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Edited by Peter Tmka

“Marginalization of the Global South”

11 (11)

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75 Years of Nakba No More; Unbinding Janus from Identity and Consistency Paramountcy-Regimes: Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Peter Trnka

Thinking, Acting; Unbinding

Two themes, two faces, two styles, two approaches, or one that is both *this and its other*, even its *opposite*? On one side/direction/face: political action, revolution. On the other, abstraction, abstract thinking. Both at the same time; an anomaly, an exception then becomes a rule. Monstrous normality, unimaginable difference. Patterns mutate, mutations become patterns.

The promise and challenge of life, hence of any inquiry, experience, investigation. The two orientations, Janus faces, moving now—becoming proper, maturing, or becoming *intensif*—political and abstract. In traditional Marxist terms, theory and practice, always together. In the skin and bones. Discursive and poetic figuration of spectral power. Consistent methodological insistence on the concrete and particular, the historical and situated, in relation to the necessity and challenge of abstraction, of thinking, given the ideological spectral falsification of reality, and necessity, and priority—to be short, how to live. “Learning to live finally,” as Jacques Derrida says in his last, Late Style interview:

I am at war with myself ... and I say contradictory things that are, we might say, in real tension; they are what construct me, make me live, and will make me die. I sometimes see this war as terrifying and difficult to bear, but at the same time I know that it is life. ... I thus cannot really say that I assume this contradiction, but I know that it is what keeps me alive, and makes me ask ..., ‘how does one learn to live?’. (2007, 46)

To the point: to the question *Janus Unbound* posed of the continuing contradiction, opposition, tension, and asymmetries between the colonizing and exploiting Global North and the multitudes of the Global South, we bring two concepts. And a case study. An answer: True Wealth and True Friend(s). And the case of Palestine, and Palestinian liberation from the ongoing 75-year Nakba, 75 years of ongoing disaster and catastrophe, “(post)-catastrophic” catastrophe (Hamdi 2023, 29), generations living in the same temporary, unlivable refugee camp. And a collaboration and transdisciplinary theory and practice that is aware that concepts are living paradoxes to be thought and thought

again, anew. The nature of true wealth: a question posed in Ionia in the 7th century BCE, for example, and again by Socrates in the 5th century BCE, for example, and again today, and in-between, in this form and that. And the nature of friend (and hence by implication enemy, note the difference between starting with one or the other). And the truth of who was here first, or longest, or more “properly”—or who is the indigenous and who the alien, and how to relate to the friend, the alien, and the unknown.

A life of found objects. Letters to the editor stream in with questions, ideas for work, conversations, helpful thoughts. Objections. Letters leading to work. As Stephen Spender writes in “One More New Botched Beginning” (1964) about himself and two undergraduate friends at college, both of whom died, whom he sees gathered still with him at college, sharing poems with each other:

Their lives are now those poems that were
Pointers to the poems to be their lives.

The issue at hand holds poetic objects, philosophic concepts, and subjective desires that travel at infinite speeds, globally and cosmically. Tahrir Hamdi’s *Imagining Palestine*, for example. The threads of conversation that crystallized into an article on true wealth, a translation of Abdelkébir Khatibi on true friendship, and the first formal letter(s) to the journal, on contradiction and Janus as a supra-proposition.

Janus is already unbound from facing only one direction. Facing past and future simultaneously generates something like the present. Unbinding Janus from identity and consistency regimes, and from assumptions concerning values, especially the trump, ultimate, or paramount values (such as life, deity, family), puts reality and time—not only time—outside of logical rule, beyond logical containment, generative that is of logic and everything else. Thanks to our Editorial Board member Jay Foster for bringing Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (1967) into play, where, at III.59, one finds: “Why should [Bertrand] Russell’s contradiction not be conceived as something supra-propositional, something that towers above the propositions and looks in both directions like a Janus head?”

The paradoxical knot of the real and its political untying and unbinding squiggles together the varied strands of imaginative thought gathered here, from the political situation in Tahrir Hamdi and Ilan Pappé’s constructing of a future Palestine to the abstract plenipotent well of contradiction. As Ilan Pappé argues, the concrete political situation necessarily involves abstraction and contradiction: “In *Imagining Palestine*, Hamdi follows the way Palestinians and pro-Palestinians involved in cultural resistance reconcile various contradictions or seeming dichotomies in a similar way” (71). A child puts it best, most quickly and graphically, in one of a series of lost or nonreproducible images related to this work, namely, the background for the first of the triptych of poems published here by our Poetry Editor, Andreae Callanan. “A ghost” carries a dedication to a drawing by her niece, Eleanor, age four. As Andreae Callanan informed me in an e-mail in May (accompanied by a photo of the drawing, but unfortunately the original may be lost): “the full title of Eleanor’s masterpiece

is, and I quote, ‘**A ghost who is looking at his own butt, and he turned his body around so he could see his butt, and his butt is allergic to his head.**’ Image attached. I take my inspiration where I can find it!” And there you have it: a person is also their own and others’ ghost, and persona and ghost contradict, sit allergically or in dynamic opposition. We are countervailing forces (semi-colon, not colon; concrete; abstract; the pretentious title, *mea culpa*).

Thank you friends for more friends, for giving more to read—Ludwig Wittgenstein, Abdelkébir Khatibi, Alessandro Sarti, Ghassan Kanafani, only a start. Thank you Tahrir Hamdi for *Imagining Palestine*, discussed here and in our interview of Hamdi by her collaborator and our Book Review Editor, Louis Brehony, in “The Role of Revolutionary Intellectuals is of Utmost Importance.” And Hamdi’s work is taken up in a continuing conversation with Pappé in his review essay, “The Agency and Resilience of the Palestinians Shines.” Unbinding, liberating imagination—I trust and hope Tahrir (the liberator) Hamdi would agree—goes hand in hand with political resistance and social freedom. Political and imaginary regimes. Parallel lines. Psychic and social forces. Parallel lines. Semi-conscious and unconscious, as yet to be formed and figured desires overflow, resist containment in logical or political regimes.

Imagining Palestine

At the beginning: thank you Tahrir for this work. Hamdi offers thanks in her acknowledgments, and also prominently in her “Introduction: Imagining Palestine: Defining the Concept.” The concept of Palestine, and, as Pappé emphasizes in his reading of Hamdi’s work, “The Theory of Palestine”:

Hamdi allocates much space to this discussion on the relevance of theorization to an actual liberation struggle. She identifies closely with intellectuals who refer us to marginal and third spaces as an ideal position from which they could contribute to the almost paradoxical idea of a practical theorization (not dissimilar to liberation theologies which in their own way grapple with similar challenges).
(72)

Imagining, theorizing, and defining concepts. The power of naming, of symbolically regulating. To cut to the chase, the naming of one or two nations, one-state or two-state solution. Hamdi closes her book by affirming Pappé’s vision of a future Palestine as the “one democratic state solution,” a Palestinian nation, including what is now named and known as Israel, and its citizens (205). But I am ahead of myself. Hamdi begins by thanking her father, Khalil Hamdi, and styling her work as an ongoing conversation with him: “My father, Khalil Hamdi, never stopped talking about Palestine, to his last breath, and with this book, I am continuing this conversation” (x). The personal is here the political and intellectual. Khalil Hamdi is to Tahrir Hamdi a father, a teacher, and a political leader, then also political collaborator. Khalil Hamdi was a major figure in the Palestinian resistance and co-founder of the ANM (Arab Nationalist Movement). Tahrir’s brother, Hamdi, figures in the work as well, for his research on the medicinal properties of olives (see below).

Appropriately—given the attention Tahrir Hamdi gives in this work to Edward Said’s *Beginnings*, among many other of Said’s works, big and small, academic and political—the beginning of *Imagining Palestine* is precise in its acknowledgements and initial epigrams; that is, the bites from Mourid Barghouti’s *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here* (2011) and from Mahmoud Darwish’s *The Butterfly’s Burden* (2007) go to the heart of the matter. Mourid Barghouti writes: “But, I tell myself, no reality cancels out imagination” (89). Imagination is real; imagination is the real power to transform what is real, and so to transform itself as an imaginative force, and transform the whole world. Here Hamdi joins in conversation with Khalil Hamdi Sr., with Barghouti, and others, multitudes.

Always among others, including the no longer with us, the dead, especially, or more properly, *now inclusively all those working to live*, that is, the biopolitical multitudes, all who struggle to survive, dead labour. Ghosts, that is, including the ghosts that are those people-to-come, the future generations, including future Palestinians occupying a future Palestinian nation. Those conversing on the power of imagination, in this issue, include Margherita Pascucci, with Baruch Spinoza and Alfred Sohn-Rethel, among others; the conversation folds into Khatibi, and so also Jacques Derrida and Aristotle, on the imaginary, oppositional, solitudinous character of loving intellectual discourse, that is, friendship. Khatibi, in “True Friend,” addressing Jacques Derrida’s *The Politics of Friendship* (2005), speaks of the loving that is found among true friends, the “love in thinking,” which is “an art of living.” In that work, Derrida’s guiding utterance is taken from Aristotle: “O my friend, there is no friend.” For Khatibi,

The ‘good friendship’ is a strange law of sharing, a paradoxical pact and one which changes the terms of the alliance depending on the vicissitudes of life. A dissymmetrical alliance, certainly, demanding respect, a distant respect, which tolerates the friend in its singularity. Each one is separated and tied to the other by separation itself, by this indestructible tie of intimate solitude. (47)

Conversation, in the personal and political family, does not mean the absence of (the weapons of) criticism. So Pappé, for example, faults Hamdi for neglecting the Palestinian historians, and summarizes here (73-76) the re-conception of the indigenous population of Palestine following from that historical work. Friendship as caring, informed criticism.

Consider this fragment of the second starting epigram in *Imagining Palestine* (xi), from Mahmoud Darwish: “The ghost grows up and occupies the killer consciousness.” Hamdi then begins by invoking “The ghosts of Palestine” (1). She proceeds by way of transdisciplinary critical analysis of culture in the broad sense, including all forms of symbolic expression, and especially so-called “low art” cartoons and graffiti, etc. A broad sense of culture, in Said’s sense, which includes politics, action, and resistance. Culture is itself an abstract concept in need of and worth fighting for; as Ilan Pappé puts it, “[a]n abstraction that

cannot be taken for granted between two concepts: culture and cultural resistance” (68). Hamdi understands the resistance of intellectuals through the example, or paradigm, of her father, Khalil Hamdi, as well as Ghassan Kanafani, and Said himself, especially Said’s “Late Style.” Hamdi is a good intellectual friend to Said, that is, she does not uniformly accept and affirm, but inquires, questions, and criticizes in her reading of many of Said’s works, albeit in a highly selective manner. Most importantly, Hamdi updates Said concerning the demography of Late Style resistance. Late Style is similar to the honesty and cutting view of those near death in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari at the start of their last collaboration *What is Philosophy?* (1994), but it also resembles the disdain of youth in Plato and other state bureaucratic, royal thinkers. For Hamdi, contemporary resistance is found in force in the acts of Palestinian youth, such as the Gazan fire-kite flyers (53). The Late Style, of the elderly or just awake, is *hybrid*, complex, and real (40-41); it shows “the power of culture to create reality” (46). “As becomes clear in Said’s last interview with Charles Glass,” Pappé writes, Late Style is:

The maturation of his contrapuntal dialectical approach to harmonious and complementary affiliations and values. . . . As a Palestinian, exile, in the first instance, is traumatic; as a universalist intellectual, it is an asset. At the beginning of the 21st century, there was no need to apologize for or to reconcile this contradiction. . . . His Palestinianism, so to speak, had to coexist, uncomfortably, with his universalism . . . this in fact was his political legacy for the future: Jews and Palestinians would have to reconcile to a similar existence as does the national intellectual in exile. (73-74)

In closing this acknowledgment, let the olive, and not only the olive branch, stand for the kind of concrete particular at play from beginning to end, one whose knots resemble the symbolic, logical knots—contradictions, opposites, *coincidentia oppositorum* even—at play in imagining, thinking, and attempting to designate and express the truth and reality of a particular. The olive, as indigenous food staple, is also an emblem of colonial Israeli violence and Palestinian resistance (see the discussion of solidarity planting, for example, at 171). “Israel has uprooted hundreds of thousands of olive trees” (169), writes Hamdi; “in fact,” she continues, “the oldest olive tree in the world is located in the Palestinian village of Walaja, near Bethlehem—*Al Badawi* tree, which is looked after by Salah Abu Ali whose family owns the orchard near it” (170). The age of the tree may exceed the great septo-millennial span of history that Palestinian historians have shown is the length of Palestinian habitation, relatively uninterrupted throughout that period except, of course, for the recent, ongoing—but no more!—75-year Israeli settler displacement of indigenous Palestinians from Palestine. The tree has a name and a life so long in duration that it puts the generations of human populations in perspective. In some indigenous cultures, trees, rivers, mountains, and other natural forms are persons in kinship and expressive relation to them. What could we learn from the tree? What truths does the tree speak?

It is said that the *Al Badawi* tree was named after Ahmed al-Badawi, a 13th-century Sufi imam who is said to have spent many hours sitting in the shade of the tree.' Some refer to it as 'the tree of our master Ahmad al-Badawi' (Melhem 2018). Using the method of carbon dating, Italian and Japanese teams tested *Al Badawi* tree and estimated its age to be approximately 3,000-5,500 years old. If the older estimation holds true, this 'would make the Al Badawi tree the oldest olive tree in the world' (Ruffin 2020).

For Palestinians, their sustenance and very existence depend on the existence of the olive tree. ... [C]ontinuous destruction of olive groves represents a systematic plan by Israel to force Palestinians into exile, a kind of ethnic cleansing. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 80% of all the orchards in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip are made up of olive trees (Relief Web 2006). (170)

Contradicting

Thank you Tahrir Hamdi, Ilan Pappé, Margherita Pascucci, Jay Foster, and others for pointing to contradiction and continuing paradox. My Archimedean point on contradiction is Heraclitus, here presented with focus and precision by Samuel Sambursky (1976, 167):

Heraclitus ... like Empedocles after him, regarded the harmony prevailing in the universe as the result of a dynamic equilibrium of opposite forces. For Heraclitus this dynamics was built up around fire: 'There is an exchange: all things for Fire and Fire for all things, like goods for gold and gold for goods.'

Sambursky continues, in this excerpt from *The Physical World of the Greeks*, to distinguish a first and second position in Heraclitus:

This double motion, upwards and downwards, is characteristic of the harmony of opposites whereby there is a simultaneous process of coming into being and decay within the existing cosmos. This was Heraclitus' first theory, as confirmed by the extant fragments of his works. ... The notion of the eternal order of the cosmos as maintained by a simultaneous process of creation and decay, was, in the generations after Heraclitus, mixed up with the idea of creation and destruction occurring one after the other. ... But the Stoics incorporated it into their scientific doctrine as a model of Heraclitus' theory and set him up as the authority for their conception of a final conflagration of the cosmos. (167)¹

How is contradiction in—and out of—time? What is, really, out of time? Consider logic altogether, in its basic operation: consistency and identity are the logical fundamentals (agreeing with Cornelius Castoriadis (1975)). What are the limits of logical requirements and axiological directives/orientations, that is, matters of value: what counts and why, what is important and what is most important—at any one moment and in any situation—the paramount in the paradigm or trending pattern/tendency? Hence the wordy, pretentious “paramountcy-regimes” means: the politics of what matters most, the power that determines what has to be, what must be necessary, unthinkable otherwise.

Beginning and Ending

This journal/collective/institution is now in its third year. No surprise then perhaps that this one, this issue—collective outburst, institutional emission, capital product—happens to be particularly self-reflexive, abstract-concrete, and philosophically political and politically philosophical, given the broad trans-disciplinary streams. Hence an issue on imagining, thinking, and acting socially, critically, politically. An issue on friends: personal, political, critical, and paradoxical. An issue on intellectuals, that is, thinking people acting imaginatively, that is, acting intellectually and socially, making a difference.

Our cover and inside art show imaginary real hybrid objects of the South and North; found associations, tensions, liberations. *Merman/Sereno Cartonera* by Górges Míchel Mílian Maura and Cory W. Thorne explores “the ways in which queer identities are often coded through anthropomorphic and post-human imaginaries,” and inquires into the paradox of “how masculinities are simultaneously exposed and hidden” (17)—not in serially differentiated time, but at one and the same time, *simul*. *Remittance* (oil on moose antler) looks at/shows Fernando Ortiz’s notion of “transculturation in Cuban and Newfoundland folklore” (18). The antler, found, remade, photographed, duplicated, named, signed, tells the story of how Thorne “created *Remittance* while in isolation in Newfoundland, and while receiving updates from several different friends who were attempting to cross from Cuba to the United States via central America and Mexico” (16).

Margerita Pascucci’s “True Wealth” gives a reading of value, surplus-value, and labour as value-generation that intensifies the *paradoxa* of capital’s zombification and vampyric exsanguination (or draining of the life blood) of capital’s subjects: “capital’s productive inadequacy lies in the continuous production of misery” (20); yet “poverty, if read not as misery but as an expression of capital’s mistake, is *potentia*” (23). The virtual “itself,” or virtuality, is a paradox; as Deleuze states in *Difference and Repetition* (1994, 208-9), “*The Virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual;*” it “must be defined as strictly a part of the real object—as though the object had one part of itself in the virtual into which it is plunged.” Pascucci builds on Deleuze’s description of the crystallization of the virtual: “the evanescent quantity, the virtual (as ‘ratio’ of surplus value) by expressing the *saltum* of productivity (the *chiasmus* of the material-immaterial), by expressing the difference of the matter (production), *knows itself* and *knows itself as the index of productivity*” (32). Pascucci argues that the “quantum of the uncommon that capital produces” expresses the measure of the wealth or power of the multitude:

Paradoxically we can measure it, and we want to see with the *production coefficient of inequality*—like the carbon footprint of labour—how much capital produces misery, and to change this into the *potentia* of the dismeasure, into the elaboration of an adequate production whose engine would be an adequate labour, with adequate working relations (*the production co-efficient of equality*). (37)

Is Δe (the production coefficient of inequality ... also call[ed] Π , ‘true wealth coefficient’) = $f(V/S)$. Function (Variable capital/surplus value). The rate of exploitation in Marx is S/V , i.e., the relationship between surplus value and variable capital, which gives the measure of the exploitation of the labour-force. We want to develop the direct relation between living labour and surplus value. (39)

To enjoy a direct, positive relation may be on the way to something like the friendship of which Khatibi writes:

To not speak excessively of one’s friend, rather address oneself to him, and to the horizontality in him, bearer of promise. That is why good friendship is pure presence, pure virtuality, graduated, oriented toward the time of reincarnation and of inheritance. (47)

Aimance: to love in thinking. It is an act, an active affinity, between men, between men and women, between animals and their fellows, plants and every initiatory thing in existence. A relation of realized tolerance, a knowing how to live together, between genders, sensibilities, thoughts, religions, diverse cultures. It is the art of living correspondences. (47)

Enjoy, friends, and potential friends.

Biography

Peter Trnka is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Memorial University. He has taught at Karlova University, Prague as well as Toronto and York. He has published scholarly philosophical and transdisciplinary articles in various international journals, most recently the chapter “Disjoint and Multiply: Deleuze and Negri on Time” in the edited volume *Deleuze and Time*, as well as poetry and a cookbook. He also edits *Codgito: Student Journal of Philosophy and Theory* with Ulysse Sizov.

