in its purpose to neutralize particular causes of environmental indeterminacy through creating ordered states, that is, to control autonomous beings and systems capable of complex behaviour, flexible actions, and adaptive reactions. However, with the appearance of armed humans and human collectives, weapons also created a new type of danger and source of contingency. This duality results in a perpetual upgrading and development of weapons, spurred on either by armed conflicts or the threat of them. The existential necessity to anticipate the range of responses, intelligence, and innovative pow-

er possessed by opposing individuals and cultures materializes in specific weapon forms, forcing all parties involved to strive for - and perhaps exceed - the same degree of advancement achieved in any given weapon. Since no other durable entity capable of both constant adaptation and learning is able to provide a similar threat to the survival of cultures, weaponized and intelligent entities emerge as the most significant remaining source of selection pressures. As such, they serve as a main cause for development and innovation and key driver of cultural evolution.

If cultural history is understood as the "successor organization to an evolutionary natural history,"[32] weapons then function as the primary medium for the evolutionary pressure deposited into culture as a "second nature." In earlier evolutionary stages, the pressure of natural selection forms phenotypes according to their fitness within ecological niches. In contrast, the evolutionary pressure emerging with culture as a "second nature" selects *cultural behavioural systems,* the fitness of which manifests in the efficiency and utility of noetic concepts; forms of rationality; the ability to plan, to form effective assemblages, to develop productive capacities; and technology. Additional factors, such as the structure of social organization, collective intelligence and techniques for subduing and aligning social forces equally and effectively, also come into play. The influence exerted by weapons in determining the developments in each of these domains unites all elements of cultural evolution.

This uniting principle now can be identified. Simply put, weapons are the materialization of the ability to outsmart other intelligent beings. In weaponized conflicts, depths of foresight are engaged in the struggle against foreign depths of foresight, capacities of anticipation against the opponent's capacity for anticipation, and in the waging of intelligence against intelligence. For this reason, weapons technology acts as a key catalyser for increases in intelligence and foresight, flourishing through the need to model and anticipate capacities held by other intelligent entities. This spiral of preemption most certainly does not lead the participating entities to a purely innocent omega point.[33] On the contrary, the need to intuit

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[32] Günter Dux, *Historico-Genetic Theory of Culture: On the Processual Logic of Cultural Change* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2014), 16*f.*

[33] Though, the foreseeability of wars becoming widely automated and algorithmicized (drones against drones, AI against AI) will yield an inevitable increase in and extension of preemptive

and adapt to an antagonist's intelligence causes the ever-expanding arms races which result in the predominance of the human species on the planet, and soon beyond its boundaries.

This leads us to the conclusion that fronts in active war zones are, in reality, *secondary* to the real fronts on which the preempting of future conflict scenarios takes place, such as in laboratories and along rapidly extending virtual surfaces hosting the projective modelling of the capacities of novel martial entities. The horizon of intelligence, foresight, and preemption is materialized in newly developed technologies, anticipating potential responses and events. Here, where the rendering of potential adversarial entities, events, and causalities through science and technology takes place, is the *actual* war front - and its expansion continues unabated.

Following this logic, the weapon using species appears on the scene accompanied by the emergence of a new evolutionary principle in the cosmos, which is not based solely on selection by fitness based on given abilities, but, rather, by the potential for pre-adaption, foresight, and intelligence, that is by the potential for the development of new abilities. Each newly developed cultural-cognitive form of existence represents a layer of potential foresight and preemptive action serving as the baseline for fresh cultural-cognitive developments. Owing to the fact that this gradual revelation of structures and phenomena predetermines the form, range, and content of human intentionality, decision-making and action, the source of this principle would appear to originate outside of human agency, as it establishes the continua in which relations and agency can concretize.

This generative principle underlying weapon-mediated processes of cultural evolution can be termed *telegenetic preemptivity*. Telege-

netic preemptivity is constitutional for weapons technology, as for example the history of armour and sword development illustrates. While leather armours may protect against sword blows, armours made of iron may protect against sword blows *and* against arrows. Thus, the range of anticipation and preemption of potential events *embedded* in iron armour is *wider* than that of a leather armour: iron armour, thanks to its material and structural constitution, can preempt more eventualities and events than leather armour as well project deeper and wider zones of safety into the future. The same principle is valid for technologies of assault like swords. For example, a bronze sword may stay intact up to a dozen strikes, while a steel sword may stay intact up to a hundred strikes. The potential future *embedded* in these technologies is, therefore, constituted by a different number of discrete potential events. The number of future events anticipated by an army equipped with steel swords is larger than the number of future events anticipated by the army equipped with bronze swords. The steel-equipped army can envision, integrate, and realize more potential events. It plans and navigates in relation to a deeper and more voluminous future due to the larger number of events that are embedded in its weapons, and it operates based on a projected future in which the rendering of events is more fine-grained. Due to this prospective and simultaneously generative relation to the future materialized in the weapon, the evolution of weapons concretizes a cumulative hierarchy of *telegenetic preemptivity*, providing, in turn, an index of potential telegenesis by which all technologies can be inventoried, measured and compared. For example, due to technological and tactical advantages, only a few hundred conquistadores were able to subdue whole empires in Latin America and, subsequently, the continent itself. [34] In this way, all cultures can in principle be indexed with a value of telegenetic preemptivity and compared by it.

The principle of *telegenetic preemptivity* becomes very concrete in the beginning of the 21st century. Next to the announcement that, under the presidency of Donald Trump, the United States of America will form a space force and by that yet again will expand the frontier of anticipation and preemption, the president of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin stated in 2017: "Artificial intelligence

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capacities. Furthermore, telegenetic efficiency could be gained by the next step of automation consisting in the full virtualization of battle fields, fighting wars in simulations, and predicting the outcome derived from all given parameters. Of course, this speculative scenario would require all participants to agree to the rules of a virtual competition system and accept the outcome of any possible simulations created by this system. Ensuring the authority of this system would necessarily fall on the shoulders of some sort of world government or organizational system, which must not necessarily be based solely on humans. This governmental entity would provide the essential precondition for resolving conflicts virtually and could lead to the ultimate alleviation of the stress of warfare exerted on humans (i.e., the above-mentioned omega-point: "peace on earth"). Given that humans, being biological organisms, remain dependent on and in search of competition for the satisfaction of basic needs such as nutrients, social prestige, and reproductive activity, whether such a system could ever be fully realized remains an open question.

[34] Cf. Felipe Fernández-Armesto and Matthew Restall, *The Conquistadores: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 36-47.

is the future [...] but for all humankind. [...] Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world."[35] This indicates that the powers of the multipolar world are already starting to erect *algorithmic domes of preemption* of events and potentialities over their spheres of influence and power, establishing a new playing field in which the ever-lasting game of keeping ahead of foreign intelligences will continue in a new round and open new continua of telegenetic emergence.[36]

Although it seems impossible to isolate single causalities and regularities within the coevolutionary processes constituted by complex feedback loops unfolding between various domains, ontologies, and scales of systems, one should not necessarily draw the conclusion that these processes are irregular, aberrant or purely intermittent in nature or structure. The underlying forces bound up in processes of coevolutionary emergence not only act as a motor, but, simultaneously, also as an *inhibitor* of development, as the tendency to preserve ordered states proves (take peace for example). The ability for systems to remain ordered and stable over long periods of time proves that thresholds and parameters of sufficiency exist, thus pointing to the existence of *regular principles* governing forces occasioning development. The then quite literally *regular* structures found in processes of emergence, mediated principally by the capacity for foresight bound up with weapons, makes evident an underlying ontogenerative or "xeno-auto-poietic"[37] structuring force.

In this process of ontogenerativity or "xeno-auto-poiesis" through *telegenetic preemptivity* futurity directly permeates and protrudes into the present. This means that the culture presiding over the most advanced tools for *probing the horizon of potential futures* is the culture in which the "future attractor"[38] is first concretized, residing higher up on the *telegenetic index*. This "xeno-auto-poietic" mechanism driving cultural evolution lies in the unveiling of intelligence, where "future attractors" determine pathways of becoming in the present, opening "cones of realization"[39] that channel the transformation of existing phenomena into new forms, resulting in new objects and relations emerging between them. As generative principles, "xeno-auto-poiesis" and *telegenetic preemptivity* concretized in weapon use condition the formation of noetic milieus in which concrete articulations of mind and culture unfold continuously. In brief, the frontier of the weapon *is* the frontier of onto-poiesis.

In what preceded, we have attempted to outline how the predominance of weapon technology, as a factor of civilizational development, points to an integrative principle catalysing the emergence of all phenomena in cultural evolution. This abbreviated history of weapons reveals the existence of a meta-ontical realm through which forms of existence concretize themselves. The identification and description (*Freistellung*) of this realm may initiate the epistemology of an integrative, posthumanist human science. This new entry point for conceptualizing history will permit future inquiry to specify how motives and forces driving humankind through history, and history through humankind, should be framed and further investigated.

[35] Edoardo Maggio, "Putin Believes That Whatever Country Has the Best AI Will Be 'The Ruler of the World,'" *Business Insider UK* (September 4, 2017). http://www.insider.com/putin-believes-country-with-best-ai-ruler-of-the-world-2017-9

[36] Beyond the "iron cage" (Max Weber) of capitalist production, which commits the global political elite to cling to fossil fuels and petroeconomics despite their being aware of the catastrophic consequences of global warming and the impending collapse, similar actors are obliged to maintain a high-level of telegenetic preemptivity. In this perpetual game of one-upmanship, states cannot afford to risk even a nanosecond delay in the concrete defence actions as well as in "imagineering" of their anticipatory defence responses. This deadlock in the defence systems of global powers arguably factors into global warming and climate change more significantly than any other source. This point is illustrated by the total consumption of fossil fuels and emission of greenhouse gases by the US military, which accounts for up to 30% of the United States' total carbon consumption and carbon emissions; cf. Oliver Belcher, Patrick Bigger, Ben Neimark and Cara Kennelly, "Hidden Carbon Costs of the 'Everywhere War': Logistics, Geopolitical Ecology, and the Carbon Boot-Print of the US Military," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (June 19, 2019), DOI:10.1111/tran.12319. Solutions to this stalemate are, for a variety of strategic reasons, highly improbable, as replacing defence technologies built with and operated using fossil fuels with sustainably sourced alternatives is not feasible. For example, tanks, fighter jets, and missiles powered with sustainable energy systems cannot compete with those powered by fossil fuel-based systems.

[37] Cf. Hans Peter Weber, *KreaturDenken. Aventüren. Randonné* (Berlin: sine causa, 2006), 86-95.

[38] Ibid., 74 (translation by the authors).

[39] Cf. Löffler, *Generative Realitäten* I (2019), 456-65.

Neda Genova |
Material-semiotic Transformations of the Berlin Wall in Post-Communist Bulgaria

Bionote: Neda Genova has recently completed her PhD in Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths College. She has defended a thesis on the material-semiotic transformations of surfaces and their role in political negotiations of time and space in post-communist Bulgaria. She is a member of the editorial collective of the online magazine *dVERSIA* and a member of the feminist collective *LevFem*. Neda has been teaching at Goldsmiths since 2016 and has also taught at the Institute for Media and Culture at the Heinrich Heine University of Düsseldorf. She is interested in post-colonial and feminist theory and practice, and how they can act upon institutionalized spaces, like those of the university.

Goldsmiths University of London
n.genova@gold.ac.uk

Abstract: In this article I examine the repeated material-semiotic mobilization of the trope of the Berlin Wall in post-communist Bulgaria. I show that despite the official dismantlement of the Wall commenced some thirty years ago, the structure's afterlife continues to exert a unique influence on Bulgaria's public life today. I explore the function of the Wall as a narrative and political device in moments when the relation to public space is negotiated or when notions of "past" and "present" are short-circuited. By taking up the notion of a "recording surface," developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*, I show how Bulgarian post-communism can be understood as the terrain of a continuous production of consensus. I argue that after 1989 the Berlin Wall has adopted a governing and consensus-building function that contributes to the "smoothening" of political and social differences on the recording surface of Bulgarian post-communism. Yet, what makes the examination of the fictitious successors of the original Berlin Wall an interesting terrain for examination is that their operation is predicated upon a material heterogeneity and dynamism. In the article, I explore the way this trope has been mo-

bilized in four different cases from Bulgaria's most recent history and demonstrate in what sense its "reactivation" can be seen as contributing to the stabilization of the recording surface of Bulgarian post-communism.

Keywords: Berlin Wall, Bulgaria, post-communism, recording surface, protest, transition, post-1989

Figure 1. Protesters collapsing a Berlin Wall made of cardboard during anti-government demonstrations. Courtesy: Darik Radio.

A preoccupation with the afterlife of the Berlin Wall has been a permanent fixture of Bulgaria's post-communist present.[1] This is an engagement that takes the form of anything, from the exhibition of individual fragments of the barrier to a playful re-enactment of its collapse. For example, a Berlin Wall made out of cardboard boxes was "built" and then "felled" in front of the German Embassy in Sofia during the anti-government protests that took place in Bulgaria in 2013 and 2014 (Figure 1). On another occasion, during the same protests, demonstrators dubbed a crowd-control fence, installed in front of the Parliament, to be "Sofia's Berlin Wall." Exclamations that "our" Berlin Wall "still stands" are regularly voiced out in various

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[1] I would like to thank Zhivka Valiavicharska for her valuable comments and feedback, which aided me when writing this article.

contexts - as in the case of an anti-communist group lobbying for the dismantling of the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia. In another episode that took place in 2015, park maintenance workers incidentally poured concrete on a piece of the actual protective barrier exhibited in Sofia. This event made for a minor diplomatic scandal with Germany and provoked the indignation of many watchful citizens lamenting the lack of cultural appreciation of the people who committed the mistake. And finally, a travelling exhibition of large chunks of the Berlin Wall was recently brought to Plovdiv, Bulgaria's second-largest town. The colourful fragments were displayed in the city centre on the occasion of the opening of the celebrations, which marked Plovdiv's assumption of the title "European Capital of Culture" for 2019.

How can we understand the continued material-semiotic[2] mobilisation of the Berlin Wall thirty years after its actual collapse in Bulgaria's post-communist context? What function does its evocation and its frequent "rebuilding" assume in cases of political unrest in the country, in moments when the relation to public space is negotiated or when notions of "past" and "present" are short-circuited, via the utilization of powerful tropes such as "Europe," "freedom" and "democracy"? In this article, I will argue that none of the abovementioned occurrences and the publicity they were granted are merely incidental - if considered from the point of view of the governing and consensus-building function performed by the Wall today. The insertion in various contexts of a remarkably flexible, adaptable, and heterogeneous - in both symbolic and material terms - trope of a "Berlin Wall" can be understood as a narrative and political device. It contributes to the establishment and stabilization of what, in thinking with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, we can understand as a "recording surface"[3] of post-communism. Although the official dismantlement of the Berlin Wall commenced some thirty years ago, the structure's afterlife continues to exert a unique influence on Bul-

garia's public life today in that its re-actualization, as I will demonstrate, helps to articulate a certain understanding of the present moment and its relation to a constantly disavowed past.

In his seminal work *Zone of Transition: On the End of Post-Communism*, Boris Buden writes of a particular kind of a disavowal inherent to the image of the Fall of the Berlin Wall.[4] According to him, similarly to the missing perspective of the actors in the French Revolution in accounts of that historical event, the gaze of the people who actually "felled" the Berlin Wall is also missing from images that have sought to capture this event. Buden writes about the forced infantilisation of Eastern European populations, who were suddenly put in a position to be "educated to democracy" by their Western counterparts, despite the democratic nature of their very act of disobedience towards former governments across the Eastern bloc. He states: "The image of the Fall of the Berlin Wall, which stands for the fall of communism, already contains the whole truth of post-communism."[5] By "truth" Buden means the consensus of capitalism triumphing over communism and, consequently, a lack of an economic and political alternative to the neoliberal regime introduced in the ex-socialist countries. This, according to him, is predicated upon the disavowal of the agency of the populations for whose sake these changes were allegedly introduced.

My contention is that there is something of this disavowal that persists in present-day utilizations of the trope of the Berlin Wall in Bulgaria. Only through an erasure of the heterogeneous motivations and political ideas that drove the actors who toppled down oppressive regimes at the turn of the 1990s across Eastern Europe, is it possible to establish an unequivocal, consensual understanding of the regime imposed afterwards as one that lacks any viable alternative.[6] As many have pointed out,[7] the period that followed the "fall of communism" in the so-called East, and the collapse of the

[2] The term "material-semiotic" is borrowed from Donna Haraway, see: Donna Haraway, "The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Treichler (London and New York: Routledge, 1992). My use of it here is also informed by Félix Guattari's work on machines and his insistence on the necessity to uncouple semiology from linguistics. See: Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. by Julian Pefanis (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 2012), 24.

[3] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (London and New York: Continuum, 2004).

[4] Boris Buden, *Zone des Übergangs: Vom Ende des Postkommunismus*, 1. Aufl. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2009).

[5] Buden, *Zone*, 17. All translations from the German original are mine.

[6] Buden describes the attitude, as famously put by Winston Churchill: "Capitalism is the worst economic system, except for all the others," as a cynical one in that it presupposes an "ironic distance" towards one's own economic and social reality yet also includes a refusal to challenge its status quo. See ibid., 24*ff*.

[7] See Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005); Oliver Marchart, *Post-Foundational Political Thought: Political Difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

bipolar worldview with the end of the Cold War, is characterised by a diminishing of antagonisms that would be articulated in political terms. These would have to engage with questions such as "what constitutes a society worth living in?" The symbolic transformation of the Berlin Wall itself can be seen as being in line with these developments. Previously the Wall was considered to be the sign *par excellence* of political division - reflected in the official name given to it by GDR authorities, "Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart." By contrast, after 1989 it has increasingly become a consensus-building device that contributes to the "smoothening" of political and social differences on the recording surface of Bulgarian post-communism. Yet, what makes the engagement with the fictitious successors of the original Berlin Wall an interesting terrain for examination is that their functioning is predicated upon material heterogeneity and dynamism.

In the following pages I will first briefly outline how I make use of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "recording surface" and demonstrate in what ways it can be rendered useful for the study of post-communism. I will then engage with various instances in which the trope of the Berlin Wall has been mobilised in recent times and demonstrate in what sense its "reactivation" can be seen as contributing to the stabilization of the recording surface of Bulgarian post-communism.

When deciding to engage with these questions through this particular theoretical lens, my methodological approach is informed by an engagement with the work of Donna Haraway. Her call for *situatedness* in knowledge production and her simultaneous assertion that claims to "objectivity" are never neutral but rather the products of an uneven distribution of power and knowledge,[8] have become a common point of reference for many feminist and critical writers. However, what bearings do these insights have for the present theoretical work - one that takes as a point of departure socio-political and cultural developments of a context largely considered to be "foreign" to the experiences and knowledges of the majority of the ones educated in "Western" institutions? We, who will have little difficulty deciphering not less specific or situated notions that have

emerged from cultural and political developments of the West (such as "Thatcherism" or, say, "Nouvelle Vague"), might suddenly find ourselves unequipped to come to terms with references that pertain to less familiar contexts. The lack of a more holistic and comprehensive account of these contexts can appear as dissatisfying and one might even demand to be properly introduced to them.

The decision here to take *some* context for granted is thus politically and intellectually motivated. More often than not, those of us situated differently are asked to carry out the work of introducing an unmarked, generic reader to complex situations, convoluted historical trajectories, and contradictory political demands for pages and hours on end. Instead of taking these complexities as terrains for further theoretical examinations and political thinking that would truly matter for these contexts, we are caught in the condition to always have to "contextualize" and "explain" them anew. This not only often runs counter to the very theoretical interests that have brought us to these complexities in the first place, but also inadvertently makes us complicit in perpetuating Orientalist and self-colonizing practices of thinking and producing knowledge. My intention here is to thus move away from such an approach (classically found in traditional area studies); I will instead take the abovementioned occurrences from Bulgaria's contemporary public sphere as instigations to think about the political and narrative function of the various re-actualizations of the trope of the Berlin Wall for and at the recording surface of post-communism.

Recording Surface

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari draw on Karl Marx to develop a notion of three syntheses as different, yet interrelated modes of production: these are the connective, the disjunctive and the conjunctive synthesis. Unlike the *connective* synthesis, which is a characteristic of desiring-machines and which constitutes the ("primary") production of production,[9] or the *conjunctive* synthesis, productive of consumption, the *disjunctive* synthesis is governed by the law of distribution and is also termed "production of recording."[10] It engenders what Deleuze and Guattari call a "recording surface." The

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[8] See Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1988), 575-99.

[9] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 8.

[10] Ibid., 13.

construction of the latter involves a peculiar kind of displacement, set in motion when the recording surface comes into being: it can be understood as an obfuscation and negation of the productive forces which have gone into its own creation.

Deleuze and Guattari describe a conflict between what they term the body without organs (BWO) "that functions as a socius"[11] and the machinic (social) production. They assert that "capital is the BWO of [...] the capitalist being."[12] The movement, which enables the formation of a recording surface from the BWO is made possible by a transfer of "the productive powers and the social interrelations of labour"[13] *from* labour *to* capital. Only through this appropriation and simultaneous negation of its own conditions can the BWO come to constitute and act as a recording surface:

> The body without organs, the unproductive, the un-consumable, serves as a surface for the recording of the entire process of production of desire, so that desiring-machines *seem* to emanate from it in the *apparent* objective movement that establishes a relationship between the machine and the body without organs.[14]

In this crucial passage it is important to stress the care put by Deleuze and Guattari into presenting the movement through which desiring-machines *seem* to originate from the BWO as *only apparently objectively given*: even if the recording surface is not a naturally given precondition for production, it nevertheless presents itself precisely in this manner. Thus, it can be understood as a result of a peculiar kind of displacement. Through their reference to the functioning of fixed capital as exemplified in Marx's analysis, one is led to contemplate how capital comes to appear as the "natural or divine presupposition"[15] of desiring-machines precisely because it fails to lay bare the processes of production inscribed onto and originating it. Labour is erased from the miraculated surface so that this surface can present itself as the "quasi cause"[16] of (desiring-)machines.

