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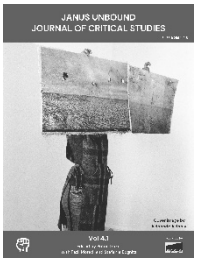

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Epistemic Justice: Urgent but Still Rare Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Peter Trnka

Preamble

Truth, and some other, old concepts, seem to have faded recently, been put on pause, at least for a while. A worry: is language—in this case English—overworn in patches, with wordy overstitches making do—displacing, substituting, correcting somehow, vaguely? Remember ideology?

Epistemic justice: correcting—better, constructing—ways of knowing; addressing—speaking to—colonial, classist, capitalist, racist, sexist, ableist, extractivist and other prejudicial forms: false universals, assumptive frameworks and perspectives, violent epistemologies and attendant, corollary ontologies, ways of knowing-being; resisting "imperial epistemologies of domination" (Moradi 36). Speaking truth to power, following Edward Said (1972).[1] Following Antonio Gramsci (2011) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2012), listening to and taking the lead from the subaltern.

Two 'cases' here: contemporary Gaza and 18th century slavery. Two 'problems': international justice (Palestinian indigenous land rights and right to exist) and Enlightenment (in its connection to 'race'). One issue: knowing what is going on, as all is being done to block such knowledge.

Palestine and Amo

Palestinian mourning holds—virtually, in the spacing of this issue—the mourning of Anton Wilhelm Amo and the 'lost' African slaves in vibrant motion, as vivid and vivacious as can be. Maryam Qawash's "Lands on the Edge of the Winds"—dare you to read it and not bawl in tears, knowing what is happening in Gaza right now. Unspeakable atrocity? Unnameable? Law today requires the name genocide. Justice requires the *right to co-habit the world and to narrate*, as Said (1984) would have put it, exposing the full weight of what the name 'genocide' alone cannot contain.

To tear up right now with hope, with attention to beginnings, as Said (1985) insisted, as Qawash echoes, thinking "the first hours" that then are followed by "the hours of interpretation," what meditation do we have from the heart of violence and suffering on the power of the imagination and creative thought: "Be patient, we are told, among other ways of wise guidance, noting that time is not straight and clear but a 'riddle' with wide beginnings" and "this life is vast in the eyes of one who's hopes have broadened" (Qawash 94). Beginnings, in the plural, for the multiplicities and multitudes, not in the singular, as per some

founding, archaic origin: "a root is always one among many … [T]he beginning[:] … a method or intention among many, never the radical method or intention" (Said, 1985: 380).

The mission, the mourning, the dealing with the haunting - no easy matter, every case being different. To begin with, there 'are' good ghosts and bad. Hauntology, tendential analysis: of the killed, dead, martyred, and the traces born, and the wide beginnings, people-to-come, of the new bright futures.

Olive rich Palestine. Not the Palestine of Israeli prisons and scabies. Not the life produced by global Israeli biopower where disease is turned into "a weapon of control and degradation," as Bilal Hamamra and Michael Uebel tell us in their "Letter from Palestine: The Spread of Scabies among Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Prisons" (11).

What lives, what *bios* or biological life forms and what *zōon politikons* or political life forms, can be written/graphed, graphically inscribed, marked, on papyrus or rock, of the gravestones, graven tablets of the living remembering? Hate, excoriate, act on the outpouring of unbearable passion? What cannot be born, carried, held in living memory—when does prospect, potential wither? When is it erased? Can it be erased permanently, without trace, as per the intentions of the torturers and mass killers?

Nonsense takes over. The creative (eventually sense producing) nonsense of Dada, the manifesto and shock of the surreal/absurd. Make the impossible possible. Make intolerable the intolerable. Refuse the manufactured, imposed, impoverished Real. Expel, destroy, refuse settler colonial violence, micro and macro, subjectivized and objectified.

Spectres of Amo

Fazil Moradi and Stefanie Bognitz, the editors of the special issue *Spectres of Anton Wilhelm Amo*, argue in their Introduction that Amo's ghost indicates—groans, if you will, or gestures towards—the idea that the Enlightenment is not finished, that there is, in line with Jacques Derrida's New Enlightenment, an Enlightenment to come: "The Enlightenment to come is tangled with the future to come and of becoming receptive to haunting and the spectrality of Amo" (15). The Enlightenment to come is to fulfill the existing promise and disappointment of Enlightenment: one corrupted, tainted, inhabited by a most countervailing tendency, violence and enslavement: "The imperial-colonial conditions made the work of certain Enlightenment thinkers and the era of the Enlightenment known to the world as exclusive embodiment of the Western 'race' … while homogenizing and annihilating its relations to other intellectual traditions" (15). Hence the need to think the future, for a future, better, more adequate and just or truer Enlightenment, free of its failure to mourn its corpses: "This is where the *Enlightenment to come* is also a question of democracy to come, beyond state sovereignty and citizenship" (15) following the lead on hauntology and the deconstruction of the present stirred up by Jacques Derrida, in *Specters of Marx* and elsewhere.

The indistinct, trace-like, clear and obscure character of the spectre, Amo, is similar to the indistinct, trace-like, still-to-be-settled-and-still-contested cha-

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racter of 'Europe' and 'Africa': "Similar to the two imaginary coordinates of 'Africa' and 'Europe,' … Amo is both present and absent, real and imagined, between worlds, and European and African. We are committed to allowing Amo's ghost to hover between life and death, here and now and then, making certainties vacillate" (16). Instead of sharpening the epistemic arsenal to choose just the right concepts for the case, Moradi and Bognitz take a contrary tack, multiplying and proliferating options rather than narrowing down preferred instruments, in favour of a "pluriversality of epistemic practices and knowledge regimes" (17). Epistemological revolution for epistemic justice, by way of—and for—epistemic pluralism; expressing, imagining, experimenting, improvising, generating.

One thing is clear, as Souleymane Bachir Diagne shows in his "Postface":

> As a symbol, Amo's biography and identity have long taken precedence over what Paulin Hountondji has called the need for a "systematic study" of Amo's work independent of his biography (*African Philosophy: Myth and Reality* (2nd ed, Indiana University Press) 1983, 112). Recent publications about Amo's thought indicate that the time for such a "systematic study" has come. In addition to this special issue [*Spectres of Anton Wilhelm Amo*, edited by Fazil Moradi and Stefanie Bognitz], two very similar books have been published recently, one in English and one in French. The first, titled *Anton Wilhelm Amo's Philosophical Dissertations on Mind and Body*, was authored by Stephen Menn and Justin E.H. Smith and published by Oxford University Press in 2020). The latter, published by *Présence africaine*, is titled *Anton Wilhelm Amo, une philosophie de l'implicite* (Anton Wilhelm Amo, a philosophy of the implicit). (84)

Amo's importance "as a philosopher *of* his time and place lies in his original perspective on the enduring problem posed by Descartes' dualism of *mens* and *corpus* and the question of the union of the *res cogitans* and a *res extensa*" (85). Amo emphasizes "the purely actuated nature (mere actuosa) of the mind" (85). As Diagne explains, "[a]ctuosa is an important concept for which Dauvois (2020, 267ff) chooses to create *actueux* in French: central to Amo's thought is the idea that the nature of the *mens* is to be *mere actuosa*" (85). Mind, purely active, impassive: "Impassivity," Diagne states, "means that what belongs to the mind is the ideas it forms in its spontaneity (as a power of representation, a *vis repreasentiva*) without being compelled by anything external" (85). This generative aspect of mind is not, for Amo, the imagination, which Amo defines negatively—in various senses—in the "Philosophical Disputation containing a Distinct Idea of those Things that Pertain either to the Mind or to our Living and Organic Body" of 1734 (in Menn and Smith, 221): "V IMAGINATION. Imagination is the mind's momentary act of understanding prior to sufficient reflection in which the mind according to the character of natural instinct and of the affects that are present represents something to itself as existing which is however absent in reality."