Notes

1. Consider the following from Antonio Negri’s penultimate paragraph from *Spinoza: The Savage Anomaly* (1991) (forgotten as an object in my recent “Disjoint and Multiply” (2022)): “Being is temporal tension. If difference founds the future, then here the future ontologically founds difference. ... A continuous transition toward always greater perfection. Being produces itself. ... Being is greater tension toward the future as its present density grows to a higher level. The future is not a procession of acts but a dislocation worked by the infinite mass of intensive being: a linear, spatial displacement. ‘Time is being’ (228). Compare with Cornelius Castoriadis in *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (1975): “[T]ime that is not reduced to the necessities of bearings and of *legein*, true time, the time of otherness-alteration, is a time of bursting, emerging, creating. The *Present*, the *nun* is here explosion, split, rupture—the rupture of what is as such. This present exists as originating, as immanent transcendence, as source, as the surging forth of ontolog-

ical genesis” (201). Ontological genesis not contained or ruled over by laws of identity and consistency and other logical operators and fundamentals; productive of novel material and symbolic sensible situations. Fadi Abou-Rihan (2023) addresses the issue of sustained contradiction and paradoxical relations in his recent *Finding Winnicott*,² the anchor for which enterprise is a paradox, a curveball, not exactly contradiction (Heraclitus, G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx) but *coincidentia oppositorum* (Nicholas of Cusa, Giordano Bruno, Gottfried W. Leibniz, Johann Hamann, Carl Jung, Henry Corbin, Gershom Scholem, Walter Benjamin). *Finding Winnicott* affirms a radical, essential constructivism, one in some tension with hermeneutic traditions oriented to interpretation of meaning: “Part of an order higher than that of interpretation, construction mirrors the found object’s function as an in-between that crosses the divide between inner and outer realities” (45). A subject’s relation to itself, and to other objects and subjects, is a construction, a co-construction of reality. Reality is a relationship. Reality is transfinite sets of relationships constituting themselves and other relations constantly. Squiggle game. The signature of the squiggle: the found object is a confounded co-construction that unbinds the law of excluded middle and affirms real contradiction, if reality is understood in part as the product of desire. Construction is essential, “not merely a tool among the many at one’s disposal: it is the fundament of ... analytic experience” (60). The range of Abou-Rihan’s discussion, and its critical political focus on Freud and psychoanalysis, is seen clearly in his treatment of the *barẓakh*, introduced to “shed further light” on the idea that “to acknowledge in time a number of components—eternal, eruptive, developmental, decaying ...—is to echo Freud’s recognition of libido’s own constitution as polymorphous, incorporating diverse, seemingly chronologically progressive though structurally simultaneous perversions” (117). The *barẓakh* is a thinking of in-between, transformational, dynamic space-time. Telling the story of the *barẓakh* is significant (also) for what it shows of the history of interactions and self-forming-mutations between so-called Western philosophy and psychoanalysis, on the one hand, and Islamic thought, on the other. Briefly, the notion of the imagination is shuttled like a football-found-object, from Aristotle on to various Sufi, Jewish, Christian, and other copyists, commentators, critics, and authors, over three millennia of punctuated intellectual criss-crossing and hybridization. The Sufi Ibn al-‘Arabi thinks of the *barẓakh* by way of a double-faced Janus-type figure. The *barẓakh* occurs thrice as an expression in the Qur’an. It signifies, in al-‘Arabi, a liminal space, such that *being is finding*: it “is a boundary that unites; it is an indivisible partition whose single-sidedness gathers the elements of a difference and insists on their co-occurrence. The *barẓakh* is an *interregnum* of over-determination situated somewhere between the two sides of a polarity that it nevertheless incorporates” (120). Let me, please, cite al-‘Arabi at length (as cited by Abou-Rihan from William

Chittick): “So the reality of the *barzakb* is that within it there be no *barzakb*. It is that which meets what is between the two by its very essence. If it were to meet one of the two with a face that is other than the face with which it meets the other, then there would have to be within itself, between its two faces, a *barzakb* that differentiates between the two faces so that the two do not meet together. If there is no such *barzakb*, then the face with which it meets one of the two affairs between which it stands is identical with the face with which it meets the other. This is the true *barzakb*. It is, through its own essence, identical with everything that it meets. Hence the separation between the things and the separating factor become manifest as one in entity” (120).

2. Fadi Abou-Rihan’s essay “On the Micro-Colonial” from *Janus Unbound* 1.1 appears in part in the fourth chapter, “Solitudes,” of *Finding Winnicott*.

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Letters to the Editor and Replies: Wittgenstein's Janus

Jay Foster

(Editorial Board, *JU*, Director of Humanities M. Phil., Memorial University,
on 22 February 2023 - 13 March 2023, via e-mail)

Introduction

This brief e-mail conversation arose from noting a mention of “Janus” in Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (1967). In the passage cited below, Wittgenstein seems to be considering what is now commonly called the Russell-Zermelo paradox, which arises in naïve set theory from defining a set through all sets that are not members of themselves. Ludwig Wittgenstein speculates that in the absence of variables, a propositional function may be self-contradictory without inconsistency. That is, some propositions may be inconsistent without being incoherent. Such a proposition may tower over all logic like a Janus head, though presumably not looking over both past and future (as Janus is usually interpreted). Instead, Janus is a proposition that is both true and false, overlooking all claims to truth and falsity. The conversation with the ChatGPT 3.5 LLM highlights the heterodoxy of Wittgenstein’s proposal in much mainstream thinking. As shown, ChatGPT acknowledges “the acceptance of ambiguity and paradox in certain contexts” and that “while some degree of inconsistency or uncertainty may be present in the scientific process, the goal is always to minimize these factors.”

22/02: Jay Foster: Hi Peter, ... Since it’s Reading Week [semester break], I’ve been reading Wittgenstein’s *RPM* (because I always need that as an antidote to Bertrand Russell’s *PLA*).¹ This passage may be of interest:

Why should Russell’s contradiction not be conceived as something supra-propositional, something that towers above the propositions and looks in both directions like a Janus head? N.B. the proposition $F(F)$ —in which $F(@) = \sim @$ ($@$)—contains no variables and so might hold as something supra-logical, as something unassailable, whose negation itself in turn only *asserts* it. Might one not even begin logic with this contradiction? And as it were descend from it to propositions. The proposition that contradicts itself would stand like a monument (with a Janus head) over the propositions of logic.

The pernicious thing is not, to produce a contradiction in the region in which neither the consistent nor the contradictory proposition has any kind of work to accomplish; no, what is pernicious is not to know how one reached the place where contradiction no longer does any harm. (Wittgenstein 1967, III.59-60)

P.P.S. Dipesh Chakrabarty has the most cited paper in academic humanities, “Climates of History” from *Critical Inquiry*. How about a *Janus Unbound* edition on Chakrabarty? “From Provincializing Europe to the Anthropocene?”

23/02: Peter Trnka: Hi Jay! Thank you for the brilliant e-mail. The Wittgenstein is wonderful and I will use it—*Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*? I enjoy the brute affirmation of “why not a superproposition?” So you’ve probably noticed we came out with two CFPs, the second of which is with special guest editor, Danine Farquharson. I’d be thrilled to assist with a special guest edited volume by you on something like “Provincializing Europe by way of the Anthropocene.”

8/03: JF: Hey Peter, I came back from analytic [a philosophy undergraduate course at MUN] and found a cryptic note written in blood and stabbed to the door [of my office] with a stiletto! Not quite—but I prefer that story. Yes, sorry, it is *RFM* not *RPM* as I cited it. It was late and I might have been cruising by the hour. But, the passage is at III.59. The passage you cite beginning “Each proof ...” is at II.59! So, I am merely a semi-unreliable narrator!

9/03: PT: Thank you—hmmm I’ll check again [regarding the text] at my office—yes blood soaked with the struggle of labour.

[Précis of intervening conversation and investigation: The English-only *RFM* has various corruptions and the Janus passage is entirely missing.² Regarding *RFM*, I had the English-only edition, while Foster was using the German-English-facing-pages edition, which is not, as far as I have been able to make out, corrupt on this issue. There is also an intervening discussion between us concerning ChatGPT and other AI systems and the recent directive from MUN administration regarding risks and benefits. The conversation becomes three-way.]

13/03: JF (asks the AI, ChatGPT 3.5): “Is it possible to consistently maintain a contradiction?”

AI: From a logical perspective, it is not possible to consistently maintain a contradiction, as a contradiction is a statement that cannot be true under any circumstances. If someone were to try to maintain a contradiction, they would eventually run into logical inconsistencies and contradictions that would undermine their argument or belief system. However, there are philosophical and cultural perspectives that recognize the inherent complexity and ambiguity of the world, and accept that seemingly contradictory beliefs or ideas can co-exist

in certain contexts. This is sometimes referred to as dialectical thinking, and can be found in a variety of traditions and fields, including Hegelian philosophy, Taoism, and modern psychotherapy. So while it may not be possible to consistently maintain a contradiction in a purely logical sense, there are certain frameworks and perspectives that allow for the acceptance of ambiguity and paradox in certain contexts.

JF: Is not logical inconsistency incompatible with science, or does science require inconsistency to be fruitful?

AI: Logical inconsistency is generally considered incompatible with the scientific method, which relies on logical reasoning and empirical evidence to generate knowledge and make predictions about the natural world. Inconsistencies in scientific theories or models can indicate flaws in the underlying assumptions or methods, and may require revision or replacement to better align with observations and data. That being said, scientific progress often involves testing and refining hypotheses through trial and error, which can involve some degree of inconsistency or uncertainty. Scientific models and theories are often approximations or simplifications of complex phenomena, and may require certain assumptions or idealizations that are not perfectly consistent with all aspects of reality. However, the goal of science is to continually refine and improve our understanding of the world, and to minimize logical inconsistencies or errors in our models and theories as much as possible. So while some degree of inconsistency or uncertainty may be present in the scientific process, the goal is always to minimize these factors and arrive at the most accurate and consistent representation of reality possible.

13/03: PT: Thank you for my first letter to the editor from an AI—or I will choose to take it as something like that. We've been comparing Wittgenstein on rule following to Jean-François Lyotard on discourse in the Cornelius Castoriadis class discussion of signification. Thank you for this, and the previous, and the next, however it follows.

Biography

Jay Foster teaches in the Philosophy Department and is Acting-Director of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Graduate Program at Memorial University. His areas of academic interest include environmental philosophy and philosophy of science with a particular focus on the Anthropocene and the work of Bruno Latour.

Notes

1. Foster means *RFM* (*Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*). *PLA* is a reference to Bertrand Russell's *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* (1972).
2. This happens—but it is odd that it happened to Peter Trnka twice that week in March, with the other occasion being a Broadview anthology edition of an excerpt of W.E.B. Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk* that was

missing the early crucial first chapter paragraph on double consciousness and double worlds, an error that has now been fixed by the publisher and used as a case study on primary and secondary sources in Trnka's second year social and political philosophy class at MUN.

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Gíorge Michel Mílían Maura and Cory W. Thorne on Their Work: *Merman/Sereno Cartonera*

Cory W. Thorne in Conversation with Gíorge Michel Mílían Maura

Introduction

In March 2020, when the World Health Organization officially declared the COVID-19 pandemic, I was in Havana to meet with several artists and curators about posthumanism and sexuality in Cuban art. This was part of my on-going work toward a critical queer ethnography of Cuban masculinities. Because of Canada's announcement that they would soon be closing their airports to international flights, I left Havana for Matanzas in order to wait there while trying to leave early from the nearby Varadero airport—the airport that serves the bulk of Canadian flights because of its proximity to many of the all-inclusive beach resorts. I spent this time with my close friend Gíorge Michel Mílían Maura, an artist whom I have written about previously, particularly in my essay about his nearly life-sized painting *Testosteromania*—a surrealist gym scene of nearly naked men with taurus heads, injecting steroids and lifting weights, each of them assisted and admired by masked harlequins (Thorne 2021). I presented *Testosteromania* as a story of queer masculinities, MSM (Men who have Sex with Men) sex tourism, and the historical coding of queerness through clowns and the carnivalesque. Like many of the individuals that I have interviewed over the past 15 years, these men were sculpting their bodies in order to gain the attention of tourists and to build relationships that could lead to economic support from the Global North. MSM sex work in Cuba is about short term and long term economic planning (remittances), and for some, the goal of sponsorship to live in Canada or Europe. *Merman/Sereno Cartonera* was co-created by Gíorge Michel Mílían Maura and myself during the early days of COVID-19 as we attempted to prepare for what might come. I created *Remittance* while in isolation at my home in Coley's Point, Newfoundland.

Merman/Sereno Cartonera

Cartonera is a genre of book sculpture that is most often associated with the Buenos Aires art collective *Eloísa Cartonera*, which began in 2003. Partly in response to Argentina's economic crisis, artists began purchasing cardboard from *cartoneros* (waste-pickers), paying above-market value in order to develop a new approach to book-making and vernacular political engagement (Bell and O'Hare 2020). This model of creating and publishing books with found and recycled objects was likewise central to the art collective *Ediciones Vigía*, in

Matanzas, Cuba. Founded by poet Alfredo Zaldivar and artist Rolando Estévez Vigía in 1985, *Vigía* publications are typically multi-dimensional books: sculptures that are created to house poems and short stories. Because of Cuba's *Periodo especial en tiempos de paz* (special period in the time of peace)—the officially named economic crisis that began with the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s—Cuban artists turned to found and recycled objects for their creations. Cuban-American folklorist and anthropologist Ruth Behar describes them as handmade books (2020). Latin Americanist Jessica Gordon-Burroughs sees them as artists' books that are likewise a type of archive—focusing on their relation to Cuban memorabilia and material culture as shaped by the Revolutionary period and the ongoing shortages of material products across every facet of Cuban life (2017). I think of them as bricolagic book-sculptures, and I am particularly intrigued with how they are created to bring new perspectives and depth to classic Cuban literature. *Ediciones Vigía Cartoneras* invite audiences to revisit and question their meanings in response to contemporary political and economic concerns.

At Michel's suggestion, we began exploring our intersecting interests in queer masculinities and queer history, noting the ways in which queer identities are often coded through anthropomorphic and posthuman imaginaries. I first met Michel in 2016, when he approached me on the street and invited me to see some of his *cartoneras* on display at the *Ediciones Vigía* gallery. He then invited my partner and I to his home to show us his “erotic” art: dozens of paintings that were more sexually explicit, queerly masculine, and personally meaningful. Many of his subjects are simultaneously masked and exposed, creating statements about how individual identities and desires are deeply hidden from Cuban everyday life while masculine bodies and sexuality are forever present and on public display. When we met up again in 2021, we began discussing the role of mermen/*serenos* in Newfoundland and in Cuba for addressing how masculinities are simultaneously exposed and hidden in each of our communities.

Mermaids and mermen have a vibrant presence in Afro-Cuban folklore and Afro-diasporic religions. The Yoruban *orisha*/spirit Yemaya has long guarded the Ogun River in Yorubaland (present day Nigeria). She crossed into the Middle Passage during the African slave trade and now lives as a mermaid deep in the Atlantic Ocean. She is often coded as the Catholic Virgin Mary and is recognized as the goddess and protector of the sea. Yemaya is often accompanied by a merman, Inlé. Inlé, who is known as Erinlé in Yorubaland, has long been seen as an androgynous *orisha* who once resided in the mud and swamps along the river Oshun. He lived in the space that is both land and water. He now lives with and is protected by Yemaya, and he is increasingly respected as the protector and guide of 2SLGBTQI+ individuals (Otero 2018). The merman Inlé is a vibrant representative of Afro-Cuban queer masculinities.

Michel is responsible for the design of this *cartonera*, guiding me to assist with its creation while we held this conversation. The book opens to reveal an essay that I co-wrote in 2018 with Australian folklorist and ethnomusicologist Philip Hayward: “It's the Merb'y: Masculinity, Mermen and Contemporary Newfoundland.” This essay is an analysis of the virally-successful fundraising

calendar created by Hasan Hai and the Newfoundland and Labrador Beard and Mustache Club, and their coining of the term “Merb’y” (a blending of merman and the Newfoundland vernacular “b’y”). My work with Hayward is about how merb’ys were used to spur conversation about masculinities in Newfoundland and Labrador, addressing the challenges of hegemonic masculinity while incorporating a diversity of forms of masculinity in contemporary life that allow more openly for emotions and caring, and for incorporation of non-heteronormative bodies and identities, all while reasserting the association between Newfoundland and Labrador masculinities with aquapelagic imaginaries. This was about addressing the changing and diversifying understandings of masculinity in a community where men were struggling with the loss of the fishery and increasing detachment from the ocean.

Merman/Sereno is our joint creation for exploring queer masculinities in relation to Cuban and Newfoundland and Labrador folklore. It is a product of and a tool for conversations about the ways in which queer masculinities have been hidden or erased in both of our communities. It is an example of how post-human and anthropomorphic imaginaries have connected us across ocean spaces, and how these imaginaries can serve as powerful tools for 2SLGBTQI+ empowerment. By presenting these ideas about masculinity in Cuba and in Newfoundland through this *cartonera*, we invite you to consider the ways in which queer identities have been hidden and erased across time and space, and how queerness always exists through creative acts and imaginaries in everyday life.

Biographies

Górge Michel Mílían Maura is an artist from Matanzas, Cuba, who moved to Miami, Florida in 2022. He has had several private and group exhibitions at the state-run *Asociación Cubana de Artesano Artistas*, as well as designing and performing shows for tourist resorts, and creating murals for his *Open Sesame* project: using public art to encourage neighbours to work together and take pride in shared public spaces. Inspired primarily by surrealism, expressionism, and carnivalesque traditions, he describes his work as “social eroticism”: communication and exploration of social issues through the erotic.

Cory W. Thorne is an Associate Professor of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland, with a cross-appointment in music/ethnomusicology. His primary interests are in queer and vernacular theory, underground economies, popular culture, material culture, and tangible/intangible cultural heritage. Since 2008, he has been conducting ethnographic research within Havana’s queer community, focused on a suburban ranch that was once used as part of a network of underground gay parties.

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True Wealth

Margherita Pascucci

Abstract

The core of my research is poverty in relation to the genesis of capital. I contextualized the reflection on poverty in relation to the gnoseological error of capital, a gnoseological error which is immediately also an ethical and ontological one.

The thesis at which I arrived is that the *productive mechanism of capital contains within itself a gnoseological error which causes the production of poverty instead of “true” wealth: true wealth being the common good for and of all.*

Poverty is the litmus test of this gnoseological, and therefore ontological, ethical, and political error of capital.

Key words: Capital, *Causa Sui*, Common Notion, Differential, Matter, “Plus of Being,” *Potentia*, Poverty, Substance, Time, Virtual, Deleuze, Marx, Spinoza

Introduction

The results of my research are gathered in three books: *Potentia of Poverty*, *Causa Sui*, and *Macchina Capitale*. *Potentia of Poverty* delimited the field: there is a field of capital, which is an inadequate production that implies inadequate knowledge (or rather, the two are contiguous, being the expression of the same movement under two different aspects). Capital’s productive inadequacy lies in the continuous production of misery, and its gnoseological inadequacy lies in the mystification of private appropriation as a principle of subjectivity/subjectification and true wealth. Poverty reveals the error of capital as a litmus test: the production of misery reveals that the productive principle on which capital is based is the exploitation of the other’s labor, a theft. This one-sided appropriation, theft, is a mistaken knowledge because on both sides, whoever owns capital and whoever is exploited by it, capital exchanges for true wealth, and for the production of true wealth, a mechanism which, in order to produce—that is, to reproduce itself—cannot but destroy what it encounters and enslave the elements that compose it. Capital’s “engine” is like a vampire, wrote Karl Marx,¹ the extraction of one’s productive capacity, and its production is, by its nature, annihilating: this extraction is subtractive. It takes away from the workers, in the form of an exploitation rate, those unpaid hours,

which would correspond to the adequate production of themselves, which should correspond to a new concept and praxis of labour.

Focusing on the gnoseological plane, we analyzed the *Heft Spinoza* (1976b), Karl Marx's youthful notes on Baruch Spinoza. We individuated there a parallelism between the mechanism of capital (Marx) and the one of imagination (Spinoza): capital and imagination work with time in the same way, by abstracting. But, whereas the abstraction that capital does is aimed at establishing and keeping an asymmetrical power relation, the abstraction of imagination has a "material" aim, to produce a presence out of an absence. There is, though, a fundamental difference between the two. According to Baruch Spinoza, when we realize that what imagination does is not the knowledge of the trace of which it is the embodiment but the production of a presence, we understand this production as a force of our mind. In Marx's analysis of capital, there is no such element. It starts here, then, the investigation of this "material" element, also in Marx. The starting point of an "ethical" plane in Marx is that commodities can be known as common notions. It is possible to know commodities as the embodiment of a produced equivalence (labour as this motor of production of equivalence, namely, of value, a commonality, the pooling of capacities. The production of equivalence as the pooling of individual capacities and the construction of commonalities that, as such, can be known). Commodities are thus known as value, a social relation. From here, if they allow for a material knowledge of this social relation, they become a "poetical object,"² a political object, and from there they can become adequate production, production of a time of life free from exploitation.

Now, both commodities and common notions are defined "through other"—we need to give back this *causa ab alio* (to be defined through other) its substance of commonality, its *causa sui*. This substance is by its nature a material one and cannot be abstract or extracted. Substance is the very weaving of this common. Thus, a commodity is a political object, an embodiment of a social relation established through labour. To know a commodity as a political object shows that labour is the motor that transforms a *causa ab alio* (I, the worker, need to sell my labour force to further produce my life) into a *causa sui* (in the actual production system: a *causa sui* of capital). The parallelism runs: imagination—common notions—intellectual knowledge. Value—commodity as poetical/political object—production of a time of life free from exploitation. The political *causa sui* must be opposed to the production of misery. The re-composition or composition of a self-determination, an affirmative adequate production, a *causa sui*, that is not appropriated by capital as its *causa sui* but, through labour, being immediately political, is both *principium individuationis* and community element. The research in *Causa Sui* focused on this, tracing the presence of the virtual in the formation of capital and subjectivity. The error of capital in its seminal self-productivity arises from the theoretical "encounter" of the *logos spermatikos* with the *seminal ratio*, of *oikonomia* with the theological reflection (Augustine). In the Middle Ages, we will begin to see this seminal capacity of matter to produce itself being extracted from matter (that is the worker) and appropriated.

Here the gnoseological level develops a further element: given the parallel between Sadi Carnot's ideal machine and capital's mechanism (according to the intuition of Antonino Drago in the 70s), the "material" element of *Potentia of Poverty* is investigated as the fourth phase which is present in Carnot's machine and absent in the cycle of capital in Marx. What is the fourth phase in Sadi Carnot's machine, the energy which goes back to the internal machine, becomes in the reading of capital's mechanism, the element which would go back to the worker as his/her surplus value: we called it the "plus of being."

The analysis is widened in *Macchina Capitale*. There it is shown how, with the establishment of the general equivalence of the concept of money in ancient Greece, the abstraction-synthesis that this entails, by establishing a "metaphysics" of matter, a transcendent use of matter, increases that self-productive force of matter which, with a single movement, is separated from its own creative capacity and thus increasingly possessed in an asymmetrical way.

By the "transcendent use of matter," I mean that its generative force is identified (what will later be called *causa sui*) and extrapolated, made a "quantum" of matter, measurable, made proportional and with this, exchangeable. Through the passage from the *logos spermatikos* to the *seminal ratio*, we have a further moment in which the movement of "transcendentization" of the matter becomes its "transcendentability," that is, the definition/establishment of the conditions for which the possibility of a metaphysical use of matter continues to be produced.