The negation constitutive to the production of the recording surface can be furthermore conceived as a manifestation of what Alfred North Whitehead has termed a "Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness,"[17] as it involves the error of taking what is in fact a *product* of a constructive abstraction (the recording surface itself) as a cause or a pregiven. Hence, the *disjunctive* synthesis can be understood as a peculiar form of abstraction, which is productive of a social territory, but whose mode of production is at the same time contingent upon the purification of that very same territory from the traces of the discarded (yet constitutive to it) "social interrelations of labour."[18] This territory is formed through the attachment of machines, each acting as a point of disjunction, to the BWO. Between these points "an entire network of new syntheses is now woven, marking the surface off into co-ordinates, like a grid."[19]

My claim here is that the post-communist condition of Bulgaria can be understood as a recording surface, as it acts on the premise of negating the conditions of production and social interrelations of labour, which have been incorporated in it. One way of defining post-communism is as the *continuous production* of consensus in the aftermath of the collapse of communist regimes. This is done through the coordinated working of political mechanisms such as a linear, progressive understanding of historical development; the imposition of a logic of "belatedness" for "catching-up" societies of the so-called Eastern Bloc; the naturalisation of economic reasoning and marketization as the only viable ground for building a prosperous society; the negation of pre-1989 historical experience and the exclusion from the present of dissident (collective) subjectivities. However, what is important to bear in mind when describing the modality through which the social surface of recording comes into being, is that it is the result of *productive* processes, and, as such, it is neither a mere given nor does its continuous renovation - more often than not premised upon violent erasures - occur without a trace. The process of establishing such a consensus, albeit seemingly to-

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[11] Ibid., 11.
[12] Ibid..
[13] Ibid., 12.
[14] Ibid.; italics mine.
[15] Ibid., 11.
[16] Ibid., 13.

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[17] Cf. Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World. Lowell Lectures from 1925* (New York: Pelican Mentor Books, 1948), 52. Through an engagement with 17th century scientific thought, Whitehead demonstrates that its "enormous success" (ibid., 57) was due to the fact that in a process of abstraction it isolated, on the one hand, *matter* "with its simple location in space and time" and, on the other, the "perceiving, suffering, reasoning", *mind* (ibid.). The "Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness" consists of taking this isolation not as the *product* of abstraction but as "the most concrete rendering of fact" (idem).
[18] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 12.
[19] Ibid., 12.

talising and all-encompassing in its capacity to permeate nearly all social spheres, is thus one that is always in the balance.

Some Bulgarian scholars, writing in the tradition of Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, have come to describe the effects of these processes as a "post-political" state of affairs.[20] While there are indeed valid arguments to accept this description of post-communism - such as the frequent cloaking of profoundly political issues in a language of morality, or targeting individual, allegedly corrupt personalities, instead of scrutinizing the policies they put forward - I would be cautious to adopt a "post-political" framework as an explanatory matrix for the present. Even though I share the preoccupation with a necessity to scrutinize procedures seeking to stabilise a consensual vision of the *status quo*, my contention is that these consensus-building operations need to be read precisely as productive processes - predicated upon the negation of their own artificial character, they always include an element of openness and fragility. Furthermore, writings that stop short of looking into the modality and concerns of moments of political unrest, which challenge the generalized agreement of a lack of an alternative to the present beyond globalized capitalism, run the risk of becoming complicit with perpetuating that very same order they attempt to question. Indeed, only in the period between November 2018 and January 2019 protests occurred on an almost daily basis in Bulgaria, tackling issues ranging from environmental pollution to legislation in relation to gender-based violence, cuts in the social welfare system, implementation of punitive taxes on used vehicles, which disproportionally hit the less affluent. All of these instances, despite their frequently fragmented character, should be understood as challenging the consensual character of the post-communist regime with its tendency to flatten out differences and present itself as devoid of conflict and a natural state of things.

[20] See for example: Georgi Medarov, Madlen Nikolova, and Jana Tsoneva, *Политика без политика. "Ние" и "те" в протестите и кризата на представителството* [*Politics without Politics. "We" and "Them" in the Protests and the Crisis of Representation*] (Sofia: Media Democracy Foundation, 2014). Alongside the provision of a comprehensive and detailed overview of the Bulgarian political landscape since 2005, Jana Tsoneva also put forward a similar argument in an article from 2017: Jana Tsoneva, "Politics after the Political," *Jacobin* (March 30, 2017). https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/03/bulgaria-elections-corruption-privatization-judiciary-islamophobia.

Figure 2. A chunk of the Berlin Wall that was temporarily plastered over during refurbishment works in Sofia. Courtesy: Stefan Ivanov/OffNews.

In the following passage, I will engage with one particular instance that temporarily exposed the fragility associated with one of post-communism's chains of equivalences: "freedom = democracy = capitalism triumphing over communism." A minor public nuisance occurred on December 2, 2015 when workers, contracted to refurbish the area in front of the National Palace of Culture (NDK) in Sofia, painted over a commemorative segment of the Berlin Wall placed in immediate vicinity to the building (Figure 2). The rationale behind the renovation works of the garden surrounding the edifice, which was to host meetings during the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU Council,[21] was to embellish the whole area in time for the country's assumption of the role. The act of temporarily painting over the

[21] Each EU country hosts Council meetings on a rotational basis. Bulgaria held this role in the period between January and June 2018.

original graffiti provoked not only a swift reaction from the German Embassy, but also a series of widely publicized comments on the quality of the works and the alleged ignorance of the anonymous painters. They were reprimanded for not recognizing the historic and symbolic significance of the graffiti covering the original piece because the failure to properly decipher and respect the codes of "authenticity" and "freedom" was understood to have led to the illegitimate refashioning of the Wall's surface. It had to be sanctioned in political and class terms, and alloyed with a language of culture:[22]

> The graffiti on the already collapsed Berlin Wall used to be a symbol of free spirit, which overpowered bigotry. The plasterers, who painted over the Berlin Wall in Sofia, probably deemed these graffiti to be ugly. This is not surprising: so much for their taste; so much for their culture […]. It is remarkable that a quarter of a century after the end of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," public culture seems to be again in the hands of the working class![23]

The surface of the Wall's segment in Sofia became a site of political and class struggle, where the proper, cultured reading of history served as a catalyst of subjectivation in the post-communist present. In Bulgaria and elsewhere, graffiti signs sprayed over the Berlin Wall have become an integral part of the structure's dynamic after-life since the citizens of Berlin felled it. The fragmented materiality of this surface, with the graffiti displayed on it, is the most visible manifestation of the political and semiotic transformation of the spatial partitioning device. We could claim that these graffiti have detached, even emancipated themselves from the Wall, yet remain tied to the "original" structure in so far as they continue interrogating and acting upon it. As one German online article sums up its shift:

> Practically overnight, it [the Berlin Wall] turned from a monument of oppression and the Cold War into a sym-

bol of freedom - or rather into a sign on the American Way of Life [English in the original] having triumphed over communism.[24]

Returning to the context of Sofia: it is precisely this consensus of a definitive triumph over communism, which was put into question by the acts of the Bulgarian workers who accidentally plastered over the graffiti on the Berlin Wall's piece exhibited in the city. The fragility of this generalized agreement seems to be temporarily exposed by the ease with which the material evidence for that "victory" can be put out of sight and literally covered up. At stake, in such seemingly minor nuisances around cultural heritage in post-communism, is the "successful" transition to Western liberal democracy and neoliberal capitalism, a passage which in the Bulgarian context often goes hand-in-hand with unequivocal anti-communism. In the case of the Wall's surface being plastered over, the centrality of this coupling is disregarded - an indifference, which sends ripples through the recording surface of post-communism. As the commentary quoted above made it starkly apparent, this disinterest provokes anxiety around a possible overturn of class power or even a reversal of the proper course of history precisely because it forces to the foreground the discarded and disavowed social interrelations of labour which have gone into the constitution of the recording surface.

The original graffiti, once considered "foreign" to the structure by the former GDR administration, which persecuted graffiti painting as an act of vandalism, still retain a degree of alterity towards the Wall's segments. However, this alterity is now appropriated, rendered operative and indispensable to their present material-semiotic arrangement as they are seen as carriers of meanings such as "freedom" and "revolt." These meanings can only be articulated as authentic when set as standing at odds with the pre-existing surface of the barrier: the struggle of "democracy" against "dictatorship," of "freedom" against "oppression," of "closed borders" against "open markets" is dramatized through the recording and, as in other cases discussed further in this article, the re-enactment of the interventions on the Wall. It can be asserted that, to some extent, the trac-

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[22] According to Boris Buden, the language of culture and cultural heritage increasingly takes over public discourse in post-communism. Cf. Buden, *Zone*, 6*of*.

[23] Pavel Antonov, "Още една четка бетон по стената, която не съборихме" ["One More Brush of Concrete upon the Wall We Didn't Fell"], *Evromegdan* (April 12, 2015). http://evromegdan. bg/1907/още-една-четка-бетон-по-стената-която-н; translation from Bulgarian mine.

[24] Reinhold Manz, "Where is the Schutzwall?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (August 11, 2009). http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/20-jahre-mauerfall/mauerstuecke-in-aller-welt-where-is-the-schutzwall-1883116.html; translation from German mine.

es on the Wall's fragmented surface become the condition for the post-1989 circulation of its segments around the world. The fragile scribbles become guarantors of the definite shift in the signification of the whole monument (from a sign of oppression to one of victory of capitalism over communism) and as such need to be continuously stabilized and subjected to re-articulation in a manner striving to accentuate their "authenticity."

The segment in Sofia had been shipped to the city in 2006, and is one amongst hundreds of fragments scattered around the world - bestowed both as official state or municipal gifts, or sold for large sums to gallery owners, private collectors and corporations post-1989. Only a few weeks after the Wall was felled, the GDR transitional government itself recognised the commercial potential of selling the segments and started trading them through the companies Limex and Lelé.[25] While these transactions mostly involved more affluent actors, smaller pieces of the Wall are today sold to tourists visiting Berlin in huge quantities each year. Currently, the monopoly over this lucrative business is held by Volker Pawlowski, who is the principal seller of 90% of the small fragments in circulation in Berlin:[26] from tiny pieces sealed in little containers attached to postcards, to chunks of concrete glued to Plexiglas stands to, finally, large elements similar to the one in Sofia which can be sprayed over according to the client's specification.[27] A request for additional information on the conditions for purchasing whole segments of the Wall from "Pawlowski Souvenirs" revealed that the going price for an original piece of the barrier is €9,000 excluding shipping and potential painting costs.[28] An employee of the company assured me of the possibility to retroactively paint it over with graffiti or a company's logo (the examples of beverage companies Red Bull and Erdinger Weissbier, which bought elements and had them repainted, were provided) and that on this production aspect the firm collaborates with a Berlin-based graffiti artist who would charge me between €500 and €1,000 for his services.

When interviewed by journalists, company owner Pawlowski himself readily admits that the Wall pieces in mass circulation have been *retroactively* coloured, challenging claims that he is "faking history" by drawing a parallel to the East Side Gallery in Berlin, also sprayed over only after 1989.[29] Furthermore, he states that no one would buy these pieces in their original state today as the old paint is flaking off.[30] The post-communist commodification and circulation of the Berlin Wall is thus premised upon the fabricated authenticity of the graffiti that have been retroactively painted over the fragmented and disintegrating surface of the Berlin Wall. The constitutive alterity of these graffiti, (occasionally transmuting into logos) covering piece after piece as an emblem of freedom, is what allows for their privatisation and distribution around the globe.

The fragments, big and small, draw a particular cartography:[31] from the Vatican Gardens to the gardens of the Taiwan Foundation of Democracy in Taipei; from the Microsoft Conference Centre in Redmond, Washington to the Hilton Anatole Hotel in Dallas, Texas; from the Imperial War Museum in London to the National Palace of Culture in Sofia. Similarly to the construction of the Great Wall of China from Kafka's short story of the same name,[32] their fragmented materiality also marks off a particular territory. If the Great Wall's never complete instalment is meant to ward off the uncivilized hordes of foreign tribes, the Berlin Wall segments' distribution around the globe is premised upon the fabricated consensus that there are no longer bipolar divisions to be held intact. From a vertically operating structure, formerly known as the "Anti-Fascist Protection Wall" meant to physically obstruct movement, its fragments have now become conjunction points on the miraculated surface of globalized post-communism. The conditions of the pieces' formation are erased from this surface: from the "felling" of the Wall and

[25] Limex, a foreign sale company in the former GDR, operating before 1989, took over transactions involving museums and public authorities, while Lelé Berlin Wall Verkaufs- und Wirtschaftswerbung GmbH was founded in West Berlin in order to facilitate the sale of Wall segments to museums and collectors, as in a widely publicised auction held in Monaco in June 1990. Cf. "Die Mauer-Dealer," *Cicero Online* (2017), https://www.cicero.de/wirtschaft/die-mauer-dealer/39861.
[26] Manz, "Where is the Schutzwall?"
[27] Pawlowski Souvenirs, "Mauerelemente," *Pawlowski Souvenirs* (January 22, 2015). http://www.pawlowski-souvenirs.de/index.php/item/3-mauerelemente.
[28] Email communication from August 15, 2018.

[29] Manz, "Where is the Schutzwall?" The East Side Gallery is an open-air gallery on the east side of the Berlin Wall, which came into being when in 1990 different artists created altogether 105 murals on various chunks from the original structure.
[30] Martin Müller, "Wie ein Mann die Mauer zu Geld macht," *Spiegel Online* (December 29, 2010). http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/geschaeftsidee-in-berlin-wie-ein-mann-die-mauer-zu-geld-macht-a-736888.html.
[31] See *The Wall Net*, where an interactive map of many Berlin Wall segments scattered around the world can be consulted. It is evident that the largest concentration of pieces around the globe can be found in Europe and the United States, followed by South East Asia. The Wall Net, "The Berlin Wall across the World," *The Wall Net* (2014). http://enmap.the-wall-net.org.
[32] Franz Kafka, "The Great Wall of China," trans. by Willa and Edwin Muir, in *The Complete Stories*, ed. by Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1971).

the missing gaze of the people who actually collapsed it, commencing the beginning to its disintegration, to the labour necessary for the crumbling of the singular concrete chunks, their subsequent covering with fresh paint and sale in souvenir shops online and on site in Berlin. The traces of acts of disobedience - the graffiti painted over the original protective barrier - have been retroactively appropriated and commodified by the industry, which emerged post-1989 and which now profits from the endless reproduction of these acts.

What comes to the fore instead, is the disjunct surface of the concrete wall, whose material-semiotic transformation (its physical disintegration, its cladding with graffiti guaranteeing "authenticity," "democracy" and "freedom") becomes the condition for the formation of a second, horizontal surface, unfolding over the globe. The description of the coming into being of this surface - the tipping over of the Wall, it's becoming-horizontal; the almost miraculous world-wide dissemination of little wall-fragments stripped of their polarizing function, becoming instead consensual or synthesising elements - is one way of describing the operative mode of the recording surface of post-communism.

If this section was devoted to the examination of the post-1989 lives of the segments of the "actual" Berlin Wall, in the next section I will consider a different kind of modality of this potent historical and political actor: that is, its capacity to attach itself to other, temporally and physically remote, structures and to vest them with its associated meanings. I will thus examine two cases when a "Berlin Wall" was built during the Bulgarian anti-government protests of 2013 and 2014,[33] and briefly point towards a separate instance when the trope of the Wall was attached to a particularly contested spatial product in the context of Sofia - namely, the Monument to the Soviet Army. I will also offer a reading of the operative mode of these fictitious, yet, nevertheless, politically effective, offshoots of the Berlin Wall.

Walls at Protest

As discussed at the beginning of this piece, the trope of the Berlin Wall is particularly persistent in the Bulgarian post-communist context: it has increasingly solidified as a signifier of totalitarian oppression and become a useful rhetorical tool for articulating a sense of indignation towards features of the present deemed to be unacceptable. More often than not, the evocation of the Wall becomes a means to "short-circuit" past and present; its figure works as a peculiar "bridging" device that permits its users to almost miraculously traverse thirty years of post-communism and attribute various faults of the present to the workings of communism's undying ghost.

The anti-government protests which shook Bulgaria in 2013 and 2014 happened in two "waves", putting forward various demands, including such against the monopoly of private electricity distribution companies, high-level governmental corruption, as well as the concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few with known ties to officials in power. Two governments handed in their resignation in this tumultuous period, which was marked by daily marches and a series of student occupations of university buildings. A lot has already been written on this subject,[34] which is why I will here refrain from going in much detail on the socio-political conditions during the protests, the difference between their two waves or their discursive links to the overarching ideological framework of the transition period. I will instead look at two instances when the vocabulary of the protest made use of the trope of the Berlin Wall, and seek to offer a reading of its strategic utilization *vis-á-vis* the operative mode of post-communist consensus-building.

Both of these "Berlin Walls" were built during the second wave of the anti-government protests, which contested the legitimacy of the Plamen Oresharski coalition government. Formed in June 2013, after pre-term elections, this government was made up of the Bulgarian Socialist Party and the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (typically seen to represent the interests of the Bulgarian Turkish

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[33] While the protests lasted for over a year, from February 2013 to August 2014, the largest concentration of flash mobs, happenings, interventions in public space and other creative forms of protest was in the first half of this period - that is, until the turn of 2013. The examples I focus on here are all derived from this particularly prolific period as they explicitly utilized the trope of the Berlin Wall.

[34] See Medarov, Nikolova and Tsoneva, *Политика без политика* [*Politics without Politics*]; Valentina Gueorguieva, *Множества на несъгласните: Антропология на протестните движения в България (2009-2013)* [*Multitudes of Discontent: Anthropology of Protest Movements in Bulgaria (2009-2013)*] (Sofia: Sofia University Press, 2014); Ivaylo Dinev, "Махалото на масовия протест. Зимата на 2013" ["The Pendulum of the Mass Protest. The Winter of 2013]," *Bulgarian Ethnology*, No. 1 (2016), 51-70; Julia Rone, "Left in Translation. The Curious Absence of Austerity Frames in the 2013 Bulgarian Protests," in *Global Diffusion of Protest: Riding the Protest Wave in the Neoliberal Crisis*, ed. by Donatella della Porta (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017); Veronika Stoyanova, *Ideology and Social Protests in Eastern Europe: Beyond the Transition's Liberal Consensus* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

and Roma minorities), and supported by the far-right party ATAKA. The summer of 2013 saw daily marches, ignited after a governmental appointment considered to be particularly brazen: that of media mogul Delyan Peevski as Head of the State Agency for National Security. The Bulgarian abbreviation of this institution, ДАНС, is homonymous with the English word "dance," which led protesters to adopt the slogan "#ДАНСwithMe." Photographic documentation of the daily protests, especially those taking place in the capital Sofia, circulated on social media and sympathetic media outlets, and was frequently accompanied by a hashtag stating the consecutive day of the protest.

The protesters designated the dates not only in relation to the usual Gregorian calendar, but also in relation to the first day of the protests, June 14, 2013. This collective "counting" quickly established a calendar of sorts through which the movement kept its own time and which furthermore came to incorporate the anniversaries of significant historical events. The latter acted as catalysers for the mobilization of collective action around particular dates; they provided narrative and visual resources for the protesters chosen not at random but arguably for their rhetorical potential for the present. For example, on July 14, 2013, or Day 31 of the protest, a small group performed a flash mob, re-enacting the painting by Eugene Delacroix "Liberty Leading the People" on the occasion of France's National Day. In the early hours of August 21, or Day 69 of #ДАНСwithMe, the sculpted figures from a high relief at the base of the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia were painted over in pink, accompanied with the caption "Bulgaria apologizes" written in Czech. This was a clear reference to the Warsaw Pact invasion of Prague, which happened on the same date in 1968. These individual, yet highly publicized actions, can be understood as devices aiding the protest movement to form a collective subject, not only by drawing from the political potential of charged historical events, but also by appropriating this potential for a present political context. Thus, while the belated "apology" for the Prague invasion betrayed an attempt to adopt a moral high ground in relation to the elites in power (seen as direct successors to the old Bulgarian Communist Party), the flash mob on July 14, 2013 was a clear curtsy to the French Ambassador who at the time spoke out in support of the protest.

In a similarly motivated gesture drawing from a liberal Eurocentric imaginary, protesters[35] built a "Berlin Wall" made out of cardboard in front of the German Embassy in Sofia only two days later - on July 16, 2013 (Figure 1). The carefully stapled cardboard boxes, inscribed with slogans such as "Resignation" and "Mafia," were then toppled down with cries of "Danke schön!" ("thank you" in German). Putting aside an assessment of creative acts that more often than not seek inspiration from conveniently removed historical events, it is still worthwhile to examine this flash mob, as well as the Delacroix re-enactment, as suitable for providing us with a notion of the ways in which the protest movement sought to gain symbolic legitimacy in these instances. In both cases, the addressees were official representatives of foreign, Western European countries, and, on both occasions, the protesters were at pains to find suitable forms for a "cultured" expression of their dissent.