Moradi engages with Amo's philosophy on a related point, namely, the scale of Amo's definition of liberty, i.e., as a question of the condition or situation of the whole person, mind and body, and not mind alone: "It is important that

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Amo begins with *human* instead of 'mind' or 'Man' " (35); as Amo states in the aforementioned treatise:

> IV. LIBERTY. This we understand either concerning the mind alone, or concerning the whole man. With respect to the mind liberty is spontaneity, or that faculty by which the mind sets up something to do or to omit if it is not otherwise impeded. This liberty is never absolutely such, because the mind cannot operate other than by means of its commerce with the body, inasmuch as it operates by means of sensations. (Menn & Smith 221).

Diagne formulates the central points of this special issue hauntology of Amo precisely and concisely:

> This special issue*, Spectres of Anton Wilhelm Amo: The Enlightenment Philosopher*, is committed to highlighting his enduring significance with both clarity and conviction. It emphasizes two important points. First, Amo's philosophy serves as a striking counter-example to the "absurd prejudices" of those who think of themselves enlightened, and offer a compelling argument in favor of the abolitionist cause. Second, it undoubtedly manifests the African presence in addressing philosophical problems." (85).

Moradi, in his "Anton Wilhelm Amo Beyond His Time and Place," argues that "Amo's non-present present, anchoring him in the here and now, is the coming back of spectres and an unknowable future," the unknowable future holding the potential for "a re/turn to the possibility of hospitality," a turn to a broader, more inclusive, more pluralist hospitality than the unjust, repressed, falsely universal western European philosophical hospitality of the predominantly 18th and 19th century German form of the Enlightenment, as Diagne argues in the first memorial Amo lecture of 2018, "Decolonizing the History of Philosophy":

> In order to decolonize the history of philosophy against the fabrication of *translatio studiorum* as the unilinear path connecting Greek thought and sciences to medieval European Christianity, we need to *pluralize that history*. And to manifest in our textbooks that *translatio studiorum* is not just Jerusalem-Athens-Rome-Paris or London or Heidelberg … but, as well: Athens-Nishapur-Bagdad-Cordoba-Fez-Timbuktu … To decolonize the history of philosophy is also to take into account the *plurality of languages*, in order to consider the perspectives introduced by tongues other than European, and thus undo the "ontological nationalism" upon which rests the assumption that philosophical exercise is intrinsically tied to certain (European) languages. (16)

Ontological nationalism as a form of violent imposition of part for whole, partial perspective for view from above/nowhere. Epistemological nationalism as well. Forming ways of being and ways of knowing walk hand in hand. As do ways of valuing. Epistemic justice corrects biases, false universals: becoming truer and truer to becoming. The perpetual activity and vigilance of epistemic justice: ongoing interrogation, an unending unsettling of unjust knowledge regi-

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mes. An ethical commitment to exploring and exploding the limits of knowledge. As we have learned from Spivak, the subaltern cannot speak within structures that refuse to hear; epistemic justice requires not only inclusion but transformation of the conditions of learning and knowing and heterogeneity of knowledges themselves.

Spivak figures her position to the European Enlightenment as a double bind:

> [T]he double bind of the universalizability of the singular, the double bind at the heart of democracy, for which an aesthetic education can be an epistemological prescription, as we, the teachers of the aesthetic, use material that is historically marked by the region, cohabiting with resisting, and accommodating what comes from the Enlightenment. (20)

Working one's way out of—or through and in to weave another—such a situation of double bind—a weaving and unweaving at one and the same time—attempts to wake up, to stimulate, proliferate and generate imaginative desires:

> [w]e must learn to do violence to the epistemo-epistemological difference and remember that this is what 'is' and thus keep up the work of displacing belief onto the terrain of the imagination, attempt to access the epistemic. The displacement of belief onto the terrain of the imagination can be a description of reading in its most robust sense. It is also the irreducible element of an aesthetic education. (26)

Epistemological revolution, by imaginative acts of radical desires.

Spivak usually prefixes Enlightenment with the historico-regional specifier "European" and figures the double bind in the playful polysemous grammar of "ab-using" it (37): "Can this be historically our role? To make the Enlightenment open to a(n) (ab)-use that makes room for justice …?" Perhaps this is not the justice of Kant's trial bench—and giving Derrida more slant on the abusing than using side—may the figure of justice here be saved from trial correction and sidle up with the unconditional ethical and the infinite task of hospitality? What the law/justice distinction promises.

Justice as the displacement and abuse of existing law, as violence, as schizophrenia: "The Euro-US subject must court schizophrenia as figure. In our dwindling isolation cells, we must plumb the forgotten and mandatorily ignored bio-polarity of the social productivity and the social destructiveness of capital and capitalism by affecting the world's subalterns, in places where s/he speaks, unheard, by way of deep language learning, qualitative social sciences, philosophizing into *unconditional* ethics" (43). Aka hospitality, aka openness to the radical Other:

> Imagination is structurally unverifiable. Thus, the image of the other as self-produced by the imagination supplementing knowledge or its absence is a figure that marks the impossibility of fully realizing the ethical. It is in view of this

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> experience of the figure (of that which is not logically possible) that we launch our calculations of the political and the legal. The gift of time grasped as our unanticipatable present as a moment of living as well as dying, of being hailed by the other as well as the distancing of that call is launched then as reparation, as responsibility, as accountability. (120)

Ontology and epistemology, the study of being and knowing, become arenas for the trial of colonial violence: "Colonial power is not just a rhetorical or material force – it is a metaphysical imposition, creating, shaping reality and dictating what is deemed knowing and knowledge, truth, and being" (Moradi 36); and, as such, theatres for the construction of and experimentation with new desires, new bodies and minds, new ways of thinking, being, and valuing.

Witness, archive, curate ongoing colonial violence: physical, mental, epistemic, ontological. How to imagine, to think, to know, to love differently. To be differently.

Avram Alpert, in "To Philosophize is to Learn How to Live with Others," continues the grand theme of hospitality, false and truer, in relation to the spectres of the Enlightenment and Western thought, finding a meaning in Amo's separation of philosophy from the issues of race and culture, namely, that "universalization occurs by going out into the world and attempting to integrate yourself with it, not by turning into one's 'own mind' " (47). Stefanie Bognitz in "Signposts of a Precarious Biography" addresses the fragile, risky character of any attempt to define or describe a life by asking her reader to consider the possibilities of "speculative epistemology" and what it means "to engage possible archives" (56). Anticipation and memory, projection and retrojection, the key operators in self-production and recall: "the archive is a memory laboratory, a mediated site of imagination and representation" (55). In writing, constructing, or remembering a life, she notes that "there is no final draft in the script of everyday life" (55-56). Her positioning of the problem in the case of Amo is acute: "What is of interest here is the involvement of the empire state of Brandenburg, situated in the very middle of the German territories, in the trade in enslaved persons on the brink of the Enlightenment era" (57).

Memorial acts—remembering and engaging with spectres—are multiple, multitemporal, and multimedic. Bognitz, in her second contribution, "In-Between Worlds," points out that "The archive is oral, written, ethnographic, and ephemeral" (74). Photographic and poetic, in the case of Akinbode Akinbiyi's gift of our cover image, untitled, and his work, "Attempts at Understanding," in which he tries "to intuit" a figuration of Amo the everyday, wandering man, feeling our way through the traces of his mind and body. Connecting with existing threads and traces, knowing that there is "constant weaving still going on from then to now" (78). A "prayer to be haunted" (Spivak 218) in the right way, open to the other, desiring and open to desire of the gestures of others.