The production and reproduction of this asymmetry comes to us today in the form of a differential. Marx, in the last years of his life, looked for answers in the attempt to elaborate a material concept of the differential. On the same theme of the differential, Gilles Deleuze arrived at a very important conceptualization. According to Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc, the presence of Marx in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari can be traced in the matrix of the presupposition of the power relationship capital establishes (2016). Alfred Sohn-Rethel had already seen in the "presupposition"—which he calls the "*a priori*" of knowledge—the genesis and structure of exploitation (1971).

In *Macchina Capitale* (2022) my aim was to identify that element—the "quantum of common," as Antonio Negri calls it (2014, 36)—which is subtracted (asymmetrical/individualistic/post-Socratic *koinonia*), made abstract (coinage), synthesized (*logos spermatikos-seminal ratio*, theological economy), rendered transcendental, that is, the very condition of its producibility *ad infinitum* (Middle Ages), extracted (cogito vs. *causa sui*), categorized/allegorized (see what the *lens ustoria* of the market is—the first poor laws—and at the same time to make of money the "conceptual persona" as in Shakespeare), enslaved again (colonialism; second poor laws), shattered in a continuous real and phantasmatic crisis (wars, finance capital; third poor laws). This element is what expresses and embodies the differential. The differential—the product of the algorithm or the rhythm of the creating nature/*natura naturans*—is the quantum of common that is appropriated. Can we try to extrapolate it from the dynamic chain in which it is set and trapped and place it in another configuration, in another composition, both theoretical and practical? Can we liberate the differential from

its chains, invent new forms of production, think of and practice an adequate production whose engine would be an adequate labour? The gnoseological plane here would develop this passage: commodities can be known by common notions. The fourth element is the “plus of being”—the coefficient of production of equality is the practical production of the “plus of being.”

I. *Potentia* of Poverty

Drawing on Marx’s reading of Spinoza and my reading of Marx reading Spinoza, potentia of poverty will be related to the concept of the virtual and its fundamental importance for the birth and the constitution of capital. The aim of this section is to investigate the revolutionary role that potentia of poverty can have confronting capital’s exploitation mechanism.

Poverty, if read not as misery but as an expression of capital’s mistake, is *potentia*. The productive mechanism of capital contains within itself a gnoseological, at once also ontological and ethical, mistake, which is the cause of the production of poverty instead of the production of *wahre Reichtum* (true wealth), which is the common good of and for all. Poverty is the litmus test for these multiple errors of capital.

If we conceive poverty as what expresses capital’s inadequate knowledge and inadequate cause of production, poverty itself is the plane for a reacquisition of *potentia*, the striving for persevering in one’s own being, politically and ethically adequate. It is the plane of immanence of an adequate production, an adequate cause of ourselves, an adequate labour.

The figure of the virtual is one of the first luminous signs of both capital’s inadequate knowledge and cause of production and the *potentia* of poverty to revolutionize this mistake.

A) The Figure of the Virtual, the Birth and Constitution of Capital

To read the figure of the virtual in Spinoza and Marx—or rather to consider how the actual/virtual plane is used by Spinoza, and to employ the concept of the virtual as a kind of proof positive for the knowledge of capital in Marx—is the second step of a vaster reading of the commonalities between Marx and Spinoza. The first step highlighted three points: the shared origin in Aristotle of Marx’s concept of value and Spinoza’s common notions (“being conceived through other”); the *Hefte Spinoza* (1841); and the actual/virtual plane in Spinoza and the notion of the virtual in Marx. These commonalities can be clarified by investigating Marx’s interest in the structure of the anticipation of time in thought, evident since the dissertation and the first *Hefte* (1841-1843) and in the Marx of *Capital*, to which considerations of the structure of the imagination and the workings of the intellect in Spinoza give an exemplary key.

Here I will address only the last point: the notion of the virtual. In what follows, the conceptual figure of the virtual is analyzed with reference to its role in both the birth of capital and the formation of subjectivity. It is my contention that the conceptualization of the virtual—the date for which can be set provisionally in the 13th century—is connatural with the first theoretical reflections

on capital, the most significant example of which is the work of Petrus Johannes Olivi (1248-1298), the first Franciscan “economist,” theoretician of capital and of the *usus pauper*. The virtual, since its birth as a concept, has expressed, on the one hand, the knowledge of the relation of cause and effect—or the relation of cause and effect in knowledge—and, on the other, the immaterial aspect of matter which allows for self-production and movement. We have, thus, two planes: a gnoseological plane and a physical plane.

The importance of the conceptualization of the virtual in the 13th century lies in the fact that it, along with the reflection on value, sheds light on the economical perspective into which substance has been cast (for example, the figure of the *seminal ratio*). This “economical” dimension of substance—its being considered divisible, measurable, and quantifiable—has been influential in the history of thought up to Immanuel Kant (*Gradus*) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel,³ but what interests us here is if that *ratio seminalis* can be seen to resurface in the 17th century in the concept of the “eminency of the cause.”

In the 17th century, Spinoza counterposes a caesura to this conception of substance: the economical dimension of substance (which is measure, a mistake of knowledge) is opposed to its ethical dimension, the production of substance and its capacity to be known. Spinoza breaks through notions of measure, quantity, and money—all inadequate knowledge of substance—to open to true knowledge of it: the *causa sui*, the production of the self, the mechanism of the production of substance. This caesura is expressed by Spinoza in the actual/virtual plane: *virtuale* never appears as a term but it is constituent of its brother concept, the actual, the vault’s key to the entire *Ethics*. The caesura, which Spinoza operates in regard to the apprehension of substance as a divisible entity (revealing its “economical” dimension), is the banishing of the possible/real plane, in order to open to true knowledge of the mechanism of the production of substance: the actual/virtual plane. The actual/virtual plane expresses immanence: substance is not divisible, nor is it a measure, a quantity, or a thing. Substance is an act, and it has to be produced; substance is *production itself*. The caesura marks the elimination of the possible/real plane and affirms the actual/virtual plane as true knowledge of the mechanism of the *causa sui* (production of substance, what I call the “formation of subjectivity”).

Marx is the heir of both these traditions: of the economical substance, capital, with its core mechanism, surplus value (a concept which is heir, in turn, to the *valor superadiunctus* in Petrus Johannes Olivi) and of the true knowledge of this mechanism (in the general intellect, or in today’s immaterial labour).

If in the 13th century substance is cast into the economical, and the figure of the virtual expresses it (in its being the knowledge of the relation of cause and effect and that immaterial aspect of matter which renders it capable of self-production and movement), if in the 17th century the question of knowledge of substance and its relation of cause and effect surfaces again and one of its examples is the eminent cause, whose place is taken by the figure of the virtual (this is the case of Adrian Heereboord, Cartesian scholar whom Spinoza reads and opposes in his early writings), then, in the 19th century, with Marx, we find both these aspects of the virtual: the virtual of capital (virtual capital, *Capital*,

Volume II) and its knowledge (the crisis—in my paradigm: poverty as *potentia*).

B) Potentia of Poverty. A Materialist Knowledge or the Parallelism between Money and Metaphysics

To understand how this mistake originates and is perpetrated, the wider framework of our reading refers to Alfred Sohn-Rethel's intuition on the parallelism, and the contemporaneity in the West of the birth of abstract thought and coinage, tracing, in different periods of time, a path that identifies the moments in the history of thought where a crisis of economic value corresponds to a reflection on poverty as an ontological force of revolutionary crisis in the production system. Sohn-Rethel (1978; 1990) developed the theory, already posited by George Thomson (1978), on the parallelism of the birth of coinage and metaphysics in Ionia in 7th century BCE and therefore of the *close epistemological relationship between money and metaphysics*: to understand one it is necessary to understand the other.

I believe, with Sohn-Rethel, that it is *essential to understand metaphysics and its crises to fully understand the gnoseological and ontological mechanism of capital, of which poverty is the most striking emblem*. Following Sohn-Rethel's intuition, I identify in history those moments when *value enters a crisis* and where, alongside a *reflection on value, on money*, there is a *reflection on poverty, not only as misery but as revolutionary force*. To this must be added a *reflection on the state of metaphysics*, of abstract knowledge, in the identified historical period.

I mention here, for example, just a few temporal junctions where reflections on value, money, and goods, are accompanied by contemporary reflections on poverty as a cognitive force (of that value, of that money, of those goods). Although we are dealing with different historical periods, each with a defined specificity, these reflections that run parallel, if read within the history of ideas, form a texture that I find fertile. Indeed, they respond to recurring and intertwining theoretical questions:

In **Ancient Greece, 7th century BCE coinage and metaphysics**: what constitutes the relationship between coinage and the birth of metaphysics and abstract thought? In the West they were born in the same period, 7th century BCE. For an answer to the question: What is money? In understanding the relationship between the birth of coinage and the birth of abstract thought, we understand the formation of money. Here we have many authors and concepts to investigate—from the first “formulation” of equivalence of the concept of money in Aristotle up to the figure of Parmenides and the One. The thesis of scholars such as Richard Seaford (2004) that the emergence of coinage, the concept of psyche, the One in Parmenides and cosmogony, express the passage, the “synthesis” as Sohn-Rethel would say, between polytheism and monism. In the transition to monism, there is, at the same time, the production of an abstract thought that synthesizes the disorder in logos, or the One; we have a unitary concept for interiority (the psyche), we have the equivalent (Aristotle), all mirrored in an idea of the universe as an intelligible order subject to the uniformity of an impersonal power (cosmogony).

In 13th century Italy and France, the concept of capital: with the first Franciscan economists, we have the first theorizations of capital and, provocatively from the point of view of the history of thought, these are in the same milieu as the debate on the *usus pauper* (use of poverty), that is, the restricted use of poverty. What is capital, the *valor superadiunctus*? This is the locus of the emergence of an economic-theological perspective on substance.

Olivi's theorization on capital (capital as *ratio seminale*) and the *usus pauper*⁴ begins a meaning and use of the concept of *ratio seminale*, which has taken course over the centuries, transforming in various ways but remaining the code and matrix of eminence, as far as metaphysics is concerned. The same conceptual texture of the *ratio seminale* is found, for example, in René Descartes with the eminent cause, then in Adrian Heereboord, Dutch contemporary and scholar of Descartes and Spinoza and theorist of the virtual.⁵

In 16th century England, money as credit and the first poor laws revealed the beginning of government-level poverty management in England. What is poverty? We understand in this period the first state apparatuses of categorization and governance of poverty. Here the very prolific terrain to be investigated is the contemporaneity of the strengthening of money as credit and the issue of the first poor laws in England. This is a period in which “European” governments began to categorize the poor as a social category and to enact laws for their management at the government level. The charity systems that had responded to the problem of poverty throughout the Middle Ages were no longer able to meet the needs of the poor populations and from the end of the 1400s to the mid-16th century a series of laws called poor laws were promulgated, with which the poor were identified and a “subsistence” system was articulated, proving to be prodromal to the extraction of low-wage labour. At the same time, the “immaterial” element of money, constituted by credit, was getting stronger and stronger.⁶

In 17th century Holland, the knowledge of substance and the *causa sui* (or the concept of productivity), that is, the reflection on the knowability of substance, leads to disclosing and understanding it as “productivity.” What is *potentia*? Substance? *Causa sui*? Spinoza opposes a caesura to metaphysics as it has come so far: the economic dimension of substance, its eminence and unknowability (which is measure, an error of knowledge),⁷ is opposed by its ethical dimension, the *production of substance*—or substance as production—and the possibility of knowing it (Negri 1991).

If the thesis is valid according to which the *ratio seminale* (defined as “capital” in the Middle Ages) is of the same gnoseological texture that will constitute the eminent cause in René Descartes, it is to this conceptual paradigm that Spinoza opposes a caesura, opening up to another line of thought, to other ethical-political conceptualizations, which find in the constitution of immanence a true, revolutionary act of rupture. There is a reflection on *substance as production*.

But what is *causa sui* and the concept of political *potentia* in Spinoza? Knowing substance according to measure and quantity (for example, money) is inadequate knowledge of substance (in other words: “a priori”), while its true knowledge is the production of self (the self as multitude). The knowledge of

substance and of the *causa sui* leads to understanding them as “productivity.” Spinoza, therefore, becomes central for us with his concept of *causa sui*, which I oppose to the eminence of the concept of capital.

By the **19th century with Marx, we have both capital and the crisis.** The “conceptual figure of capital,” the productive mode of capital, opens up to its crisis and understands itself as an incessant generator of crisis. Reflections on value, money, and capital take the form of profound knowledge and radically critical reflection of the *processes of valorization of capital*. Marx’s work, his concept of capital, is at the heart of a revolution in the understanding of capital as a “self-productive” mechanism. From the first conceptualizations of capital in the Middle Ages (the self-productivity of money as *valor superadiunctus*) to Marx’s in the 19th century (surplus value) the same theoretical composition remains.

For our parallelism between money and metaphysics, between reflection on capital and production of knowledge, together with the Marx of *Capital* we must read an ontological and ethical Marx (I am referring to a plane of ethics in Marx which can be seen as Spinoza’s trace): being and its conceivability belong together and express each other through each other. History as *dunamis* (power) expresses: history must be known as virtuality—being prospective, prospective virtue—as conceivability (ethics). Surplus value is surplus of being anticipated which is deprived of the power/*potentia* of becoming (political plan) at the moment when this virtuality (virtue of becoming of things, and their knowledge, conceivability) comes to us subtracted and appropriated from capital.

With the **20th century and Walter Benjamin, we start to “know” the commodity.** The “mystery of the commodity when it steps forth into the market” is made a knowable object, the crisis becomes critical: it is possible to know the commodity as a poetical object, that is, it is possible to experience alienation and to know it (Walter Benjamin’s reading and his elaboration in *The Arcades Project* (1982) of Marx’s phantasmagoria and the work of Jean Ignace Isidore Gérard Grandville (1803-1847)).⁸ A similar theoretical conceptualization can be found in Sohn-Rethel’s analysis of money as alienated consciousness and his critique of apriorism (1978; 1990).

For each of these periods, I kept in mind the *reflection on value, poverty, and the metaphysics/production of knowledge*. For the reflection on value declined in its various forms, the analysis went from the first reflections on coinage and money in ancient Greece, to the *valor superadiunctus* of the 13th century, to the fluctuation of value in 16th century England and the strengthening of money as credit, the 17th century Dutch market, the crisis of value in the 19th century, and the mystery of the commodity in the 20th century. For the reflection on *poverty*, the analysis touched the first definitions of poverty, the debate on voluntary poverty in the 13th century, the poor laws in the 16th century up to the end of the 19th century. For the reflection on *metaphysics/production of knowledge*, a theoretical line was proposed and investigated made by different passages: the one from polytheism to monism, and the presence of dualism in ancient Greece; materialism (Democritus-Epicurus-Lucretius); the Christian monotheism and the *rationes seminales* (Augustine); the (transcendent) substance placed in the economy (Olivi and the Franciscan economists); representation and the crisis of

representation in the 16th century; eminence-immanence in the 17th century; a physics of knowledge (Carnot); production and production crisis (Marx); the knowledge of the mystery of the commodity, the knowledge by images, capitalism as religion (Benjamin); the true knowledge of money as alienated consciousness or a priori synthesis of metaphysics (Sohn-Rethel); and of capital as theft of the *causa sui* (my interpretation of Marx and Spinoza).

Clearly, the field is endless, centuries are crossed, and the risk is to make them homogeneous when they are not. The research method that has imposed itself on me is to follow one or more concepts, for instance, “signs of light,” both within a specific historical context and its transformations through the ages. Above all, the aim is to investigate the relationship between these concepts, their contradictions, transformations, or caesuras. One of these “signs of light,” a concept or leitmotif which crosses these periods, and in some moments acts as a litmus test of knowledge, is the concept of the virtual.

Olivi and the Virtual

In the 13th century, *substance was placed in the economy by borrowing it from theology*. The reflection on matter, on substance and its knowability, in its meanings of transcendence or immanence, is transposed into economic categories.⁹ The virtual expresses this meaning of substance in the economic sense (a *seminal ratio*: a seminal virtue). It is the “*knowledge of the cause-effect relationship*” and that *immaterial aspect of the matter* which makes it *capable of self-production and movement* (virtue, *seminal ratio*, is the *principle of production* and *knowledge of the cause-effect relationship for production*, it is the *valor superadiunctus*). We will find this aspect of *seminal ratio* in Olivi as the heart of the concept of capital.¹⁰

Spinoza and the Virtual

In the 17th century, the question of the *knowledge of substance in its cause and effect relationship* is pressing again. Descartes calls the cause of everything (God who creates creatures, for example) an *eminent cause*. Heereboord defines it as *virtual*: virtual are creatures in God, and virtual is their knowledge in God (1659; 1988).¹¹ Spinoza reads Heereboord and opposes his work in his early writings. There is no mention of the virtual in Spinoza, but its concept is the “brother” of the actual; hence we can read: the eminent cause (Descartes), together with the concept of virtual (as in Heereboord, tradition), to which is opposed the actual/virtual (Spinoza, the caesura). It is here that we find the coordinates of actuality/virtuality. But this is another formulation of the virtual, not the virtual of Heereboord. In Heereboord, the virtual is still a companion of the possible, still opposite to the real, and thus an accomplice of the eminency of the cause. Spinoza breaks through this equivalency, as I read him: the mistake of considering substance divisible, the mistake of time and measure, the mistake of money, derive all from substituting the plane of the virtual/actual with the one of possible/real. In between, to mark their difference, there is the necessity of creation—and its freedom. Thus, we can affirm that *potentia* is virtual in that it is *actuosam essentiam* (*actuose essence*).

Let us then try to think of the *causa sui* as the expression of the virtual. The

causa sui is the expression of the involvement of essence in existence. It is the mode of this relation. It is the expression of the relation of mode to mode (existence, being) with substance (essence). Substance implies the relation of production of the modes. It is this relation of production. The efficient cause expresses itself in substance: the presence of the cause in the effect (actuality: God's *actuose* essence) and the presence of the effect in the cause (virtuality: its *potentia* to exist). Substance is at once production (actuality) and knowledge (virtuality).

It is here that Spinoza breaks with—and breaks through—the tradition of substance made economical in order to turn it upside down. To substance made measure, made quantity, made “possible,” he affirms substance as production, production of the self, production of the self through the other; as production and knowledge of this production. And, because it is at once production and knowledge, it is there that it *is*, and it is the *potentia* of being (necessary).

Potentia is virtuality in that it is *actuosa essentia*: a producing and knowing virtue, a “prospective virtue”—as Wim Klever in private correspondence suggested it might be called—which insists on its being by producing and knowing itself.

Marx and the Virtual

With Marx in the 19th century, we find both aspects of the virtual: the *virtual of Capital* (virtual capital, *Capital*, Volume II) and its *knowledge* (the crisis, Marx, *Capital*). Here these hints are only to glimpse a part of the theoretical mapping that I am trying to define. In Marx the virtual takes the lion's share.

II. Capital and *Causa Sui*. Δ' and the “Plus of Being”

The labour-poverty relation has, at its core, the virtuality of the *causa sui*. Labour is partly the expression of that life force, the expropriation of which comes to be exposed in poverty. This force is the core of subjectivity, our capacity to produce life.

One of today's main forms of labour, immaterial labour, also has subjectivity at its core: tool of capital on the one hand, production of sense, when it escapes capital, on the other.

For us, it is crucial to see how to articulate the self-productive capacity of the subject in a relation of production to value-production, and how it is different from the one into which capital casts us. How to make labour the motor of the affirmative production of our subjectivity and not of its alienation from itself, the separation from its own life force?

This would be to produce “true wealth.” When the core of subjectivity, the virtuality of the *causa sui*, can constitute, through new relations of production, the intensive of the subject, there the “plus of being” has been produced. And a different path to produce value and for valorization has been affirmed.

A) The Crystal of the Virtual, or the Virtual of Knowledge

The figure of the virtual in *Capital*, Volume II, centres on and expresses here

the relation of the material and the immaterial (the principle of production), which we traced to Olivi and the physical line. In order to analyze this figure of the virtual in *Capital*, Volume II, we follow a trace given by Friedrich Engels in a footnote, and stressed again in his notes from Jean-Baptiste D'Alembert, *Traité de dynamique*, where Engels affirms that Marx takes the concept of latency and of virtual capital from the principle of virtual velocities in D'Alembert (1999). We can, then, pursue a cross-reading of the concept of virtual velocity in Jean-Baptiste D'Alembert and the concept of virtual capital in Marx.

The virtual appears in Volume II of *Capital*,¹² where Marx describes the process of circulation of capital. I mark references to the virtual in the passages with an asterisk [*] and a number:

Part

- I. *The metamorphoses of capital and their circuits*: in chapter one and two the function of *productive capital* [*1]; in chapter three, the commodity capital; mainly chapter five, *time of circulation* [*2]; and chapter six, *costs of circulation* [*3].
- II. *Turnover of capital*: (* indirectly).
- III. *The reproduction and circulation of the aggregate social capital*: chapter 20, simple reproduction; mainly chapter 21, *accumulation and reproduction on an extended scale* [*4].

At [*1] the virtual appears as the hoard form of money-capital: inactive, latent (possibility of the crisis, “caesura” of production). Also, the grasp of anticipation-latency-inoperability-virtuality. We find interconnected there latency—which we read as crystallized anticipation—and virtual potential capital. It is here that Friedrich Engels refers to the virtual velocities of D'Alembert.