In *Zone of Transition* Buden writes eloquently of the position of historical belatedness Eastern European populations were assigned with during the so-called "transition period" and the instrumentality of an infantilizing language for stabilizing the *status quo*.[36] He scrutinizes Habermas' notion of a "catching-up revolution,"[37] whose premise can be summarised as follows: "communism has cut off Eastern societies from normal historical development (which was possible in the West) and now, after the fall of this totalitarian obstacle, these societies are in the condition of historical belatedness."[38] Buden hence argues that the figure of the child has become a central metaphor for Eastern European societies caught in perpetual attempts to "catch up" with their Western counterparts. An "ideal subject of a democratic restart,"[39] the child is immature - meaning it needs constant guidance, education and tutelage - and innocent - so that it bears no responsibility either for crimes of the past, or those

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[35] At the time of this flash mob one of the most visible anti-government actors in the face of the Protest Network (comprising of a number of journalists, bloggers, university professors, workers in the NGO sector and others, many of whom took up political careers in the years that followed) was not yet formally founded. The act in front of the Embassy was publicised on social media and reported on in mainstream media as a collective one and attributed to the protest movement as a whole.

[36] Buden, *Zone*, 34*ff*.

[37] Ibid., 52*ff*.

[38] Neda Genova, "'A Better Past Is Still Possible:' Interview with Boris Buden," *LeftEast* (July 4, 2018). http://www.criticatac.ro/lefteast/a-better-past-is-still-possible-interview-with-boris-buden.

[39] Buden, *Zone*, 35.

of the present. This discourse naturalizes the hegemonic logic inherent to the child-parent relation, but also the idea that transition in post-communism can take only one conceivable direction: that of liberal democracy under capitalism.

As anti-colonial scholars, such as Frantz Fanon, have pointed out,[40] the internalization of a position of inferiority by subjugated populations has always been instrumental to maintaining the hierarchical relation between colonizers and colonized peoples. Although he ends *The Wretched of the Earth* with a call to "decide to not imitate Europe,"[41] the rhetorical mode of some of the particularly visible expressions of dissent during the Bulgarian anti-government protests (which took place exactly fifty years after the publication of Fanon's book) works in precisely the opposite way: by accepting and dramatizing a child-like position of inferiority towards official representatives of Western Europe. The approval of these delegates vested in authority is what is imagined by some of the protest's more vocal spokespersons as being capable of lending legitimacy to the popular revolt in Bulgaria. The point of critique I am offering here is not meant to cast doubt on the "success" of these rhetoric strategies, much less to reprimand protesters for a lack of proper historical or political consciousness: to do so would arguably mean echoing a patronizing attitude that Buden has called into question in his work. What I am, however, doing is taking seriously their enunciations and, rather than treating them as benign expressions of civil society at work, scrutinize their political efficacy and implication within regimes that can be described as hegemonic.

It can be argued that the adoption of an unequivocally pro-European rhetoric in moments of political and social rupture in post-1989 Bulgaria comes to work as a "smoothening" force on the recording surface of post-communism. It serves to remove the possibility of engaging with the conditions for issues such as economic or social inequality, replacing this engagement with a lamentation of the insufficiently "European" character of the present - even when it is the effects of an endless catching up with this same "European" liberal democracy that often make themselves felt on this terrain.

Finally, the perpetuation of a consensus that it is the latter that has to be "transitioned" to in order to at last cope with the injustices of the present day, is predicated upon an epistemological, political and historical negation. It produces a homogenous understanding of "Europe", based on a double erasure: it presents Bulgaria's own socialist past as incompatible with a notion of Europe, but also negates the importance of left-wing and communist ideas, projects and movements for the historical development of that very same Western Europe that Bulgaria is attempting to "catch up" with.

To come back to one intriguing detail of the flash mob enacted in front of the German Embassy in Sofia, July 2013: the "Berlin Wall" made out of cardboard was first "built" to then be felled in an almost ritualistic manner. The necessity to visually and materially build that spatial object - which more than any other has come to function as shorthand for the undying ghost of communism - resonates with Buden's pronouncement of a certain "miracle" of post-communism:

> ... the miracle that communism has actually survived in the guise of anti-communism, as a target of anti-communism. [...] Today, the communist past is blamed for everything. This is why the system needs communism as its enemy, because what is at stake is the crisis of legitimation of the whole post-communist historical project.[42]

Thus, in order to "purge" communism's ghost, it first needs to be "summoned"; in order for the "Wall" to be collapsed, it first needs to be constructed. Yet, its destruction cannot be executed once and for all: this event needs to be continuously revisited. The Wall comes to be "attached" to other sites, which are then speculatively associated with it - for instance, to the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia, which had been previously dubbed by the anti-monument group Demontirane (which means "Dismantling") as "Our Berlin Wall."[43]

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[40] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 2008).
[41] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 313.

[42] Genova, "A Better Past Is Still Possible."
[43] For more on Demontirane, see: Various, "Гражданска инициатива за демонтиране на Паметника на Съветската армия" ["Citizen's Initiative for the Dismantling of the Monument to the Soviet Army"], a Facebook group in *Facebook* (December 1, 2012), https://www.facebook.com/groups/demontirane. The constituent assembly of the group was held on November 9, 2011 on the steps of the Monument of the Soviet Army in Sofia.

Figure 3. The fence three days after its metal bars were exchanged for panels.
Courtesy: Vassil Garnizov.

In a similar process of simultaneous material heterogenization and discursive solidification, the crowd-control fence installed in front of Sofia's Parliament building during the abovementioned anti-government protests also underwent a peculiar material-semiotic transformation. After the fences made up of vertical metal bars were replaced by a smooth, continuous surface on November 12, 2013, passers-by and protesters quickly started attaching to it various materials in an attempt to articulate it as a "wall." Brick-patterned A4 sheets of paper, a poster reading "Berlin 1961 - 1989 / Sofia 2013 - ?" (Figure 3) and pieces of cardboard set on fire all contributed to the stabilization - and simultaneous "destruction" - of yet another reincarnation of the Berlin Wall in Bulgaria.

What I find particularly interesting in this case is the interplay between the utilisation of fragile materials - paper, cardboard, easily erasable paint - in order to establish a stable discursive link between the temporally and spatially delimited object that is the crowd-control fence in Sofia, and a whole set of politically charged references, most significantly pointing to the period of "totalitarian" communism. This link needs to be continuously revisited and dramatized through a rhythmic, daily return to the fence/wall's surface, which is

constantly modified through heterogeneous additions. Only in this way can the claim for "sameness" be stabilized and the utterance "our fence is a (Berlin) Wall" literally made to *make* sense. Hence, processes of semiotic homogenization and stabilization should not be seen as standing at odds with an alterity or heterogeneity in material, visual or even temporal sense; indeed, the latter should rather, in this case, be understood as the former's precondition. To achieve fixity of meaning, to articulate rigidity, to evoke a wall's pro-hibiting function, it first needs to be constructed using material and visual means that can hardly be described as solid or stable. In order for the Wall to fall again, it first needs to be re-built.

Walls for Europe

In light of the insistent presence of the trope of the Berlin Wall in post-communist Bulgaria, it should come as no surprise that it became among the centrepieces of the opening ceremony to perhaps one of the most significant public events in the country in the year 2019: namely, the assumption by the city of Plovdiv of the title "European Capital of Culture." The kick-off of the official program on January 12th included both the opening of a private travelling exhibition as well as a 3D video-mapping spectacle on the façade of the Municipality building. The exhibition featured 25 original fragments from the Berlin Wall and the video-mapping also took up this theme. It animated visual elements that were extracted from the graffiti painted on the Berlin Wall pieces on display. As the town's mayor pointed out in his opening address, the choice of the trope of the Berlin Wall for the European Capital of Culture celebrations was not arbitrary but was rather dictated by the wish to assert Plovdiv as "the first city to commemorate thirty years since the Fall of the Berlin Wall."[44]

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[44] Plovdiv Municipality, "Откриване на изложба *Изкуство на свободата от Берлинската стена*" [Exhibition Opening *Art of Freedom at the Berlin Wall*"], *Facebook* (December 1, 2019), https://www.facebook.com/pg/%D0%9E%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B8%D0%B-D%D0%B0-%D0%9F%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%B2-Plovdiv-Munici-pality-298150390280406/photos/?tab=album&album_id=2002981083130653&__tn__=-UC-R.

Figure 4. *Art Liberte: From the Berlin Wall to Street Art in Plovdiv*, 2019, video recording accessible from: *Vimeo*, https://vimeo.com/315676059, screenshot (00:55). Video courtesy of Plovdiv 2019 Foundation.

The staging of an "overlap" of the visual elements from the Berlin Wall fragments abstracted from their physical surfaces and then projected onto the façade of the Plovdiv Municipality, could be read as evidence that "Europe" and "Bulgaria" have come to coincide and occupy the same space at last. It furthermore appears to suggest that the temporal gap of a "victory of capitalism over communism," which allegedly happened "overnight" in Western Europe but took some thirty years to be completed in the periphery, has finally been abridged.

However, if we take the political implications of this visual strategy, as well as its timing, seriously, we can use it as an occasion to examine more closely to what extent a celebration of the disintegration of borders can be upheld in contemporary Bulgaria and Europe as a whole. We could furthermore polemically ask to what extent does a celebration of the integrity (ideological, as well as geographical) of Europe, premised upon the trope of the Berlin Wall, obfuscate the political effects of walls and barriers that continue to operate across the continent some thirty years after the collapse of the Wall?

Material and immaterial barriers have been continuously built in the past thirty years; these are the internal and external divisions, put in place to govern the populations of Bulgaria and the European Union

as a whole but also of migrants seeking to find access to these territories. As a recent report by the Transnational Institute has shown, the EU has built more than 1,000 kilometres of "protective barriers" along its borders since 1989, in addition to a series of maritime and virtual walls.[45] We could claim that the solidification of these differently constituted walls, together with Europe's increasingly restrictive policies towards migrants in general, are the main reason for the colossal loss of life on the borders, shores and in detention centres on the continent since the beginning of the 1990s.[46] While Bulgarian governmental officials easily succumbed to pressure from the EU and built a 166 kilometre long wall along the border with Turkey back in 2013 - that same year when the country was shaken by anti-government protests - many Bulgarian municipalities such as Vidin, Kyustendil and Kazanlak have been installing barriers for years to literally segregate the Roma population from the rest of the towns. As Tatiana Vaksberg and Rositsa Kratunkova have both shown,[47] walls keep being built under the pretext of protection or sheltering whole neighbourhoods, with the actual effect of impeding access to social and educational services for residents of these areas.

These acts of wall-building are incommensurable with the playful transformation of a crowd-control fence into a wall or the collapsing of a "Berlin Wall" made out of cardboard. My intention when bringing up the continuous construction of internal barriers and border walls across Europe and Bulgaria is not to create a simplistic opposition between "fictitious" and "actual" walls and to somehow discard the former as less politically potent.[48] As shown above, many of the contexts in which such fictitious walls are built are oppositional

[45] Ainhoa Ruiz Benedicto and Pere Brunet, *Building Walls: Fear and Securitization in the European Union* (Barcelona: Centre Delàs d'Estudis per la Pau, September 2018). https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/building_walls_-_full_report_-_english.pdf.
[46] See UNITED, "List of 34,361 Documented Deaths of Refugees and Migrants Due to the Restrictive Policies of 'Fortress Europe,'" *United Against Racism* (June 19, 2018). https://uploads.guim.co.uk/2018/06/19/TheList.pdf.
[47] Rositsa Kratunkova, "My City Is Not Yours, Let Me Be (Build) On My Own. Or, How Politics Created the Ghetto," *dVERSIA* (July 4, 2018), http://dversia.net/3448/my-city-is-not-yours-let-me-be-build-on-my-own-or-how-politics-molded-the-ghetto; Tatiana Vaksberg, "От другата страна на стената" ["On the Other Side of the Wall"], *Deutsche Welle* (August 4, 2015). https://www.dw.com/bg/от-другата-страна-на-стената/a-18366477.
[48] I have instead engaged with the rhetorical modes and narrative strategies that are utilized to link, mix and separate "real" and "fabricated" walls at the recording surface of post-communism. The paths of enunciation of the distinct successors of the Berlin Wall thus appear to be interwoven and engaged in complex processes of mutual conditioning and disavowal.

to a *status quo* seen as oppressive; the building of "Berlin Walls" is, in these situations, meant to highlight the unjust character of the present and constitute the agents engaged in these practices of erecting and demolishing it in explicit opposition to this present. Nevertheless, I believe it is necessary to attempt to bring to the fore the spatial and social effects of those other walls which do not lend themselves as smoothly to a rhetorical appropriation and mobilization because they build the unwanted, disavowed ground of the post-communist regime. These two processes follow distinctly opposing, yet interrelated and co-constitutive, political logics. While the "tearing down" of the Berlin Wall builds the ideological foundation of a united Europe with its central tenet of freedom of movement, the "unification" of this space is premised upon the intensification of border operations that secure its outer limits and are driven by a racialized, exclusionary logic. Perhaps a sustained attention to the political productivity of these latter walls can discontinue what Buden has called an "education to immaturity."[49] Finally, it is not only immaturity but also innocence that has to be rejected if the post-communist transition is to be brought to an end. As Donna Haraway has pointed out, by rejecting innocence, one can also shed "the corollary insistence on victimhood,"[50] which is a precondition for an engagement with and opposition to both past and present injustices.

In this article, I examined different cases in which the trope of the Berlin Wall was actualized and politically utilized in present day Bulgaria. Some of these events involved fragments of the historical object itself, as was the case with the inadvertent modification of one of its chunks during renovation works executed in Sofia in 2015, but also with the centring of celebrations for the European Capital of Culture in 2019 around a travelling exhibition comprising of a number of large-scale elements of the Berlin Wall. I also engaged with acts of disobedience from protesters who actively drew on this trope to construe fictive, contemporary versions of it. Lastly, I pointed towards the continuous erection of internal and external divisions in both Europe and Bulgaria, in an attempt to direct the attention to forms of wall-building that not only still persist after

1989, but have in fact intensified after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. If the recording surface of post-communism operates through the continuous smoothening and obfuscation of the socio-material, productive forces that have gone into its constitution, then the task I tried to undertake here is to show the political productivity of the material-semiotic transformations of one of the central figures of the so-called transition period.

[49] Buden, *Zone*, 40.
[50] Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *The Haraway Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 16.

Ana Blazheva |

Macedonian Affective Rhizome: Fear and Shame in the Case of the Macedonian "Name Issue"

Bionote: Ana Blazheva, Ph.D., is a Program Coordinator, Researcher/Assistant Professor at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, Skopje. She holds a BA in Psychology, an MA in Sociology and Gender Studies and a PhD in Cultural Studies. She is also a certified Gestalt psychotherapist working in private practice. She teaches Qualitative Research Methodology and elective courses: Gender Policy and Emotions and Politics. Her research experience is mostly in qualitative research in the field of policy studies, gender, media, social inclusion, education, youth, etc. She has published research reports, policy research analysis, academic papers, as well as manuals. Her interest is in the interdisciplinary approach to emotions and politics.

Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, Skopje
ana.blazheva@isshs.edu.mk

Abstract: The text examines two core emotions - fear and shame - and how they shape the affective and social dynamic in relation to the Macedonian "name issue." Both fear and shame are analyzed through phenomenological approach and in relation to other affects and as core affects that also enable social polarization. Polarization is explained through two Gestalt concepts: polarities and fixed gestalts that serve to analyze the phenomenon that results in exclusionary and divisionary types of thinking and behavior into two blocs - "us" vs "them." The intersubjectivity is taken to be one of the core conditions of the social field that shape its dynamic as a crucial argument towards the need for overcoming polarized and dichotomized logic of understanding social and political polarization. The analysis shows that fear and shame create a rhizomatic pattern that connects different affects binding together and creating complex structures of behavioral responses and intersubjective space. Enacted through discourse, those affects shape the Macedonian social body as wounded by fear, anxiety, shame, hate, anger and trauma, all of which constitute experience of parlous precarity. Those experiences could not be reduced to binary positions, but they create multiplicity.

Keywords: affects, intersubjectivity, shame, fear, polarization

The text examines the intersubjective and interaffective phenomenology of fear and shame and how they shape the affective and social dynamic in Macedonian society in relation to the Macedonian "name issue" after the Prespa Agreement.[1]

The "name issue" refers to the almost three-decade long dispute between Macedonia and Greece over the name of the state and the process of negotiations,[2] finalized with the Prespa Agreement in July 2018. The agreed name, "Republic of North Macedonia," fell under a principle of *erga omnes* (a change of the constitutional name and its use both internally and externally), something that Greece insisted upon during the negotiation process. The Macedonian side got the guarantees regarding the identity aspect of the problem by acknowledgment of the Macedonian language and the right to use the adjective "Macedonian," with the differentiation that for both nations and cultures it has distinct meaning. In exchange, North Macedonia was to gain support from Greece in the process of integration to NATO and EU.

The international community greeted the agreement and promised to open the EU/NATO accession for the country. However, Macedonian society was, and still is, sharply divided as the majority of citizens were against any change of the country's name.[3]

[1] Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, "Final Agreement for the Settlement on the Name Issue." *Government of the Republic of North Macedonia* (June 27, 2018). http://vlada.mk/node/15057?ln=en-gb.

[2] See the timeline and analysis of the negotiations around the Macedonian "name issue" in Katerina Kolozova et al., *"Who Owns Alexander the Great?" A Question Upon Which EU Enlargement Relies* (Skopje: Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje, 2014). http://www.isshs.edu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Who-owns-Alexander-the-Great-A-Question-Upon-Which-EU-Enlargement-Relies.pdf.

[3] *The Name Dispute 2018: Public Views in Macedonia* (Skopje: Macedonian Center for International Cooperation and Institute for Democracy, May 2018). http://www.mcms.mk/images/docs/2018/the-name-dispute-2018.pdf; Center for Insights in Survey Research, "Macedonia: National Public Opinion Poll, June 28 - July 15, 2018," (Washington, DC: International Republican Institute). https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/iri_macedonia_july_2018_poll_public_final.pdf; "Анкета: Мнозинството граѓани се против каква и да е промена на името" ["Survey: Majority of

The goal of this article is to analyze how fear and shame shape the psychosocial dynamic around the "name issue." The main argument is that there is a complex intersubjective and interaffective dynamic shaping the social relations that could not be explained through mere polarization of only two opposing positions. The text will show that a more nuanced understanding of the psychodynamics of affects is an important perspective for a discursive and political analysis of the social polarization phenomena.

The text begins with a short introduction to Gestalt perspective of polarization. This perspective enables understanding of the psychological mechanism of functioning of polarization. Further, the concepts of intersubjectivity and interaffectivity are introduced as concepts that could enable more nuanced understanding of the complexity of polarization by opening the space for thinking outside the polarized and binary logic. The central part of the text consists of a phenomenological analysis of two core affects - fear and shame and their expression through discourse related to the name issue after the Prespa Agreement. At the end, there is a short summary and conclusion of the arguments that introduces multiplicity instead of polarization as a perspective towards the psychosocial dynamic of Macedonian society regarding the "name issue."

Two Gestalt concepts are used to explain polarization. The first one is the concept of polarities, which is interpreted as opposing views, behaviors and forces or "parts of the self" that are not integrated, not taken and/or recognized to be part of the whole. Polarities generate tension and therefore, energy that could be invested into different directions. If energy built through tension gets fixated into one possibility, it could operate as what is called a fixed Gestalt. Fixed Gestalts are functioning as rigid perceptions which cause misconceptions and errors in judgment. Fixed Gestalts are mostly the result of an unresolved conflict or experience such as trauma. Those "frozen figures" are a ramification of the lack of support (physical, psychological, social, cognitive, etc.) due to the strong embodied imprint that shapes the overall experience as undone, but yet fixed. Fixation operates through repetition and a continuous urge to resolve, to complete and to untangle the experience. However, although resolution is needed and pursued, it is paradoxically locked

into patterns that prevent movement of awareness in the field or prevent recognition of the background, the context from which the figure emerges as well as the position of the other figures in the field. The result is being stuck in a repetitive pattern of thoughts, feelings, behavior related to the unresolved experience. This means that affective energy bound to the unresolved experience is perpetually invested into the same or similar figures. Through repetition, the fixation creates disturbances into the wider field, since other elements into the field are constantly changing. This mechanism explains the cognitive dissonance that is characteristic to polarization. Polarization blocks more complex and integrative awareness into the overall situation. It prevents taking into account the position of the other as well as empathy. This results into exclusionary and divisionary types of thinking and behavior. In terms of social and/or political polarization, it fixes the division into two blocs - "us" vs "them." This division is made possible because of the strong identification that is also characteristic of polarization. Identification with a certain group serves as a pinpoint of polarization. The main mechanism used when polarities function as fixed Gestalts is projection. What is unrecognized and unaccepted within oneself becomes projected into "them" and therefore strengthens the division and potential for a destructive conflict.[4] War could be explained as the most extreme example of polarization that generates extreme energy into destruction. Another example from the psychological domain is psychosis, where splitting is caused due to the unresolved conflict of opposing mental forces.

I will expand the analysis by introducing intersubjectivity and interaffectivity, defined through the concepts of embodiment and enactment as crucial argument towards the need for overcoming polarized and dichotomized logic of understanding social and political polarization. The enacted approach refers to the complex exchange of the organism with the environment. The co-constitution of organism and environment also entails "dynamic constitution of meaning in experience" and provides ways for insight into diversity of variations in embodied and discursive intersubjective experiences.[5] Through this dynamic, both the organism and the environment

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Citizens Are Against Any Change of the Name"], *Telma TV* (May 2, 2018). https://telma.com.mk/anketa-mnozinstvoto-gragani-se-protiv-kakva-i-da-e-promena-na-imeto.