Thank you for the humility and grace of all the contributions, tied together so clearly by their respect for the difficulty and multiplicity of ways of knowing,

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and their recognition of the importance of that respect, and its attendant hospitality, for the ongoing project of a future-to-come.

New Enlightenment, Truer Enlightenment, includes a Free Palestine.

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.

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Notes

1."The goal of speaking the truth is, in so administered a mass society as ours, mainly to project a better state of affairs, one that corresponds more closely to a set of moral principles—applied to peace, reconciliation, abatement of suffering—applied to the known facts. This has been called 'abduction' by the American philosopher C.S. Peirce … Certainly in writing and speaking, one's aim is not to show everyone how right one is, but in trying to induce a change in the moral climate whereby aggression is seen as such, the unjust punishment of peoples or individuals is either prevented or given up, the recognition of rights and democratic freedoms is established as a norm for everyone, not invidiously for a select few" (1972, 7).

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The Spread of Scabies among Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Prisons

Bilal Hamamra & Michael Uebel

Recently, an alarming spread of scabies (*Sarcoptes scabiei*) has been reported among prisoners in all Israeli occupation prisons. Scabies is a skin disease characterized by intense itching caused by mites, which can spread rapidly through close contact. The Palestinian Prisoner Society and Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees have issued warnings about this situation, particularly in Ofer Prison, where minors are at grave risk due to the rapid transmission of the disease (AlQuds, 2024).

Scabies has been declared by the World Health Organization to be the most common Neglected Tropical Disease with skin manifestations (Cox et al., 2021). Scabies mites spread through direct contact with infected individuals and can also spread via shared personal items such as towels and bedding (Delie et al., 2024). Scabies is a troublesome disease caused by an ectoparasitic infestation of the skin by the obligate human parasite mite *Sarcoptes scabiei* (Chosidow, 2006; 2012). It is common, highly contagious, and affects all age groups (Chosidow, 2012; Romani et al., 2015). One of the primary symptoms is severe itching, especially at night, along with the appearance of small, wavy tracks of blisters or bumps on the skin (Hay et al., 2012). Classic scabies is characterized by an erythematous popular eruption, serpiginous burrows, and intense pruritus. Sites of predilection include the webs of the fingers, volar wrists, lateral aspects of fingers, extensor surfaces of elbows and knees, waist, navel, abdomen, buttocks, groins, and genitals (Leung, Lam, & Leong, 2020). As the most common manifestations, intense pruritic skin lesions can profoundly impair quality of life. Infection with scabies not only causes local irritation but also induces host systemic inflammatory responses. The pathophysiology of scabies infection is mediated through hypersensitivity-like reactions and immune responses (Walton & Oprescu, 2013). Patients with scabies have higher serum levels of interleukin (IL)-2, IL-4, IL-6, and IL-17 (Mounsey et al., 2015). Increased risk of systemic disease is also reported in patients with scabies, as well as higher risks of chronic kidney disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease subsequent to infection with scabies (Chen et al., 2016; Chung et al., 2014; Turkmen, Erdur, & Kucuk, 2013). More recent studies suggest that scabies is associated with acute myocardial infarction and higher rates of all-cause mortality

(Ko et al., 2022). The long-term impact of scabies on other systemic diseases remains largely unknown.

The spread of scabies in Israeli prisons has been exacerbated by punitive measures imposed by the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) following October 7, 2023. Prisoners live under conditions that are not only unsanitary but also aimed at weakening them physically and mentally. These retaliatory measures include denying prisoners access to hygiene products, limiting their water supply, and overcrowding them in small spaces, all of which have accelerated the spread of diseases like scabies (Sajrawi, 2024).

The Prisoners and Freed Prisoners Affairs Authority has specifically raised concerns about the spread of scabies among minors at Ofer Prison. Of the 260 prisoners, 150 are minors who are particularly vulnerable to the disease. Symptoms such as painful boils, pimples, and skin irritation have appeared on the bodies of these young prisoners, making sleep impossible due to the constant itching (AlQuds, 2024). The Authority has called on the World Health Organization (WHO) to intervene and address the dire conditions in these prisons, where a lack of hygiene materials and sufficient time for washing is turning prisoners' bodies into fertile grounds for the spread of diseases (AlQuds, 2024).

A highly contagious disease, scabies constitutes a major health problem that extends to mental health and well-being. Several studies have shown that scabies causes impairment in the quality of life in adult patients. Scabies patients often suffer from social stigma, isolation, sleep disruption, as well as difficulties in concentration and productivity (Cox et al., 2021; Jin-Gang et al., 2010). In a recent study of 85 adult patients with scabies, researchers assessed the impact of scabies on the quality of life of patients and evaluated the relationship between depression and anxiety levels and impairment in life quality (Koç Yildirim et al., 2023). It was found that scabies has a moderate to severe effect on quality of life, with a positive correlation between quality of life impairment and anxiety and depression scores. Another study of over 7000 patients with scabies by Chien-Yu Lin and colleagues (2017) discovered a moderately increased risk of Bipolar Disorder. Perhaps the most common effects of scabies on mental well-being are related to how uncontrollable and unbearable itching causes insomnia and distress (Trettin et al., 2019).

Al-Shawamreh confirms that scabies has spread in several prisons, including Naqab, Megiddo, Nafha, and Rimon. Abu Safiya described how prisoners were deliberately denied access to basic hygiene materials such as soap and water, making it impossible to maintain personal cleanliness. He remarked: "We couldn't shower or clean ourselves for weeks. Without soap or clean clothes, the disease spread fast among us" (AlQuds, 2024). Abdullah Jaradat added that the overcrowding in cells only worsened the situation: "Twenty of us were crammed into a space meant for ten, and with no proper hygiene or ventilation, everyone started getting sick" (AlQuds, 2024).

Tamer Al-Shawamreh spoke about the lack of medical attention, saying: "They knew we were suffering from scabies, but instead of treating us, they just isolated us and ignored our pleas for help. It felt like the disease was being used as another tool to break us down mentally and physically" (AlQuds, 2024).

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These accounts suggest that the IPS is using scabies as a form of punishment by deliberately refusing to provide medical treatment and prevent its spread.

According to Middle East Monitor (2024), IPS officials have deliberately isolated infected prisoners and denied them access to medical care. Reports from Ofer Prison, where minors are also held, highlight the severe skin conditions affecting detainees due to these unsanitary conditions. A released prisoner recounted how they were forced to live in overcrowded cells, deprived of basic medical care, and left without clean clothes for extended periods, further contributing to the spread of scabies (Middle East Monitor, 2024).

Delie et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review and noted that the global prevalence of scabies in prisons is a significant concern, with rates as high as 6.57% in some facilities. Overcrowding, poor hygiene practices, and the lack of access to healthcare are key factors contributing to the spread of scabies in prisons around the world. In Israel, this is further exacerbated by intentional policies designed to increase suffering among Palestinian prisoners.

One former prisoner, Mohammed Al-Bazz, described the deplorable conditions inside Ktzi'ot Prison: "We are locked up over an honorable cause, but at the end of the day, I'm flesh and bones, with dignity and emotions — a human being that gets tired and feels pain when beaten and feels despair when sick" (Sajrawi, 2024). Another prisoner, Mo'ath Amarnih, a Palestinian photojournalist, was similarly affected by scabies during his detention. Upon his release, he warned those around him, "Stay away; I don't know what disease I'm carrying," reflecting the widespread fear of contagion among released prisoners (Sajrawi, 2024).