At [*2] the virtual appears as a difference between production time and labour-time. Production time exceeds labour-time. Because of the excess of production time over labour-time, it is not produced surplus-value: “Hence there is no expansion of the value of productive capital so long as it stays in that part of its production time which exceeds the labour-time, no matter how inseparable from these pauses the carrying on of the process of self-expansion may be” (2010, 128). Hence the tendency of capital to abbreviate, to annihilate this difference, this excess: “hence the tendency of capitalist production to reduce the excess of the production time over the labour-time as much as possible” (128). But this excess is based on the productive capital latent in production—it is an excess which *Capital* tends to abbreviate but which, at the same time, constitutes the condition of the productive process (again: anticipation-excess-latency). In fact, as Marx points out, “The more the metamorphoses of circulation of a certain capital are only ideal, i.e., the more the time of circulation is equal to zero, or approaches zero, the more does capital function, the more does its productivity and the self-expansion of its value increase” (129).¹³

At [*3] the virtual appears as storage and supply, as a form of the means of production latent in the productive process. At [*4] *flagranti* reappears as potential supplementary monetary capital: we are within the “supplementary constant

capital”—*virtualiter* (the virtual), the virtually supplementary is the uncovered nerve of the excess, of the *superadiunctus*.

So from its form of *inaktiv* latent money capital (“*Schatz*—*Form des latenten (inaktiven) Geldkapitals*”), the first nucleus of virtual potential capital (it is a crystallized anticipation), from its form of hoard, passing through the reduction of the circulation of capital to 0, that is, through the abbreviation of the excess of time of production over time of labour, i.e., through the reduction of the time of production to the time of labour (and passing through the storage mechanism), we arrive at the virtually additional productive capital: the surplus-product.

We are thus at the heart of the mechanism of production. Again, we can perceive the double aspect it has, of self-production and possibility of the crisis (unproductivity for capital—this “possibility of the crisis” can also be read as that formation of subjectivity which we referred to at the beginning). With a single stroke, Marx thus takes us back, resumes the discourse, and closes it:

whereas the surplus-product, directly produced and appropriated by the capitalists A, A', A'' (I), is the real basis of the accumulation of capital, i.e., of extended reproduction, although it does not actually function in this capacity until it reaches the hands of B, B', B'', etc. (I), it is on the contrary absolutely *unproductive* in its chrysalis stage of money—as a hoard and virtual money-capital in process of gradual formation—runs parallel with the process of production in this form, but lies outside of it. It is a dead weight of capitalist production. (2010, 498)

The figure of virtuality ebbs then in the surplus-product (as virtually additional productive capital), goes to constitute the virtually additional money-capital, and signals to us that “dead weight” in capitalist production which is exactly the point from which we would like to start over.

Its *unproductivity* for capital, its being the possibility of the crisis, is the opening from being the highest point of knowledge of the mechanism of self-production to that crisis of production which is the breaking through toward the formation of subjectivity (*causa sui*).

The virtual is then so important to us because, by indicating the mistake of capital, it indicates the possibility of the crisis. The act of cross-reading with D'Alembert can now be helpful because it exemplifies the role which the virtual assumes in Marx. The virtual velocity in D'Alembert is the invisible core of the principle of equilibrium: two forces, two bodies (*puissances*) remain in equilibrium¹⁴ when clashing because of their virtual velocities (the velocities with which they would persevere in their “being” and movement) which pose themselves, in the clash, in inverted relation to these potencies.¹⁵

Let us thus think of the circulation of the equivalence as an apparent or dynamic equilibrium in Marx. The simple circulation occurs as such: C->M->C and M->C->M. So, we have two cycles: C-M-C and M-C-M *comme des puissances*. In D'Alembert the relation is of two potencies in movement which arrive clashing. Circulation, if we continue the parallelism, remains in equilibrium¹⁶ (we start from C and we arrive at C; we start from M and arrive at M) because the

tendency of the relation of the two cycles is virtual, that is, the plane of circulation is the plane of the *quantitative difference that is almost perceptible* (or rendered imperceptible). What is produced in circulation is the *movement itself*, an *element in excess* which expresses this quantitative difference of the two terms (starting and arriving point), and which expresses the latent content (of the distinction between the two): *the basis of anticipated capital which produces plus-value* (that is, of the two combined cycles what interests us here is the passage: M M and M).

It is the figure of the virtual, then, that discloses the structure of the “anticipation of time in thought,” which we hinted at in the beginning as the main interest of Marx, and as one of the features of his work’s “commonality” with Spinoza’s.¹⁷

The production of plus-value, read according to the figure of the virtual (i.e., the production of equilibrium is given by the subtraction of the living force, by the continuous transformation of the living force in dead force for the apparent equilibrium) shows its core mechanism as subtraction, from the force, of its life; subtraction from the force of its capacity of producing its own movement (its *causa sui*). The surplus-value is subtraction of the produced excess; in that, it appropriates the mechanism of self-productivity of the substance itself (*causa sui*) in order to subtract this very mechanism from the knowledge connatural to its very texture (from that capacity of the mind to know it as such, which Spinoza defined as *potentia*).

But the equilibrium, we know, is apparent, dynamic, and the evanescent quantity, the virtual (as “ratio” of surplus value) by expressing the *saltum* of productivity (the *chiasmus* of the material-immaterial), by expressing the difference of the matter (production), *knows itself* and *knows itself as the index of productivity*. It is here that the Spinozian intertwined plane of production-knowledge-being has to be put into play and this time, with Marx, in all those forms (from contemporary immaterial labour to the economy of knowledge; from the material labour of the big industrial districts of poverty to the general intellect; from each and everyone’s mind to the common notions) which allow us to adequately know the infinite and, most importantly, the infinite in circulation.

B) The Political *Causa Sui* (Or: Δ ’ and the Theft of the *Causa Sui*)

Causa sui in Spinoza’s *Ethics* has an ontological and logico-gnoseological function: “in the same sense that God is said to be self-caused he must also be said to be the cause of all things” (1992 I, P25, Sch.). Why is the Spinozian definition of *causa sui* so important to us today?

First, because it is the affirmation of immanence and creation—the production of nature—as immanence (“God is said to be self-caused” in the same sense as “he must also be said to be the cause of all things”). Here we already find the expression of *causa sui* as pure immanence, without any shadow, or any possibility, of eminence, dualism, and separations.

Second, because the time has come to extend its “ontological and logical-gnoseological” function to a third aspect, its political function. The political *causa sui* indicates the way for the liberation of man from any form of slavery

that may exist in his relationship to himself, the field of subjectivity, the field of desire, and of society, the political-economic field, for example, of labour. The “plus of being” is the object of the political *causa sui*: where the implication of the level of essence—what makes us human beings, our desire to be—and of existence—what we are—works, succeeds.

The “plus of being” is the product of implication. And it is “produced” like the intensive and affirms difference. Not in the sense of eminence, but in the sense of internally counteracting the “extensive factor” of entropy, whose excess is dissipated (which in *Capital's* terms, means stored and then appropriated). In the “plus of being” the excess is implicated.

Returning to Spinoza’s concept of *causa sui*: “the implication of essence in existence” is, for us, translated into a political sense, the production of a “plus of being,” that is, of that intensive element which affirms difference and in which the excess of the becoming of matter is implied. This is where “true wealth” is formed.

“That whose nature can be conceived only as existing” (*Ethics* I, Def. 1) indicates for us that plane in which implication must take place and must be full. Where the plane of essence, let’s call it the plane of desire, of what a nature can do, is not implicated and does not extend into existence, the plane of our life, there is violence and oppression wherein we are not free. This can also happen when desire is removed from the plane of existence as the driving force of the *causa sui*, free self-determination. To have a political *causa sui*, we must think to “actively produce ourselves,” to be “ontologically independent.” But how to be “ontologically independent” while at the same time making desire, the plane of *conatus*, of the essence, pass into existence?

C) “Plus of Being” as Deleuze’s Intensity

In Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition* (1994), we find two concepts that help us trace or imagine a new production of modality. These are the *actual-virtual paradigm* and the *notion of the intensive*. The notion of the intensive helps us to contextualize and understand the strength of *potentia* in terms of production and self-production, that is, the construction of the “plus of being,” which is the first element of the production of the free man.

Every intensity is differential, by itself a difference. Every intensity is $E - E'$, where E itself refers to an $e - e'$, and e to $\varepsilon - \varepsilon'$ etc.: each intensity is already a coupling (in which each element of the couple refers in turn to couples of elements of another order), thereby revealing the properly *qualitative content of quantity*. (Deleuze 1994, 222, my italics)

He adds the notion of disparity which explains the “Unequal in itself” contained in the intensity:

We call this state of infinitely doubled difference which resonates to infinity *disparity*. Disparity—in other words, difference or intensity (difference of intensity) is the sufficient reason of all phenomena, the condition of that which appears. ... The reason of the sensible, the condition of that which appears, is not

space and time but the Unequal in itself, *disparateness* as it is determined and comprised in difference of intensity, in intensity as difference. (222)

I believe that the intensive is the signal that warns us of the difference between the illusion of production as autonomous (production of the possible by capital) and the real production of the new (expression of the virtual of the *causa sui*). The intensive indicates the production of sense, the “labour” that returns to the subject and cannot be taken away from them. It is the expression of that production of the *causa sui* which is irreducibly one with ourselves.

Here we find the solution to that “fourth phase” of the capital cycle which is missing in Marx and which we have investigated following the suggestion of Antonino Drago.¹⁸ The fourth phase is that phase in which the “work-labour,” the energy, the transformation made with production, goes to increase our being, the being of the worker, instead of being stored, or, today, being embedded in “fixed” capital by the production mechanism of capital.

Carnot is quoted by Deleuze in the “Asymmetrical Synthesis of the Sensible” section, and we find the fourth phase that Marx lacks in Deleuze’s notion of the intensive. Deleuze, in splendid pages, takes us inside the constitution of the intensive, of difference, its relationship with extension, depth, the idea, and individuation. He thus outlines a new revolutionary ontology.

We can thus ask ourselves now, how does the construction of the “plus of being” occur?

Deleuze’s affirmation: “the power of intensity (depth) is grounded in the potentiality of the Idea” (244), together with the Spinozian parallelism: “the order and the connection of the ideas is the same as the order and connection of things” (*Ethics* II, P7), “By virtue and *potentia* I mean the same thing” (IV, Def. 8), discloses the comprehension of becoming adequate causes of ourselves: “the force with which each thing strives to persevere in its being is nothing but its actual essence” (III, P7).

The movement of the idea, the idea-movement, is inseparable from actualization, but how does it actualize itself? With the individuation process:

The essential process of intensive quantities is individuation. Intensity is individuating, and intensive quantities are individuating factors. Individuals are signal-sign systems. All individuality is intensive, and therefore serial, stepped and communicating, comprising and affirming in itself the difference in intensities by which it is constituted. ... Individuation presupposes a prior metastable state—in other words, the existence of a “disparateness” such as at least two orders of magnitude or two scales of heterogeneous reality between which potentials are distributed. ... An “objective” problematic field thus appears, determined by the distance between two heterogeneous orders. Individuation emerges like the act of solving such a problem, or—what amounts to the same thing—like *the actualisation of a potential and the establishing of communication between dispartes*. The act of individuation consists not in suppressing the problem, but in integrating the elements of the disparateness into a state of coupling which ensures its internal resonance. The individual thus finds itself attached to a pre-individual half which is not the impersonal within it so much as the reservoir of its singularities. In all these respects, we believe that individuation is essentially

intensive, and that the pre-individual field is a virtual-ideal field, made up of differential relations. ... *Individuation is the act by which intensity determines differential relations to become actualised, along the lines of differentiation and within the qualities and extensities it creates.* ... Individuation does not presuppose any differentiation; it gives rise to it. Qualities and extensities, forms and matters, species and parts are not primary; they are imprisoned in individuals as though in a crystal. Moreover, the entire world may be read, as though in a crystal ball, in the moving depth of individuating differences or differences in intensity. (Deleuze 246-7, my italics)

The moment difference ceases to be thought, it dissolves into non-being: “Creation is always the production of lines and figures of differentiation. It is nevertheless true that intensity is explicated only in being cancelled in this differentiated system that it creates” (Deleuze 255). Creation is linked to intensity inasmuch as to create is to produce “lines of differentiation” and intensity is founded in the idea; the transformation is internal; it is the very implication at the level of the *causa sui*.

This is the principle of transformation and that of the “plus of being,” which we want to establish to oppose it to the entropic mechanism of capital where dispersion and latency are fuel for the process of continuous production of the presupposition.

D) To Construct Our Δ , the Economic Expression of the “Plus of Being”

At the end of his life, Marx was interested in studying the differential in an attempt to “unmask” the operation (“mystical” or metaphysical) of making the infinitesimal disappear in the symbolic operation of the differential. There are two movements that interest us: a) the differential as the negation of the negation (with respect to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel) and b) the intrinsic nature of differentiation which expresses the potential for change.

The importance of these reflections can be seen if correlated with Drago’s intuition that Marx could have borrowed the cycle of capital from the cycle of the ideal machine of Carnot. However, for Drago (1987), Marx is missing the fourth phase, the one in which the work (or expended energy) returns to the machine.

For me, the fourth phase missing in Marx is the production of profit which returns to the worker as the producer of that “labour,” of that plus in the form of the “plus of being,” not just an increase in wages—plane of money—but at the level of productivity, of the capacity for productivity—level of capital, and its theft of the worker’s *causa sui*—that is, in the form of the “plus of being.” What is the relationship between Marx’s calculus of the differential and the fourth phase of the Carnot cycle? We can postulate this as regards the parallelism between the Carnot cycle and the capital cycle, we can think of the machine, on the other hand, as self-sufficient (capital as autopoietic, or as a “quasi-cause”), and on the other, with the cause of the change, production, as an external and autonomous, independent element. The first step to take here is to change the subject, *to replace the Capital Machine with the productive relationship*.

In fact, if we think of the origin of the differential as an intrinsic movement

of matter (here, of the worker), we understand that the production of surplus (the infinitesimal) cannot be eliminated or extrapolated from the relationship but is intrinsic to the productive relationship itself, that is, to the relationship between worker and capital. Overturning the presupposition, namely the apriorism of production, which establishes and nourishes the mechanism of capital, means freeing the fourth phase as a “productive *causa sui*.” It is to relate the concept of differential that we have seen in Deleuze with the study of the differential in Marx, passing through the Marx-Carnot analogy (what I call “the fourth phase”) and then constructing our Δe , the economic expression of the “plus of being.”

Marx’s missing fourth phase is Spinoza’s *causa sui*, the capacity for self-production that each of us has, and which, in Marxian terms, is taken from us by capital. A political *causa sui*. In terms of this context, the energy that must return to the worker can be defined as their ability to reproduce themselves in life, as her *potentia*, in Spinoza’s terms, as his ability, namely, to produce a “plus of being.” As the intensive that we saw in Deleuze, which is implication and what the difference consists of. I understand the fourth phase in Marx as the production of a “plus of being” which, through work/labour, returns to the worker as an increase in their being; as an increase in the implication of the essence in existence, as an increase in “that whose nature can only be conceived as existing” (*Ethics* I, Def. 1). It is about starting to outline a concept of adequate labour.

Constructing the fourth phase in Marx as a concept of *causa sui* (I dare say in ethical-political terms, the self-production of matter which, in our case, is the force to produce ourselves in life), can correspond to Carnot’s intuition, if we read it together with Deleuze, as the germ of production of the differential. For Deleuze, the increase of entropy is an illusion—which is the same sense in which I read capital, whose “increase” is the “grasp” on/of the work of others, its theft. We can speak, more productively, of differential as self-production of matter.

In the pages we saw of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze explains the concept of the intensive as a difference of intensity, and quotes Carnot and M.L. Selme, for whom the increase of entropy is an illusion, i.e., we have the “paradox of entropy”: entropy is an “extensive factor” that exists only if it is implicated, it has the “function of *making possible* the general movement by which that which is implicated explicates itself or is extended” (229).¹⁹

A principle of causality is established for which “intensity defines an objective sense for a series of irreversible states which pass, like an ‘arrow of time,’ from more to less differentiated, from a productive to a reduced difference, and ultimately to a cancelled difference” (Deleuze 223). The transcendental illusion of the “increase” of entropy means that there is not a true increase but a transformation, and that this transformation is internal: the function of entropy is the implication itself. This, we said, is similar to the process of capital which is the continuous (re)production of the presupposition—an implication dictated from the outside, in a violent way. It is the same transcendental illusion of the production mechanism of capital

because capital merely reproduces the presupposition and increases that part of the production process which makes it so, but it is neither an increase in the worker, nor in production itself.

The construction of a fourth phase in Marx could respond precisely to this: to dissolve the transcendental illusion of the mechanism of the Capital Machine, to pursue it on its own level of immanence (the anti-production which produces the lack at the level of desire, which makes of desire an inner phantasm; which produces the infinite debt at the level of labour), and to give the differential, an element which capital uses and which it entangles in the “illusion of increase,” a materialistic procedure, a materialistic base.

III. Living Dead Labour and the Coefficient of Production of Inequality²⁰

I have given the main points of a work that is expressed in a trilogy: *Potentia of Poverty: Marx Reads Spinoza*; *Causa Sui: Essay on Capital and the Virtual* and *Capital Machine; Genesis and Structure of Exploitation*. We saw that capital works with time by anticipating it for an abstract aim, that is, the theft of the working capacity of the worker, whereas imagination anticipates time but with a “material” aim, because it is the trace of an encounter and its aim is to make present what is not.

If we understand that imagination does not tell us anything about what it is the trace of, but that it is production, it produces an absence into presence, then we understand this capacity as a force, a force of the mind. To know the commodity form as common notion means to start to understand that the commodity form can be known—in the case of the commodity form it is the knowledge of the production of a common plane made by equivalences.

By recognizing the virtual of capital and the virtual of the *causa sui* and the role of each in labour relations, we can give back to *causa sui* its *potentia*, its virtuality. In the first part, we can know the mystery of the commodity form as common notion, that is, as production of a presence (equality) instead of an absence (unaccounted difference). We now know the *knowledge of the dismeasure*. The example given traces the virtual in Marx’s *Capital*.

The third part: to give account of the dismeasure by understanding that this is the quantum of the uncommon that capital produces in its way of production. *Dismasure is the result of the presupposition*, the power relation that capital establishes with the worker. Paradoxically we can measure it, and we want to see with the *production coefficient of inequality*—like the carbon footprint of labour—how much capital produces misery, and to change this into the *potentia* of the dismeasure, into the elaboration of an adequate production whose engine would be an adequate labour, with adequate working relations (*the production coefficient of equality*).

In the third part, the element I chose is the *differential*, important for Marx and Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and what I call, the *production coefficient of inequality* and the *production coefficient of equality*.

A) The Production of Differentials (from Marx to Deleuze and Guattari)

The Capital Machine has a form and a mechanism. It stole substance. By substance I mean matter in becoming, nature, life. When I say that the Capital Machine has stolen substance, I mean that the first “leap” of which it is constituted and on which it feeds is the theft of that production of differentials (initially from Augustine and his “translation” of Plotinus’ *logos spermatikos*, to the medievals, called *ratio seminale*, and which then, after centuries of transformations but with the same virtual force, will become, in my opinion, financial capital), which does not intrinsically belong to the nature of capital as a productive mechanism but to the nature of a productive relationship which, in the case of capital, is based, and reproduced, on inequality.

By differential I mean here the notion of the “differential” that we find in Deleuze in the expression of intensity: the ability of being to produce itself as difference, the primary texture of being.

The production of differentials at the basis of the social relationship of labour is forfeited as if it were a property of the capital which, whoever owns the means of production, that is, whoever embodies capital, can dispose of at will. The productive relationship is based on a synthesis in which the dissymmetry between owner and worker is given as a presupposition of the productive relationship itself.

Capital, thus, by appropriating this capacity inherent in the production relationship—the capacity to produce surplus—annexes the capacity to produce a differential. But does this ability belong to its nature, or is it given in the productive relationship itself of which capital becomes master/owner, in the productive relationship that capital manages with its power, i.e., by establishing the unequal terms of the relationship?

We know that capital is the production and maintenance of an unequal and asymmetrical relationship. That is, regardless of its cause and nature, the mechanism it perpetuates is the production and maintenance of inequality and asymmetry.

By whom and by what is it sanctioned, permitted, and even created—this primitive element by which capital can multiply its value (in addition to inducing surplus labour, and its theft) in a disconnected, abstract way, from the production activity and from the subject of production?

With the general equivalent, the first abstraction was created, making it possible to homogenize differences and exchange products (it also made it possible to shift the debt inherent in the slave’s body to money, thus extrapolating and objectifying it, and giving the slave the possibility of redeeming themselves): a first small leap was already made in making something different commensurable.

From a first leap (simple, primitive accumulation) inscribed in the formation and establishment of the general equivalent, follows a second, more fundamental leap. This general equivalent is not only an autonomous element and abstract from what it represents and for which it stands, a production relationship and product of labour activity, but a device which allows, through a strategy of an-

icipation-latency-exploitation, to self-reproduce, making this self-production pass as its own production when this “self-production” is not actual production but appropriation and reproduction (reproduction and subtraction) of the work of others.

It is in the passage from abstraction—which began with coinage, and its expression in a general equivalent—and from there becomes anticipation-latency-profit, that we have the legitimacy of the self-fructification of money up to the transcendental illusion of the mechanism of the Capital Machine (Pascucci 2022, 7).