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[4] Samuel Handlin, "The Logic of Polarizing Populism: State Crises and Polarization in South America," *American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 62, Issue 1 (2018), 75-91.
[5] Christoph Durt, Thomas Fuchs and Christian Tewes, *Embodiment, Enaction, and Culture: Investigating the Constitution of the Shared World (*Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press and

are constantly changing and also mutually shaping each other. This constitutes our shared world in which we participate in "collective sense-making processes manifested in dynamic forms of intercorporeality, collective body memory, artifacts etc."[6]

In terms of social and power relations, this means that there is no power or relation that is predetermined and unchangeable. In terms of polarization, it explains why the investment into the fixed divisions is impossible to be sustained and that polarization is always already part of the process of continuous change, which also means other possibilities and options, governed not just by exclusionary binary logic. Moreover, it unlocks the myriad of possibilities for both social and political directions and movements.

The embodied aspect refers to all the cognitive, mental and psychological processes that are reflected, manifested, felt and lived through the body/bodies and its/their exchange with the environment. The embodied approach offers recognition to our bodies as primary sources of our selfhood as well as interrelatedness. As an origin of selfhood, it is also our boundary through which we connect to and exchange with the environment. In terms of polarization, this offers perspective to look at the effects of polarization on the whole society, not just the separate parts of the poles. Intersubjectivity could explain even more the interconnectedness of the social actors in an inseparable relation in the shared field.[7] Intersubjectivity defines the space between, it consists of our interaction, gestures, movements, the words spoken, any type of behavior and affective reaction. Both the world and the subjects are shaped through it. Once an act upon the world is given, it becomes part of intersubjectivity, the shared field. It is the exchange, the "third" in the dialogue, it is what is being created, expressed, given, written, what is out there as an imprint of our being in a certain moment and in certain constellations. The whole intersubjective space is defined not by individual enactment but through complex interaction of enactments and other processes in the field. Interaffectivity is an aspect of intersubjective space that refers to the shred affective field and the dynamic shaped through affects. Therefore, to understand the social

dynamic there is a need to understand the affective processes that are shaping the interaffective field. In such a shared world, in which we are incorporeally and interaffectivelly interrelated, there is more complexity than what a polarized picture can tell and explain.

Therefore, further I will elaborate different responses to two core affects - fear and shame - to present the complexity of the social field that cannot be reduced to two opposing social or political positions.

Fear is an assemblage of different and simultaneously embodied movements. Fear organizes the experience by engaging all the embodied resources for survival or being safe. Fear's function is to ensure our survival through mobilization of the entire capacity of the body when faced with a threat, real or perceived. The interaffective and intersubjective aspect of fear is related to the experience of threat. Whenever something or someone is perceived as a threat, it will mobilize fear.

The mobilization of the physical body includes physiological, metabolic, endocrinal and neurological changes. The embodied and emerging movements are felt with different intensity as being afraid, scared, worried, as shock, panic, terror, etc. The feeling is enacted through behavior manifestation labeled as fight or flight and/or freeze. Fear either enables and empowers or disables us to act. It could clear our cognitive processes and make us super focused and effective in both fight and flight or to tighten the consciousness, desensitize and demobilize us as part of the overall (sometimes traumatic) experience of fear.

If we approach the phenomenon of fear from the different points of its expression or behavioral response - fight, flight or freeze - we enter into the complex rhizome of affective states. Different behavioral responses employ a different impulse into the interaffective and intersubjective space that further shapes the social dynamic. Crossley argues for the primacy of the affective constitution of intersubjective relations. Emotions are primarily pre-reflective and they define our way of relating. Therefore, there is interaffectivity shaped by our interactions that at the same time is shaping them. The author takes Merleau-Ponty's view on emotions as a situated corporeal attitude, a way of being in relation to the world expressed

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Cambridge, 2017).
[6] Durt et al., *Embodiment*, 1.
[7] Nick Crossley, *Intersubjectivity: The Fabric of Social Becoming* (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 37.

in our perceptions, our speech, thoughts, our motor actions, gestures, and in our ways of understanding and interpreting.[8]

If the fight mode of the behavioral response gets activated, it is usually accompanied by aggression. Ahmed speaks about fear in terms of being the background for aggression, rage towards "the other" - the one that we experience as a threat.[9]

The experience of being threatened and the rage towards "the other" are among the main characteristics of polarization. The intersubjective aspect of the aggression is that we tend to perceive others as either "us" or "them". "Them" are the enemy. Both fear and the accompanying aggression also facilitate the distance between. Therefore, it empowers the polarization. According to Ahmed, the fear fixes us towards the stereotype, and the stereotype, instead of certainty, brings uncertainty.[10] The unconscious mobilization could not ensure overcoming of the fear but, to the contrary, the mental, cognitive and behavioral response could perpetuate the feeling of uncertainty, of not being safe or feeling threatened.

The "name issue," as well as the recent change of the name, for a large part of the population was always discursively and symbolically related to and therefore experienced as an attack against identity, Macedonian ethnic and/or national identity. The name dispute is, at its core, an issue of recognition and could therefore be analyzed by following Jessica Benjamin's psychoanalytic elaboration of the desire for recognition.[11] Benjamin takes on from Hegel's desire for recognition and Freud's insight that the child renounces parts of his psyche to keep the mother's or father's love. Benjamin's argument is focused on recognizing the other, instead of merely seeking recognition for the self, as was with Freud. Both the need and desire for recognition, seeking recognition for self, as well as recognizing the other, are important aspects in terms of polarization. Hence, the threat against the identity regarding the "name issue" is also related to the experience of "not being recognized." The experience of not being recognized is also phenomenologically related to that of being rejected. As such, it poses a specific kind of vulnerability defined also by an asymmetrical power relation. The short history of the Macedonian national state has a complex aspect regarding recognition of different national identity markers (name, history, church).[12] I will not go into further explanation, problematization, or justification of national identity and its social construction. My position is that however constructed, this aspect of social identity is lived and felt through both personal and social, embodied and enacted lives. It is part of the Macedonian affective rhizome and therefore affects the overall social dynamic.

The difference in fear responses is defined by the symbolic power that is woven into the very fabric of intersubjectivity and interaffectivity.[13] The meaning that was given, prescribed, performed, exchanged, created to the affective experiences further defines the power relations. Thus, the intersubjective fabric, the space that we create and share is also a "site of sharing and agreement, and of competition and contestation" at once.[14] Therefore different positions in the opposite poles would also be defined by ideology, values, believes, etc.

When the name change was experienced as fear for the ethnic identity, it was mostly expressed as resistance towards the change of the name. The fight response was mostly channeled through public rage during the protests for the refusal of the Agreement and the boycott of the referendum organized against the acceptance of the Agreement as a condition for EU and NATO accession. This response enables expression of fear and its transformation into other affective qualities, such as anger and aggression. The transformation is easily accessible through collective voices and performances. Through transformation into anger, fear becomes experienced as a powerful emotion. However, although this transformation is a powerful experience, it could get frustrating when the need for recognition and acceptance is not met.

The goal of "Bojkotiram" ("I Boycott"), the initiative for boycotting the referendum, as it is published on their webpage, was "[t]o pre-

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[8] Crossley, *Intersubjectivity*, 45.

[9] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 63.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Jessica Benjamin, *Beyond Doer and Done To: Recognition Theory, Intersubjectivity and the Third* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

[12] Mircela Dzuvalekovska Casule (Ed.), *The Name Issue Revisited: An Anthology of Academic Articles* (Skopje: Macedonian Information Centre, 2013).

[13] Crossley, *Intersubjectivity*, 44.

[14] Ibid., 23.

vent the generational sin and to preserve Macedonia for future generations. #BOJKOTIRAM [#IBOYCOTT] is a mass citizen rebellion against the legitimization of historical treason through illegal power grab and referendum fraud."[15]

These introductory lines are already full of affective discourse with predominantly angry notes. Phrases such as "generational sin" speak of the historical dimension projected into the feeling and the weight it has over the "national body." It is articulated as an appeal for an emergency. Emergency is one of the phenomenological aspects of experiencing fear. The size and the emergency of the situation here are related to the historical dimension and urgency. Along these lines is the historical assignment to "preserve Macedonia" for "future generations."

The call for "rebellion" is a call for transformation of the emergent fear and anger into a fight response. The experience of injustice as a dimension of the historical narrative also serves the purpose of transforming fear into anger. The call for "mass rebellion" is a call for uniting, joining forces as the necessary support to overcome the feeling of fear. Injustice is the generator of fight response and joint fight gives sense of hope and overcoming of fear, as it is clearly stated in the following lines:

> Discovering lies and hostile propaganda against the Macedonian people and the Macedonian state for discouraging, demoralizing and disturbing dignity. Encouraging hope and overcoming fears.[16]

The other camp, the referendum campaign for change of the name "Go Out FOR European Macedonia," also operated with an affective discourse of fear but in another mode:[17]

> This is a historic opportunity. The responsibility lies within each of us. Each of us has to make a decision. Will we go forward or stay behind? Future or uncertainty, the choice is yours. Each of us has to go out and

choose. This is not the time to hide. Hiding is irresponsible. If you have to go out and vote at least once – not is the time/it is now.[18]

The historical dimension of the choice is also present, but the threat is articulated through the discourse of uncertainty, related to Macedonia's EU integration. Therefore, another affective assemblage of fear could be detected. It is not related to the immediate threat. It is based on a more deterritorialized fear we experience as anxiety. In anxiety there is an active fear that is felt, while the threat is vague and cannot be recognized, the object of fear is missing. It is more like a rhizome of objects or possibilities that create the dynamic of overwhelming fear. The constant disorganized, almost random and chaotic movement of anxiety and/or being overwhelmed, is actually the paradoxical movement of stuckness. Circular movement through which the energy is constantly drained but there is no change in the position or an end to uneasiness, the fear, the dread.

The energy that is released as anxiety without its object, is channeled into obsessive repetition of acts. The paranoid aspect of fear can be initiated when the object of fear is lost because fear has a tendency to spread and take up more space - everything becomes scary.[19] In the concrete Macedonian context, it is related to the more vague fear for "the future," articulated through discourses of further EU isolation, possible regional ethnic conflicts, and other uncertainties. The future of EU integration was offered as a vision of hope and prosperity. But the fear that brings the uncertainty is mitigated with a vision of a future equally uncertain. Further, the focus of personal responsibility was used as motivation for voting, as opposed to the collective rebellion in the first discourse. Here, two different strategies are using the same affect with different responses. One that uses the vulnerability of the individual and the other that uses the power of the collective and its potential for transformation of the affect.

The other possible response of fear is the flight mode. A flight is movement that mobilizes the body to escape, to find a safe place and protect itself from the threat. It is usually accompanied with the cognitive appraisal that the threat is bigger than we can handle or confront. We feel vulnerable in the face of the perceived danger.

[15] Web page of the campaign for boycott of the constitutional changes, available at https://bojkotiram.mk/en.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Web page of the campaign for voting "Yes" on the referendum for change of the constitutional name, available at http://izlezi.mk.

[18] Ibid.
[19] Ahmed, *The Cultural*, 69.

For Ahmed, fear is related to vulnerability since the world/other are always a possible threat and the embodied self is at risk of being wounded.[20]

And here, shame joins fear as a core emotion regarding the reaction to the "name issue." Shame, in its definition, is an affect shaped by the experience of not being accepted, a feeling of being rejected, obsolete, not-good-enough and/or dangerous to exist. Shame appears as a reaction to the experience of the unworthiness of the self. Therefore, the experience of shame is built in our very vulnerability in the face of rejection. Shame is considered to be a self-conscious affect but not in the sense that it always incorporates reflection as a conscious evaluation; as any emotion, it is also pre-reflective. The intersubjectivity of shame is therefore always already there as shame is always about the other, its perception and its acceptance. The affective response towards the other, in any situation, is pre-reflective and derives from the interaffective and intersubjective fields, as well as the individual background, personal histories and previous experiences.

The position of shame in the collective Macedonian body as a whole could be easily detected. In the short history of Macedonia's independence since 1991, both in the Balkan context as well as in the wider EU context, there have been a lot of processes that still dwell around the issue of recognition, acceptance and approval. The name dispute with Greece was officially closed but lasted almost three decades; the historical dispute with Bulgaria was also just recently resolved, but still there are a lot of tensions regarding the issue of the Macedonian language, as well as what is now referred to as shared history; further, there is the church dispute with the Serbian Orthodox Church, the ethnic tensions with the Albanians in Macedonia and the conditioned process of the application for EU membership. It could be unveiled as the reason behind many internal processes and disputes among ethnicities (Albanian and Roma) and groups (marginalized communities).

As an experience of not being accepted, as an experience of one whose identity was/is always contested, it could be met through a compensatory mechanism and shame's polarity, pride. Nationalist discourses offer easy compensation of shameful experiences with

pride, which compensates for the shameful experience. Nationalist discourses in general play with the core sense of belonging, being one of the strongest psychological needs alongside the affective need for recognition. One of the biggest nation-building projects was "the antiquization," referring to the antique Macedonian heritage.[21] Pride has the function to maintain positive social identity, while shame as an unpleasant feeling does not correlate to the desire for group identification.[22] Salice and Sánchez point out that "group identification is not necessarily an intentional process because it does not have to be triggered by conative states like intentions and desires."[23] This finding places group identification more into the field of the affective, unconscious, pre-reflective; or towards the thesis that nationalism is not so much about ideology but more about a pervasive cognitive and affective orientation.[24]

In contemporary feminism, cultural politics and affect theory, shame is associated with the oppression of marginalized groups as a structural effect of politics and policy, but is also perpetuated on a more subtle level through cultural deployment.[25] As Dolezal explains, shame is "most often experienced by those who occupy positions lacking social authority, those who find themselves in social situations where the parameters of shame are determined, not by themselves, but by a more powerful other."[26]

Fanon's analysis on the psychology of colonialism could be used to explore the shame in the Macedonian case as internalized, as part of the identity. The internalization of colonization, explains Fannon, ends with internalization of "whiteness" into black people in order to be accepted.[27] This is in a context where "whiteness" is the only validated position. In the Macedonian case, shame as an experience of rejection and inferiority is also related to the indefinitely

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[20] Ibid., 68.

[21] Anastas Vangeli, "Nation-building Ancient Macedonian Style: The Origins and the Effects of the So-Called Antiquization in Macedonia," *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, Vol. 39, Issue 1 (2011), 13-32.
[22] Alessandro Salice and Alba Montes Sánchez, "Pride, Shame and Group Identification: Hypothesis and Theory," *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 7 (2016): Article 557.
[23] Ibid., 2
[24] Bart Bonikowski, "Nationalism in Settled Times," *The Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 42 (2016): 427-449.
[25] Luna Dolezal, *The Body and Shame: Phenomenology, Feminism, and the Socially Shaped Body* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015), xv.
[26] Ibid., 52
[27] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 2008).

stretched process of EU integration. In these processes, "Europe-anness" becomes Macedonian "whiteness." This phenomenon is also analyzed in the famous *Imagining the Balkans* by Maria Todorova.[28] The shame is experienced through the dynamic in which we become our own worst critics, constantly blaming or being cynical and/or with abject towards our lazy, dirty, barbaric "Balkanism." The dynamic also involves projection as the main mechanism. The projection is present in the public discourse and jargon through which there is a tendency to publicly shame everything that does not fit into "Europeanness." Through this mechanism, shame is projected towards the outside, the other.

Yet another aspect of affective complexes with shame is related to the experience of trauma. Shame memories or experiences that evoke shame, which function like traumatic memories, and can be a central reference point to the individual's self-identity and life story, are significantly associated with paranoid anxiety, even when the ongoing external and internal shame are considered at the same time. A materialized example of this affective position and construct could be explored through the Museum of National Struggle.[29] This brings victimization as one of the strategies when dealing with shame and fear. Also, the traumatic impact of shame memory and the centrality of shame memory predict paranoia (but not social anxiety) even when considering ongoing feelings of shame.[30] The internalization of shame could also be analyzed in relation to a more generalized experience of trauma. Being rejected or deprived of acceptance from its constitution by the nearest neighbors could be experienced as part of the systemic conditions for deprivation and as a certain traumatic experience. An example that could be useful is the visa procedures that for decades served for marginalization and isolation of Macedonian citizens from EU countries.

The fear that underlies and stimulates shame is the fear of being abandoned, rejected, or ignored. This implies self-image as helpless or inferior to one's ideal self. It is related also to the psychodynam-

ic conceptualization of shame as a response against wishes to be loved and taken care of by others.[31]

Another assemblage of fear and shame could be analyzed through the social enactment of the flight response. In the Macedonian context, it could be detected in the fantasy, the need and the acts of the actual escape from the country. Although this act could not be directly or solely motivated by the isolated fear regarding the name issue, as discussed above, I do not isolate this fear from other affective knots that derive from the social as well as individual bodies. Namely, it is unlikely that the feeling of being under threat by the name change can motivate someone to leave the country, but certainly if this issue is undermining the feeling of safety and/or recognition by any means, it could be a part of the decision to leave. Furthermore, it does not have to be perceived as a direct threat but as an experience of continuous uncertainty and/or limitation. The public feeling of leaving the country is vastly spread, as it is one of the discursive frameworks that are most present in both the public and private sphere. It is one of the most common exit strategies. I would say that this feeling is related to the need for safety as well as hope. It occurs whenever hope is lost that things will turn out for the better, the uncertainty and fear arise that it can get worse, or stay in the permanent uncertainty. This "exit" strategy is present and real for many. There is not a citizen that has experienced it one way or another through processes of separation and/or longing.

Withdrawal is another kind of response of the flight movement. The Macedonian saying "Bended head will escape the sabre" could be a traditional discursive and symbolic framework for passive resilience in the face of fear. Acting through fear in this way means using the affective capacity of this movement, to flight, to withdraw as means for one's own survival. The risk of this movement as a typical reaction to fear is turning vulnerability into victimization. It is a typical response in dominant asymmetrical power relations which increases the risk of losing the freedom to act differently in situations of threat.

Gillian makes excellent analysis in his work with men in prisons and prison mental hospitals. What he explains is how shame in relation to respect and recognition are the common cause of aggression and

[28] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[29] The web page with the gallery section for visual representation of the museum exhibit is available at http://mmb.org.mk/muzej/index.php/mk/%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8%98%D0%B0%D1%82#.

[30] Marcela Matos, José Pinto-Gouveia and Paul Gilbert, "The Effect of Shame and Shame Memories on Paranoid Ideation and Social Anxiety," *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, Vol. 20, Issue 5 (2012), 334-349.

[31] James Gilligan, "Shame, Guilt, and Violence," *Social Research*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (2003), 1149-1180.

violence. He also notes class as an element of shame/violence bind. Also in the work of Sennett and Cobb, they speak of the hidden injuries they have discovered with working-class men. These men felt that their class and employment position did not enable or entitle them to the respect they should have gotten from others, from their teachers, bosses, and even from their own children.[32]

The aggression/shame bind in the Macedonian context could also be analyzed through the aggressive nationalist discourses that use both pride and aggressive discourse, hate speech and narratives.[33] A suitable example would be the construction of the name "severdzhan"/ As an example, the construction of the name "severdzhan" can be used. "Severdzhan" is defined in the so-called *Resistance Dictionary: Dictionary of the Contemporary Macedonian Struggle* as "a member of an anti-nation, a human being without national honor, previously member and now in negation of the Macedonian nation."[34] It is used as a pejorative term to downgrade and project both fear and aggression towards what is perceived as traitors. It is one of the most polarizing strategies to antagonize and distance oneself from the other perceived as an opponent.

People resort to violence when they feel they can wipe out shame only by shaming those who they feel shamed them.[35]

Both fear and shame shape the Macedonian affective social body in ways that perpetuate polarization and shrink the space for democratic processes. The dynamics and specific underlying issues that hold both fear and shame are closely related to the core needs for safety and recognition. It takes a huge effort to overcome this position and the complex situation since shame is almost never the first, distinct or the most obvious affective state. It always belongs to a wider affective complex that enables shame to cover and hide itself. It could be a background emotion covered by other more explicitly manifested affective states such as anger, aggression and pride.

The analysis shows that the two core affects of fear and shame create a rhizomatic pattern that connects different affects binding together and creating complex structures of behavioral responses and intersubjective space. Enacted through discourse, those affects shape the Macedonian social body as wounded by fear, anxiety, shame, hate, anger and trauma, all of which constitute experience of parlous precarity. Those experiences could not be reduced to binary positions, but they create multiplicity. Multiplicity opens opportunities for different and not necessarily polarized possibilities for resolution of the unresolved tensions that could enable overcoming of the frozen Gestalts into more flexible and functional behavior and experience.

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[32] Thomas J. Scheff, "Shame and the Social Bond: A Sociological Theory," *Sociological Theory* Vol. 18, No. 1 (2000), 84-99.

[33] Zdravko Saveski and Artan Sadiku, "The Radical Right in Macedonia" (Skopje: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation, December 2012). http://civicamobilitas.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/radikalna_desnica_makedonija.pdf; Hristina Shulevska et al., *Analysis of the Situation with Hate Speech in the Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje: Macedonian Helsinki Committee, August 2015). https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Hate_Speech_web_eng.pdf.

[34] Web page of Association Tvrdokorni available at https://tvrdokorni.wordpress.com/2019/02/20/otporashki-rechnik.