The Physicians for Human Rights – Israel (PHRI) has raised alarms over the IPS's refusal to provide adequate medical care for prisoners suffering from scabies. They have reported instances where prisoners were given ointment without proper disinfection of their living quarters, allowing the disease to spread unchecked. Testimonies from prisoners confirmed that even when some treatment was provided, it was inadequate, leaving many inmates to continue suffering from the effects of the disease (PHRI, 2024).

As the situation worsens, the Prisoners and Freed Prisoners Affairs Authority continues to call for international intervention, particularly from the WHO, to address the appalling conditions in Israeli prisons, where scabies has become not just a health issue but a weapon of control and degradation (AlQuds, 2024).

The spread of scabies among Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention centers highlights the inhumane conditions and deliberate neglect imposed by the Israeli Prison Service. Testimonies from released prisoners, combined with reports from human rights organizations, paint a grim picture of how disease is being weaponized to break the spirit and health of detainees. Denial of medical care, unsanitary living conditions, and overcrowding serve as tools of punishment, exacerbating the suffering of prisoners. Urgent international intervention is needed to address these violations and ensure that basic human rights, including access to healthcare, are upheld for all prisoners.

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Biography

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Michael Uebel has taught theory and literature at the University of Virginia, Georgetown University, and the University of Kentucky. One of his reputations is that of a medievalist. As a clinician, he practices with the Veterans Health Administration, U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs. He works primarily on the philosophical dimensions of psychology and psychoanalysis (theory and therapy). His current book project is on ethical, ideological, and psychocultural understandings of equanimity.

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Spectres of Anton Wilhelm Amo

Fazil Moradi & Stefanie Bognitz

Introduction

It is in the year 1727 that a university of the Prussian Empire, the Fridericiana (today's Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg in Saxony-Anhalt, Germany), admits Anton Wilhelm Amo as a student of philosophy. Amo's entry in the Fridericiana's registry book reads, "Antonius Guilielmus Cognominatus Amo. Aethiops."[1] In the column entitled "Patria" (lit., homeland or place of origin), we read, "Ab Aximo in Guinea Africana," from Axim in Guinea in Africa (for an impression of the original page in the university's registry book see "Amo's Archive" in this issue). While other students have entered cities located somewhere in the German-speaking territories, Amo has registered his heritage on the continent and his hailing from Africa (see also Diagne and Amselle 2020). He does not, however, mention his childhood and upbringing in the Principality of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel–the location of his early education and employment as a librarian and secretary (Firla 2020). His identification locates him on the Gulf of Guinea, known to the colonizing empires for its immeasurable mineral wealth as the "Gold Coast" on the continent of Africa, present-day Ghana. Amo, the student hailing from Axim in Guinea in Africa, would become a published Enlightenment thinker, holding "positions" at the universities of Halle, Wittenberg and Jena.

The essays in this issue address the circumstances of Amo's arrival, early life and upbringing in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, how he would become a student, teacher and thinker of early Enlightenment philosophy and a critic of slavery at the Fridericiana in the first half of the eighteenth century, and how he lives on in the twenty-first century. Unlike other Enlightenment philosophers or "white spectacles" who dominate philosophy departments in Germany and worldwide, Amo's published works do not resonate in the genealogy of philosophers in the established metanarrative of thinkers influencing early Enlightenment and/or modernity. Neither has Amo entered the canon nor the curricula of decolonial education and critical (race) theory, or what Souleymane Bachir Diagne has termed philosophy-by-translation in his outline of "Decolonizing the History of Philosophy" (Diagne 2018).[2] However, more than any other Enlightenment thinker of his time, the resonating demands of his specters take us to both, the "joining of a radically dis-jointed time" (cf. Derrida 1994, 20), and the underlying inequalities and ambivalences of imperial-colonial violence through philosophical, legal, religious and public vantage points.

The imperial-colonial conditions made the work of certain Enlightenment thinkers and the era of Enlightenment known to the world as exclusive embodiment of the Western "race," people and nations while homogenizing and annihilating its relations to other intellectual traditions and movements and abandoning scholarly inquiries that would take the love of critical knowledge production as a principle. Some Enlightenment philosophers, who celebrated their "being white" as a natural sign of male freedom, subjectivity, "race, racial superiority" and being racist and sexist as an "ontological" practice, not only continue to constitute the aura of the "modern" university, the library, or, the faculty that provides the esteem for distinct/ive ideas to gain momentum; they are also institutionalized as symbols of western culture/"racial superiority" and as such are made central to the philosophical and "racial" understanding of being human and the human condition.

This is where the *Enlightenment to come* is also a question of democracy to come, beyond state sovereignty and citizenship (Derrida 2005: 115–40). The Enlightenment to come, as Derrida writes, takes us to "the 'Enlightenment' of today and tomorrow (which must not without qualification be reduced or assimilated to *Aufklärung*, the *Enlightenment*, the *Illuminismo*, or *Les Lumières* of the eighteenth century)" (1995: 400). The Enlightenment to come is tangled with the future to come and of becoming receptive to haunting or the spectrality of Amo. Amo, as a person who was born, lived, philosophized, and continues to haunt beyond his lonely grave in Shama, Ghana, comes to us as a timeless reminder that Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am")—I, "in charge of it-self and of its decisions, as the sovereign power to do as one pleases, in short, the power to attain "perfect independence" (cf. Derrida 1995: 43)—always arises within a broader context.

Here, Amo looks at us and remains both absent and insistently present. At issue is the persistence of this haunting that unsettles the framework of Enlightenment claims of universality, exposing the fissures of its complicity with the transatlantic trade in human beings from the continent of Africa or colonial violence in the centuries to follow. In the postcolonial present, Amo occupies a liminal space: spectres that disrupt, question, and refuse to be confined to the imperial narrative of territorial and racial belonging as well as its denial of a place of hospitality and the quest for epistemic justice (Moradi in this issue; see also the editor's note by Peter Trnka in this issue).

How can one write of the spectres of Amo?

In this issue, we turn to Amo, his life, writings, and spectrality, critiquing and moving beyond Euro and Afrocentric appropriations of his thinking. We are interested in how Amo's ideas are shot through with philosophical concerns far older than the Enlightenment era and temporalities that resist appropriation and never cease haunting our world. The archive of Enlightenment philosophy has omitted the thought of Amo for more than 250 years. It is only at the dawn of decolonization or independence that he comes to haunt Kwame Nkrumah (Nkrumah 1964/1970, 18-19, 87; see also Abraham 2004, 191-99; Wiredu 2004, 200-06), in the 1960s and 1970s that he becomes politically relevant in the German Democratic Republic (Brentjes 1975, 443-44), and lately that his life and

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work receive more sustained scholarly attention (Dauvois 2020, Menn and Smith 2020).

By weaving together anthropological inquiries, archival work at the university and sites in Halle (Saale), philosophical inquiries into Amo's work and photography and by trying to intuit Amo, what he would feel and perceive, what he would take with him on his daily wanderings and passages, we aim to disrupt the border and boundary-making struggles that are at work suspending Amo between the imagined binary of Africa–Europe. Similar to the two imaginary coordinates of "Africa" and "Europe," in this issue, Amo is both present and absent, real and imagined, between worlds, and European and African. We are committed to allowing Amo's ghost to hover between life and death, here and now and then, making certainties vacillate.

Contributions

This issue consists of five contributions and a "Postface". In the first contribution, "Anton Wilhelm Amo Beyond 'His' Time and Place," Fazil Moradi draws on anthropological research in selected places in Germany and Ghana to discuss how Amo's life and memories confront the coexistence of advancing intellectual life or the Enlightenment as the ideals of "reason and progress" and slavery as imperial violence that persisted across empires in the 18th century. His contribution is a movement that crosses borders, going beyond the linear understanding of history, traversing more than one place, narrative, memory or human experience, and bringing into conversation W.E.B. Du Bois with Amo. Fazil Moradi reiterates and engages the Amo Lectures, delivered by Arjun Appadurai in 2016 and Souleymane Bachir Diagne in 2017 at the University of Halle, to explore how a re/turn to Amo transforms the pursuit of learning and knowledge into an experience of hospitality and how dwelling on Amo is being and dwelling in what Homi Bhabha discusses as beyond as both "a space of intervention in the here and now" and the possibility of re-inscribing "our human, historic commonality" (2004, 60).