To dissolve the transcendental illusion of the mechanism of the Capital Machine and to give the differential a materialistic base, we need to construct the fourth phase that is missing in Marx.

B) The Productive *Causa Sui* Can be Restored by Passing through Δe and $\Delta e'$

If we remove the constant capital (C, machinery, etc.) from the rate of profit, what remains is the ratio between surplus value and variable capital. In other words, there is a *direct comparison/confrontation* between the “productive waste” constituted by surplus value and living labour (variable capital). This is called by Marx “exploitation rate.”

We are interested in overturning this formula, or rather, basing ourselves on this formula, in revolutionizing it into a positive formula, by studying how to make the “rate of exploitation,” a “ratio of the ‘plus of being’/of increase of being,” the “rate of true wealth.”

If we think of the *seminal ratio*, the encounter of the *logos spermaticos* with the actualization of *potentia*, with an imaginative leap, we can see in the *logos spermaticos* living labour, in the actualization of *potentia* (which is the actualization of a virtuality, the productivity that becomes production) the nucleus of surplus-value. The ratio, the above relation, must express the differential of the function between the two. That is Δe (the production coefficient of inequality, which we also call Π , “true wealth coefficient”) = $f(V/S)$. Function (Variable capital/surplus value). The rate of exploitation in Marx is S/V , i.e., the relationship between surplus value and variable capital, which gives the measure of the exploitation of the labour-force.

We want to develop the direct relation between living labour and surplus value. First passage: surplus value becomes function of variable capital to then transform this relation in a differential relation (filiative form of capital $x+xd$), to transform it into a frontal relation between living labour and surplus value, where surplus value is recognized as the *separation* and *subtraction* of *necessary labour* from *living labour* and not an addition from the outside, not where the implication of the production of the “plus” is a presupposition of the productive relationship, where the end and the gimmick of the extraction of surplus value is the relationship of exploitation, the “extractive” relationship between surplus value and variable capital—a rate of true wealth would show the “differential materialistic” relationship that exists between the two. What is the difference between thinking of the relationship between the two as a “materialistic differ-

ential,” and thinking of it in terms of a relationship of division and consequent appropriability?

It lies in making the production of difference “really implicating, enveloping” (instead of the differential of capital, which is the implication of an illusory increment) and thus starting to “pick” the presupposition of capital’s power (surplus value at the nominator, variable capital at the denominator; right to the wealth of capital, impoverishment *ad infinitum* of the worker: production based on the rate of exploitation). The rate of exploitation is the presupposition, which must be deconstructed.

What does it mean that S/V , the rate of exploitation, must become a differential materialist ratio? It means asking the question “what would it be if we knew the surplus value every time, and, even more, if this went to the work that produces it”? A reversal, which would consist of two steps: a) a first differentiation (in which the surplus value arises from a subtraction and not from an addition) (differentiation); and then b) a transformation of the relationship of appropriative synthesis into a materialistic differential (really involving differential, development of a Δe) by reversing its terms: no longer the variable capital which is enslaved to the surplus-value, but the surplus-value which becomes a function of the variable capital, no longer the exploitation rate, but the “true wealth rate.” Changing the relationship between surplus value and variable capital (exploitation rate) into a materialistic differential relationship not only sheds light on the relationship between virtuality and actualization (anticipation/producer-product separability—exploitation/ extraction of the *causa sui*), but also affects the presupposition mechanism of capital. The productive relationship is producing becoming, a non-appropriable flow, weaving *koinonia*, originating the common through the work of each one, not the asymmetrical and individualistic fragmentation of the elements that contribute to production.

First, therefore, *the rate of exploitation must become the “production coefficient of inequality” (Δe), then to be reversed into the “production coefficient of equality” ($\Delta e'$) which is equivalent to the differential of the “plus of being,” also called the “production differential of equality.”*

C) Conclusion: the “Production Coefficient of Inequality” and the Consequent “Production Coefficient of Equality”

We have given a hint as to the intrinsic nature of differentiation as expressing the potential for change. We have seen that if we consider the origin of the differential as an intrinsic movement of matter (here, of the worker), we understand that the production of surplus cannot be extrapolated from the production relationship, but is intrinsic to the production relationship itself, to the relationship between worker and capital, or rather, is intrinsic to the worker and is expressed in his relationship to capital.

To make the increment produced by production, an increment of being and not of profit, we have related Deleuze’s concept of differential (concept of intensive, which corresponds to our concept of the “plus of being”) with the study of the differential in Marx (the negation of the negation which explains the production of an intensive that materialistically founds the operation of the

differential), passing through the Marx-Carnot analogy (what we call “the fourth phase”), constructing our $\Delta e'$, economic expression of the “plus of being.” This is how the political *causa sui* we mentioned above is formed.

This “political *causa sui*” overturns the presupposition, the apriorism, that the mechanism of capital establishes and feeds on, and frees the fourth phase as a productive *causa sui*, liberates a material base of production.

Thus we call the *production coefficient of inequality* (Δe) that coefficient which, within production, is the figure of the rate of exploitation. It is a sort of carbon footprint—or even Gini coefficient—applied to the productive relationship: that is, what is subtracted from the worker by the Capital Machine in terms of life capacity that his work expresses. This can also be applied to nature, to populations: how much the Capital Machine subtracts from nature in order to function; how much the dynamics of the global market subtracts from individual populations in terms of their internal well-being.

Once this coefficient has been calculated, turning its elements into “positive,” we should arrive at defining the *production coefficient of equality* ($\Delta e'$, the production of the “plus of being”), a coefficient that restores what is subtracted, the element that implies production in the subject who produces, which makes production an intensive of the subject.

The *production coefficient of inequality* (Δe) is what evaluates the discrepancy between necessary labour and living labour, that is, what is transformed into dead labour and the “plus” of the difference between living labour and necessary labour. It makes living labour necessary labour and variable capital frontal, and indicates, in their relationship, surplus value as the rate of exploitation. The rate of exploitation, unlike the rate of surplus value which was given by the ratio between surplus value and variable capital, becomes equal to the ratio between living labour and variable capital.

If this is true, defining each time, in each productive relation, the production coefficient of inequality will bring us closer to that concept of adequate production, of free labour which will be expressed by the production coefficient of equality.

Biography

Margherita Pascucci, PhD (2003), has published five monographs, including *Philosophical Readings of Shakespeare: “Thou Art the Thing Itself”* (Palgrave, 2013); *Macchina Capitale. Genesi e struttura dello sfruttamento* (Ombre Corte, 2022); *Causa sui. Saggio sul capitale e il virtuale* (Ombre Corte, 2009); *Potenza della povertà. Marx legge Spinoza* (Ombre Corte, 2006), foreword by Antonio Negri; translated in Persian, by Foad Habibi, Qoqnoos (June 2019); in English *Potentia of Poverty: Marx Reads Spinoza*, forthcoming (Historical Materialism Book Series, Brill, 2023); and *Il pensiero di Walter Benjamin. Un'introduzione*, foreword by Ubaldo Fadini (Il Parnaso, 2002).

Notes

1. “Capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks” (Marx 1976a, 342).
2. According to Walter Benjamin, see Konvolut G in Benjamin’s *Arcades Project* (1982). Also, allow me to refer to my PhD thesis “Capital and Imagination: Commodity as a Poetical Object” (New York University, 2002).
3. *Einheit Subjekt-Objekt, das Ansich; die Intelligenz, “die alle Bestimmtheiten in virtueller Möglichkeit enthält”* (Subject-object unity; the in-itself; the intelligence, “which contains all determinations in virtual possibility”).
4. See Olivi (1980; 1990; 1992; 1994; 2016). See also Alain Boureau and Sylvain Piron (1999); Sylvain Piron (1999); Giacomo Todeschini (1987; 2004); and Julius Kirshner and Kimberly Lo Prete (1984).
5. As regards the metaphysical/theological/economical perspective, or interlacing of this *ratio seminalis* and Olivi’s conceptualization, traces of it can be found in Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444), his economic treatise *On Contracts and Usury* (and the concept of *utilitas-raritas*), from Bernardino to Galiani (value as proportion), from Galiani (1728-1787, *Della Moneta*, 1751) to Marx.
6. In Italy, more or less in parallel, there are the Monti di Pietà.
7. See letter 12 (Spinoza 1992).
8. See endnote 2.
9. See Ovidio Capitani’s work on political economy in the Middle Ages.
10. “*Quamdam rationem seminalem lucrosi quam communiter capitale vocamus*” [(money possesses) a certain seminal cause of profit that we commonly call “capital” (Olivi 1980, 85)], and: “*la virtuale possibilità di un guadagno, che noi comunemente chiamiamo capitale, e pertanto si deve restituire non solo il semplice valore della moneta o dell’oggetto, ma anche il valore che si è aggiunto*” (Olivi 1990, 131-2) [“some probable profit ... a certain seminal cause of profit that we commonly call “capital.” And for that reason, not only the simple value of the thing ought to be returned, but also the super-added value (*valor superadiunctus*) (Olivi 2016, 57). Translation slightly altered: instead of “character” I translated *rationem* with “cause”]. See also Michael Wolff (1994, 413-42). Please allow me to refer also to my *Macchina Capitale* (2022, 153).
11. See Spinoza (1988, 344). See also Jacob Freundenthal (1887, 94-106). For a further deepening of Heereboord’s philosophy within Cartesianism, see Theo Verbeek (1992, 34-51). For the relation between Spinoza and Heereboord, see F.A. Trendelenburg (1867, 316) and L. Robinson (1928, 176). For a general overview see Gunther Coppens (2003). Furthermore, please see my *Causa sui* (2009, 84; 106).
12. It is here considered only the virtual in *Capital*, Volume II.
13. “*Je mehr die Zirkulationsmetamorphosen des Kapitals nur ideell sind, d.h. je mehr die Umlaufzeit=0 wird oder sich Null nähert, um so mehr fungiert das Kapital*

als produktives Kapital um so größer wird seine Produktivität und Selbverwertung” (Marx and Engels 1999, 98-9).

14. “When several forces or powers act against each other, it is necessary to start by reducing two of these powers to only one, which will be done by prolonging their directions until they meet and then seeking by the rules of the composition of the forces, the direction, and the value of the power which results from these two. ... Now, for there to be equilibrium, this last power must be zero, or its direction must pass through some fixed point which destroys its effect” (*Equilibre, Encyclopédie*, D’Alembert and Denis Diderot 1751, Tome 5, 873-80).
15. This equilibrium is furthermore defined in D’Alembert as the relation of the dead force and the living force; as the status which transforms the living force in dead force. The dead force is expressed by the product of the mass for the virtual velocity ($f=mxv$), and the living force is expressed by the product of the mass for the square of the velocity ($f=mxv^2$).
16. It is an absolutely fictitious equilibrium—the most dynamic and omnivorous to exist.
17. The most imminent precursor of D’Alembert, for his theory of virtual velocities, is Christiaan Huygens.
18. For an explanation and analysis of this, and of the construction of the fourth phase missing in Marx, please allow me to refer to *Macchina Capitale* (2022), chapter four, “*La quarta fase è la causa sui dell’uomo*,” and to “*Il Sogno di Marx*” (Pascucci 2011).
19. “... Entropy is an extensive factor but, unlike all other extensive factors, it is an extension or ‘explication’ which is implicated as such in intensity, which does not exist outside the implication or except as implicated, and this is because it has the function of *making possible* the general movement by which that which is implicated explicates itself or is extended. There is thus a transcendental illusion essentially tied to the *qualitas*, Heat, and to the extension, Entropy” (Deleuze 229).
20. What follows is a very short summary of chapter five of *Macchina Capitale*, “*Genesi e struttura dello sfruttamento*” (Pascucci 2022).

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True Friend

Abdelkébir Khatibi (1938-2009)

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Translated by Conor O’Dea

Friendship is involved in the invention of a dialogue and in a dangerous game of virtue and truth.

We voluntarily admit that it is, for this reason, a condition of the social bond, of public and private opinion, of the community of spirit, whether it be social, intellectual, or spiritual. A work of civilization, in short, and one of the founding paradigms of thought, of the exercise of democracy and justice.

But, could there not be a profession of faith there, which corresponds to the ideology of brotherhood? Yes and no. Yes, insofar as where the invention of dialogue, in the major example of the Greeks, holds itself in the universe of a language reserved for men, and where the absence of the feminine figure shines.

An absence which became incommensurable with the advent of monotheism. It must be remembered that in this tradition, God bestowed the power of nomination to Adam. Adam, an androgynous being from whom the prosthesis of the division of the one into two detaches itself.¹ Since the dawn of monotheism, this game of nomination is a war of disidentification, the effacement of an essential difference and dissymmetry. No wonder that the desert of that which we call love was celebrated there, phantom or angel, sin and paradise lost!

The thing is not so simple, in another measure, the one where the friendship that will be gradually articulated here, is heard as access to the law of sharing at the heart of vast individual solitude. Beyond the foundational denegation of this belief, friendship will be sought as an oftentimes indecisive promise, a possible promise, and a sign of an alliance. With whom and what? With gods? With men? With other beings and things of existence? With what secret truth about the gravity of life, sickness, death, and survival?

Let's admit that the truth of friendship is plural and perspectivist, without certainty or moral stability. A corruptible morality because it is subject to passion, to competition, to dissension. Masked, it presents itself as a cult, the veneration of the ideal image of the self, of the one and the other. It thus watches over the (political) balance of individual interests, drawing its rhetoric from tangled affectations. Each one finds or does not find their account there. It can last an entire life under this benevolent and caring illusion, after all.

Is there here, still, a "bad friendship" of consolation and substitution? Yes, according to Nietzsche, who places the cult of friendship and the praise of enmity back-to-back. Thought that Jacques Derrida redeploys in his magnificent work composed in sessions. The "good friendship" is a strange law of sharing, a paradoxical pact and one which changes the terms of the alliance depending on the vicissitudes of life. A dissymmetrical alliance, certainly, demanding respect, a distant respect, which tolerates the friend in its singularity. Each one is separated and tied to the other by separation itself, by this indestructible tie of intimate solitude. This limit of friendship and its dangerous truth, where everyone searches, explores, invents perhaps, liberates the potency of life that proves to be veiled, from day to day, covered by the graduated art of confidence and all its beautiful words. Friends valorize the undertones of confidence and come to celebrate it as love of solitude and knowledge of the truth.

Aimance: to love in thinking. It is an act, an active affinity, between men, between men and women, between animals and their fellows, plants and every initiatory thing in existence. A relation of realized tolerance, a knowing how to live together, between genders, sensibilities, thoughts, religions, diverse cultures. It is the art of living correspondences, which gives to friendship this lightness, an apparent carelessness, liberating a space of well-being, and a held-back burst of *jouissance*. The happy moments between friends are signs that ask for celebrations and rejoicings. As such, they are salutary illusions, summoning a distant desire for eternity.

Intellectual friendship declares itself as being a style, that of acting at a distance from life and its turbulences. One recognizes the sensitive value of these moments in the availability to listen to the friend, to a fair dialogue, measured or unmeasured along its moments, a sort of transmutation of living thoughts, withdrawn from their emotions and filtered by the sensitive intelligence of the body, including in sickness and in distress, and in the face of death which slips itself behind these signs of mutual recognition, of respect that honours the secret, the solitude, the singularity of the one and the other. To not speak excessively of one's friend, rather address oneself to him, and to the horizontality in him, bearer of promise. That is why good friendship is pure presence, pure virtuality, graduated, oriented toward the time of reincarnation and of inheritance.

Aimance is not a substitute for love as a word and fragment of the real; it prolongs it in an active thought, in modifying its initiatory path. Clearing an unknown space. It does not resolve any enigma, does not expect any miracle, no pretense of angelism. It proposes a more redoubtable enigma: the dangerous truth of a search without a declared finality. The enigma of a common and necessary dissidence against the intolerable, indignity, the indiscriminate devastation of the human and superhuman.

What is common to love, thus named, and to the hate which accompanies it and to their instability, is our blindness to the lure of suffering and its seductions. Its principle of uncertainty: to maintain our capacity, our possibility of being perpetually in love, across deceptions, exiles, the rage of being misunderstood by men and the gods. Softening this suffering a little, thanks to experience made thought, transfigurable in the manner of living and surviving between friends.

Certainly, taking the risk of knowing that which one is in the process of living in loving is not in itself a surplus of disarray. Neither the sublime memory of an arid depassionalization or a desert with neither trickles of water nor rhizomes with aerial stems.

Over the desert watches God, the One, the Unique, the Absolute Stranger. What is a mystic in the universe of monotheism? It is a loner who dreams of being a friend of God.

In his philosophical tale *Hayy ibn Yaqẓān* (The Son of the Awakened), Ibn Tofail, born in Andalusia at the start of the 12th century and deceased in Marrakesh in 1185, tells us of the birth of this utopian friendship. Let's follow the steps.

A baby is abandoned on Ouaqouaq Island. He is raised by a gazelle which breastfeeds him and protects him against wildlife. No articulated language: Hayy imitates birds and other animals. It's a strange little beast. A strangeness that transformed itself, in the growing child, into an investigation of natural life. Thus, the death of the gazelle, his nurse and substitute mother, destines him to his first vocation, that of a naturalist. After the pain and the beginnings of mourning, he proceeds to dissect the body of the gazelle, which is followed by a series of experiments on the cadavers of other animals. He continues his research on the different kingdoms of nature: the vegetable, the mineral, the sky, and the constellations.

At the age of 35 years, he discovers God, thanks to the Vision, internalized little by little by the knowledge of the True. Ecstasy where, at the age of 50 years, he *sees*, at last, *a man*: Asâl. A man who has come from *another* island where he lived with his friend Salâmân. This friend was a character steeped in dogmas, while Asâl devoted himself to the practice of spirituality and the community between thoughts.

This friendship, which bore within itself a discord, would separate them along the paths of the Way. Yet, a friendship is a hospitality, a law, a source of

hospitality, dedicated to the experience of the Unknown, and maybe the Unheard-of. It obeys two contradictory exigencies: friendship is held by a conventional pact of the social bond; it is also the search for a community of spirit and soul, between loners, from island to island, voyaging toward the Invisible, behind a sky covered by angels and parables in the form of signs.

This quest is consecrated to meditation, to the voyaging autonomy of the interior life—under the potency of the outside. Passion for the trace of the Unknown, of the step and the side-step, a space starred by God, of signs and images, appearances and disappearances illuminated, from degree to initiatory degree: a state of unveiling, stasis of knowledge.

Asâl leaves his friend and his island seeded with dogmas and theology for that of Hayy, which he had heard spoken of from the one to the next. At first, he could not see him. Each one, from their side, lived in isolation right up until the day where they *interperceive*. This is the first gaze of the Son of the Awakened upon a man, in the clarity of an inter-vision. A man who does not resemble the other animals which Hayy had frequented with affection.

From then on, Hayy sets himself to the work of shadowing with a growing curiosity. Observation which induced an error. Like the mystics of this era, the stranger wore a tunic of hair and wool, so fine that Hayy took it for a type of hide, enveloping the body of a bizarre animal. A fearful animal which took flight, man himself disguised as animal.

Hayy pursued him, changing tactics. Neither to capture him nor kill him, but to examine him up close, with a measured distance. In these moments, the man is an unidentified being, neither a friend nor an enemy: an unknown, a stranger, a sign of apparition to be deciphered.

Asâl broke away, stepping out of line of sight. He fled at full speed. Hayy stopped himself, side-stepping from sight as well, before continuing his painstaking investigation of the other. He did so with skill, in the animal way he carried within himself: hiding quickly, looking from a distance, watching for the movement of gestures. The body language took place (it always takes place) in three positions, three stases: the vertical, the genuflecting curve, and the seated position. Asâl lifted his hands above his shoulders, to ear height, while moving his lips. A remote murmur, incomprehensible, lost in a forest of signs.

Asâl prayed, without any doubt, by invoking God, all while crying. He forgot himself in this ecstatic state while Hayy approached him, without either divining or realizing it. Hayy heard new prayers and supplications. This time, he felt that the other voice was clear, and its lexicon, well-articulated, pleasant to hear, to repeat. A voice of an unheard accent, the man himself. He heard the human language without understanding it. He then discovered the geometric shape of Asâl's body, resembling his own. Similarly, the ornaments covering and forming part of his skin.

The more he examined him in this ecstatic state, the more he was convinced of a brilliant idea, of the secret that bound them together in this language so foreign. He reassured Asâl, spoke to him of that which we call the language of animals, without doing him harm. In turn, Asâl spoke to him in

all the languages and snippets of languages that he has learned, but without result. Asâl decided to teach him language, science, religion. Their friendship was sealed on this island, in this community of solitary basis, under the gaze of God.

This philosophical tale teaches us something precious, this participatory friendship across different kingdoms of nature: that of affection and mourning, which connects Hayy to the gazelle, by a kindness said to be natural. It also teaches us the significance of the discord which separates friends in the search for and knowledge of the truth. Asâl does not bring war against Salâmân, his brother in religion. He shows tolerance in moving himself, changing his initiatory path. He does not seek to oppose him, thus demobilizing the friendship/enmity opposition, nor to change him in any way. He orients himself according to his search, the voyage toward God. There, the place of separation.

Theology is the spirituality which attaches itself, no matter the cost, to the social bond cemented by belief and by its adepts. Consensual obedience to God and to a social politics of gathering. Everything else is the friendship between Hayy and Asâl. The crossover between two events, friendship which proves to be a step towards the confluence of the epiphanic encounter. Asâl is not the master of his friend but a companion on the road, a wayfarer (*sâlik*), a pathfinder, he who gives sense to that which his friend already knows. Friendship, a maieutic of *aimance*.