[35] Gilligan, "Shame," 1163.

III. INTERVIEW

Alkisti Efthymiou in Conversation with Athena Athanasiou: Spectral Publics and Antifascist Eventualities

Bionote: Athena Athanasiou is Professor of Social Anthropology and Gender Theory at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences (Athens, Greece). Among her publications are the books: *Agonistic Mourning: Political Dissidence and the Women in Black* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017); *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political* (with Judith Butler, Polity Press, 2013); *Crisis as a "State of Exception"* (Athens, 2012); *Life at the Limit: Essays on Gender, Body and Biopolitics* (Athens, 2007). She has been a fellow at the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, at Brown University, and at the Center for the Study of Social Difference, at Columbia University. She is a member of the editorial advisory board of the journals *Critical Times*, *Feminist Formations*, *Philosophy and Society,* and *Journal of Greek Media and Culture*.

Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences
athenaathanasiou@panteion.gr

Bionote: Alkisti Efthymiou is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Social Anthropology at Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences (Athens, Greece). Closely engaging with works of film, her thesis focuses on the critical state of intimacy under late capitalism. She holds a BA in Media and Cultural Studies and MA in Gender, Society and Politics from Panteion University, as well as an MA in Museum Studies from University College London. Her most recent publications include papers in the Greek feminist journal *feministiqá* and the *Journal of Greek Media and Culture*. She has received a scholarship to support her doctoral studies from NEON Organization for Culture and Development and the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (HFRI).

Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences
alkisefth@gmail.com

Abstract: This text is a conversation between Athena Athanasiou and Alkisti Efthymiou, drawing from Athena Athanasiou's new book, *Agonistic Mourning: Political Dissidence and the Women in Black* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017). The conversation discusses the critical potency of collective subjectivities such as the Women in Black and expands on issues that include political agency, vulnerability in resistance, spacing appearance, performing public mourning, or the traveling of social movements, associating them with contemporary feminist and antifascist urgencies. Central to the text is the concept of non-sovereign agonism, a form of political agency that addresses (or takes into account) the dispossessed quality of subjectivity and pays attention to the relationality through which we are constituted as subjects.

Alkisti Efthymiou: The politics of the transnational feminist and anti-militarist movement Women in Black and specifically its Serbian branch [*Žene u crnom*] is an important point of engagement in your work.[1] During the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s, these activists publicly acknowledged and mourned, through wearing black and standing in silence, the dead from all "sides," undermining at once the normative associations of mourning with femininity and the dominant conceptions of nationalist sovereignty. Could you tell us a bit more about the context in which you encountered the Women in Black and bonded with their activism?

Athena Athanasiou: Although I had met with activists from the Serbian branch of Women in Black during my initial short stay in Belgrade in May 2005, I met again members of Žene u Crnom (hereinafter *ŽuC*) in Jerusalem, at an international conference of Women in Black, in August of the same year. That first visit to Palestine allowed me to experience Israel's colonizing policies in practice. Palestinian villages and communities were divided, military checkpoints across occupied East Jerusalem and throughout the West Bank were disciplining Palestinian circulation. Together with my ŽuC friends and

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[1] Women in Black is a worldwide movement opposing militarism, violence and war, and counting vigils in multiple countries such as Israel, Serbia, South Africa, India, Spain, and Australia. In this text, we focus on its Serbian branch, *Žene u crnom*, which on October 9, 1991, initiated a public protest against the then ongoing Yugoslav Wars. For more information, refer to the website: http://womeninblack.org/vigils-arround-the-world/europa/serbia.

comrades we marched through the streets of villages in protest against militarization and the construction of the Separation Wall, we took bus journeys to the West Bank, and held anti-occupation demonstrations at military checkpoints.

I was already aware of the feminist political interventions of Women in Black during the violent breakup of Yugoslavia, but my political bond with the antiwar feminist activism in former Yugoslavia was wrought, suggestively, in Palestine. That encounter was inscribed in the transnational and decolonial genealogy of the group, as the feminist antimilitarist organization Women in Black emerged in Jerusalem in January 1988, right after the beginning of the first intifada, when a small group of Israeli Jewish women on the Left, actively supported by Palestinian women, started marching into the West Bank to protest against the occupation.

Whilst I was writing *Agonistic Mourning*, and doing the research that became the book,[2] the trope of the "other side" was acquiring a very intensive, personal, as well as political, meaning for me and for my own formative moments of critical positionality; most notably, a meaning of foreignness and not-being-at-home-in-the-world because of racism, sexism, heteropatriarchy, class privilege, and ableism. The political formulation of the "other side" resonated with the way in which I had experienced my own ex-centric positionality vis-à-vis nationalist scripts, gender norms, and my life as a feminist academic working in/for a public institution that I have found myself both defending from neoliberal depletion and, at the same time, inhabiting critically to cope with and struggle against its overwhelming national, class, and heteronormative markers of privilege. So, the political formulation of the "other side" became an ethnographic and auto-ethnographic device for reaching and relating to my friends in Belgrade and other places in former Yugoslavia. It became a site of comradeship and situated knowledge formed in the shared experience of unbelonging.

AE: You seem to be hinting towards an understanding of the "other side" as not merely *one part* of a binary opposition. Could you perhaps expand on that? And specifcally in relation to the Women in Black: Why were their protests so potent and critical in the histori-

cal context of Slobodan Milošević's regime in Serbia and its conflicts with the "other side"?

AA: I met my Women in Black friends through sharing stories of the "other side," as we moved across and even against boundaries and orientations. My sense is that the concept of the "other side" is not merely a spatial issue, as Sara Ahmed has so powerfully shown in taking up the concept of orientation to queer phenomenology.[3] She talks about how the "table" (especially the fraught figure of the dining table) matters in the ways our bodies are shaped, act, follow (straight) lines or become oblique. Surely, one occasionally has to go to another side, to the other side/s, or to what is other to available sides, to reach points from where to face the world beyond the straight order/ing of things. So, for me, taking sides takes place as a performative way of taking a stand by means of inhabiting (and "cohabiting," following Arendt and Butler) the polis and the world.[4] In this sense, it involves the bodily disposition of decentering the authorized lines along which we are interpellated to position ourselves.

The political subjects with whom I worked use the trope of mourning as a means to publicly position themselves not along the authorized lines of gender, kinship and national normative belonging, but rather on the side of the other. Clearly, in the historical context of Slobodan Milošević's regime in Serbia, the *ŽuC* way of performing public memory and mourning for the ungrieved enemies of the nation, and doing so from a gendered internal enemy perspective, represented a treasonous deviation from, and a bodily refashioning of, the national and gendered propriety of mourning and memory.

So, in the situated epistemology of *ŽuC*, the act of becoming the gender-marked enemy in the face of national mobilization signaled a feminist resistance to the idealized commands of patriotic kinship and motherhood. Standing at and across the border of the nationally defined body politic, *ŽuC* activism embodied the question of what happens when the one who does not belong returns to reclaim what Hannah Arendt calls "a space of appearance."[5]

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[2] Athena Athanasiou, *Agonistic Mourning: Political Dissidence and the Women in Black* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

[3] Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2006).
[4] Judith Butler, "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2012), 134-51.
[5] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).

AE: What is lost, if it is, when a movement that emerged in a particular spatial and temporal locality becomes worldwide (such as Women in Black, for example, that initially emerged in Israel in 1988 and spread to Serbia and globally)? Is a certain "moving" required for political gestures/actions of resistance to become "movements"?

AA: The question is what is lost, if it is, and what is gained when political ideas, concepts and practices travel. And then the question also becomes what can be lost in "winning," or what we gain through loss and through the risk of losing certitude and troubling attachments. To address the entire scope of this question is an impossible task here, but I would like to point out that the logic of moving can have a strange link with canonical definitions of routes and destinations, but also, more interestingly for me, it implies that a sign, an identity category or a political idiom can indefinitely (albeit not limitlessly) break with its given, authorized context and engender new contexts. Posed in these terms, the question of what can be lost on the way might take into account the performative event of citationality, whereby turns, wanderings, disorientations and re-appropriations form the lexicon of a non-linear and non-univocal bodily political life.

Hence the theme of "moving" transforms itself into a question of the embodied political and the possibility of its re-orientation. I think it would be interesting to think further how enacted agonistic politics describes a political agency that transfigures legacies of disposability through the performative textures emerging from the affective exposure of bodies in proximity of others. If refusing to stay in one's proper place can signal acts of resistance, critical agency can also "take place" in the form of claiming the right to stay in place, as in combating the colonially embedded logic of disposability/displace-ability, demanding one's rights in land, and claiming livable and affordable housing.[6] Moving beyond the powers by which we are constituted does not have to involve geographical movement and determined localities. It may as well define manifestations of inhabiting and moving whereby geographical typologies and *ontopologies* (to recall Derrida's way of linking notions of being to notions of place, locality, or territory[7]) falter and fall apart. The equation of agency with the capacity to move and mobilize rehabilitates the presumption that political praxis belongs to certain regimes of status, bodily morphology, and affective disposition, and it needs to be problematized from the perspective of deportability, statelessness, homelessness, struggles over land rights, and disability studies/crip theory. We have to continue to think what possibilities and articulations of political agency can be put forward by bodies-in-place and bodies-out-of-place as they reinhabit and transform normative matrices of embodiment, situatedness, public appearance and belonging/unbelonging.

So it seems to me that it would be interesting and fruitful to pursue the question of "locality" through the perspective of translocal and transversal performativity such as, for instance, the one pertaining to the movement of ŽuC in former Yugoslavia and the way it was inspired by, and traveled from, Israel/Palestine. I believe it is helpful to work with a critical framework that would enable us to productively question *both* the erasure of local/translocal specificity in Euro-American paradigms of universalist scholarship *and* the essentialist invocation of reified localization as an authenticated critical point of view of colonial capitalist globalization. The critical strands of thought that have been brought forward by feminist transnationalism, queer of color critique, and postcolonial/decolonial critique, have powerfully grappled with the tangled affective and political economies of location across geographical and epistemological boundaries. Drawing on such critical epistemologies, I am interested in how queer and decolonial locations and translocations can productively disorient our perspective, but also, perhaps more significantly, how concepts and political ideas and acts, when traveling across disparate topographies and temporalities, can work to queer and decolonize the politics of location and positionality.

The cross-border work of Women in Black entails not only crossing in spatial terms, but also performing acts of gender exile as a way to define a restless and transformative field of politics. These border-crossings are about affirming a critical cartography of interstic-

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[6] Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou, *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2013).

[7] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994), 126.

es and interfaces, and thus changing the normative premises that form the inscriptional space of locality, belonging, borders, and the nation-state.

So, to answer your question whether a certain "moving" is required for political gestures of resistance to become "movements," I would say that "moving" does not have to be taken literally and it does not necessarily move "straight." It does not have to follow straight lines (as well as straight timelines) of a fixed and immediate order. It does not have to affirm transparent and univocal identities or preconfigured and essentialized subjectivities and communities. Through a perspective of political performativity, claiming a place is not merely about inhabiting what already exists but rather about re-appropriating, repurposing and transforming place through troubling and thwarting racialized, sexualized, and economized onto-epistemologies of emplacement and displacement. In this sense, it seems to me that it is crucial to continue working toward a non-foundational theory of locality and movement in order to account critically for the contingent ways in which universalized structures of inhabiting and moving are confounded, affective and bodily morphologies are critically dispossessed, and political practices are reimagined. And so I think we need to continue defending critical theory's different genres of nuanced complexity.

AE: The translocality of Women in Black brings in mind, perhaps a bit arbitrarily, the rapid global spread of contemporary mobilizations like #MeToo. Talking about "movement," do you think there is something to be said here about the type of feminist critique that #MeToo seems to "move" around the world?

AA: I wonder whether and how one can draw together Women in Black and #MeToo, given that these are incommensurably disparate instances and I would not want to pose an airtight comparative frame here. I think, however, that a transnational, ex-centric, non-US-based perspective would offer valuable insights into the multiple ways in which constellations of gendered violence play out in different contexts of colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist power. I am thinking, for example, of the feminist movement Ni Una Menos, which, through open assemblies and other genres of organized resistance, has articulated a response to the growing number of femicides in Argentina.

Surely #MeToo is a broad mobilization, which, importantly, has prompted awareness and dialogue about harassment, abuse, and hierarchical manipulation in the workplace. I support the gesture of making oneself part of a broader collective subjectivity and standing with others to acknowledge shared suffering and anger, to struggle against ubiquitous and normalized structural forces of misogyny, and to put forward collective visions for worlds of justice and equality.

I wonder, however, whether #MeToo could exceed the caliber of white US individualist feminism. I am hesitant in front of what I understand as rehabilitation of a non-intersectional universal - or universalizable - female "me" that reproduces the structure of capitalist individualism: a "me" that seems to be inscribed in the longstanding marginalization of women of color, trans women, gender non-conforming people, and those in undervalued fields of work within the larger US feminist movement. It is worth recalling that the phrase which was used by actress Alyssa Milano as a Twitter hashtag in response to allegations of sexual assault by Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein had been initiated by African American activist Tarana Burke in 2006, and was influenced by black feminist scholars such as Kimberlé Crenshaw whose work on intersectionality called for a new way of addressing the combined effects of racism and sexism in the lives of black women.[8] We might need to ask why the phrase gained widespread attention recently. And so we have to look at the situation we are currently in, and I think the answer would be rather complicated.

I would say that this is, once again, a necessary time to counter the pervasive ordinariness of gendered assault and injury in the historical present, while tracking new modes for responding to it. When it comes to the need to expose and unsettle, again and again, the banalized intelligibility of violence, I would like us to be able to think collectively on how social structures of unrelenting, normalized heteropatriarchy can attract attention and public awareness. And

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[8] Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez, "Practice Intersectionality," *L'Internationale* (May 27, 2018), https://www.internationaleonline.org/research/politics_of_life_and_death/103_practice_intersectionality.
Allyson Hobbs, "One Year of #MeToo: The Legacy of Black Women's Testimonies," *The New Yorker* (October 10, 2018), https://www.newyorker.com/culture/personal-history/one-year-of-metoo-the-legacy-of-black-womens-testimonies/amp?__twitter_impression=true.

I would like us to think critically about the different ways logics of "proper victimhood," moral indignation, sentimental identification, and the register of the mass cultural intimate public play out in this #MeToo moment. I have in mind Lauren Berlant's groundbreaking work on the genre of "the female complaint" as part of the "unfinished business of sentimentality in American culture," where she addresses the link between intimacy and publicity in ways that dissect the category of individuality in late capitalism.[9]

Also, as we ponder the question who gets to speak and who gets to be heard in these mass-mediated publics, we might need to think further about the distinctions and indistinctions between individual denunciation and political testimony, as well as between public accountability and publicity stunts in the techno-optimistic era of shorthands and "likeability." Finally, as we seek justice, we might ask ourselves: how do we involve (or do not involve) the legal/punitive machinery of incarceration? Is the current lexicon playing out in the #MeToo moment sufficient for addressing the intersections of power and violence? And then how to critically engage with political ramifications that #MeToo obscures?

What I am trying to say is: could we complicate the conversation, or would this move get us into trouble? I worry that the current global rise of the forces of racial capitalism and national right fosters the sentiment that complicated critical reflection is an irrelevant distraction at this moment of urgency. In that respect, I would keep in mind the current backlash against poststructuralist thought, along with trends of anti-critique and rebukes of "relativism" and complexity, at this intense moment of unleashed racism, misogyny, anti-immigration, homophobia/transphobia, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia.

With that said, I am quite perplexed when what travels under the name of feminism sometimes takes the form of a white bourgeois heteronormative regime of truth. It makes me remember that feminism is certainly not immune to being consumed by racial capitalism and to acknowledge the multiple feminist antiracist practices that resist this peril in different contexts of this world. I think we need

courageous transnational critical theory to inspire, historicize, and think differently about the ways we agonize and organize in and against the toxic atmospheres generated by the intersecting structural powers of racial, sexual, national, and class privilege. We need the courage of critical theory to open up spaces for change. That is hard work, I know, and it is collective through and through.

AE: ŽuC activists stood still and in silence in the Republic Square of Belgrade. They demonstrated their opposition to the war, wearing black as the colour of grief to mourn those posited as impossible to mourn according to the requirements of nation and war. As you mention in your book, this "mourning" can be termed as such "only by virtue of political catachresis," echoing Judith Butler and her work on the figure of Antigone.[10] Could you elaborate on this idea? How does it interrupt conventional allegiances of gender, sexuality, and nation?

AA: Indeed, the political grief of Women in Black, bringing into play several kinds of possibilities and impossibilities, resignifications, and aporias, has nothing to do with a nihilistic despair of tending the dead. Rather, it is about troubling the intelligibility of memorability by means of public, embodied affectivity and performativity. In a way, the act of taking mourning beyond kinship and national normativity moves this political activism beyond mourning as well. In working with them, I have been interested in understanding the ways in which these political subjects, acting in the context of a multilayered antimilitarist, antifascist and queer feminism, have been embodying the political and ethical eventualities involved in their own and others' dissident un/belonging. I was interested in this queering going on in the very complexities and complicities of belonging. By "queering" I mean here the acts of disrupting the (ethno-nationalist and heteronormative) conditions of intelligibility that mark grief, camaraderie, dissent, and transformative desire in the face of political loss.

In this sense, performing grief, relationality, and political agonism beyond the mourning's biopolitical matrices of gender and national properness entails a political catachresis, that is, the strained

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[9] Laurent Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2008).

[10] Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

and deformed/deforming appropriation of a signifier in contexts that would be perceived as inappropriate. The *ŽuC* activists mourn where and when they should not; they mourn in inappropriate ways and for inappropriate purposes. What would this transposition and reconfiguration against the grain do to the power relations that have authorized and validated prior uses of this sign? It seems to me, and I am inspired here by the work of Judith Butler and other scholars of gender performativity, that this acknowledgement, recollection, and recitation of historicity opens up spaces for the possibility to undermine and politically transform those authorizations. These spaces have their own internal limits, of course, and their own vulnerabilities to injurious effects. I think it would be interesting to think of political performativity as not only an instantiation of breaking with prior contexts but also of critically recollecting and remembering them in ways that can hopefully be politically reparative and transformative. It seems to me that the complexities and complicities of agonistic mourning, as a resistant politics of remembering otherwise, affirm the links between subversion, vulnerability, recollection, and performativity. I have tried to elucidate that these interconnections are not reducible to any presumed and clear-cut symmetry between possibility and impossibility. For me, agonism complicates and troubles the presumed linear passage *from* potentiality *to* actuality, or *from* passivity *to* volition. In this sense, attending to the im/possible aspects of mourning has significant effects for acknowledging contingency and vulnerability at the heart of critique and political performativity.

AE: In your work, you problematize the notion of sovereignty, both as the militarized, unilateral power of the nation-state and the one of subjectivity based on the model of self-sufficiency, individualism, phallogocentrism. Instead, you introduce a different conception, talking about "non-sovereign political agency" and "sovereignty without sovereignty." Could you further describe this concept and its association with vulnerability and finitude? If this kind of subjectivity is so fragile and contingent, how can it be incorporated in contemporary struggles of marginalized groups that strive for recognition and self-determination?

AA: That is a key question, which hits at a real core. Let me make clear from the start that I think non-sovereignty as a conceptual de-

vice at once affective and sociopolitical. Also, I would like to emphasize that the notion of non-sovereign subjectivity I seek to elaborate, while involving the modalities of vulnerability, is not a negative or nihilistic concept and is not reducible to destitution. Nor should it be equated to self-negation, although it seeks to question the liberal devices of individualistic selfhood. Rather, it is an experimental, critical lens through which to think (with) the relational as a way of decentering the self as well as universalized, ontological, dichotomous figurations of self/other. I believe that this idea has significant implications for our understanding of the political today. In my work, I have tried to reflect on the political acts of performing non-sovereign, agonistic political agency in opposition and resistance to the logics of abjection, racism and militarism.

Relevant to our conversation here would be Simone de Beauvoir's account of eroticism and erotic desire, which grounds itself in the alterity of the other.[11] Of course, Beauvoir works with an existentialist theory of subjectivity as a transcendent movement, but I am interested in how a non-possessive ethics of reciprocity emerges from a different account of subjectivation, one that addresses the dispossessed quality of the subject and pays attention to the relations and norms through which we are shaped and situated as subjects. It seems to me that poststructuralist feminist thought has raised compelling questions for ethics. The way in which Butler reads Beauvoir (notably, Beauvoir's consideration of Sade with "critical sympathy," in Butler's terms) is very illuminating in this regard.[12] I think we need to find ways of figuring reciprocity and responsiveness beyond self-sovereignty; and also without complementarity, universality, fetishization of the other and reduction of alterity to sameness (as in Hegelian reciprocity). Acknowledging the impossibilities of absolute reciprocity evokes new aporetic possibilities of intersubjective relationality that might disrupt the logic of the absolute.

When I seek a way to pay attention to non-sovereign political claims, I have in mind a certain mode of sovereignty: one predicated on the matrices of the self-contained, self-sufficient, and coherent subject,

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[11] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. by H. M. Parshley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953). Originally published in 1949.