Avram C. Alpert's contribution, "To Philosophize is To Learn How to Live with Others: Notes on the Works of Anton Wilhelm Amo," focuses on how Amo's philosophy takes us one step further: to philosophize is not just to learn how to live as such but to learn how to live with others, to learn the difficult art of keeping your personal integrity while integrating your life into the lives of others. It pursues the relationship between seemingly abstract philosophical categories and the specific things that philosophers write—or, in Amo's case, do not write – about race and culture in their philosophical works. It engages the philosophical tendency on this point among contemporary scholars, primarily, though not exclusively, in the United States and Europe. This tendency is to discard what a philosopher says about certain matters as if it did not affect the philosophy itself and how the traces of enlightenment or past ideas still reach into the present.

The contribution, "Anton Wilhelm Amo: Signposts of a Precarious Biography" by Stefanie Bognitz, does not make an effort to bring order or comprehension to the extraordinary academic or biographical heritage of Amo. She

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turns to evidence-in-writing and antecedents-in-archive from the 18th century and beyond to draw connections between otherwise far-flung signposts. In this vein, she shows how the residues we have come to inherit from a philosopher-scholar of African descent in Prussian Empire, Amo in places such as Axim, Amsterdam, Wolfenbüttel, Halle, Wittenberg, Jena—of his living presence, his education and his profession—are not only scattered, at times opaque, they are moreover invested in a temporality of possibility and horizons that would open up a different perspectivism of a world-yet-to-come. She writes that the prospective ideas and writings of Amo embrace connectivity and proximity, not only for a new humanism but for an inter-relationality of two continents, Africa and Europe, conscious of their pluriversality of epistemic practice and knowledge regimes.

In her second contribution, "Anton Wilhelm Amo: A Biography In-Between Worlds," Bognitz follows signposts of the scholarly biography of Amo by way of engaging the knowledge retrieved from the archive and selected writings by Amo himself and by scholars who engage with his biography and its academic legacy. It covers his biography in between worlds when Amo returns to Africa and spends the remainder of his life as an intellectual in the "Gold/Slave Coast," present-day Ghana. By opening up a conversation with Amo beyond his time and place, the text alludes to postcolonial perspectives on Amo's scholarship. Amo's noteworthy passages from Africa to Europe and back, in many ways, allude to a relational making of these seemingly separated worlds. Amo's in-between-worlds biography reveals a hidden archive of a possible philosophy between worlds. Bognitz seeks out an engagement in and with emerging archives around the many questions we continue to ask about the life and times of Amo. Dwelling on theorizations of archive and archiving as critical method, her research reveals the ways in which the everyday doings of Amo during his years in Europe and Africa far from give a complete account. On the contrary, if we learn anything from the archive, it is continued critical engagement with its memory and knowledge practices.

In an attempt to let possible archives emerge, Akinbode Akinbiyi's account and photographic search, "Anton Wilhelm Amo: Attempts at Understanding – 8 Photographs," tries to feel Amo, his emotions and perceptions, his observations and thoughts on his daily walks. His is a different time, well embedded in the past, but one still intuitively accessible by trying, striving to wander as he did then. The pathways he walked, etched into the landscape, the cobbled roads and streets, the lanes and byways that all define a certain geography, a specific location. Wolfenbüttel, Braunschweig, Halle, Wittenberg, Jena—small-time towns and places of residence, eking out an existence. The everyday of coming to a kind of acceptance of difficult neighbours, familial tensions, and sensing the gradual wear and tear of one's body. This contribution speculates how the fundamental human desire for justice beyond race and racism allows for this reach back into another person's past as a world memory while being, at the same instant, in one's own condition, present history.

Souleymane Bachir Diagne closes this issue with a *Postface*.

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Biographies

Fazil Moradi is a Japan Society for Promotion of Science Fellow and serves as a Visiting Researcher at the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hiroshima University. Dr. Moradi is also an Associate Researcher at the Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences, and an Affiliated Scholar at the Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes against Humanity at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, Graduate Center—City University of New York. Dr. Moradi served as a Visiting Associate Professor at the University of Johannesburg (Nov. 2021–Oct. 2024) and held Research Fellowships at the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study, has been a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and a Research Fellow with the International Max Planck Research School on Retaliation, Mediation, and Punishment in Germany, and collaborated with medical scientists at Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, to study the long-term effects of chemical weapons on the human body. Dr. Moradi's publications include: Being Human: Political Modernity and Hospitality in Kurdistan-Iraq (Rutgers University Press, January 2024); "In Search of Decolonised Political Futures: Engaging Mahmood Mamdani's Neither Settler nor Native," a Special Issue in Anthropological Theory (2023); and Memory and Genocide: On What Remains and the Possibility of Representation (co-edited with Maria Six-Hohenbalken and Ralph Buchenhorst, Routledge, 2017).

Stefanie Bognitz is a social anthropologist with strong interest in epistemologies embracing the political, legal, ethical and everyday resonances and remaking after genocide. As a senior research fellow at the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study (2022-24), Stefanie started to conduct research in Ghana, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK for her second single authored book tentatively entitled "Anton Wilhelm Amo in-between Worlds" which takes its inspiration from a philosophically-inclined anthropology that relies on long-term research and theory-oriented writing. Dr. Bognitz publications include, "Mediation in circumstances of the existential: Dispute and Justice in Rwanda" in Günther Schlee & Karl Härter, eds., *On Mediation* (New York: Berghahn, 2020); "The legal laboratory in Rwanda: Experimentalization and adaptation" in Kathrin Seidel & Hatem Elisie, eds.*, Normative spaces in Africa: Constructing, contesting, renegotiating and adapting dynamics in motion* (London: Routledge, 2020); and "Dispute as Critique: Moving Beyond 'Post-Genocide Rwanda'," *Anthropological Theory* 23.4 (2023): 386-403.

Notes

1. Universitätsarchiv Halle-Wittenberg, Rep. 4, Sektion XVII, Nr. 5, Bd. 3, Lfd. Nr. 488; DAB 4.
2. This was Diagne's lecture entitled "Decolonizing the History of Philosophy", which was part of the Anton Wilhelm Amo Lectures at the University of Halle, organized by Matthias Kaufmann, Richard Rottenburg

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and Reinhold Sackmann. Diagne started his outline by emphasizing the spectrality of Amo's absent presence captured in the motivation of the lecture series at the university of Halle in the following words: "To be standing in a place where I like to think that the spirit of Wilhelm Anton Amo is alive is very special to me" (2018, 17).

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Anton Wilhelm Amo *beyond* "his" time and place

Fazil Moradi

Introduction

This text draws on my anthropological inquiry crossing Halle (Saale) in Germany, Accra, and the southern regions of Ghana. The former was a city historically imbued with intellectual significance and the place that was once home to Anton Wilhelm Amo, who lived, studied, taught, and moved within the city's upper echelons. Halle also became central to my academic life between 2011 and 2019, as I pursued and completed my doctoral dissertation at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and earned my Ph.D. from the University of Halle, where I also taught and contributed as a researcher and lecturer.