This mystical form of love is a universal given, which traverses sacred traditions, civilizations and their works. It does not require a profession of determinate faith. One can be a substantive mystic without any dogma whatsoever. This is why friendship, thus named, is a qualitative transmutation of life. The social bond is an axiom of this life and not its answer. The social bond is reabsorbed in the law of sharing and its respect: values, norms, institutions, basic communities.

Beyond these signs of alliance and this sense of belonging of the collective subject, friendship is left to itself, vulnerable, unfulfilled. When the body or the spirit of a friend, who is dear to us, bends towards sickness or death, fading away in the time to come, I am left to my untreatable solitude. More taciturn than ever, dead in thought instead of truly sick or dead, like a phantom in search of reincarnation.

Whether I suffer or whether I console myself, I know that my mourning will always be fragmentary. I will lack a way of speaking to the other, to the next one who is alive. My carelessness diminishes. I already know that I will inherit its brittleness, which precedes me in showing me the path. Such is the decline in which we shut ourselves before misfortune. Against the hardness of this misfortune which makes me grow and endure, it is necessary, I repeat to myself, to maintain, with respect, that which is dissidence in any sensitive force of life. In unleashing the shockwave, the path is made.

Biographies

Abdelkébir Khatibi (11 February 1938 – 16 March 2009) was a Moroccan literary critic, novelist, philosopher, playwright, poet, and sociologist. Among his works translated in English are the novels *Tattooed Memory* and *Love in Two Languages* and his collection of essays entitled *Plural Maghreb: Writings on Post-colonialism*. The above piece comes from a series of essays written upon the passing of his friend, Jacques Derrida (*Jacques Derrida, en effet*, 2007). Khatibi and Derrida first met each other in September 1974, in a café in Place Saint-Sulice in Paris, to discuss several of his works that he had sent to Derrida earlier that year. They became lifelong friends from that time, right up until Derrida's death in October of 2004, a friendship Khatibi describes as “a landmark in the time of living” (2007, 7).

Conor O’Dea is an independent scholar, currently working on a project bridging the ontological anarchy of Reiner Schürmann and the ontology of revolution of Guy Lardreau and Christian Jambet. He thanks Peter Trnka for the encouragement to undertake this work and A. Limoges for his sage advice and counsel on the translation.

Notes

1. The enigmatic choice of a “side” of man for the point of departure for the creation of the first woman, “mother of all the living” (Genesis, 3:20), may clear itself up if, as we have noted for long enough, one appeals to a Sumerian assonance between “side” and “life,” equally pronounced “til” or “ti” and written with the same “ideogram.” There could therefore still be a Mesopotamian reminiscence here.

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The Role of Revolutionary Intellectuals is of Utmost Importance: *Imagining Palestine*

Tahrir Hamdi Interviewed by Louis Brehony

Introduction

With the flames of anticolonial resistance raging in occupied Palestine, those on the receiving end of Zionist repression have continued to develop cultural and intellectual counterparts to the armed struggle. *Janus Unbound* is proud to have on its Editorial and Advisory Boards a number of scholars whose work has sought to platform this struggle, analyzing its history, and understanding its trajectories. Hailing from a family of displaced Palestinians and fighters including her late father Khalil, Tahrir Hamdi is a leading professor of literature and decolonial studies at Arab Open University, Jordan. Her new book *Imagining Palestine: Cultures of Exile and National Identity* (2023)¹ gives a historic and contemporary survey of Palestinian resistance culture. This conversation between Professor Hamdi and Dr Louis Brehony took place after the book's publication, in the context of a renewed Palestinian counterattack against an ongoing wave of settler-colonialist massacres.²

Interview

Louis Brehony: Introducing your book, you describe imagining Palestine as “a *conscious act* of resistance and defiance, which involves the constant process of reconfigurations and reformulations of Palestinian national and cultural collective identity” (10). This is a succinct summary of your work, its main themes of analysis, and the catalogue of revolutionary and intellectual figures who personify the acts and positions that you introduce. Your focus here is on Palestinian culture, including, but not limited to critical theory, literature, music, and visual arts, and, through a serious analysis of each, it becomes clear how each is assembled into a collective politics and history. It is particularly striking how your emphasis on consciousness in the making of different strands of Palestinian narrative shapes the approaches of new generations of exiles to the core issues facing questions of dispossession and liberation.

I'd like to begin this interview by breaking down and exploring particular strands of the statement I quoted earlier. Firstly, the word *resistance* is used repeatedly throughout your work, whether to describe the poetic and artistic contributions of Mourid Barghouti, Susan Abulhawa, or Naji al-Ali, or as a term recognizing the function and spirit of the armed movement to decolonize Palestine. Readers may be familiar with recent “debates”—for want of a better

term—whereby Palestine solidarity is criminalized in the West and apparently progressive social forces position themselves against descriptions of Palestinian culture and protest as resistance. But how do you see the importance of the term? Or, put another way, why must imagining a different Palestine involve resistance?

Tahrir Hamdi: I emphasize words like “resistance,” *sumud* (steadfastness). I call it “Palestinian *sumud*,” and “defiance” to clarify that this is more than protest; resistance entails a total rejection of the status quo, not only of the Zionist settler colony, but also Arab officialdom, which enables the perpetuation of the dispossession and oppression of the Palestinian people. Many Arab states have security arrangements with the Zionist entity, arrangements targeting revolutionary Palestinian intellectuals and freedom fighters inside occupied Palestine. To imagine Palestine involves serious resistance—all forms of resistance—and this is something that some (in the West, “apparently progressive social forces”) in the international Palestine “solidarity” movement seem to ignore. Resistance, of course, involves all forms of cultural resistance, BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions), and teaching and speaking about Palestine, but it also involves the armed struggle, which for Ghassan Kanafani cannot be separated from cultural resistance. The two must work together, in unison, with one feeding into the other: cultural resistance and armed resistance.

To imagine is to make real. So imagining Palestine is empowering: the colonized feel empowered when they can strike and hurt the colonizer, and this allows the colonized to undergo a kind of empowering rehumanization, whereby we have the creation of new human beings, if you will, who do not beg for their freedom, but freedom fighters who act and become agents of their own destiny. One needs to be able to imagine the very possibility of this ultimate act of resistance, *sumud*, and defiance, a transforming and empowering act that makes it possible for the colonized/oppressed to *imagine* victory. In *Imagining Palestine*, I write about this very possibility of resistance and the ability to imagine victory and liberation, not the humiliating and dehumanizing defeat and defeatism of the so-called “moderate” Arab regimes. Of course, they are not moderate by any means; they are “moderate” in the sense of being under the total control and influence of the imperialist colonizer. So, the term “moderate” is a word taken out of the political playbook of the imperialist Western (neo)-colonizer.

LB: So, in opposition to this demand for moderation comes popular defiance to those attempting to quash their struggle. At other points in your book you find *sumud* in the cross-community defense of al-Aqsa mosque, in the acts of self-decolonization found in Ghassan Kanafani’s novels, or in al-Ashiqeen’s songs depicting families’ endurance of martyrdom. The concept of *sumud* was developed in the period of the Palestinian revolution, which gained steam as an armed resistance movement after 1967. It has been interpreted in many ways, including by liberal Zionists as somehow taking on defeatist or fatalistic con-

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notations. Can you expand on your definition of *sumud*? And how do the acts you describe contribute to an ongoing Palestinian movement?

TH: Let me tell you something, Louis. When the enemy, the “liberal Zionists” you mention, describe *sumud* as “defeatist or fatalistic” you know that the enemy fears this phenomenon because they do not understand it and because it does not exist in their culture. They fear Palestinian *sumud*.

Sumud in Arabic literally means to stand firm, to remain steadfast in the face of brutal occupation and criminal settler-colonialism. This is not defeatist. This is the greatest form of heroism, bravery, and defiance. This is something that the Zionist enemy lacks. This Palestinian *sumud* represents the energy that will help power the ongoing Palestinian movement. New generations of Palestinians inside and outside occupied Palestine do not look to the occupier’s policeman, the Palestinian Authority (PA), or any so-called “leader/leadership” supported by Arab regimes that have signed treaties of surrender and alliance with the Zionist entity.

This new generation of Palestinians has chosen their leaders—revolutionary intellectuals—such as the martyr Basel al-Araj, and freedom fighters from already established and newly formed resistance groups, such as al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the Lions’ Den, the Tulkarm Brigade, and others. This generation of Palestinians live in *sumud* and resistance where the defeatist (il)logic of the PA and Arab regimes is totally rejected. It is defeatist and fatalistic to accept defeat, but for those who have chosen the path of resistance and *sumud*, there is an absolute refusal to surrender. For this generation of Palestinians, it is Palestine, all of Palestine from the river to the sea. The so-called two state solution is no solution; it has always been a big lie. Palestinian writers/poets/artists/intellectuals, such as Kanafani, Edward Said, Mahmoud Darwish, Izzidin al-Manasra, Naji al-Ali, and Mourid Barghouti, spoke about *return*, the urgent return of the Palestinians to Palestine and the return of Palestine to the Palestinians. The Palestinian revolution continues, and the millions inside and outside occupied Palestine are awaiting their return; as Barghouti writes in *I Saw Ramallah*, the “return of the millions, that is the true return” (2005, 38). This return of the millions will indeed be realized by the collective resistance and *sumud* of the millions and not the capitulation, surrender, and defeatism of Arab officialdom.

LB: I am interested in the important insights you make into the role played by singing, and followers of Palestinian music will be grateful for your contributions to our understanding of movements in this vital form of expression. When you speak of reconfigurations and reformulations, this is arguably seen (or heard) most clearly in evolving Palestinian approaches to music. Again, the reader becomes aware of how Palestine is imagined in exile and the aesthetic approaches you draw on range from the traditionalized sung poems of revolutionary folklorist Abu Arab to US-based poet Suheir Hammad, who has forged connections with black and migrant cultures. In places of exile—which are frequently governed by racism, poverty, and the denial of space to open narratives

of exile—your use of bell hooks’ analysis of “the margin” is pertinent. It reminds us that forms of resistance culture have forged their own spaces to create, and to revolutionize the masses. In times of consumerist culture and social media saturation, do you see attempts to “mainstream” the Palestinian issue as contradictory to this concept? I am thinking in particular of the pressure of mass media to water down or compromise notions of resistance in order to get a hearing.

TH: You are absolutely right, Louis, and this I fiercely dislike, this mainstreaming and watering down. Not only that, but also not supporting or conveniently ignoring Palestinian resistance if this resistance ideology, which is the ethical right of any colonized people, does not fit into the Western framework of what is politically correct in the liberal West. The fact that Palestinians are dispossessed, living under brutal siege and in extreme poverty in refugee camps that are now 75 years old without any form of normalcy does not seem to matter. These refugees have to fit into the Western liberal mindset to gain Western sympathy, if you will. Palestinians do not need this sympathy. Sympathy is like begging, begging for mercy, and this is not what the Palestinian cause is about. This is not to say that there are not people in the international community who do not genuinely stand with the Palestinians and their moral right to resist; there are, and they are many. The danger, I believe, is when Palestinians in exile fall into the trap of mainstreaming the Palestinian cause. The Palestinian people are not fighting for scraps of land on the so-called “West Bank.” Even the use of diction is very important and can be quite dangerous when unwittingly repeated: for example, the use of OPT (Occupied Palestinian Territories). This implies that only these particular territories (some parts of the “West Bank”) are Palestinian and occupied. With this simple phrase, the whole 4,000-year history of Palestine is intentionally erased. This is definitely something that newer generations of Palestinians have to be cognizant of. All of Palestine is occupied/colonized. “Israel” is a racist and brutal settler colony, and this Zionist entity must be totally dismantled.

At the beginning of your comment, you mention music and the repurposing of song and dance, and I know that you’ve done some very important work in this regard (keenly awaiting your book on this!). Yes, this is essential. Revolutionary Palestinian music helps to connect the Palestinian community across space and time: Palestinians in exile with those living under occupation. As I discuss in *Imagining Palestine*, there are several layers of reconfigurations/repurposing of song and dance. Much of the Palestinian songs and dances today that have taken on a very revolutionary fervor are deeply entrenched in the heritage of Palestine. However, when sung anew wherever there are Palestinians, they become songs of defiance and resistance, a declaration of Palestinian national identity.

Other poem-songs of the Palestinian revolution, which were originally written during the British Mandate, such as “Min Sijn Akka” (“From Akka Prison”) have been repurposed by bands, such as al-Ashiqeen after the 1970s. A very popular song of resistance nowadays is called “Shuftu al-Batal, Shuftu?”

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(“Did You See the Hero, Did You See Him?”), sung by al-Ashiqeen in honour and praise of the young heroic martyrs of occupied Palestine, such as Ibrahim al-Nabulsi, known as “The Lion of Nablus.” The 19-year-old al-Nabulsi has become a symbol of heroism and fortitude for a new generation of Palestinians the world over. To slightly alter Barghouti’s phrase, “poetry travels,” I would say that these revolutionary songs travel and help to shape the mindset of a new generation of Palestinians who believe in their right to resist and return to their homeland, and there is no compromising or watering down the Palestinian right of return.

LB: Remaining on the theme of reconfiguring, there is a politics of defiance evident in your own narrative, shaped in separation from the freedom to return to Palestine. A crucial part of this approach comes up in your highlighting of voices opposed to the PA, to which you add your own voice. You cite Barghouti, who was a fierce critic of the “moderate” (doublespeak for imperialist-backed) forces presiding over the region. The PA banned the books of Edward Said, who attacked the Oslo “peace” deal in the 1990s, and I think you are correct in writing that this elite feared Basel al-Araj, in whose Zionist murder they collaborated in 2017. They feared Said too. You describe Basel al-Araj as a “revolutionary intellectual.” Would you mind unpacking this term? In thinking of the balance of forces in Palestine and across the Arab world, what role should revolutionary intellectuals play? And in which way does this differ to the kinds of “revolutionaries” promoted by the West in places like Syria or Libya during the imperialist interventions of recent years?

TH: Both the Zionist occupiers and the PA feared/fear revolutionary intellectuals like al-Araj. A revolutionary intellectual is one who is oppositional in the sense that he/she cannot be contained or absorbed into the hegemonic, imperialist mindset/ideology of the oppressor/colonizer and cannot be supported by them. The revolutionary intellectual stands with the oppressed and fights on their behalf and is willing to pay the price for it—as Basel did with his heroic martyrdom. Basel, a pharmacist by training, was not only an activist, but also an educator; he understood all too well the importance of Kanafani’s teachings on the culture of resistance and its natural fusion with the armed struggle. Basel could not teach his revolutionary ideas at formal universities, so he formed his own underground university called the “Popular University, an informal education project that goes against the mainstream of what is taught at formal Palestinian universities” (Hamdi 198). Basel taught resistance, specifically a course called “Palestinian resistance since the inception of settler-colonialism” (Hamdi 198). This kind of revolutionary education does not bode well with the occupier and the local enforcer, who preaches and teaches defeat and surrender. Perhaps the title of an article by Victoria Brittain, “They had to die: assassination against liberation” (2006) best describes why revolutionary intellectuals like al-Araj and Nizar Banat had to die—it is an attempted assassination of resistance and liberation, an action coordinated by the colonizer/occupier and the PA, the local enforcer.

So, the role of revolutionary intellectuals is of utmost importance in the Arab region; in fact it is essential because there is so much intentional misinformation that is encouraged, if not designed, by the West and spread by Arab regimes allied to the West by means of what Louis Althusser called “Ideological State Apparatuses” (ISAs). Revolutionary intellectuals in the Arab region, like al-Araj, resort to non-traditional routes since most of these regimes are controlled by Western imperialist powers. As for the Western supported “revolutionaries” of Syria or Libya in recent years, it goes without saying, you cannot be a revolutionary if you are supported by the imperialist West—that is a contradiction in terms. Imperialist powers do not support revolutions in the Global South, and to believe that this could ever be true is delusional. However, as I mentioned above, the hegemonic powers can gain the consent of the masses in the Global South when they are able to spread their false discourse through the state apparatuses of the Arab regimes, such as the religious apparatus during Friday prayers, universities and schools, media and other state apparatuses. Of course, media has proved to be a powerful tool in the destruction of Arab states, especially with the promotion of Sunni/Shiite divisions not only between states, but also within the same state.

LB: Said is frequently looked upon as a great thinker and in your text, I think we see another, rarely emphasized side to his work, in the concrete, principled position he took towards Palestinian resistance. I also think you are correct in making passing criticism of Bashir Abu-Manneh as seeing Kanafani’s support for armed struggle as merely an expected “standard.” As you show, this support was part of a broader outlook, which saw the armed resistance movement as a key tenet of his outlook, comparable to the contributions of other anti-colonial, revolutionary, and socialist fighters, including Frantz Fanon and Amílcar Cabral. Readers may be interested to know that we are currently working on a selected political works of Kanafani, which I believe will offer his work greater exposure and contribute to fervor for Kanafani’s work among Palestinian youth. In light of the renewed armed struggle currently being led in Nablus by the Lions’ Den movement, how do you see the relevance of these contributions today?

TH: You know what I would like to see happen—especially with the new Kanafani volume that we are working on right now—is to better contextualize Kanafani, not only as a great novelist and storyteller, but also as a great thinker and revolutionary theorist. Kanafani’s ideas on cultural resistance and the armed struggle, which were already forming in the 1960s, were of great significance to the Palestinian resistance movement and other anti-imperialist movements around the world. An important difference between Frantz Fanon and Kanafani is that Fanon was translated and promoted in the West, but Kanafani was not. It seems that Palestine must remain silenced, even within the context of revolutionary theory. Said believes that Western Marxists, such as Jean-Paul Sartre (who wrote the introduction to Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*), were hopelessly disappointing when it came to Palestine: “Sartre struck me as worth

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the effort simply because I could not forget his position on Algeria, which as a Frenchman must have been harder to hold than a position critical of Israel. I was wrong of course” (2000). In the same way that Palestine has been long silenced, its great thinkers, such as Kanafani, have until quite recently, been silenced in the West—again the idea of “they had to die” that I mentioned earlier. Kanafani, of course, was assassinated by the Mossad in Beirut along with his niece Lamees in a car bomb in 1972. Kanafani’s ideas on resistance and liberation are especially relevant today. You mentioned the young, fearless *fdayees*, such as the Lions’ Den movement. These young people represent the new generations that Kanafani theorized about in his important essay “Thoughts on Change and the ‘Blind Language’” and narrated in his fiction, especially in his novella *Returning to Haifa* (2000).

Kanafani’s message in *Returning to Haifa* is clear. His character Khalid represents the future Palestine. For Kanafani, the cause is not a sentimental memory or part of an atavistic and nostalgic past; it is something *living*, and it entails agency and empowerment, the creation of new men and women. Khalid, in *Returning to Haifa*, represents the empowered, re-humanized Palestinian:

I was just saying to myself: What’s Palestine with respect to Khalid? ... Palestine is something worthy of a man bearing arms for, dying for ... We were mistaken when we thought the homeland was only the past. For Khalid, the homeland is the future. That’s how we differed and that’s why Khalid wants to carry arms. Tens of thousands like Khalid won’t be stopped by the tears of men searching in the depths of their defeat for scraps of armor and broken flowers. Men like Khalid are looking toward the future, so they can put right our mistakes and the mistakes of the whole world. ... Khalid is our enduring honor. Didn’t I tell you from the beginning that we shouldn’t come—because that was something requiring a war? Let’s go! (187)

Thus, when the critic Bashir Abu-Manneh says that Kanafani here is offering the “standard advocacy of armed struggle” (2016, 86), he’s obviously wrong. For Kanafani, cultural resistance would provide the steeliness, the *sumud*, and the fearlessness required to ensure a successful armed struggle. Kanafani believed in the moral right of the colonized to resist, using all means possible. The turning point in *Returning to Haifa* is when the main character Said (Khalid’s father) realizes that Palestinian return to the homeland entails having “tens of thousands like Khalid,” a war of liberation, not meaningless negotiations with the brutal colonizer, and it is the responsibility of revolutionary intellectuals (cultural resistance) to prepare for this (187). New generations of Palestinians, such as the Lions’ Den of Nablus, understand this lesson. It is of the utmost importance for Kanafani’s fiction and political writings to be taught inside and outside occupied Palestine. Hopefully, the Kanafani volume on which we are currently working will be important in this regard.

LB: The enduring hunger for the right of displaced Palestinians to return to their homeland, which you emphasize, is ever-present in many of the political, cultural, and intellectual works you cite in the book. And, it must be said, that

Leila Khaled, who has steadfastly clung to a politics of socialism and liberation, truly deserves her place among them. Are you optimistic that this right—including, of course, your own right of return—will be obtainable? Or do new generations imagining Palestine through resistance cultures of their own suggest that liberation or *tabrir*, may one day be in reach?

TH: The answer is a resounding YES! Let me spell it out here: THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WILL RETURN TO PALESTINE. Like Kanafani, I believe in this new generation of Palestinians, and their experience, which I would define as Late Style. If I were to rework Said's concept of Late Style, I would include the Late Style resistance of the *young*, and not only the resistance and defiance of the old and dying, as Said would have it. Late Style represents a defiant refusal to surrender under any circumstance. The Late Style resistance of the young, the new generations of Palestinians in Nablus, Hebron/Al Khalil, Jenin, Jerusalem/Al Quds, and other towns and villages in 1967 occupied Palestine and even inside 1948 occupied Palestine is fierce and unstoppable. This fierce resistance is based on the experience of these young people: historical knowledge (passed down from one generation to the next) and the present experience of the brutality of Zionist settler-colonialism. Palestinians live the daily pain and suffering. Many of them live in refugee camps: the steadfast and fiercely defiant Jenin refugee camp is one example. Their lives are their education. No form of oppression and suffering can continue as such. And no exclusivist, apartheid, settler-colonial state can continue to exist. Zionist oppression and colonization must and will come to an end.