[12] Judith Butler, "Beauvoir on Sade: Making Sexuality into an Ethic," in *The Cambridge Companion to Simone de Beauvoir*, ed. by Claudia Card (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 168-88.

body politic, family or nation. Through histories of colonial capitalism, sovereignty has become the irreducible paradigm for social and political intelligibility. But I think it would serve us well to consider what other relations to the political are possible. The possibility of non-sovereign politics runs counter to the common conception that politics requires resolving or even negating, in some sense, the complicated and intractable messiness of subjectivity and subjectivation. Politics is almost automatically understood, primarily in Western liberal contexts, in terms of affirming one's sovereign identity. In contrast, through the space opened up by the problematization of sovereignty, the point would be to rethink relationality as a transformative political concept; and also as a possibility to rethink sovereignty itself. The point for me is to ask how we might think of sovereignty differently by remaining critical of self-sufficient and indivisible self-authorization. I certainly do not mean to do away with all sovereignty as such, especially insofar as this notion has been tied to collective claims of popular sovereignty or struggles of marginalized groups for recognition and self-determination. I would like to ask, however, whether we might reinscribe self-determination as embodied relationality for thinking and enacting political articulations.

AE: Certain feminist political subjectivities of today have developed their claims along the lines of "my body is my own," particularly in reaction to rape culture and sexual assault and harassment. Where does relationality and vulnerability fit into such claims?

AA: This is a very important question, especially given that the formulation "my body is my own" - as not merely a linguistic but also a political performative formulation - can take many forms in different registers, can be premised upon different standpoints, and can serve disparate interests. We must be able to distinguish these qualitative differences and assess in what direction they work in specific contexts of power relations. In our theories and practices, we have to always try to make sure that this political lexicon works to address and contest injustice, inequality, oppression, and, more specifically, the biopolitics of gender and race. As antiracist decolonial queer feminists, we are always attached to the long-standing urgency of the political project signaled by this formulation. As we hold onto this political articulation that has historically mobilized extremely

important collective struggles, we are mindful that the formulation itself implies a politics of positionality and situated knowledge that points to a radically reformulated notion of embodied subjectivation. As long as bodies are deemed dispensable and disposable, we need to ask, again and again: How do bodies come to matter or do not matter as they become inscribed in the workings of power and enact contestation?[13]

That said, I wish to contend that in the context of struggles against sexual violence, or against the abolition of women's reproductive and non-reproductive self-determination, countering the forces that challenge the possibility of being a self-determining sovereign subject becomes an occasion for concerted actions of political despair and dissent troubling the frames of proper (i.e., individualistic, hetero-patriarchal, white, possessive bourgeois) subjectivity. And yet, universalized feminist concerns with violence against women often replay normative modalities of "vulnerability" that have historically served biopolitical pursuits of women's "protection" from racialized others. One can also trace such essentialist productions of gendered "vulnerable bodies" in discursive formations that promote the criminalization of sex work as sexual violence exercised upon women's bodies.

My sense is that our political struggle is not about instating a logic of invulnerability or claiming an exemption from vulnerability seeking recourse to the grand narrative of the self-contained and securitized individual, but rather about struggling with, within, and against the power configurations that determine whose vulnerability and corporeal integrity counts. So I would like to emphasize that "vulnerability" itself undergoes an important conceptual and political reconfiguration when at stake are dissident acts of defending and politicizing vulnerability by those dispossessed of self-determination. This is a kind of theorizing, I think, that would take us beyond the abstract and universal generality of vulnerability and would have us challenge the overriding power differentials that determine the structural experience of becoming-vulnerable.

It may appear that the formulation "my body is my own" implies a claim of invulnerability. Contrary to such (mis)understanding, however, I take it as one possible way to critically assess how bod-

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[13] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

ies come to matter, in Butler's terms. Our bodies are ours but also given over, never entirely our own, never entirely under our control; certain bodies are expelled, exploited, under-resourced, exhausted. Acknowledging, politically positioning, and thinking with vulnerability does not undermine but rather enables claiming rights of bodily self-determination even if our bodies are not simply our own. It seems to me that feminist ideas of corporeal vulnerability are intimately interconnected with, and indebted to, histories of feminist and queer aspirations and struggles for corporeal self-determination. Defending vulnerability as a relational capacity to affect others and to be affected by others should not doom anyone to cruelty and suffering. Consider the differential and unequal costs that we, as differently positioned subjects, have to pay for defending (our) bodies that are not our own. Defendability is not inexhaustible. The question is how we fight for the right to matter when our bodies are battlefields that are never simply our own in many senses; and how vulnerable bodies are mobilized mobilizing (their) vulnerability in order to politicize their injuries.

In contesting the differential distribution of precarity, different street actions and activist movements have performed the questions: Who comes together, whose streets, who has not been included in "the people," whose lives matter as lives? The Black Lives Matter movement, which was initiated by three young black feminists, organized public demonstrations where protesters held banners reading "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" and "I Can't Breathe," to convey a particular kind of racialized deadly violence and embodied disposability that black people experience in ways so thoroughly embedded in the ordinary. The "I Can't Breathe" phrase commemorated Eric Garner, who died from a chokehold applied by police officers while he pleaded for a breath of air eleven times, on July 17, 2014, in Staten Island, New York City.

Feminism allows us to politically mobilize this sense of suffocation as a site of critical and empowering resignification through which to call into question the vast power differentials of class, racialization, gender, sexuality, and able-bodiedness through which precarity is experienced. As the legacy of liberation movements by racialized and gendered subjectivities showcases, vulnerability can enable collective political praxes of revolutionary transformation. It becomes a contingent condition of political possibility.

AE: How have movements like Occupy or the Indignados changed the ways people gather together? In the case of *Aganaktismenoi* (Greek for Indignados) in Syntagma Square in Athens, a constant point for critique or provocation has been the co-existence (in the same public square but not in the same "zone" within the square) of right or even far-right groups and left or anarchist ones. I wonder if such a "co-existence" ameliorates the agonistic potency of the movement, depoliticizing it to an extent?

AA: This question points to a profoundly important issue. I see these movements as provisional planes of appearance and actualization. They are also planes of intensities and agonistic battle lines enacted in bodily performative terms. There is nothing pure, fixed and lucid about the composition of a "we," and the question "Who are 'we'?" is not to be answered through simplistic identitarian devices. For me, the task is to come up with ways of resisting the impulse to essentialize that coming-together. We have to be able to ask whether composing a "we" is even a unifying project and whether we want it to be such.

You are right to point out that the co-existence of so different constituents might work to produce depoliticizing effects. However, multiplicity and even awkward incoherence cannot be expelled from the political space of relationality. What matters for me is how we engage politically with this incoherent and inconvenient multiplicity. Such public gatherings can become transformative occasions for experimental socialities emerging in the cracks of capitalist individualism. They can instantiate collective bodily engagement with precarity in the wake of commodification and dispossession of resources, health care, and housing. But they can also work to gloss over differential positionalities in terms of class, racialization, migration and refugee status, ability, and gender. They can work to produce others by creating a horizontal solidarity - a fraternity of grievances, as it were - defined by a white, middle-class, heteronormative, national "we" formed and affected by de-industrialization, especially given the global growing influence of racism and neo-Nazism.

Your question makes me realize that, when it comes to the political dynamics of public gatherings and movements, there is no master narrative to plan and determine the possibility of the social. In a rad-

ical democratic perspective, such gatherings are themselves polit-ical interventions that have the capacity to foment thinking about the question of who has, maintains, claims and exercises the right to assemble;[14] who becomes silenced and publically imperceptible; what political possibilities are enabled or excluded. In a way, this constellation of questions implies and involves fighting for alter-native ways to come together and to share distances, to imagine and to generate change. There is surely no guarantee about the outcome of this fight for reinventing lived democracy beyond the free market political and economic rationality. In this sense, I take the embodied relationality implicated in projects of making public presence to be an interminably complicated matter: both limited by various complexities, convolutions and incommensurabilities, and open to unexpected transformative political potential. For me, what is really important is what becomes unpredictably possible in the fis-sures - and often against the grain - of gatherings and the commons.

The interconnected forces of neoliberal restructuring and the rise of far right produce today a space of forming mass-marketed publics and popular cultures saturated by anti-political and anti-democratic sentiments, and organized around identitarian ideologies of racist, nationalist, reactionary anti-global, islamophobic, misogynistic, and homophobic/transphobic resentment. Speaking from the moment we presently inhabit, lots of "outraged" people's movements are reactionary. In certain contexts, it is the far right that capitalizes on the frustrations of the austerity-hit middle classes. In the US and in Brazil, white male supremacists did. In an increasing number of Eu-ropean countries, national exceptionalism, securitization and mid-dle-class frustration are deployed as tools against "globalization." Far right-wing parties claim the power to promote an authoritarian order of white, Christian Europe. They campaign for a well-regulated capitalist order of things premised upon a flourishing (white, nation-al) middle class status quo, which retains its normative fantasies of sovereignty and security against a world of strangers "with privileg-es." We have to keep in mind that the impoverishment of the middle class propelled the rise of fascism between the two world wars. Nic-os Poulantzas, in his classic *Fascism and Dictatorship*, has delineated the relationship between fascism and the different fractions of the

bourgeois class, emphasizing that the operations and repercussions of these class contradictions and alliances impicit in the rise of fas-cism are not confined to economics alone or the military aspect. Here is a memorable passage from that book: "In this respect, Clara Zetkin's warning to the executive committee of the Comintern on 23 June 1923, is still correct: 'The error of the Italian Communist Party lies mainly in the fact that it has seen fascism only as a military-ter-rorist movement, not as a mass movement with deep social roots. It must be stressed that before fascism wins militarily, it has already won the ideological and political victory over the working class...'"[15] The rise of the new fascist forces is not merely a repetition of the past but at the same time it is possible - and perhaps necessary - to trace continuities as well. Perhaps what is at stake here is engaging the nuanced ways in which history is performed in the present. The collective memory of left antifascism is, for me, an indispensable vantage point here.[16]

In other countries, such as Spain, Portugal and Greece, the Indig-nados movement was instigated in recent years by the common cause of resisting and opposing authoritarian austerity govern-ments, although there was surely no univocal agreement over what kind of world those participating in the mobilization would envision to build. But there was a reconfigured political Left emerging and reassembling from that plural and heterogeneous movement that sought to critically reactivate democracy, to inspire a transforma-tive social imaginary and to build on alternative aspirations for an anti-neoliberal, post-nationalist Europe. I think that if we are to think through and with the question of antifascist critical possibility in the present time, it is necessary to work with left and radical dem-ocratic configurations of political life that can be shaped in the pres-ent, within and beyond the present biopolitical order, and as claims for a different future.

The question of sustainability is also relevant in this regard. It is an important part of all dissident political forms to seek ways to make them sustainable. But again, how to understand and critically re-think the attachment to promises of duration? What other notions

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[14] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015).

[15] Nicos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship: The Third International and the Problem of Fascism*, trans. by Judith White (London and New York: Verso, [1970] 2018), 84.

[16] See Enzo Traverso, *The New Faces of Fascism: Populism and the Far Right* (London and New York: Verso, 2019).

of sustainability or notions alternative to sustainability - i.e., possibilities for non-linear, non-teleological, open-ended relationship to temporality and the world - might emerge and be enacted from responses to precarity through troubling the social norms of reproductive temporality? Ultimately, how does "crisis" work to conventionalize desires and modes of living and living on? These are all questions that call for a rethinking of ongoing crises and agency. For me, this requires us to attend to a critical politics of temporality that accounts for contingent acts that "brush history against the grain," in Walter Benjamin's terms, rather than eagerness to transcend conflict and to control history according to self-aggrandizing orthodoxies.

I also think that this matter resonates with your own work, Alkisti, on the cultural politics of intimacy as a critical state that bears radical potential for change under late capitalism. Perhaps for both of us the question would be how "crisis" becomes an occasion for critical worldmaking instead of complacent (self-)possessive and self-sufficient individualism.

AE: Indeed. To go a bit further with your argument, critical worldmaking goes hand in hand with forms of relationality (such as love, in my view) that can open up the subject to the possibility of its non-sovereignty. It would be interesting, I think, to ask to what extent this "opening up" happens in public protest. It seems that in order not to reinforce a metaphysics of presence, or fetishization of *being-there*, when talking about the polis and public assembly as spaces of appearance, we need to constantly be reminded of who might be excluded from such spaces and from appearance. Under this light, we would shift "from an analytics of *spaces of appearance* to one of *spacing appearance*," as you suggest in your book. What does such a shift entail and how does it relate to spectrality and counter-memorial work?

AA: In assembling in public space, bodies are interpellated to fulfil the conditions of possibility for their appearance through norms of gender, sexuality, nationality, raciality, able-bodiedness and ownership. And so embodied practices of critical agency might find themselves resisting the epistemological premises and differential conditions of "appearance." The need to constantly be reminded of

who might be excluded from such spaces of appearance and who appears out of place (i.e., without holding onto the sovereignty of presence) is about recalling what remains of unhomely, displaced presence; it also gives counter-memory a place. Forming all that remains from the space of appearance, such absent presences complicate the ways in which people come together and emerge in contested spaces and in spaces that have been rendered uninhabitable, or opt out of certain schemes of appearance. It seems to me that the point of the "I am no longer here" sign (on one of the banners that appeared in the 2012 Gay Pride in Belgrade to commemorate LGBTQI+ people who were expelled from the public space) in this context is to account for bodies to which "appearance" is at stake. The available space of appearance is indelibly marked by those "no longer" that contest hegemonic memorability. The analytics of spacing appearance seeks to complicate the conditions of "being there" and "belonging together" through which political agency is typically articulated. Spacing collapses the clear distinctions between appearance and disappearance. It is perhaps the register of the emergent performed by bodies in political space. It attends to the political temporalities and spatialities that might arise from embodied practices of appearing out of place, or appearing in disappearance.

AE: From the "I am no longer here" sign that you mentioned to the photos of the dead body of the refugee child Alan Kurdi washed ashore: there are different ways in which the dead "appear" and, especially in the context of the so-called "refugee crisis," the dead have been used to construct "the suffering other" as exactly such. As a passive, helpless, mute body that, according to Leticia Sabsay, "demands affective responses willing to commit to humanitarian enterprises, thereby moralizing otherwise potentially political claims."[17] Would you perhaps like to expand on these different forms of appearing and disappearing in relation to how the "living" engage with the "dead"?

AA: You are pointing to different registers of meanings, practices, affects and political engagements of bodies appearing and disap-

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[17] Leticia Sabsay, "Permeable Bodies: Vulnerability, Affective Powers, Hegemony," in *Vulnerability in Resistance*, ed. by Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti and Leticia Sabsay (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2016), 280.

pearing in/from quotidian public spaces. The "I am no longer here" banner asks a necessary question: What kind of partial, displaced and disavowed presence is implied through that which appears to be not there? It thus articulates a demand for a political reparation. Our task is to respond to this radical cry and acknowledge how it takes place, what takes its place, and what cannot take place except in a spectral fashion.

The Derridean critical framework of spectropolitics acknowledges the disquieting, uncanny persistence of the past that occupies present-day configurations of the political and opens it to the possibility of change. A few years ago, a wave of protests swept several US cities under the banner of "Say Her Name" to remember black women who were injured and killed by police violence and sexual assaults. Perhaps these tactics prefigure and spectralize a "space of appearance" (which I understand as different from a space of visibility), unexpectedly turning it into a site of collective potentiality for alternative imagining and enacting. Such sites and spaces are haunted by all those condemned to live as living dead. They are marked by situated knowledges such as the activist remembrance of the recent death of the queer activist and drag performer Zak Kostopoulos/Zackie Oh after a brutal public beating in the center of Athens.

The structure of spectrality is also being taken up to address conditions of border securitization and refugee necropolitics in EU borderlands and to bring out the exigencies that mark the coming-in-to-presence of the body politic as a common or uncommon space in late capitalism. The presumptions of commonness are contested by economized, racialized and illegalized precarious lives rendered dispensable and deportable and haunting securitized neoliberal Europe. And so I could not agree more with Leticia Sabsay's account. For my part, I think this is a necessary critique of the compassionate liberalist impulse to moralize and depoliticize, and it is interesting to trace how compassionate/condescending liberalism converges with neoliberal border securitization masquerading as humanitarianism at a moment when walls and fences are rising and becoming increasingly militarized.

When it comes to humanitarian viewership, I think the question cannot be more urgent today. Indeed, what kind of visual and sensual familiarities and unfamiliarities are enacted when TV screens and social media are saturated with images of distant others in distress and refugee bodies "washed ashore"? Do these images become part of a visual field already entrenched in a securitarian epistemic violence that renders certain bodies unrecognizable or all too recognizable? Might they mobilize to political action despite and against realms of visual order and ordinariness that are infused with overlapping forms of oppression, including racism, heteropatriarchy, white supremacy and capitalist exploitation? What would it mean to assert a politics and poetics of opacity (as in Blanchot's "right to disappear") against the drive to visualize?[18] And how might this be uncannily linked to the political duty to appear?

When it comes to the aesthetics of biopolitics, perhaps we would need to pay attention to the ways in which intersectional critical race feminist epistemologies have addressed the visual, sensational, and representational violence of the white male gaze. In our present global context of brutality against African-Americans ("walking while Black"), immigrants, refugees and queer and trans people, we might ask ourselves whether the visual economy of humanitarian governmentality is another trope of depoliticization and anti-politics, and how we can engage with a radical democratic articulation of the political premised upon agonistically reconfigured formulations of seeing, feeling, knowing, caring, responding and acting.

AE: One last, but very pertinent, question. Signed in June 2017, the Prespa Agreement between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia finally resolved the long-standing dispute over the latter's name, a dispute that echoes back to the 1990s and recalls Greece's foreign politics during the Yugoslav Wars and the parallel rise of nationalism in the country. In the present conjuncture of the Agreement, do you see perhaps an intensified evoking of national sovereignty and, if so, how could forms of non-sovereign agonism, or agonistic democracy, resist it?

AA: In an international scene where the political spectrum shifts to the right, and in a Europe where anti-immigration sentiments and ethno-racist chauvinisms are surging in the debris of aggressive

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[18] Maurice Blanchot. *Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him in A Voice from Elsewhere*, trans. by Charlotte Mandell (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), 120.

capitalist restructuring, the peaceful and equitable settlement of the decades-long dispute between the two countries over Macedonia's name is a radical democratic event that allows for, and does justice to, a new social imaginary of mutual self-determination in a post-nationalist and post-austerity Europe. For me, this critical event showcased that the ethico-political vision and courage of agonistic democracy can overcome sedimented configurations of ethno-nationalist power.

Although it has been a thorny issue in Yugoslav-Greek relations since World War II, the "name dispute" was reignited after the breakup of Yugoslavia and the declaration of independence from the former Socialist Republic of Macedonia in 1991. Nationalism was one of the leading forces that brought forth the overthrow of communism. It was the time when the Greek foreign policy aimed at destabilizing Macedonia (named under the then provisional reference "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" / FYROM), as it was manifested also in the alliance with the nationalist Serb leader, Slobodan Milošević, who played a leading role in the violent dissolution of multinational Yugoslavia. For the Greek diplomacy of the time, "FYROM"'s use of the "name Macedonia" signified nothing less than an irredentist threat to Greek national history, cultural heritage and territorial integrity.

The Prespa Agreement has sparked mass nationalist protests on both sides of the border. In both countries, demonstrators who railed against the accord described it as a national sellout. In Greece, the whole spectrum of conservative forces, ranging from the far-right and center-right parties to the social-democrats and even the communist party (which insists that the settlement was brokered by NATO and the EU), responded to the signing of the Prespa Agreement with isolationist pride and conspiratorial resentment. The rally in Athens was marked by an operation of neo-Nazi groups that, shouting "scumbag traitor politicians" and using iron flagpoles as weapons, tried to storm the parliament.

In an uncanny way, these events took us back to the "rallies for Macedonia" that took place in Greece in the 1990s, under the major slogan "Macedonia is one and it is Greek." It was the time when clergy associations and reserve military officers invaded public life;

when schools were shut down to "facilitate" the participation of students in the demonstrations; and when the Greek diaspora mobilized. In those rallies, the plural *demos* of democracy was hijacked by the self-enclosed community of blood ties (thus echoing the notorious slogan of Greek nationalism in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries: "Fatherland, religion, family").

In December 1992 in Athens, a few months after the Thessaloniki rally, the neo-Nazi organization Golden Dawn made its first open and violent public appearance, by transforming the "common sense" of national supremacy into a racist weapon of hatred against those who did not seem to fall into its standards of the (white Christian masculine) "proper Greek." In November 2018, the slogan "Democracy sold off Macedonia" was written on a wall of a public school which was occupied by students as a protest against the Prespa Agreement, while representatives of the Greek right-wing party were expressing their admiration for the students' "national sensitivity." One wonders whether this was one of the schools that got locked a few months ago by "concerned students and parents" to disallow the access of refugee students to education. It seems to me that the challenge for agonistic democracy is to ensure that schools do not lock out the critical knowledges of anti-racism, equality, social justice, and solidarity across/without borders, but actively resist the turning of history and history education into national/ist grand narratives.

I think the political performativity of the Prespa Agreement lies in activating counterhegemonic practices of democracy against manifestations of unleashed ethno-nationalism. It critically repositions the political body as a plural and open-ended *demos* of democracy across geopolitical and embodied borders rather than a nationally entrenched community. And this, I think, is an ever-present possibility, today turning into an important political imperative. Putting in action - theoretically and politically - new and more nuanced, intersectional and transversal, forms of critical transnationalism in this particular moment of advanced capitalism is a painfully crucial aspect of this transformative politics. This would perhaps provide a space in which the enduring violent effects of colonial, imperial, racialized, and nationalist sovereignties can be acknowledged and dismantled.