The text does not aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of Amo's philosophical writings, nor does it aspire to undertake an archival excavation of the limited extant documents or the potential records housed in the Dutch West India Company archives, or the archive of the Brandenburg-Prussian imperial court in Berlin—where I currently reside. Instead, it situates itself within the philosophical space of absence and presence, acknowledging the fragmentary nature of such sources while resisting the reduction of the spectres of Amo to mere archival recovery or analytical classification as essential to knowing and knowledge.

Given that other contributions in this issue engage Amo's early years in Wolfenbüttel, education and intellectual life (Bognitz and Akinbiyi), it is unnecessary to revisit those discussions here. Instead, we are reminded of more than one spectre of Amo, who was born, lived, studied, and excelled in mastering languages and engaging philosophical ideas during one of the most critical times in the history of the Brandenburg-Prussian Empire. Amo's life and existence remain marked by imperial forces that shaped it. Therefore, Amo cannot be *a spectre alone*. Amo's non-present present, anchoring him in the here and now is the coming-back of spectres and an unknowable future. As Jacques Derrida writes, "a specter is always a *revenant*. One cannot control its comings and goings because it *begins by coming back"* (1994, 11). My contribution thus builds on the understanding that Amo as an autobiographical example is "not a personal story that folds onto itself," but rather "a window onto [political] social and historical processes, as an example of them" (Hartman in Saunders 2008, 5). The life, works, haunting memories, or spectres of Amo invite us to think

hospitably, to research and articulate through writing or speech, to remember or to archive. However, this invitation leads us beyond mere contemplation of the Enlightenment's ideals of "reason and progress." It forces us to confront the paradoxical coexistence of these ideals with the transatlantic trade in humans and slavery plantation as imperial violence that persisted across empires in the 18th century.

Engaging with Amo requires that one speaks with, to, and through spectres; *to speak, to make, or to let* the spectres of Amo *speak*, to borrow from Derrida (1994, 11). It is about both becoming exposed to the spectrality of Amo—an experience of non-present present that cannot entirely belong to knowing and knowledge (see Alpert, Bognitz and Akinbiyi in this issue)—and to "*crossing over*, traversing territories, and abandoning fixed positions, all the time" (Said 2000, 404). Across all the contributions in this issue, including photographs, a poem composed by Amo, and through all other texts and relays, including Amo's writings, handwriting and signature, we not only learn what spectres of Amo allow or prevent us from accessing, but also how they disrupt a linear understanding of time. These spectres urge us to engage with what has been silenced or abandoned to forgetfulness, as well as the persistent and haunting presence of the imperial foundations of Enlightenment and the unimaginable violence that shaped Amo's worlds in both 18th century Europe and the "Gold/Slave Coast" (present-day Ghana).

This encounter with Amo carries a transformative movement that crosses histories, colonial imaginations, and epistemic violence, transcending autobiography as purely portraying a single, isolated life or adhering to a linear time (Moradi 2023). It weaves through multiple places, narratives, haunting memories, and human experiences, crossing both geographical and epistemic, or, conceptual boundaries. In this text, it has meant travelling through the University of Halle, traces of Amo in its archive and museum, each allowing and at the same time blocking access to knowing or an "absolute knowledge" about Amo. This movement has taken me through the World Wide Web, which is central to the global dissemination of Amo's writings, traces, and archives (see Amo's Archive in this issue). It has carried me across the Atlantic to Ghana, specifically to the W. E. B. Du Bois Personal Library in Accra, located in the very place where Du Bois once lived. From there, it extended to the National Archives and the University of Ghana, and finally to the colonial forts and castles along Ghana's coastline. In the solitude of a remote and lonely grave at one of these sites rests the body of Amo.

If Amo's body, like the bodies of the imperial kings who destroyed and transformed his world into "Gold and Slave Coast," does not represent something strange, non-familiar, or a stranger to the Earth, then the movement toward Amo's autobiography in this text becomes a gesture of re/turn: a re/turn to the possibility of hospitality as an earthly experience. Hospitality as "not merely an invitation to reside in proximity; [but] an obligation to revise one's ways of being, living, and thinking, side by side, in a spirit of complementation, not completion" (Bhabha 2021, x). As a countersignature of imperial thinking, be it at the (nation-)state or citizen level, hospitality takes us to what Gayatri

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Chakravorty Spivak calls an *epistemological revolution* that helps revise our ways of thinking, living, co-habiting and being with the Earth: "We must think our individual home as written on the planet as planet," beyond the nation or racialized modes of identification (2013, 26, 349).

In this context, Amo becomes a call for hospitality or an experience of the *beyond* as "a space of intervention in the here and now" (Bhabha 2004, 10). As *beyond*, Amo makes us become "part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to re-inscribe our human [and more-than-human], historic commonality" (10). Thus, this text, by hosting a certain autobiography, certain spectres of Amo, moves beyond the boundaries of imperially constituted modes of identification. These include the imposition of racialized, nationalized, territorialized, sexualized, and isolating forms of memory, crafted as calculated narratives of colonization or *genophilia*[1] that are today at work identifying Amo as either purely African or as embedded within the Heideggerian "Platonico-Christian West" (Derrida 2020, 76).

This imperial heritage or memory of familiar/foreigner and *foreigner* as imminent threat suggests that there is no such thing as "culture" that exists independently of a certain political program of colonization. As Derrida reminds us, "All culture is originarily colonial. … Every culture institutes itself through the unilateral imposition of some 'politics' of language. Mastery begins, as we know, through the power of naming, of imposing and legitimating appel- lations" (1998, 39). The political act of cultural making is inseparable from the claim of domination, where the politics of language becomes the battlefield for collective identification or memory control and institutionalization of *difference*. In this sense, every culture as expression of genophilia is haunted by the traces of political domination and confrontation with foreignness or *Otherness* (see also Moradi 2024b). As Derrida writes, "[t]he difference of the One in the form of uniqueness … and the One in the figure of totalizing assemblage ('to an entire people') must make us tremble … As soon as there is One, there is murder, wounding, traumatism" (Derrida 1996, 77-78).

Amo in the Shadow of Empires

Would Amo be remembered if he had not become a philosopher during the early Enlightenment of the 18th century? As a child, Amo was likely one of many enslaved persons, including children, women, and men, forcibly deported from a region that had undergone a transition from "Gold" to "Slave Coast," to Amsterdam by the Dutch West India Company (*West-Indische Compagnie*) in the early years of the 18th century. He was not an African royal prince. Unlike the prince from Sonyo state, whom Captain Frans van Goethem deported to the Dutch colony of Surinam as a "slave" in 1695 and later the Dutch West India Company (Dutch WIC) was forced to locate and return (Potsma 1992, 102–3), we do not know of any similar effort to reclaim Amo as a child. What became of the enslaved children on the slavery plantations? What were their names? How many of them do we still remember? What happened to those children whom "African mothers were forced to abandon prior to the Middle Passage?" (Engmann 2023, 498). How many of the "702" enslaved humans

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who drowned off the coast of Surinam in January 1738, when the Dutch WIC slaver *Leusden* sank (Postma 1992, 164, 203), were children? Who today can claim to know or remember their names? (cf. Sharpe 2016).

As the Dutch Empire expanded its territorial conquests, the demand for gold and enslaved human labour grew significantly. These imperial economic and colonial calculations enabled the Dutch WIC to establish a dominant position in the transatlantic trade of enslaved persons from the continent of Africa (Postma 1992). The Dutch, Postma writes, "got involved in the slave trade in order to supply their newly acquired plantation colony in Brazil during the 1630s. Two decades later the Spanish colonies, via Curacao and through the *asiento* contracts, became the chief market for Dutch slave traders" (299). Count Maurits of Nassau-Siegen, the colonial governor of Dutch Brazil, clearly iterated the imperial call: "it is not possible to effect anything in Brazil without slaves ... and they cannot be dispensed with upon any consideration whatsoever; if anyone feels that this is wrong, it is a futile scruple" (cited in Feinberg 1989, 31). The imperialist assertion of racial superiority was rooted in a way of knowing and seeing that justified the destruction of life forms and the commodification of human existence. This worldview relegated enslaved peoples from the African continent to an artificially constructed lower stage of social and developmental hierarchy, turning their humanity into a site of exploitation (Hall and Schwarz 2017, 104).