Having said the above, it is important to emphasize that Palestinians need to unite and unify their resistance efforts; divisions cause weakness. This is actually happening now with the popular movement the Lions' Den, which is attempting to unite the resistance, bringing together all ideologies under one umbrella—that of a unified Palestinian resistance. Imagining Palestine entails the restructuring of the current state of affairs—restructuring also means dismantling what is there. There is no room for a PA with security arrangements with the enemy within a revolutionary liberation movement. I quote al-Araj on the PA in *Imagining Palestine*: “Let us dismantle it and let them fall” (199). This brings us back to the role of the revolutionary intellectual who can instill a revolutionary ethics that emphasizes victory and liberation and not defeat and surrender. The Palestinian people will not surrender, and they are growing in power and resistance in their millions. Said wrote one word in Arabic on the museum memorial cloth at the District Six Museum in South Africa when he was asked to sign his name: *return* (عودة). Liberation and return are indeed obtainable. Palestinian resistance and *sumud* will inevitably lead to liberation (*tabrir*) and the return of the millions to Palestine.

Biographies

Tahrir Hamdi is a professor of decolonial and resistance literature and theory. Hamdi is currently the Rector at Arab Open University in Jordan. Her new book *Imagining Palestine: Cultures of Exile and National Identity* was published by

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Bloomsbury in January 2023. She is currently co-editing a book (with Louis Brehony) on Ghassan Kanafani's revolutionary political and theoretical essays.

Louis Brehony is an activist, musician, researcher, and educator from Manchester, UK. He is the author of an upcoming monograph on Palestinian musicianship in exile and is director of the award-winning documentary film *Kofia: A Revolution Through Music* (2021).

Notes

1. See the review essay in this issue by Ilan Pappé titled "The Agency and Resilience of the Palestinians Shines" on page 69-79.
2. The conversation took place in writing electronically.

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Andreae Callanan



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A ghost

—After a drawing by Eleanor Callanan, age 4

Ooooo, is what I'm saying.
Ooooo, and I say it so hard that my sounds
break their floating purple speech balloon.
When I say ooooo, you had better believe

I mean it.

I glow golden, pure auric aura,
aurora eyes green like copper flame, atomic
excitation. They are filled with light
and they want to burst
out of my head.

I have taught myself to look
forward and backward
at the same time.

I do it by wrenching myself
'round, wringing myself out
like a washcloth. I
am weightless
and I have no spine, so it isn't
very difficult.

Sometimes I feel as though
my body just barely suffers
my mind, my thoughts
oppressive as pollen clouds,
mugwort and ragweed rampant
and fractious. Lung-plugging,
spirit-stifling.

Ooooo, I say. Ooooo.

Sometimes I wonder if my mind
will abandon my body altogether, rise
up out of me, spectral, phosphorescent,
lifting luminous from the muck

A ghost

and decay of this sullen world.

Sometimes I remember:
it already has.

Biography

Andreae Callanan is a doctoral candidate in English at Memorial University, and author of *The Debt* (Biblioasis, 2021).

Andreae Callanan

Queenie at the flakes

Queenie knows this sensation:
salt crusting skin, salt catching
in the throat, salt and
fishsmell straight to
the brain like a cure
for fainting. Saltfish, same
cream-and-silver boards
bought and sold by women
in the bright, brazen markets
of home.

Has she never wondered
until now just how this fish, netted
in the coldest currents of a distant
ocean, had come to grace her
breakfast plate each Sunday
of her early life? Had anyone
ever spoken of so much salt
sailing north as ballast, returning
as barrels of slab-stiff cod?

In the bowed backs of the women
and girls who clean and salt
and watch and stack the fish, who
brush away flies and rinse away
maggots, who shield their work
from ruin by rain, from scorching
by sun, does she glimpse the forms
of those who rake and shovel salt
from West Indian ponds, hands
swollen to cracking, eyes
unfixed, awed by the gleaming
white of their harvest?

And does something in her blood
know the saltfish meals of her country
for what they once were: fodder,
not food. Fish no good for winter, worse
again than the scraps these
salt-skinned folk indulge in?



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Andreae Callanan

Dismantling the great whale, Snooks Arm

“A work that always fetches an audience if carried out on shore!”
–Edith Watson. Photograph caption, undated (c. 1915)

The white fat looks like foam, a lather
spilling over the beast as though the men
were doing the animal some great
favour by bathing it. The whale
is lodged on its side on the slipway,
flanked by clapboard-cased structures, their lines
a league of calm horizons. One man stands
atop it, flensing knife honed and quick. One
fin leans casual, as though to beckon,
*come closer, witness the new century
at work.*

Tensile baleen won't cinch the waists
of the world's wealthy wives much longer.
Soon, the machinery of the age will forge
onward, ever smooth and unperturbed.

We're almost through here, blubber
dragged away to the fires, flesh
stripped from bone, bristled
plates ripped from jaw. Ribs
a bloodied cavern.

The photograph is a black and white
memory, proof that once we knew a time
when mere men broke Leviathan
into his elements,

melted monsters into lamplight.

Biography

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Remittance (2022): (Oil on Moose Antler)

Cory W. Thorne

Remittance

Remittance is an exploration of transculturation in Cuban and Newfoundland and Labrador folklore while drawing attention to the deep historical relationships and responsibilities that are hidden and ignored in everyday life. Cuban folklorist Fernando Ortiz coined the term “transculturation” to describe the ways in which Spanish colonialism resulted in new and unique cultural productions in Cuba; not a mere loss or transition of identities, but rather how African and European elements merged into something new (1940). The third eye with a tongue and a machete is a common image in Cuban folk art that is often painted on the exterior of houses as a form of protection, and it stands as an example of this concept. Imposed onto a moose antler, a symbol of Newfoundland and Labrador folklore, belonging, and masculinity, it likewise speaks to cultural imaginaries of isolation and insularity that are often used to avoid acknowledgement or responsibility for Newfoundland and Labrador’s connections to the African slave trade, and for ongoing support of Global North/Global South inequalities.

Newfoundland foodways are an underexplored and deeply powerful example of transculturation. Newfoundland salt cod/*Bacalao* was an essential source of nutrition for many slave plantations, and it could not be produced without importing salt from these plantations. It is a product of this connection. Screech—the rum that has evolved into a ritual of belonging in Newfoundland—began on Dutch-run slave plantations in Guyana, and later, British-run plantations in Jamaica. Molasses, rum and fruit cake, date squares, and coconut snowballs all serve as unacknowledged reminders of Newfoundland’s deep connections with this history. Moose meat and the male-dominated ritual of moose hunting is likewise a product of movement and an example of transculturation. Though often assumed to be native to the island, moose were brought to the island in 1904 to spur economic development via big game hunting. They are unquestioned and deemed natural while promoting a narrative of insularity and innocence.

Dripping blood into Cuba, *Remittance* is about how survival in Cuba is dependent on tourism and relationships with the Global North. Remittances are not just about supporting friends and family who have been denied a pathway forward because of their place of birth. *Remittance* is about respecting my

Remittance

Newfoundland ancestry, remembering ancestors who might have been unwilling, conflicted, or unknowing participants in the networks that were essential for the North Atlantic slave trade. It is about reconciliation, responsibility, and healing. *Remittance* likewise reflects on my personal connections to Cuba, and the sadness that haunts me when I overhear naïve and xenophobic conversations among Global North tourists headed to and from southern resorts.

The COVID-19 pandemic was particularly disruptive to Cuba's already struggling economy. Because of its proximity to the Varadero resorts, Matanzas was hit hard by the loss of tourism. Matanzas is likewise Cuba's primary port for importing and storing fuel. On 5 August 2022, an explosion destroyed a fuel tank on the edge of the city. The fire spread to adjacent tanks and for the next five days the city was blanketed in black smoke and soot. In addition to the economic crisis, they now faced an environmental disaster, worsening shortages of food and water, and daily blackouts. This led to new waves of migration from Cuba through various parts of central America and Mexico, with the goal of settling in the United States.

I created *Remittance* while in COVID-19 isolation in Newfoundland, and while receiving updates from several different friends who were attempting to cross from Cuba to the United States via central America and Mexico. Górgie Michel Mílan Maura now resides in Miami, where he has already established himself as a mural artist in the Little Havana neighbourhood. The bulk of my research community now lives outside of Cuba, in various parts of the United States and Europe.

Biography

Cory W. Thorne is an Associate Professor of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland, with a cross-appointment in music/ethnomusicology. His primary interests are in queer and vernacular theory, underground economies, popular culture, material culture, and tangible/intangible cultural heritage. Since 2008, he has been conducting ethnographic research within Havana's queer community, focused on a suburban ranch that was once used as part of a network of underground gay parties.

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The Agency and Resilience of the Palestinians Shines: On *Imagining Palestine: Cultures of Exile and National Identity* by Tahrir Hamdi

Ilan Pappé

Tahrir Hamdi. *Imagining Palestine: Cultures of Exile and National Identity*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2023), 272 pages.

True, This! —
Beneath the rule of men entirely great
The pen is mightier than the sword. Behold
The arch-enchanters wand! — itself is nothing! —
But taking sorcery from the master-hand
To paralyse the Cæsars, and to strike
The loud earth breathless! — Take away the sword —
States can be saved without it!

So wrote Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1839, 41) in his play *Richelieu, Or, the Conspiracy*. Of course, the sword is still needed, and the pen has been replaced by the keyboard, but viewed historically, resistance through writing was done by pens, pencils, and typewriters, and even by graffiti on walls, cartoons, songs, poems, plays, and novels. Nowadays, the internet offers even more inventive ways of expression.

The “Theory of Palestine”

All of these audio, verbal, and visual expressions of the “pen” are part and parcel of the Palestinian resistance since its very inception, but rarely have they been articulated as a theory of resistance, one that helps to unpack the Palestinian experience in a way that feeds back into our understanding of other current struggles by indigenous people, life-seekers, workers, and anyone else victimized by the Global North’s economic, political, and moral order. Such a theorization is offered to us here by Tahrir Hamdi in her moving and thought-provoking book, *Imagining Palestine*.

This work is first and foremost a book on cultural resistance. As such, it requires an abstraction that cannot be taken for granted between two concepts: culture and cultural resistance.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said commented that there are narrow and expanded definitions of *culture*. The narrow definition related to the aes-

thetic and literary assets of a society:

Culture is a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought, as Matthew Arnold put it in the 1860s. (Said 1993, xiv)

While the latter sees culture as the theater of life:

In this second sense culture is a sort of theater where various political and ideological causes engage one another. Far from being a placid realm of Apollonian gentility, culture can even be a battleground on which causes expose themselves to the light of day and contend with one another. (xiv)

In general, the approach to culture in *Imagining Palestine*, and by many of those analyzed by Tahrir Hamdi, is very much a reflection of Edward Said's refusal to accept the separation of the cultural from the political, a ploy that Israel still uses today to pre-empt initiatives such as the cultural boycott, which is part of the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) campaign, by claiming that the state's intellectuals, academics, and artists—or sports people for that matter—cannot be targets for being part of its politics of colonization. The hypocrisy of this Israeli and Western position was exposed fully last year: in the name of politics, one could boycott Russian sport, condemn Qatar during the World Cup for its human rights violations, but push away any attempt to apply the same principle to Israel and its role in the sporting world.

For Hamdi and many of those she surveys, the dichotomy is far less present, and the two are intertwined into what Hamdi refers to as a “theory of Palestine,” which means that not only does Palestinian cultural production involve both the narrow and wider Saidian definitions of culture, but it also provides abstraction of culture, resistance, and everything between them that can be applied elsewhere.

The second part of the theorization of Palestine is anchored on the abstraction of cultural resistance. Cultural resistance has become quite a common scholarly reference in cultural studies. As with so many such references, it has multiple meanings and usages (Kršić 2005). I find Roland Bleiker's one of the most appealing when he conceptualizes dissent and cultural resistance as being “located in countless non-heroic practices that make up the realm of the everyday and its multiple connections with contemporary global life” (2000, 278). Cultural resistance underscores how various cultural practices are employed to contest and combat a dominant power, often constructing a different vision of the world in the process.

For Antonio Gramsci (1971, 229-39), power resides not only in institutions but also in the ways people make sense of their world; hegemony is a political and cultural process. Armed with culture instead of guns, one fights a different type of battle. Whereas traditional battles were “wars of manoeuvre,” frontal

assaults that seized the state, cultural battles were “wars of position,” flanking maneuvers, commando raids, and infiltrations, staking out positions from which to attack and then reassemble civil society.

Several features of our time blur national and indigenous struggles in a way that might be less detrimental to the national project and beneficial to the community on the ground. As Stephen Duncombe (2002) remarks, with the immediacy of global media, the local becomes national and at the same time global. Stephen Duncombe offers another useful entry point on cultural projects: he sees cultural resistance as a space for developing tools for political action, a dress rehearsal for the actual political act or as a political action in and of itself, which operates by redefining politics.

Imagining Palestine is thus one of the most comprehensive representations of Palestinian cultural resistance. The analysis transcends the case study of Palestine and touches other people in the world still struggling against old and new settler-colonial projects, and who only lately discovered how relevant Palestine is for them, and how cultural, intersectional struggle may now be a crucial part of the way forward in the future.

Hamdi, however, does not employ a deductive approach: namely applying the abstraction and theorization of cultural resistance to the Palestine case study. This is an inductive research, where the case study leads to the more general discussion. This is a welcome approach, which I recommend to my postgraduate students who like to remain in the comfort zone of deductive analysis. The uniqueness and exceptional realities in Palestine (in particular, the misbalance between Israelis and Palestinians), create a dialectic which is Palestine: full of paradoxes and dichotomies that indeed call for a theory of Palestine alongside, and not instead of, a more conventional approach to its history and present conditions.

Late Style Resistance

Some of the people we meet in this book are not with us anymore. Whether writers, singers, poets, or artists, they underwent different stages in their struggle against the settler-colonial movement of Zionism and the apartheid state of Israel. Towards the end, whether consciously or unconsciously, and whether they died a natural death or were killed as martyrs in the struggle, they offer a very unique perspective in what is known as “Late Style,” which Hamdi focuses on in her early chapters in this fascinating book.

“Late Style” is an imagined or real sense of facing the end, which for instance in the case of Said, one of the many heroes of this book, led to a certain assertiveness about seeming paradoxes in his life and thought, which he learned to reconcile over the years. Said was constantly challenged for criticizing nationalism in general on the one hand, but remaining loyal to Palestinian nationalism, on the other. I will come back to the notion of “Late Style” when examining the exilic locations of many of the protagonists of this book.

Said is not the only one who navigates as a Palestinian between noble universal values and the existential challenges faced by Palestinians on the ground. In *Imagining Palestine*, Hamdi follows the way Palestinians and pro-Palestinians involved in cultural resistance reconcile various contradictions or seeming dichotomies in a similar way. That similar way is akin to a theorization of the struggle for Palestine, or indeed of Palestine itself as a concept, what Hamdi calls “theorizing Palestine.” This is a life-long process of resignation to the need to co-exist with unsolved paradoxes, a fluid situation that Said recognized in his own identity, as Hamdi reminds us when citing the opening sentence of the last paragraph of his autobiography *Out of Place*: “I occasionally experience myself as a cluster of flowing currents” (1999, 295).

As *Imagining Palestine* shows so poignantly, Palestinians who are involved in cultural activity of any sort, and those who support Palestine, are all grappling with dichotomies that are only overcome by a clear realization that culture and resistance go hand in hand when going through what Hamdi calls the “post-catastrophic condition” in which Palestinians exist. In fact, many Palestinians do not regard themselves as living in any post-reality, as they refer to this history and present time as the ongoing Nakba, namely the ongoing catastrophe, and at the same time see themselves in a constant struggle for survival, a kind of ongoing *intifada* (resistance).

Palestinians or people who are immersed in the struggle for Palestine out of solidarity and a sense of justice, are aware of the tantalizing shift between despair and hope, oppression and resistance, erasure and rediscovery of Palestine. If your only source of information is mainstream Western academia and media, you may miss the fact that since 1920, Palestinians have struggled individually and collectively for the liberation of their country day in and day out; they have faced daily attempts of dispossession. Even though almost the whole of historical Palestine has been taken over by the Zionist movement, and half of the Palestinians were ethnically cleansed, there is still a sizable presence of Palestinians in historical Palestine, and the struggle continues from within and without.

It is an incredible story of resistance because of the power imbalance between Israel and the Palestinians. Israel is supported by a Western international coalition that, from its inception, has legitimized and legalized every stage of the dispossession of the Palestinians. This coalition provided Israel with economic, diplomatic, and military aid that made the Jewish state the most formidable regional power in the Middle East. The Palestinians were, and remain, without a state, a military, or an independent economy, and only count on the support of global civil society and that of very few states such as Cuba, Syria, and Iran, along with Bolivia and Venezuela (which do not have an impact as such on the balance of power on the ground).

So how, despite these almost impossible circumstances, is there an ongoing resistance? Why are so many of us still convinced that the struggle is not over, and justice will prevail? Hamdi takes us on a journey to one dimension of this struggle, the cultural one, which provides a very inspiring and moving answer to this riddle.

Theorizing an Actual Liberation

Theorizing an actual liberation struggle, nonetheless, is not just an act of abstraction. Seeking the middle ground between a discourse of contemplation and a conversation with the people themselves is quite a challenge since the language inspired by the works of Said, bell hooks, or Edward Soja, not to mention Gayatri Spivak, has its own rich vocabulary and phraseology different from the language used by those who are actually the object of such intellectual enterprises—namely the freedom fighters or the very people the intellectuals wish to represent and support.

Some of the intellectuals in the case of Palestine are freedom fighters themselves; hence, the dichotomy is much less acute. Thus, for instance, Ghassan Kanafani is treated rightly in this book as a theorist of liberation and at the same time a freedom fighter, and his cultural production is both a weapon in the overall resistance and a crucial contribution to the discussion of the link between culture and resistance.

Many lesser-known Palestinian artists are also freedom fighters, such as the young Palestinians who draw graffiti on the apartheid walls or wherever they can in public spaces, showing their commitment to the struggle. For many years, such wall paintings were regarded by scholars as the work of youth delinquency, but recent scholarship on this topic, in general, shows much more appreciation for the art of graffiti, and in this new view it represents a means to share values, ethics, and codes of behavior in the locations where, and the media through which, graffiti is produced.

The same is true of cartoonists, with some more famous than others, beginning, of course, with Naji al-Ali, who was a *shahid* (martyr) as much as anyone killed in the struggle for liberation. Cartoonists are featured in Hamdi's book alongside poets who were freedom fighters in action as well as in writing, dating back to the resistance songs of Nuh Ibrahim, the poet of the 1936-39 Palestinian Revolution, through the poetry of 1948 Palestinians under military rule, all defined together in what Ghassan Kanafani called *Idab al-Maqatil* (resistance literature).

Exilic Resistance

Hamdi allocates much space to this discussion on the relevance of theorization to an actual liberation struggle. She identifies closely with intellectuals who refer us to marginal and third spaces as an ideal position from which they could contribute to the almost paradoxical idea of a practical theorization (not dissimilar to liberation theologies which in their own way grapple with similar challenges).

The search for this navigation is the thread that connects an incredibly rich assortment of writers, poets, and artists, examined lovingly and movingly in this book—and one would be heartless not to share Tahrir's admiration and affinity for those she writes about in this book.

Navigation is a place of exile. Readers of this book will discover—and anyone familiar with Palestinian intellectual activism recognizes—this is not merely a geographical exile. Many Palestinians in Palestine are in exile, and many of

those in exile feel as though they are under colonization and occupation, as if they were still in Palestine.

The exilic space for those involved in cultural resistance is, first and foremost, an epistemological and intellectual space, a notion brilliantly explored by Said in several of his works. Abdul R. JanMohammed found for Said a special term, “the specular border intellectual” (1992). There are two border intellectuals according to Abdul R. JanMohammed: the syncretic and the specular. In its simplest form one may say that the former is an intellectual at home in two or more cultures, and thus busy fusing and combining hybrid influences. The latter is not at home with either, although he or she is quite familiar with them, and is thus preoccupied with the deconstruction and critique of both (JanMohammed 1992, 96-120).

We may inject into this definition Said’s own typology of intellectuals: first, in the footsteps of Walter Benjamin, the preference for the watchdog of society over the articulator of its truisms; then the combination between the organic intellectual of Antonio Gramsci affiliated to a grass-root movement, such as nationalism, but nonetheless committed to the purest forms of freedoms of expression and thought, as proposed by Julien Benda (Said 1994, 183-4).

The centrality of “exile” as an epistemological construct is the product of time, and not only of principle. In his post-mortem text, Said focuses on the theme of “Late Style,” “the way in which the work of some great artists and writers acquires a new idiom towards the end of their lives—what I have come to think of as a late style” (Said 2004b). Said was aware he was coming to the end of his life, and this is why his own work was transforming not only idiomatically but also thematically. This is where the discussion of exile is so mature and ripe.