Tsvetelina Hristova |

Towards Marina Gržinić (Ed.), *Border Thinking: Disassembling Histories of Racialized Violence*

Marina Gržinić (Ed.), *Border Thinking: Disassembling Histories of Racialized Violence* (Vienna and Berlin: Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and Sternberg Press, 2018)

Bionote: Tsvetelina Hristova is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. She is interested in issues of automation and digitalization and in tracing their political genealogy and implications.

Western Sydney University
t.hristova@westernsydney.edu.au

Border Thinking: Disassembling Histories of Racialized Violence gathers together the work of over 20 scholars, artists and activists comprising a critical testimony and analysis of the politics of capitalist expansion and the racial violence of Western liberalism. It collects varying genres of texts and visual materials which makes it challenging to read and analyse the volume as a coherent theoretical framework, political claim and method. Despite the relatively coherent framework presented in the introduction by the editor Marina Gržinić, the texts, loosely assembled around the topics of race and border, differ significantly in genre, maturity of argumentation, and their overall capacity to adopt a theoretical and political framework. However, this heterogeneity can also be seen as one of the provocations of the book. The result perfectly embodies the idea of the multiplication of borders[1] and presents to us an intellectually and politically provoking multiplication of the voices of/from the border. It combines documentary style reports with highly theoretical works; historical analyses visual documentation and art; personal and very intimate political accounts of bordering and experiences of borders and racism. In this way, the volume prompts us to consider the implications of a Bakhtinian dialogic heteroglossia as a method for political and theoretical inquiry. The book combines a decolonial

approach (most explicit in Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso's article on the indigenous politics of feminism in America), with postcolonial theory, most notably Achile Mbembe's, critical border studies, and art activism. This heterogeneity allows multiple configurations and dialogues between the articles and artworks included therein. I will focus on following the conversation between some of the contributions that engage with the current crisis of Western liberalism and migration management in the EU.

Outside of this theoretical line, which I will follow here, there are some very original articles, such as Khaled Rhamadan's analysis of the cinematography of violence in ISIS' executions and African-American lynchings, which do not partake explicitly in this dialogue, but are extremely interesting and provocative in their own right. Rhamadan's article, for example, initiates a slightly different narrative and argumentative line that problematizes violence, race, and art as a spectacle and mediated performance. Rhamadan draws parallels between the scenography of ISIS execution videos, photos of public lynchings of African-Americans in the U.S., and the stalking and attempted murderer of Björk, showing the emergence of a certain aesthetics and performativity of violence with the development of visual media and documentary capture. This unsettling analysis points to the unexpected intertwining of media technologies and technologies of killing - although the case of Björk's stalker still remains unconvincingly linked to issues concerning the border and racialization.

The title of this volume makes a direct reference to the work of Walter Mignolo on decolonization and his concept of "border thinking"[2] as an epistemological method of overcoming the structures of oppression. It is worth noting the points of convergence and divergence in this book from decolonial theory. While Mignolo's concept of "border thinking" draws on a dichotomy between civilization and barbarism, colonial modernity and indigenous non-modernities, this book complicates the idea of the border, exclusion and race by interrogating different practices of bordering and racialization in Europe, as well as in the post-colonies and the "Orient."

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[1] Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, Or, the Multiplication of Labour* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2013).

[2] Walter Mignolo, "Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing: On (De)Coloniality, Border Thinking and Epistemic Disobedience," *Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (2011), 273-83; Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012).

Border Thinking comes out at a time when the political order of the West and the superiority of liberal democracy and (neo)liberal capitalism are more and more contested. While these contestations have led to movements like Occupy and the resurgence of strikes and social mobilization, they have also been expressed through a turn to the fascist right with the solidification of nationalist, fascist and conservative regimes and political expressions across different regions of the world. To this, the volume counterpoints a repeated call for the queering of ethnicities (Stanimir Panayotov) and identities (Tjaša Kancler).

One of the central themes throughout the contributions is the so-called "refugee crisis" in Europe, which has become a focal point of repression, resistance and solidarity in EU politics, but also, significantly, a sign of the crisis of liberalism in the West. This crisis is seen as a result of the inherent contradictions of liberalism, which weaves its genealogy into the history of colonialism and racialized violence, a twinning at birth, which is argued by Domenico Losurdo as constitutive of the principles and paradoxes of liberalism.[3] Panayotov, in his article "Necropolitics in the East," delves into these paradoxes from the perspective of the current EU crisis of liberal democracy and migration management. He argues that the expansion of capitalist liberal democracy to the former socialist block after 1989 shatters the necessary dependency between the liberal core and its "other," which sustains liberalism not only as a principle in the economy, but also as a political project. Panayotov argues for the possibility of complicating the notion of race and racialization through Fatima El-Tayeb's concept of "queering ethnicity," bringing class, race and ethnicity together as constitutive of the ways in which necropolitics work in the East European context. This argument is central to understanding how the volume depicts and critiques the dependence between liberalism and necropolitics as grounded in a series of operations of bordering that repeat the racialization, exploitation and negation of the colonies.

In the work of Marina Gržinić the double-faced nature of liberalism is critiqued through the concept of necropolitics, developed by Achile Mbembe and further elaborated by Gržinić as the other side of bio-

politics - a work of negation, extinction and silencing in the peripheries, which makes the solidification of liberal politics of life possible in the core. This theoretical and political project linking liberalism, colonialism, racism and the politics of death is developed in several of the contributions in the volume and I think it is worth looking into the kind of dialogue it creates.

The problem of how the border operates as a mode of exclusion and difference plays a central role in the contribution of Tjaša Kancler, who offers a critique of EU border regimes. In "Interrogating Silences: Crisis, Borders, and Decolonial Interferences" Kancler discusses the processes and mechanisms of racialization in Europe, which take shape through the construction of multiple borderlands - the externalization of EU borders to African shores and the transformation of the whole region of Central and Eastern Europe into a borderzone, schizophrenically torn between its status of a guard post for EU's anti-asylum policies while remaining Europe's "other" (Kancler, Panayotov). Kancler argues that the inclusion of post-communist Eastern European states in the EU project has not only facilitated the externalization of borders, but also the externalization and denial of racialized violence. Redrawing the borders of Europe has made it possible for the West to absolve itself of its past histories of imperialism, while simultaneously constructing an opposition that transfers its vices of racialized policies to the East - the West openly welcomes refugees, while the East is racist; the West is global, while the East is nationalistic. The discourse about the welcoming West is consistently challenged throughout the volume in the works of Betül Seyma Küpeli, who critiques the proliferation of humanitarian-inspired art which exploits the topic of migration; focussing especially in the art of Neda Hosseinyar and Marika Schmiedt, who focus on racist and Islamophobic policies; and in Miguel González Cabezas' map of the externalization of the Spanish external EU border.

However, Zoltán Kékesi's "Transpositions: Jews, Roma, and Other Aliens in the Radical Right Culture in Hungary" offers a counter-narrative of sorts, tracing the histories of racism and anti-Semitism in Central Europe and their contemporary revival by the far right in Hungary. Uncovering past stories of vilified Jews adorned with a monstrous image and fear of black magic, Kékesi analyzes the per-

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[3] Domenico Losurdo, *Liberalism: A Counter-History*, trans. by Gregory Elliot (London and New York: Verso, 2011).

sistence of myths of the abuse and corruption of the pure nationalist body by various "others" and sees in their revival the repetition of past and forgotten racial histories.

Acts of repetition, silencing and death remain pivotal for building the overall argument, throughout the volume, of the repeated and silenced histories of racialized violence. It is through these concepts that Suvendrini Perera constructs a shared history of the Transatlantic slave trade and the current refugee crisis in her hauntingly poetic article. Perera retells the legend of Drexciya, which is part of the oral tradition of African slavery - an "undersea continent peopled by the unborn babies of slaves who were tossed or fell overboard during the Middle Passage" (186). This otherworldly oceanography is seen as the new deterritorialized territory of solace and solidarity in death that brings together the two journeys. Perera considers the possibility of imagining a corporeal geography of hope, vulnerability and the precarity of "survival media" carrying racialized bodies across continents and repeated histories of dehumanization and militarism.

Her evocative piece prompts a question at the core of this volume - examining the possibility of "striking the border" (28) and keeping solidarity in the midst of the repetition of the necropolitics of colonial violence. The possibility of exodus in some of the other articles remain constrained either within a retreat into an indigenous politics of difference (Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso) or the intimate politics of identity and the self (in Njideka Stephanie Iroh's poem and Maira Enesi Caixeta's diary). It is notable that the idea of solidarity is articulated through the deadly embrace of the ocean. The ghosts of babies who were born in the seas while their mothers were dying is an eerie image that does not easily translate into a message of hope or change. It remains troubling and the loss and death linger on. The young refugee from the contemporary passage, whose story Perera links to Drexciya, shares that a part of her remained in the waters, carrying the lifeless bodies of her companions. The capacity to keep solidarity in the face of loss and death is the most pressing question asked in this volume, one however, that remains unanswered - stepping beyond the testimony and analysis, we must ask: what are the possibilities of politically articulating the dead and the living dead in the geographies of necropolitics and necrocapitalism?

The possibility of thinking about the Eastern European, post-socialist experience through the lens of colonial oppression and violence in the context of EU enlargement and the current crisis is one of the provocative and intriguing accomplishments of this volume. There have been multiple attempts throughout academia to bring these two distinct experiences together, such as the works of Madina Tolstanova,[4] Sharad Chari and Katherine Verderi,[5] Nikolay Karkov[6] and Nataša Kovačević,[7] among many others. The different voices and perspectives contained in this volume offer an important intervention into this emergent area of thinking post-socialist Europe through the power relations and dependencies with/in the (post)colony. It interweaves debates about capitalist expansion, crises and subjectivity as key aspects of a new revolutionary ontology of the past, present and future of a contracting geography. In this contraction full of political tension and muted political articulations, the border becomes a central technology for how difference is enforced, enacted and erased in the course of a long historical attempt of the West to rid itself of the haunting ghosts of racialized oppression and extermination that mark simultaneously its spilling out of the "old world" and its retraction into a morally guarded domain of a territorially defined birthplace of modern liberal politics.

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[4] Madina Tlostanova, "The Postcolonial and the Postsocialist: A Deferred Coalition? Brothers Forever?," *Postcolonial Interventions: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2018), 1-37.
[5] Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery, "Thinking Between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography After the Cold War," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2009), 6-34.
[6] Nikolay Karkov, "Decolonizing Praxis in Eastern Europe: Toward a South-to-South Dialogue," *Comparative and Continental Philosophy*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2015), 180-200.
[7] Nataša Kovačević, *Narrating Post/Communism: Colonial Discourse and Europe's Borderline Civilization* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

Giuseppe Capalbo |
Towards Karin Sellberg, Lena Wånggren and Kamillea Aghtan (Eds.), *Corporeality and Culture: Bodies in Movement*

Karin Sellberg, Lena Wånggren and Kamillea Aghtan (Eds.), *Corporeality and Culture: Bodies in Movement* (Farnham, UK and Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2015)

Bionote: Giuseppe Capalbo is a PhD student in Literatures in English at the University of Verona, Italy. He earned a Bachelor's degree - *cum laude* - in Modern Languages and Cultures (thesis title: *Dulce Chacón's* La Voz Dormida*: A Comparative Analysis in Light of Gender Studies*) in 2016 and a Master's degree - *cum laude* - in Modern Languages and Literatures (thesis title: *Queering the Body: Hanif Kureishi, Andrew McMillan, Will Self*) in 2019. In January 2017, he presented a paper entitled "Bodies that Matter in Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*" at the conference Spaces, Places and Identity (University of Calabria). In November 2018, he presented a paper entitled "Psychic Wounds, Pain, and Bodily Issues between Italy and the USA: The Case of Louise DeSalvo" at the conference The Cultural Language(s) of Pain: European Literary Perspectives (University of London). His areas of interest include Gender, Queer and Body Studies. He is currently working on the interrelated concepts of *body*, *illness* and *trauma* in contemporary English and Italian American Literature.

University of Verona
giuseppecapalbo@live.com

In the philosophical tradition, ranging from Plato to Descartes, amongst many others, the ontological distinction between mind and body entailed the subordination of the latter to the former: "The mind not only subjugates the body, but occasionally entertains the fantasy of fleeing its embodiment altogether."[1] From the 1980s onwards, in view of the so-called *corporeal turn*,[2] both the Humanities and Social Sciences as a whole have tried to revise Cartesian dualism(s) by empowering the body - thus overcoming its representation as a mere *unhappy object*.[3] Drawing on this focus of the body as an active site of resistance, the contributors of *Corporeality and Culture: Bodies in Movement* survey modern and contemporary corporeality across disciplines, encompassing a multi/interdisciplinary perspective.

The book's straightforward preface concerns its structure and the reasons why the editors chose to write such a book in the first place: thanks to a conference held in Edinburgh on May 28-29, 2011 (*Bodies in Movement: Intersecting Discourses of Materiality in Sciences and the Arts*), they realized that the corporeal turn had already influenced each and every scholar involved in the project; as such, they had to seriously consider publishing the conference proceedings in order to contribute to the cross-disciplinary development of the current scholarship on bodies. The book is then divided into three sections, each one preceded by a short explanatory introduction - which helps the reader understand the essays' commonalities.

The first section - "Movements of Violence and Corollaries of Sight" - is made up of three theoretical papers which deal with the ways in which the body affects - and is being affected by - external factors. Fiona Hanley, Tami Gadir and Irene Noy, by describing the space where the conference took place, give an account of the dependency of the body on infrastructural supports: indeed, each site presupposes specific conditions which discipline bodily movements, especially for those who do not fit into the phallogocentric system (16). Charlotte Farrell looks at both a conference presentation by theorist Alphonso Lingis and an installation by artist Wangechi Mutu, through the notion of "to be moved to tears" - outlined by William James (21): her main concern is analyzing the affectivity that moved her to tears when viewing these performances. Consequently, as in the previous essay, there is a connection between the body and the environment, which brings the author to conclude that the body exists coextensively with the spatial dimension (29). Similarly, Xavier

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[1] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, [1990] 2006), 17.

[2] Cf. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Corporeal Turn: An Interdisciplinary Reader* (Exeter-Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic, 2009).

[3] Cf. Sara Ahmed, "Happy Objects," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010), 42.

Aldana Reyes explains how an on-screen mutilation can affect the viewer. In particular, he is interested in horror films as "[…] the most obvious body genre" (39), where corporeal vulnerability is facilitated by somatic empathy (41). The special charm of this section lies in the ways in which it attempts to look at the biomediated body[4] as a place-based surface, thus bringing forward Judith Butler's latest research on bodily vulnerability within spatial boundaries:[5] here, each essayist widens her insights into the threats of gathering in the street[6] by focusing on the experience of being in a public building (e.g., university, exhibition room, cinema).

The second section - "Monsters, Margins and Corporealizing Choreographies" - focuses on the artistic and literary representations of non-normative bodies, including: bio-figures, cyborgs, hermaphrodites, etc. Elizabeth Stephens examines bio-sculptures (i.e., living organisms as artwork). Take, as an example, transgenic artist Eduardo Kac's *Bioluminescent Bunny*, a Frankensteinian monster which calls into question the very essence of life as it "[…] was produced by implanting a rabbit […] with a Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP) gene from a type of jellyfish" (59). Likewise, Rosemary Deller looks at how bio-art disrupts the boundary between human and non-human beings in Kira O'Reilly's performance piece *inthewrongplaceness* (2004-2009). Sebastian Schmidt-Tomczak shifts to a particular type of corporeal otherness: the cyborg - a crucial trope in challenging the politics of exclusion and oppression (87) - in Oshii Mamoru's *Ghost in the Shell*. Karin Sellberg considers the rewriting of the Platonic hermaphrodite in Angela Carter's novels and John Cameron Mitchell's musical and film *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001). The molding of a non-normative body and the resulting *Frankenstein syndrome*[7] - the dreary feeling that a piece of a dead person's matter is now a part of you - are seen here in a new light. At the core of each analysis there is no longer a transplantation patient, but either the reader or the viewer's response to that intersubjective and intercorporeal event.

[4] Cf. Patricia T. Clough, "The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedia, and Bodies," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010), 210.

[5] Cf. Judith Butler, "Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance," in *Vulnerability in Resistance*, ed. by Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti and Leticia Sabsay (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016), 21.

[6] Cf. Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2015), 125-26.

[7] Cf. Jenny Slatman and Guy Widdershoven, "Hand Transplants and Bodily Integrity," *Body and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2010), 69-72.

Nevertheless, what the entire section seems to lack is a deep-rooted examination of the relationship between body and space. The only exception is Sellberg's essay which considers the corporealizing process as a complicated spatio-affective amalgamation (105), thus establishing a coherent connection with the previous section.

The third section - "Political Technologies of Embodiment" - deals with war bodies, medical monsters, and poetic forms of embodiment. Jasie Stokes examines Mary Borden's memoir *The Forbidden Zone* (1929) in order to analyze the traumatized body within the interstitial non-places of WWI (i.e., the spaces between the trenches and the home front). Ally Crockford draws on the concept of the *monstrous body* - already outlined in the second section - from a medical perspective. After introducing Frederick Treves' *The Elephant Man and Other Reminiscences*, she describes scientific case studies which prove that, oftentimes, the monster was just a person born with a non-normative body (e.g., supernumerary leg, diphallicism). Peter Arnds explains the double meaning of *humanimality* - the liminality between the human and the animal (141) - in narratives about fascism, the Third Reich, and genocide: this notion could be applied to both the ruling class – as a hybrid of man and wolf – and those who were subjugated - thus reduced to the level of parasites. Although there is an explicit degradation of the human being, he demonstrates that literature offers many strategies of resistance. For instance, Primo Levi - by writing his testimony *If This Is A Man* (1947) - tried to fight back against the reduction of certain humans to subhuman levels. Douglas Clark, instead, looks at how Emily Dickinson's actual body merges - and, at the same time, resists assimilation - with her poetic bodies. Seen through the lens of the Critical Medical Humanities, this section puts many relevant issues at stake, each one related to the suffering body. For instance, the belatedness of trauma and the drift from the physical to the mental realm; the healing effect of illness narratives and the laboratory as the place where the destabilization of the normative human form takes place (128).

Overall, *Corporeality and Culture* is an excellent and well-organized volume. Contributors provide fascinating insights, which are in tune with one another and with the theoretical assumptions advanced in the first section. It fits in perfectly with the current debates on

the role of the body in literature, medicine, society, and beyond. In particular, each essay shows how Body Studies can clearly be seen to intersect with other methodologies (e.g., Gender Studies, Affect Theory, Critical Medical Humanities) in the theorization of the body as an affected and affecting site. It is definitely a must-read for those who are working - or are willing to work - on theories of embodiment.

Eszter Kováts |

"Not A Thing?" Rogers Brubaker's *Trans: Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities* and Its Relevance for Central and Eastern Europe

Rogers Brubaker, *Trans: Gender and Race in an Age of Unsettled Identities* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016)

Bionote: Eszter Kováts holds a BA in Sociology, an MA in French and German Studies and in Political Science. She is a PhD student in Political Science at ELTE University, Budapest. She worked in the Hungarian Office of the German political foundation Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung between 2009 and 2019, from 2012 till the end of 2019 she was responsible for the Foundation's gender program for East-Central Europe.

Institute of Political Science, Faculty of Law, ELTE University Budapest
kovats_eszter@yahoo.fr

"I, the undersigned, hereby state that African-American origin and identity are an inseparable part of my identity. Because of this I am especially glad to be able to perform in George Gershwin's opera, *Porgy and Bess*." This is the statement the crew of the Hungarian State Opera had to sign in April 2019 before their first performance, in order to bypass the author's will that the opera be played by an all-black cast, that caused several days of media attention and outrage.[1] This can be interpreted as a legally creative solution to a condition that would make it otherwise impossible to perform the opera in a country where there are literally no Black opera singers. But it was - as noted by several Hungarian commentators on both the Left and Right - also a mocking glass towards the identity politics focus of social justice activism in Anglo-Saxon countries often criticized from liberals and leftists too, but in the Hungarian context, unfortunately it is mainly thematized by the right-wing government (and its media) within its framework of culture war, in which it pres-

ents every social justice claim as an evil and depicts itself as savior against the horrific developments in the declining West.

Several days prior to the yearly Pride March in 2019, posters were put up all around Budapest, falsely imitating the official Pride posters, with the presumable aim of discrediting the organizers and distorting LGBT claims. One of the posters stated for instance, that "Love has no race, no gender [depicting the Austrian crossdresser singer Conchita Wurst] and no age" (referring to transageism AND pedophilia at the same time),[2] implying that the acceptance of pedophilia is among the claims of LGBT groups. While Pride organizers decidedly distanced themselves from these posters, the media outlets close to the government presented them as veritable posters to cause outrage.[3]

These episodes are far from unique in either Hungary, or the broader region, and often involve much higher stakes than mere acts of mockery and discreditation. References to US and UK activism serve as reference points for political actors in Central and Eastern Europe who aim at stopping developments and preventing changes that are often deemed progressive. MA programs in Gender Studies have been de-accredited by government decree in Hungary which derided the field's so-called unscientificity and emphasized its alleged responsibility for the proliferation of gender identities. Similarly, in a recent interview with the Financial Times, Vladimir Putin has stated, refuting the Russian state's alleged homophobia, that they have nothing against the LGBT community as a whole, but certain aspects, like children choosing from five or six genders, seem excessive to them. The Bulgarian constitutional court ruled out the Istanbul Convention[4] as unconstitutional for its use of the word gender, and linked its judgement of gender identity to an individual/

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[1] Shaun Walker, "White *Porgy and Bess* Cast 'Asked to Say They Identify as African-American,'" *The Guardian* (April 7, 2019). https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2019/apr/07/white-porgy-and-bess-cast-forced-to-say-they-identify-as-african-american.