After the Dutch colonial forces seized Elmina Castle from the Portuguese and established a headquarters for the Dutch WIC in 1637, they continued to remove the Portuguese colonial forces from their last coastal outposts, including the fort in Axim (French 2021, 247), where Amo is said to have been born. The Dutch WIC had "special agents appointed to specialize in the slave trade" (Postma 1992, 297), and its enslavers deported enslaved women, children and men from the "Slave Coast" to various slavery plantations, including Surinam which was slowly turned into a "slave market" (294). If the date of enslavement and deportation of Amo's brother to one of many slavery plantations in Surinam is unclear, Amo's deportation to Amsterdam occurred between 1700 and 1713, a time known as the "Slave Rush." During this period, "Gold Coast departures soared to quadruple the levels seen during the previous four decades" (254).[2] The Dutch monopoly on the transatlantic trade in enslaved people ended with the 1713 "Peace Treaty" in Utrecht, an agreement among the Dutch, Prussian, Portuguese, French, and British empires. This allowed the British Empire to supply enslaved people from Africa to the Spanish colonies and slowly establish dominance in the Atlantic (Hall and Schwarz 68). How, then, can we untangle Amo from the imperial acts of conquest, centuries of enslavement and plantation economies, and the enduring violence of colonialism? These imperial modes of violence ruptured the "historical connections" of the enslaved and their descendants, perpetuating endless generational violence (15). The forts and castles of the Portuguese, Dutch, English, Danish, Brandenburg-Prussian, Swedish, and French empires stand along today's Cape Coast in Ghana. These were built and maintained using enslaved human labour classified as "castle slaves, company slaves, inventory slaves, factory slaves,

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king's slaves, committee slaves, service slaves," which, together with the enslavers as technologies of transport, conquest and deportation, the forts, castles and lodges as the imperial architecture of enslavement and expansion, and "plantation overseers, attorneys, book-keepers, merchants, medical men and soldiers" (Hall and Schwarz 15) served as the critical infrastructure of imperial nation-building and expansion (Engmann 2023, 498). Rachel Ama Asaa Engmann writes that "central to studies of the transatlantic slave trade are Ghana's forts and castles. … There are more fortifications along the coast of present-day Ghana than in all regions in West Africa combined (or, in fact, in the whole of the Atlantic world)" (496). Between the late fifteenth and late eigh- teenth centuries, the empires built nearly one hundred lodges, forts, and castles along a 300-mile stretch of coastline in present-day Ghana. Stretching from Be- yin in the southwest to Keta in the southeast of today's Ghana, these monu- mental architectures of imperial conquests, destruction of established life forms, and colonial governance were how some empires and imperial nations were being created in the part of the planet that is today called Europe.

The Portuguese Empire built Elmina Castle, Fort St. Sebastian, Cape Coast Castle and Fort Saint Anthony between 1482 and 1555; the Dutch erected Fort Nassau, Ussher Fort, Fort of Good Hope, Fort Orange, Fort Batenstein, Fort Vredenburgh and Fort Patience from 1612 to 1697; the British owned Fort Amsterdam, James Fort, Fort Metal Cross, Fort Apollonia, Fort Vernon and Fort William between 1638 and 1753; Danish-Norwegian collaboration result- ed in Osu or Christiansborg Castle and Fort Fredensborg from 1660 to 1734; the Danish oversaw Fort Kongenstein, Fort Prinzenstein and the Frederiksgave plantation from 1683 into the 1830s; and the Brandenburg-Prussian Empire established Groß-Friedrichsburg Festung (Fort) from 1681 to 1683. Many of these imperial buildings were constructed on the sites of ruins of other forts, and wars among the empires led to changing ownership and names over time (Lawrence 1963; Dantzig 1980; Osei-Tutu and Smith 2018; DeCorse 2001; Adjaye 2018; Green 2020).

Although Christiansborg Castle in Accra has been a government building for the Ghanaian state since its independence in 1957, other castles and forts, preserved as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, have evolved into prominent yet contested tourist destinations. These living imperial architectural monuments embody the coloniality of power or relations of domination and destruction, simultaneously attracting global interest while raising ethical questions about how the histories or memories they embody are remembered and commodified (Osei-Tutu 2004; Kreamer 2004). Visitors—among them African Americans tracing their human relations and memories to those enslaved and deported by the Dutch WIC, as well as tourists from the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands—are drawn to these imperial colonial castles and forts. The monuments, along with others now descending into ruins, serve as enduring violence of imperial conquests, destruction, and acts of annihilation—slavery. Together, as the tour guide would narrate to us visitors in late June 2023, they vividly illustrate how the imperial architecture of colonial violence—embodied in the design of forts, castles, and lodges built to conquer and expand the bor-

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ders of empires, imprison and brutalize the enslaved humans, subjecting them to torture and rape before their departure—stretches the colonial archives. This is how the spectres of Amo's life make "demands" on the living generation—both researchers and readers—by "kidnapping" us (cf. Morrison 2010, xix.), confronting us directly with the colonial archives that have held him under *house arrest* (cf. Derrida 1996, 2), for far too long, exposing the unimaginable cruelties or *inhospitality* of imperial colonialism.

Hospitality, *friendship*, *love*, *care*, *loss*, mourning or responsibility as human practices, relationships, and rights beyond the law, living, and critical imagination lie beyond the domain of empires, whether modern or ancient (Moradi 2024a; 2024c; 2024d, 2023). The right and responsibility of the imperial colonizer or conqueror has always been the destruction of the target people and the conquest of their land. It has never been the right and responsibility toward the other or of the other to cohabit the Earth. Hospitality has, therefore, always been both a countersignature and a welcoming of conquest and exploitation for the racial capitalist imperial colonizer: "From c. 1650 to 1800, approximately one million captive Africans were trafficked from Ghana out of the continent" (Engmann 2023, 496). The "accepted figure" of the United Provinces of the Netherlands was two million in 1795 (Boxer 1965/1990, 304). In his memoir, Stuart Hall writes, "Within the mental imperatives of the plantation the slave could not even be comprehended without the presence of the master. He or she could not properly exist. … *The enslaved had slipped out of memory* (Hall and Schwarz 70, 73, emphasis mine).

Frantz Fanon's critical anthropological account demonstrates that the spectres of slavery continue to haunt the very foundation of present-day Europe: "Europe is literally the creation of the Third World. The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from the underdeveloped peoples. The ports of Holland, the docks of Bordeaux and Liverpool were specialized in the Negro slave trade, and owe their renown to millions of deported slaves" (2004, 102). At issue is also an imperial consolidation of what Aníbal Quijano (2000) calls the "coloniality of power." Beginning already in 1492, coloniality highlights relations of domination that were anchored in the codification of distinctions between conquerors and the conquered in the idea of "race" naturalizing a racial hierarchy—superior and inferior races—as tied to the legitimization and institutionalization of control over labour, including racial slavery and serfdom, extractive capitalism or ecological exploitation, and settler-colonialism. In the imperial context of dehumanization, dispossession, the commodification of human lives, plunder of knowledge systems, destruction of heritages and languages, and widespread ecological destruction across Africa and the Americas were naturalized as the order of empire. The languages of the enslaved were either strictly controlled or entirely banned to suppress any potential for mobilization of collective resistance (Hall and Schwarz 2017, 74–75), which in today's understanding can be understood as "linguifam," linguistic starvation or linguicide, murder of language (Wa Thiong'o 2009, 17).