What the latter process achieves, as becomes clear in Said’s last interview with Charles Glass, is the maturation of his contrapuntal dialectical approach to harmonious and complementary affiliations and values (Said 2004a). He can tell Nubar Hovsepian that he takes a lot of luggage with him because he fears he will never return—a sad reminder of his 1948 experience—and yet he defines exiles like him, fortunate enough, unlike political exiles, to treat home as a temporary base which allows freedom of thought and spirit. As a Palestinian, exile, in the first instance, is traumatic; as a universalist intellectual, it is an asset. At the beginning of the 21st century, there was no need to apologize for or to reconcile this contradiction (Hovsepian 1992, 5).

But is it a closed circle? Has Said left us with a clear answer of how a society can be both wedded to nationalism and yet secure individual liberties and criticism? Whether from a Marxist or a liberal point of view, critics of nationalism produced a dire picture of it; whether they treated it as an ideology, a construct, or an interpretation of reality, they presented it as a reductionist mechanism of identity and interpretation that serves the ambitions of a few at the expense of the many. Said the refugee could not easily allow himself to join in the celebration of demythologizing nationalism. His Palestinianism, so to speak, had to coexist, uncomfortably, with his universalism. Time made this necessary coexistence an asset, not a liability, and this in fact was his political legacy for the

future: Jews and Palestinians would have to reconcile to a similar existence as does the national intellectual in exile.

What is so brilliant about this book is that it links the human approach by so many of the Palestinians discussed here to the same paradoxical epistemological and moral questions: navigating between their universal values, unconditional commitment to the liberation of Palestine, and their particular mode of expression. Such navigation is at the heart of the “Theory of Palestine.”

What makes Hamdi—and Said for that matter—confident that they struck the right balance of making theory relevant is the fact that they are not overtheorizing, so as to make sure that theorization is based on experience, not just abstract contemplation. Theory for Hamdi, therefore, is not necessarily universal, but feeds back into the place where similar experiences are taking place.

Hamdi does not idealize the place of exile or margins. As seen from the poems of Mahmoud Darwish and Mourid Barghouti, it can be a dark place, what Barghouti refers to as *ghurba*, which is both absence and alienation, and at the same time a place of creativity. Exile on the margins can take place in a relatively comfortable space, such as Columbia University in New York, but also a very precarious and dangerous spot, such as a refugee camp in Lebanon. But in both locations, the prosecution of cultural knowledge becomes an invaluable contribution to the overall struggle for the liberation of Palestine.

Cultural Resistance for Our Times

In *Imagining Palestine*, a theorization of cultural resistance is inducted from the case study itself. In particular, it is the powerful poetry of Mahmoud Darwish that indicates the link between cultural resistance and actual resistance, and between abstract theorization and concrete experience. As Hamdi shows us, this is clear when one examines more profoundly Darwish’s metaphors, which fuse the personal and the political. When, for instance, the poet refers to Palestinians entering their private homes, he also alludes to their entry to their homeland, and this dual metaphoric representation appears in almost every stanza, story, and essay discussed in this book. It goes beyond metaphors as well to the whole attendance to aesthetics—the limited Saidian definition of culture is interlinked with political struggle: the form and the content have the same importance in the wish to be part of the overall resistance. Darwish clarified this when he stated: “no aesthetics outside my freedom.” A similar engagement is offered by the poet Mourid Barghouti when he wonders in his poetry whether one can oppose oppression with an army of metaphors.

This is a concern for Barghouti, as those involved in cultural resistance do not forget for a moment the other modes of resistance, in particular the armed struggle, and the daily, brave guerrilla warfare, which began in 1929 and continues today in what Hamdi calls eastern Palestine (namely the West Bank), and is enhanced by the resilience of the besieged people of the Gaza Strip. As Hamdi shows towards the end of her book, those involved in cultural resistance discussed other modes of resistance available for a liberation movement engaged in one of the longest anti-colonial struggles in the world. All the means are justified and discussed, sometimes ambiguously, as Hamdi points to the different

but complementary approaches to armed struggle taken by Susan Abulhawa in *Mornings in Jenin*, compared to her other work, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*. In *Mornings in Jenin*, there is a fine discussion about the wish for non-violent resistance, and yet she is praising of the armed resistance in other works. This clear navigation (so Saidian) between the principle universal positions, and the way they can be concretized under oppression, is part of the “Theory of Palestine.” Such navigation will continue to occupy those involved in cultural resistance, as seen with the various attempts to change the harrowing ending of Kanafani’s *Men in the Sun*. The helpless death of the men in a tanker, allegedly without any resistance, was not the ending one would find in the film adaptation or the transfer of the story to the year of 1982 by the late ‘48 Palestinian playwright and director Riad Massarweh. And this is why we met a jubilant Said at the Fatama Gate, between south Lebanon and Israel, hurling stones at the Israeli fence; the same Said who was inspired by the humanism of cosmopolitan Jews at the turn of 20th century Europe.

Cultural Unity and Political Disunity

Thus, cultural resistance is diverse, porous, and dynamic. But on the other hand, it is an antidote to the political disunity from which Palestinians suffer. The cultural resistance reveals unity of conscience as well as of memory. Its symbols are consensual as are its heroes and heroines. Whether it is Basel al-Araj, who wrote and taught about cultural resistance himself before being assassinated by the Israeli army, or Leila Khaled—long may she live. They are not heroes who necessarily defeated their enemies, but they defeated defeatism, which is one of the *raison d’être* of the ongoing *intifada*. This rejection of defeatism enabled Palestinians to challenge the main objectives of the colonizer. As Hamdi reminds us, this was very accurately articulated by Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*: “Colonization is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain, but by a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures and destroys it” (2004, 149). Moving from one mode of resistance, or from theory to praxis, and from culture to politics, and remaining in between both also applies to the challenge that the “Theory of Palestine” poses to different Palestinian geographical locations and the fragmented existence imposed on the Palestinians by the Israelis since 1948. Therefore, at the end of the book, it becomes clear why Hamdi devotes so much space to discussing whether exiled Palestine and occupied Palestine are the same space: you can be an exiled Palestinian inside historic Palestine, living less than a mile away from your original village that was colonized and Judaized in front of your eyes, or be in a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip or the West Bank, as well being either occupied or besieged. Whether you are in Sabra or Nazareth, you are denied the right of return, normal life, and liberation.

Thus, cultural resistance overcomes geographical distances, but it also challenges political dissent, since the works of artists unify the Palestinian existence and resistance. In this respect, the book could have also referred to the Palestinian academics who established in recent years a new area of study: Palestine

studies. Among their unified contribution was a clear framing of what Palestine is, while politically it is debated by the world and Palestinian politicians. It is not only a whole geographic space; it is one that had always been a coherent geopolitical space. In her book, Hamdi illustrates, through ancient olive trees, the indigeneity of Palestine and its long history that since ancient times had only for a short period been partly ruled by Israelites in biblical times, and yet that is the one chapter in history around which the Zionist narrative and the claim for Palestine revolves.

The work of Palestinian historians, a group that is overlooked by Hamdi, has helped to produce a clearer sense of what Palestine means and what Israel does not. Through a committed chronology and genealogy, they showed that Palestine, as a coherent geopolitical unit, dates back to 3,000 BC. From that time onward, and for another 1,500 years, it was the land of the Canaanites. In around 1,500 BC, the land of Canaan fell under Egyptian rule, not for the last time in history, and then successfully under Philistine (1200-975), Israelite (1000-923), Phoenician (923-700), Assyrian (700-612), Babylonian (586-539), Persian (539-332), Macedonian (332-63), Roman (63BC-636CE), Arab (636-1200), Crusade (1099-1291), Ayyubi (1187-1253), Mamluk (1253-1516), and Ottoman rules (1517-1917). Each rule divided the land administratively in ways that reflected its political culture and time. But, apart from the early Roman period and the early Arab period, when a vast population were moved out and in, the society remained—ethnically, culturally, and religiously—the same. Within what we recognize today, this society developed its own oneness and distinctive features.

In modern times, some of the above periods were manipulated and coopted into a national, or colonialist, narrative to justify the takeover and conquest of the country. This historical chronology was used, or abused, by the Crusaders, and later European colonialists and the Zionist movement. The Zionists were different from the others, as they deemed—as did the powers that be when they emerged in 1882—the historical reference was crucial for justifying their colonization of Palestine. They did it as part of what they termed “the Return” to or “Redemption” of the land, which was once ruled by Israelites; as the historical timeline above indicates, this is a reference to a mere century in a history of four millennia.

Away from the national narrative, we should say that Palestine as a geopolitical entity was a fluid concept since the rulers of the country quite often were the representatives of an empire, which disabled any local sovereignty from developing. The question of sovereignty began to be an issue—one that would inform the land’s history and conflict until today—once the Empires disappeared. The natural progress from such disintegration, almost everywhere in the world, was that the indigenous population took over. Ever since the emergence of the concept of nationalism, the identity of this historical revolution is clearer and more common. Where the vestiges of imperialism or colonialism refused to let go—such as in the case of white settler rule in northern and southern Africa—national wars of liberation lingered on. In places where the

indigenous population was annihilated by the settlers' communities, they became the new nation (as happened in the Americas and Australasia).

The takeover from the disintegrating empires succeeded in a longer process, though so many of the theoreticians of nationalism believe in social and cultural cohesiveness. The liberated land varied in structure and composition: some, having a heterogeneous ethnicity, religion, and culture, found it difficult to become a nation state, while others were fortunate, due to their relative homogeneity, although they had their share of economic polarity, social differentiation, and a constant struggle between modernity and tradition. A liberated Palestine would have belonged to the latter model, which for a while developed in Egypt and Tunisia, and less similar to the more troubled cases of Iraq and Lebanon.

These are the deeper and organic layers on which Palestinian culture rests, and this sense of continuity and attachment to the land is both theorized and illustrated through culture, not as an act of curiosity but as part of a struggle against erasure.

This uniformity in the cultural struggle explains the recent success in building intersectional and transnational cultural resistance. This new global context for the Palestinian cultural resistance is beautifully shown in Hamdi's book by the various dialogues indigenous poets and writers had with their Palestinian counterparts. In this way, the massacre at Wounded Knee corresponds with the numerous massacres suffered by the Palestinians over the years. Intersectional solidarity also occurs between Arab poets and writers, as well as famous pop stars such as Roger Waters. Culture becomes enhanced resistance if it is part of a dialogue between people who are still struggling against oppression or show solidarity amongst each other. All living in what Steven Salaita calls the "geographies of pain" (2016, 111), Hamdi introduces these spaces through diverse literary and poetic sources.

Conclusion

Between framing the Palestinians as terrorists and Islamists to viewing them exclusively as victims, most of the people who know them, their history, their struggle, and determination, cannot but admire this nation without idealization, but just purely on common human and universal values.

Imagining Palestine teaches us something else about the Palestinians: notwithstanding their constant victimization by Zionism, they do not see themselves as victims but as people who still hope to win their battle for freedom and justice. Through the works of Palestinian literati, poets, writers, cartoonists, and cultural activists, the agency and resilience of the Palestinians shines through this book. This is not an attempt to idealize a group of very normal people but rather to show how humane is the Palestinian struggle for normality. And there is a good chance that this basic but noble human impulse will direct Palestine in its post-colonial era, when it arrives. In more ways than one, this book chronicles the story of the Palestinian cultural resistance and at the same time becomes part of this resistance.

Biography

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Review of *The Purple Color of Kurdish Politics: Female Politicians Writing from Prison*, edited by Kışanak Gültan

Amany Abdelrazek-Alsiefy

Gültan, Kışanak, ed. *The Purple Color of Kurdish Politics: Female Politicians Writing from Prison*. (London: Pluto Press, 2022), 272 pages.

The *Purple Color of Kurdish Politics* follows the stories of 22 female Kurdish politicians detained in Turkish prisons since 2016 because of their alleged affiliation with armed organizations. Thousands of members of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*, HDP) were arrested, including mayors, parliamentarians, and even party leaders, under claims that the HDP has strong links to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which the Turkish state considers a terrorist organization. At the same time, critics see such moves as a pretext used to disarm one of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's staunchest opponents. *The Purple Color of Kurdish Politics* brings to light the account of revolutionary Kurds fighting for their rights in Turkey, and the brutal Turkish suppression of those rebel Kurds since the 1970s, through memoirs underlining the entangled relationships of women's rights, colonialism, and politics.

The 22 memoirs introduce English-speaking readers to the personal experiences of Kurdish women who have participated in local and general elections since 1994; their feminist struggle against gender inequality in the public sphere; and, the dominance of patriarchal systems and structures in Kurdish culture, on the one hand, especially concerning the political participation of Kurdish women, and the oppression of Kurds by the Turkish government, on the other. In her memoir "How Will You Find That Many Women?" the lawyer, human rights activist, and politician Aysel Tuğluk stresses this fact. She writes: "The Kurdish women's political struggle was now twofold: the struggle for the freedom of Kurds, whose existence was denied, and the equally urgent struggle for women's liberation" (38). The Turkish-Kurdish political conflict hindered practices of working toward changing the patriarchal culture in Kurdish society and supporting women's rights. For instance, the Turkish government hindered organizing events on women's issues and attacked female activists and women's organizations. In her memoir "They've Turned It into a Women's Municipality," Zeynep Sipçik describes this situation writing: "every time we women organized an event, the Turkish authorities would launch an investiga-

tion, despite the ongoing peace dialogue. Every week they required us to go to the courthouse and give a statement. They were trying to intimidate us” (220).¹

Kurdish Women and Leadership Positions

These personal memoirs attempt to convey the voice of political repression by presenting the suffering of women in prison and the restriction of their activities as politicians, activists, and feminists. Nonetheless, those female activists and politicians also focus on presenting their journeys as inspiring feminist models. Most of those Kurdish female politicians came from modest economic backgrounds and conservative social milieus. These women managed to escape their oppression and marginalization by challenging fears of responsibility and lack of political experience. They nominated themselves as Ministers of Parliament, heads of municipalities, and mayors. In the 2007 parliamentary elections, all Kurdish women candidates won seats by an overwhelming majority, and their representation as Kurds in the municipalities exceeded women’s representation in all other provinces. Aysel Tuğluk (b. 1965) comments on this historic victory for Kurdish women:

In the end, DTP [Democratic Society Party; Turkish: *Demokratik Toplum Partisi*] won 22 seats in the Parliament, eight of them held by women and 14 by men. The public showed that the patriarchal forebodings had been groundless. I was elected MP for Diyarbakır. For the first time since 1994, the Kurdish people’s will would once again be represented in parliament. (38)

Fatma Doğan (b. 1974) was elected co-mayor of Bozova in Urfa province in 2014, a district known for its conservative rural culture. Fatima Doğan comes from a conservative religious background, and only her husband and uncle supported her. Nevertheless, Doğan succeeded in realizing her dream and the dream of her region. In her own words:

“I got 12,800 votes, defeating the AKP [Justice and Development Party; Turkish: *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*] candidate by 1,100 votes. Remarkably, Bozova people were so jubilant that they streamed into the courthouse and refused to leave. Their dream had come true—80 years of fear had been broken. In the first two or three months, visitors flooded the town hall” (100).

Feminism From Below

The success of Kurdish female politicians resulted from their organized work in forming broad networks of women. The memoirs narrate that those activists and feminists adopted traditional methods to deliver their messages and gain women’s support and trust. Raising and relying on gender awareness from below, those female politicians went to places where women gathered, like beauty salons, and even knocked on doors to introduce Kurdish women to their feminist political agenda. In addition, those female politicians organized activities dealing with social and political problems such as domestic violence, child

marriage, widespread illiteracy, marginalization of qualified women, and lack of institutional transparency. Furthermore, to enhance the pro-gender equality culture and improve living conditions for Kurdish women in marginalized areas, these memoirs narrate how the female Kurdish politicians built roads and green spaces and turned many neglected old places into cultural centers. These places were meant to serve as meeting places for networking and the exchange of views among women. Kurdish women's solidarity in achieving a social and political culture that supports women's rights is uniquely revealed in the story of Sebahat Tuncel's election (b. 1975). In "From Prison to Parliament," Sebahat Tuncel recounts how she was nominated as an independent candidate within the Thousand Hopes coalition for the parliamentary elections from her prison cell. After winning a seat in Istanbul with 93,000 votes, she was released in July 2007.

Kurdish female politicians have succeeded in establishing a new political system in Turkey. There is now a co-chair and co-mayor in most Turkish municipalities. This "co" position was intended to support an egalitarian social culture and to establish a political principle that supports democracy and collective decision-making. The principle of co-chairing was implemented *de-facto* for nine years in the Kurdish political parties DTP (The Democratic Society Party; Turkish: *Demokratik Toplum Partisi*), and later in BDP (The Peace and Democracy Party; Turkish: *Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*). In 2014, the Turkish Law on Political Parties was amended to add a clause making co-chairing legal in all political parties. This amendment to the law, which resulted mainly from women's struggle and determination, encouraged female Kurdish politicians to push to expand the scope of joint presidency of local government. The idea was that the party could nominate two candidates, one man and one woman, with one becoming co-mayor if they were elected.

After the mass arrest of Kurdish politicians in 2016, "the AKP government removed the co-mayors from their positions and appointed *kayyum*s—so-called 'trustees'—to replace democratically elected mayors and run local government in their place" (22). Moreover, all of the training and cultural centers established by those female Turkish-Kurdish politicians while in office were closed. Journalist, politician, and feminist Gültan Kışanak comments bitterly on women's detention: "In 1980 only two women councilors had been imprisoned, but now in 2017 Turkish prisons were full of women MPs, co-mayors, and city councilors" (xiv). Although Gültan Kışanak's words indicate the constant political repression of Kurdish women activists, they underline their strong resistance and growing feminist awareness against their repression and marginalization. Thus, *The Purple Color of Kurdish Politics* employs the strategy of "double critique" in which these Kurdish women challenge not only the hegemony of patriarchal culture in the Middle East but also emphasize their resistance and rejection of the orientalist view of Muslim women as victimized, subordinate women. Kışanak maintains that "By sharing these stories of our experiences in the women's liberation struggle—the tough setbacks as well as the sweet victories—we seek to leave our mark on history" (xv).

Overall, *The Purple Color of Kurdish Politics* is not a call for the self-determination of Kurdistan; instead, these memoirs advocate for plurality and Kurdish rights in Turkey. The book reveals a rich political history of the emergence of Kurdish women as political actors despite attempts to silence and marginalize them. It also documents the radical transformations of traditional political norms, structures, and practices from the 1990s until today. The memoirs are not only descriptions of the political electoral system in Turkey but also struggles against a male-dominated capitalist (and socialist) social culture. These female activists endeavoured to consolidate a different social and political culture based on their self-awareness and willingness to break stereotypes and work towards receiving societal and institutional support to reach leadership positions. Thus, *The Purple Color of Kurdish Politics* is essential reading because it provides role models for ambitious women who aim to challenge the stereotyped construction of gendered leadership and women's role in contemporary male-dominated societies.

Biography

Amany Abdelrazek-Alsiefy holds a PhD in English from Freie Universität Berlin, Germany (2022). Her research interests include gender studies, postcolonial literature, secularization, and fashion theories, focusing on women from the Middle East and North Africa. She has contributed scholarly articles and book reviews to various publications in Arabic and English. Currently, she is preparing her postdoctoral research entitled "Gender, Colour and Modernity in Egyptian and Sudanese Women's Writing."

Notes

1. Zeynep Sipçik (b. 1986) was elected co-mayor of Dargeçit district, in Mardin province, on 30 March 2014, with 62% of the vote. She was arrested on 28 March 2016. She is currently in Sincan Prison.

Errata

Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies II.I

Displacement, Flight, Migration

- p. III Add “2022” date after “Sally Khader.”
- p. 2 For “upsettling” read “unsettling.”
- p. 5 For “weightless” read “weightlessly.”
- p. 6 For “likeminded” read “like-minded.”
- p. 11 For “U of T Art Museum” read “Art Museum at the University of Toronto.”
- p. 14 For “Israeli designated” read “Israeli-designated.”
- p. 18 On line 3 omit “the” before “such.”
- p. 36 For “*reconquistas*” read “*reconquistadores*.”
- p. 39 On line 3 delete “is” after “which.”
- p. 40 For “weapon’s” read “weapons.”
- p. 44 For “animal like” read “animal-like.”
- p. 59 For “U of T Art Museum” read “Art Museum at the University of Toronto.”
- p. 64 For “imagiSnary” read “imaginary.”
- p. 72 For “represent” read “represents”; for “Walcott” read “Wolcott.”
- p. 76 Add “Wolcott, Sara J. 2016. “The Role of Music in the Transition towards a Culture of Sustainability.” *Empowering Sustainability International Journal* 3 (1): 1-19.” to References.

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The Theme

Feminist Resistance

This is a special issue edited by Danine Farquharson, Associate Professor of English at Memorial University of Newfoundland and one of our three Associate Editors.

Roe v. Wade. Repeal the 8th. #SayHerName. MMIWG. Masha Amini... the list feels endless and ongoing. Women, female-identifying, and non-binary people continue to resist the violence, the barriers, the misogynies. We seek submissions that describe, analyze, and document feminist resistance. Our focus is on the role of cis women, trans women, and non-binary identified individuals in resistance against systems that disadvantage feminist agency, identity, and politics. We include those populations that have historical strife as the result of misogyny.

Topics:

- Intersectionality
- Feminist Praxis
- Queer, Trans, Women of Color, and Other Minority Populations
- Decolonization

We welcome submissions that fit ideas of traditional academic essays, but also encourage creative writing, personal narratives, and creative fiction.

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