[2] Suggesting that if gender is a social construct, then age must be too, as understood also by transageist activists who identify as being aged differing from their real one, the consequence being that sex with someone of whichever age is permitted, thus the conclusion: permission of paedophilia.

[3] Szilárd István Pap, "Kamuplakátokkal próbálja lejáratni a Budapest Pride-ot a kormánymédia [The Government Media Attempts to Discredit Budapest Pride with Fake Posters]," *Merce* (July 1, 2019). https://merce.hu/2019/07/01/kamuplakatokkal-probalja-lejaratni-a-budapest-pride-ot-a-kormanymedia.

[4] The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

subjective choice, disconnected from biological sex.[5] And the list could be continued.

There is already an abundance of literature on "anti-gender movements"[6] which mainly concentrate on the Catholic Church's role in mobilizing a politically charged discourse against the term gender in CEE. There are a select few scholars who acknowledge the importance of the trans question in the teachings of the Vatican.[7] However, the explicit links of the partly religious, partly right-wing party discourses on the presumed threat of "gender ideology" to US (or more broadly, Anglo-Saxon/core countries) developments of academic and activist discourses and practices on gender are still under-researched.

The so-called Jenner-Dolezal controversy from 2015 is highly relevant in the post-socialist region and possesses an explanatory power which can help us understand the practices of right-wing, and growingly anti-democratic, forces.

Rogers Brubaker, a sociologist known for his decades-long scholarship on race, ethnicity and nationalism analyses this case in his book published in 2016.

Several days after the former Olympic champion Bruce Jenner came out as transgender and officially changed her name to Caitlyn Jenner, she was presented on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, marking a turning point in transgender visibility. At approximately the same time, Rachel Dolezal, the black-identifying and black-presenting president of one of the branches of the NAACP[8] was "outed" as white by her parents. The simultaneity of the two cases prompted a controversy in the US as to whether or not the two cases were similar, and if either of them could identify as they like. The debate was thus about

legitimacy and the relation of transgender and transracial claims: if Jenner can claim to be a woman and ought to be recognized as such, can Dolezal, in the same vein, state to to transgender people that she is black? Is it a legitimate question or does it do a disservice transgender people?

Transracial "is not a case" was a common statement in the ensuing debates, and this is what Brubaker seeks to address in his volume: the most widespread position being that Caitlyn Jenner *is* a woman and should be accepted as such, whereas Rachel Dolezal committed something morally intolerable by identifying as black. Brubaker attempts to disentangle this debate and "provide new analytical resources for understanding the contingency and arbitrariness of racial categories, while remaining sensitive to the ways in which gender and race operate as different systems of embodied difference" (151).

The book is a good entry point for those acquainted with the main concepts rather used in social sciences, but without a working knowledge of either the US debates or gender and race studies. It provides a calm and systematic analysis of a phenomenon of which the Jenner-Dolezal controversy is only the surface. The text can be helpful both for those who pursue the developments of social justice activism with sympathy and those who are worried, overtly critical or just intellectually unsatisfied by calls for more empathy as arguments to accept certain intellectual and political position. The book allows the reader to take a step back from their own political positions and offers them a mirror - how these activisms and political struggles look from the outside to a sociologist, who is himself sympathetic towards the justice claims and claimants, and knows and refers extensively to the transgender studies literature, but dares to point out several contradictions.

The Trans Moment

The volume uses the Jenner-Dolezal affair as an intellectual opportunity to reflect on changes that have happened on how we think of race. Brubaker's starting point is that the reflections and scholarship produced on transgenderism are potentially useful for producing new knowledges on race too. The book is divided into two

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[5] Ruzha Smilova, "Promoting 'Gender Ideology': Constitutional Court of Bulgaria Declares Istanbul Convention Unconstitutional," *Oxford Human Rights Hub* (August 22, 2018). https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/promoting-gender-ideology-constitutional-court-of-bulgaria-declares-istanbul-convention-unconstitutional. The Convention's definitions and approach takes the two biological sexes for granted, see "3. c) 'gender' shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men"; the Bulgarian judges ruled that the Convention's text is ambiguous.
[6] Roman Kuhar and David Paternotte (Eds.), *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017).
[7] Mary Anne Case, "Trans Formations in the Vatican's War on 'Gender Ideology,'" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 44. No. 3 (2019), 639-63.
[8] National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

parts. The first part ("The Trans Moment") contains two chapters directly analyzing the Jenner-Dolezal affair and the positions taken in the debate. The second part ("Thinking with Trans") contains three chapters, describing three transgender trajectories and attempting to apply them to race.

Chapter 1, "Transgender, Transracial?," tries to make sense of the arguments for or against the claim: "If Jenner is accepted, then Dolezal should be, too." Brubaker draws a matrix of positions along gender/race and essentialism/voluntarism (22) and discerns four positions of the debate. (1) Gender essentialism combined with race essentialism: that neither gender nor race are changeable or choosable. This position is attributed to the conservative right and radical feminists, however, he makes the distinction that feminists stick to their essentialism not on a biological basis as conservatives do, (who make a causal connection between sexed body and the necessary gender roles), but on the basis of what he calls "historical essentialism," that is, that a woman is someone who has lived her entire life as woman (being socialized and treated as woman). (2) Gender voluntarism combined with racial essentialism the majority position in the debate: that people can freely identify with any gender they wish, but transracialism is excluded. This claim was combined with the (likely not unfounded) fear that if the two were combined, it would undermine the growing acceptance of transgender claims in the eyes of the wider public; transracialism is still seen as absurd, while transgenderism is visibly growing acceptable. Brubaker aptly highlights that in recent years gender voluntarism has very rapidly become the hegemonic position on the cultural left. (3) Gender essentialism and racial voluntarism, the position that was literally not taken up by anyone in the debate, a fact Brubaker treats as puzzling (see below on contradictions). (4) Both gender and race are voluntary. Brubaker dedicates the book to seriously considering this possibility, to analyzing why this position was so fiercely attacked in the Dolezal debates, denying any similarity of the claims of gender and race.

Brubaker's matrix seems like a useful tool to help disentangle the different positions in the debate of the Jenner-Dolezal affair and to discuss the difference between the categories of gender and race. However, with the categorization essentialism/voluntarism he un-

wittingly contributes to the false binary of open-minded progressives vs. backward conservatives, that is, the political interest of those aiming at presenting the debases in culturalist terms. But this does not help us situate the changes in a structural sense. I will come back to this later.

The second chapter, "Categories in Flux," describes how categories around race and gender have changed over the years. His main argument is the following: the proliferation of gender identities do not just recognize hitherto unnamed realities and identities but also produces and contributes to them, in a self-reinforcing manner.

The second part of the book takes three transgender trajectories and compares them to developments in how the societal negotiations around race have changed over the past decades and whether knowledge about transgender individuals can give new insights about race issues too. Chapter 3, "The Trans of Migration," analyses the one-way transition of transgenders (like Jenner) from one binary sex category to another, entailing surgical and hormonal treatment too. Brubaker uses the metaphor of migration to highlight the "unidirectional and irreversible" character of this change, claiming that "[t]he transgender migrant imagines the sex or gender category of destination as a permanent home" (75). As for race, he recalls former and current occurrences of passing, mainly of black people with lighter skin colors as white, with the aim to bypass racial discriminations and compares this to the transgender migration. In this sense, Dolezal was pursuing a "reverse passing" (a white person passing as a black). But in all of this, taking clear-cut racial categories, like black and white, for granted.

Chapter 4, "The Trans of Between," discusses the experience and identity of those transgender people who travel between the two categories, borrowing expressions and practices coded from both camps, while simultaneously taking the two categories for granted. He recalls for instance the categories androgynous (Greek male + female) and ambigender (both genders) (p. 98). This treats gender as a spectrum, existing between the two poles male and female.[9] Brubaker applies the term "betweenness" for race in the case of

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[9] A critical assessment of this from a feminist perspective: Rebecca Reilly-Cooper, "Gender Is Not A Spectrum," *Aeon* (June 28, 2016). https://aeon.co/essays/the-idea-that-gender-is-a-spectrum-is-a-new-gender-prison.

multiracial identities, e.g., for people with mixed ancestries. This is exemplified by the popularity of autosomal DNA tests which indicate quantitatively, in terms of percentage, the mixture of certain phenotypes. Such tests "locate everyone in a conceptual state of betweenness" (103).

Chapter 5, "The Trans of Beyond," deals with attempts to transcend binary categorizations for the good, either refusing to belong to any categories (being agender, etc.), or refusing categories themselves as useful and necessary tools for making sense of societal processes. This applies to race as well, for instance cases where people fight against racial categorizations (such changes are visible in conducting censuses). Importantly, he also draws attention to the fact that identity options are unequally distributed. Those who face multiple exclusions (racial, spatial, class-based and legal) do not have the same options, be it going beyond gender or beyond race.

Paradoxes of Trans

From the beginning Brubaker emphasizes the key tension between changing gender and challenging gender (p. 17). His take on essentialism seems to suggest that he puts conservatives and radical feminists in the same box (a rhetorical device routinely applied by proponents of gender identity). But at a later point, when discussing the paradox underlying the transgender-transracial polarity, his more nuanced view becomes clear:

> Morphological, physiological and hormonal differences between the sexes [...] are biologically real and socially consequential. Nothing remotely analogous can be said about racial divisions. Genetically governed differences between socially defined racial categories are superficial and inconsequential; genetically programmed differences between the sexes are neither. Like race, sex is a system of social classification. Unlike race, however, sex is also a well-established biological category.[10] But despite the evident biological basis of

sex differences - a biological basis that is utterly lacking for racial differences - it is more socially legitimate to choose and change one's sex (and gender) than to choose and change one's race." (135).

To account for this paradox, he draws on the sex-gender distinction, and claims that there is an additional paradox behind the subjectivity and objectivity of gender identity. The nature vs culture opposition behind the sex-gender distinction was linked to understandings of authenticity, i.e., that identity is something "deep, stable generative inner essence [...] of which each individual is the sole legitimate interpreter" (136).

> [W]hile gender identity is understood as independent of the visible morphological features of the sexed body, it is at the same time widely understood as grounded in other - and yet unknown - properties of the body. Gender identity is [...] understood *both* as a subjective inner essence, accessible to and knowable by the individual, *and* as an objective constitutional fact over which the individual has no control. The subjectivity of gender identity is seen as grounded in the objectivity of the body. [...] The putative objectivity of the subjectivity allows choice to be defended in the name of the unchosen and change to be legitimized in the name of the unchanging. [...] [I]nstead of imagining the sexed body as an unchosen and unchanging substrate and gender identity as its expression, one can now imagine gender identity as an unchosen, unchanging inner essence and the sexed body as its choosable and changeable expression. (136-7)

The Societal Context of Choice

The book dares to critically address issues that seem to have become orthodoxies on the so-called cultural left in the US, however, the author's use of the concept gender is somewhat disturbing. While he draws attention to the fact that in the English speaking context gender is often used as a synonym for sex, so as to avoid as-

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[10] Here Brubaker makes a lengthy footnote on the acknowledgement of intersex people, while highlighting that "the fact that certain individuals can be assigned to the categories male or female only arbitrarily does not make the categories themselves arbitrary; and the fact that sex is culturally co-constructed does not mean it is biologically unfounded" (135).

sociations on sexual intercourse[11], he remains incoherent in the use of the term: sometimes it refers to a gender role (as attributed by society to men and women, i.e., grown males and females), sometimes gender identity (when describing the difference between cis and trans, cis being "a person whose gender corresponds to his or her sex at birth," quoting from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, at p. 16.), and the whole time he uses the term "sex and gender" and "sex or gender."

This contradiction can be solved if we carry out the analysis that he opens on choice, but which he does not complete to its end.

Brubaker's volume succinctly describes the changes of how we used to understand and how we currently understand race and gender. While occasionally recalling the growing significance of individualism, "the climate of subjectivism" (24), and the idea that "the enlargement of choice [...] does not simply respond to this unsettling [of basic categories]; it also contributes to it" (50), he does not systematically analyze *why* these changes could take place in the first place. I think this must be accounted for in order to adequately assess the situation. I situate these changes in line with those authors highlighting the individualization of structural struggles.[12]

What began as a collective effort towards the political articulation of structural injustices has become a set of calls to change individual behavior. As Marc Saxer puts it: "Fights about moral issues and identity are a typical feature of the neoliberal age: many citizens have lost confidence in the state's ability and, indeed, will to shape society. Change is now only possible on a grand scale if enough individuals see a need to change their behavior."[13] This phenomenon is no longer endemic to the West but has also been gaining momentum in Central and Eastern Europe.

Thematizing the specific oppression that certain groups experience based on their sex, race and sexuality is crucial, and we can-

not underestimate the significance of the Western activism of the 1970s-80s. But these developments also came hand in hand with the fragmentation of identities of postmodernism that were - as described by many authors - instrumental to the growing individualism inscribed in our economic system. This opened the door to various co-optations and changes of scale.

The best example of this is classism. Class analysis - to put it simply - is aimed at how a specific mode of production or market leads to a specific mode of division of labor with different and contradictory positions. Furthermore, it is aimed at analyzing the wide-ranging levels of power and the capacity to defend the interests of people in these positions. An intersectional analysis would be, for instance, an analysis of how capitalist exploitation intersects with patriarchal power structures to produce specific life conditions and exploitative positions for women. However, in the individualized approach of the critique of so-called classism, class has become but another identity category on the basis of which people are discriminated against. In this interpretation, poor women are simply added in. And what is looked at are the ways in which lower-class women are discriminated against or disadvantaged, in relation to better-off women or lower-class men. This empties out both class analysis and systemic intersectional analysis of its original, structural sense, turning it instead into an analysis of the discrimination of individuals by adding up "layers of oppression."

I see the change in the meaning of the concept of gender and the proliferation of non-binary gender identities in the same context as the individualization of structural problems and the promotion of individual solutions to systemic oppressions.[14] Gender used to denote "the fundamentally social quality of distinctions based on sex" (as Joan Scott puts it in her seminal essay[15]), the power structures in a given society between men and women, and the societal roles, possibilities, and constraints accrued from being born either male or female. The shift in the meaning of gender, as exemplified in the Jenner-Dolezal affair and Brubaker's book, is apparent in much of the current trans and gender-queer scholarship and activism, where

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[11] Mary Anne Case, "Disaggregating Gender from Sex and Sexual Orientation: The Effeminate Man in the Law and Feminist Jurisprudence," *The Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 105, No. 1 (October 1995), 1-105.
[12] Shelley Budgeon, "Individualized Femininity and Feminist Politics of Choice," *European Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (2015), 303-18; Asad Haider, *Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump* (London and New York: Verso, 2018).
[13] Marc Saxer, "The Liberal Delusion," *International Politics and Society* (November 26, 2018). https://www.ips-journal.eu/topics/democracy/article/show/the-liberal-delusion-3108.

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[14] Reilly-Cooper, "Gender."
[15] Joan Wallace Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 91, Issue 5 (December 1986), 1053-75.

gender has become conceptually synonymous with gender identity, with a personal feeling of identity. Gender in this sense means identifying or not with being born male or female, having the privilege or not to have one's "sex assigned at birth" and "felt sense of gender identity" in line. This second approach, however, has very little in common with the original critique of the hierarchical social structures between men and women and the fact that the gendered oppression we observe today is not a response to our identities but to how society identifies us (and, say, gives lesser pay to a woman or exposes her to specific forms of violence - independently of her self-assigned "gender identity").

Brubaker OK, Tuvel not?

As I have tried to show, Rogers Brubaker's volume does not shy away from thematizing several difficult questions in the fear of disapproval from activists or scholars, and rightly so. His book did not cause a scandal, a somewhat surprising turn given the tone of the American debates on trans issues. Rebecca Tuvel, an associate professor in philosophy, did not have this chance. In her article "In Defense of Transracialism" published in *Hypatia*, the renowned feminist philosophical journal, several months after the publication of Brubaker's book, she approached the same Jenner-Dolezal case and the same question on the possible legitimacy of transracial claims as Brubaker: not from a sociological but rather a philosophical point of view.[16] And she comes to conclusions similar to his, in Brubaker's terms, she defends a voluntarist position both in gender and race, meaning that if we accept (and we should accept!) transgender claims, then we should seriously consider accepting transracial claims too. Despite stating on several occasions her commitment to transgender rights in the text, she nevertheless faced a huge backlash.[17] Over 800 scholars from universities in the US and beyond issued an open letter to call the journal's editors to retract the published piece, expressing their concerns "beyond mere scholarly disagreement," and claiming that "there has been a failure in the review process, one that painfully reflects a lack of engagement beyond white and cis-

gender privilege."[18] Other philosophers and activists pushed back, condemning academia's "poisonous call-out culture," the "modern day witch hunt" of those who do not "mindlessly parrot the prevailing orthodoxy" of the field.[19] The editors were split over the issue, with some of them issuing a "profound apology," and others leaving the board. The *Hypatia* transracialism controversy touched the public less than the Jenner-Dolezal affair, but it shook academia, beyond the Anglo-Saxon sphere of influence and beyond the domain of philosophy too.

Importantly, Rogers Brubaker himself issued a statement in defense of Tuvel.[20] One of his most important points is his concerns over the regulation of speech in academia, and how this can lead to self-censorship (especially for untenured professors). He also expressed his criticism over what he calls "epistemological insiderism," i.e., "the belief that identity qualifies or disqualifies one from writing with legitimacy and authority about a particular topic."

> Does the often-mentioned fact that Dr. Tuvel is white and cisgender (as am I) disqualify her from raising certain questions? Is her identity relevant to assessing her argument for according more weight to an individual's racial self-identification and less weight to ancestry? Epistemological insiderism not only stakes out certain domains as belonging to persons with certain identities; it also risks boxing persons with those identities into specific domains. It risks conveying the patronizing and offensive expectation that members of racial and ethnic minorities will focus their scholarship on race and ethnicity.[21]

One might ask why Brubaker's book *Trans* was not met with such outrage. Is it because of the differing specificities and sensitivities of the two scientific fields: philosophy and sociology? Is it because

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[16] Rebecca Tuvel, "In Defense of Transracialism," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Spring 2017), 263-78.
[17] The Wikipedia entry gives a detailed account about the case: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypatia_transracialism_controversy; others: Justin Weinberg, "*Hypatia* Controversy Updates (Updated)," *Daily Nous* (May 9, 2017). http://dailynous.com/2017/05/09/hypatia-controversy-updates; Jesse Singal, "This Is What a Modern-Day Witch Hunt Looks Like," *Intelligencer* (May 2, 2017). http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2017/05/transracialism-article-controversy.html.

[18] "Open letter to *Hypatia*," *Archive.Today* (May 2, 2017). https://archive.is/IUeR4.
[19] Singal, "This Is What"; Kelly Oliver, "If This Is Feminism...," *The Philosophical Salon* (May 8, 2017). http://thephilosophicalsalon.com/if-this-is-feminism-its-been-hijacked-by-the-thought-police; Kelly Oliver, "Education in the Age of Outrage," *The New York Times* (October 16, 2017). https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/16/opinion/education-outrage-morality-shaming.html; Julian Vigo and Lorna Garano, "An Open Letter on the *Hypatia* Controversy," *Feminist Current* (May 25, 2017). https://www.feministcurrent.com/2017/05/25/open-letter-hypatia-controversy.
[20] Rogers Brubaker, "The Uproar Over 'Transracialism,'" *The New York Times* (May 18, 2017). https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/18/opinion/the-uproar-over-transracialism.html.
[21] Brubaker, "The Uproar."

his was a book, and hers a short research article more easily read and available online? Was it because he was a tenured professor with serious scientific credentials, and she was an untenured professor? Or because he is a man and she is a woman - with feminists suggesting that transgender activists and allies more often target women with their critiques and sometimes even attacks? I will not speculate on this; however, the Tuvel controversy now belongs to and must be read together both with the Jenner-Dolezal controversy and Brubaker's book. It adds another layer to the same questions: What is the relation of material/biological reality to social constructs and social change? *Who* can speak, and how does the identity of a given scholar influence what he or she can study? What are the possible scientific subjects, and what should be excluded from potential (even theoretical) analysis? To what extent should review and publication policies take into consideration such political positions that claim authority over who can speak, and what can and cannot be put up for debate? And what should editors do if the published work offends personal sensitivities? I am afraid these debates, crafted in the Anglo-Saxon sphere of influence, will soon arrive in the Central and Eastern European academy too, presenting these claims as universal.[22]

Conclusion

Brubaker's volume is a challenging, refreshing and daring lecture for people invested in the debates on social justice, and acts as a good entry point for those who are not but who still have plenty of questions. And in the Central and Eastern European context, where the West is still often seen, within the field of feminist and LGBT activism, as the right direction for progress, and where at the same time, US debates are used by right-wing forces to build up a catastrophe narrative and an exceptional state where even anti-democratic measures are allowed so as to protect the population, it becomes crucial to better understand and situate these debates, beyond culturalist progressives vs. conservatives divides. Brubaker's book can, besides contributing to our understanding of race through the trans lens, complement the scholarship on "anti-gender movements" and give a deeper understanding concerning the antagonizing gender controversies found throughout the Jenner-Dolezal case.

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[22] Orsolya Bajusz and Dalma Feró, "Progressivist Gender-Based Activism as A Means of Social Antagonism in Hungary Through Two Case Studies," *Sociologija*, No. 1 (2018), 177-93.

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