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Deferred Remembrance, Forgetting Amo

On Tuesday, 18 October 2016, almost three centuries—270 years to be precise—after Amo departed from the territory of the Prussian Empire and his subsequent "return" to the "Slave Coast" in 1747, I received Professor Arjun Appadurai, a distinguished anthropologist and critical theorist, at the Halle (Saale) central train station. We walked to the Dormer Hotel located on Leipziger Strasse. Appadurai had travelled from Berlin and needed to rest and prepare his Anton Wilhelm Amo Lecture, which he was expected to deliver at 6pm in Hörsaal XX at Melanchthonianum of the Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, hereafter referred to as the University of Halle.

The Anton Wilhelm Amo Lecture series, which began in 2012, interrupted the historical silence and silencing of Amo's life and work during the early Enlightenment in Halle and Wittenberg. It was organized by Professor Richard Rottenburg, then the chair of the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology, and Professor Matthias Kaufmann, then the chair of the Department of Philosophy, and funded by the research clusters Society and Culture in Motion and Enlightenment, Religion, Knowledge of the University of Halle. Richard had told me in a conversation that the memorial plaque on the building where Amo had once lived in Wittenberg led him to work with Matthias toward the organization of the Amo lecture series.

The inscription on the memorial plaque reads:

Anton Wilhelm Amo

(um 1700 – nach 1775) Philosoph. 1. afrikan. Student 1730 – 1735 in Wittenberg

Another plaque, in fact, the only one remembering Amo as *Aufklärungsphilosoph,* Enlightenment philosopher, can be located in Jena. It is affixed to the building where Amo resided at Jenergasse 9:

Zur Erinnerung an den Aufklärungsphilosophen Anton Wilhelm Amo aus Axim in Ghana 1739 Dozent ander Universität Jena Wohnte hier in der Jenergasse

Several hours later, I returned to the hotel and accompanied Appadurai on a walk to Universitätsplatz, a square where the buildings Robertinum (1889), Melanchthonianum (1900–1902), Thomasianum (1910), and Löwengebäude converge. The Robertinum, named after the archaeologist and philologist Carl Robert (1850–1922), houses a bust of the ancient poet Homer ("8th century BCE"). The Löwengebäude, or Lion Building, is adorned with paintings and numerous busts of prominent thinkers and theologians, defined and identified as German, who represent the "white" male-dominated history of the universi-

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ties of Halle and Wittenberg. Among these figures are Martin Luther (1483–1546), Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), and Christian Thomasius (1655–1728). The Melanchthonianum is named after Philip Melanchthon, a key collaborator of Martin Luther. In the early 16th century, Melanchthon served as rector of the Academia Leucorea in Wittenberg.

In the early 19th century, two historical institutions—the Academia Leucorea, established by Electoral Prince Friedrich der Weise von Sachsen in 1502, and the Academia Fridericiana, founded in 1694 by Electoral Prince Friedrich III of Brandenburg (who would later ascend as King Friedrich I of Prussia)—were merged to form the *(Königliche) Vereinigte Friedrichs-Universität Halle-Wittenberg*. This union symbolized not just the consolidation of academic traditions but also the broader ambitions of the Prussian Empire to centralize and elevate educational standards. With the ascension of Friedrich Wilhelm II (1744–1797) to the throne of Prussia in 1786 and the appointment of Johann Christoph Wöllner as Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs on July 3, 1788, the Prussian state turned to the Christian supremacy and domination of the right to think and write critically. On July 9, 1788, Religionsedikt (the Edict of Religion) was issued, followed on December 19, 1788, by Zensuredikts (the Edict of Censorship) were established to ban or control whatever that appeared to contest the "spirit of Christianity" under the rule of a "Christian prince" (see Wiggermann 2010; Kuehn 2002, 341). The Prussian kingdom that once aligned with the ideals of *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment) became a political organization that sought to control intellectual freedom..

On 10 November 1933, during the 450th anniversary of Luther's birth, the Nazi regime in Germany renamed the University of Halle-Wittenberg to "Martin-Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg." This renaming was not unexpected, as Luther was both anti-Semite and anti-women. In December 1542, Luther declared that women were destined to "bear children to death" and openly called for the destruction of "the Jews" (Federici 2018, 30; Nolting 1999).

The buildings, the assembly of exclusive iterations of men and names, and the very name of this university itself act as a powerful technology of unification, forging a homogenous narrative of belonging and identification by erasing heterogeneity in pursuit of an "ideal configuration." The Universitätsplatz, as *Lieux de mémoire*, has become the manifestation binding memory and identification into a singular, unified narrative of a different and unique nation. This *Oneness*, this *Lieux de mémoire* is important for understanding Amo's place in Halle and contemporary Germany at large.

As Appadurai and I walked toward Universitätsplatz, he asked me, "Who was Amo?" He was already familiar with the usual story of Amo's birth in present-day Ghana in the early 18th century and his "abduction." Knowing this, he stopped me from repeating the widely accepted naturalized narrative that often defines Amo's life. Instead, he asked, "Do we have his writings? Are there publications that can teach us about his work?" I could only respond, "Yes, some of his writings are in the archive." There is no book authored by Amo available in any university library or bookstore in Germany. Instead, his work is preserved in the university archive in Halle. In this archive, you can find Amo's hand-

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written name and signature in the student registry book from Academia Fridericiana, dated 1727 (see Amo's Archive in this issue), along with his dissertations written in Latin. These dissertations were "discovered" by librarian Wolfram Suchier in 1916 and were later republished by Burchardt Brentjes in 1976.

As we were walking and talking, we arrived at the two bronze sculptures on a stone base, which I wanted Appadurai to see. One depicts a man with a piece of cloth draped around his waist. This sculpture is intended to represent "the African" in anatomical terms. The man stands behind and slightly to the right of a woman, who is wearing a long skirt, a camisole, and a turban-like head wrap. Situated behind the Löwengebäude and close to the main entrance of the Robertinum, the sculptures emerge as a solitary monument. Absent of images, portraits, or paintings, the male sculpture is intended to evoke the presence of Amo, serving as a catalyst for remembrance and a means to render visible the memory of belonging and identification. With their arms resting at their sides and hands unoccupied, the two figures are united in a shared gaze toward an uncertain future.

It is not clear how the location of the solitary monument was decided, but the two sculptures were linked to the global politics of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) from 1949 to 1990. During this time, East Germany maintained political relationships with anti-imperial movements across the continent of Africa and with the newly independent state of Ghana. In the early 1960s, the sculptor Gerhard Geyer was tasked with travelling to Ghana and Guinea. Geyer travelled to Ghana with his friend and fellow artist, Walter Howard. Their mission was to create artworks inspired by their experiences and artistic exploration of postcolonial Ghana (see also Brentjes 1976). Geyer was tasked with creating a piece for the GDR to present as a gift to the Ghanaian Trade Union Congress, while Howard was to produce a work to be gifted to the Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs de Guinée.[3] The political upheavals in both postcolonial countries prevented the artworks from being completed and presented as ideological gifts. In 1965, Geyer produced a series of artworks he referred to as "African sculptures" that were showcased at Moritzburg, a historical castle from the late 15th century that currently functions as both a heritage site and an art museum in Halle (Saale). In that same year, two sculptures titled "Freies Afrika" (Free/Liberated Africa), originally conceived as a political gift from the GDR to the Republic of Ghana, were installed where they can be found today. The male sculpture was intended to represent or stand in for Amo. It is recounted that Kwame Nkrumah, once the Prime Minister of the "Gold Coast" from 1952 to 1957 during the twilight of British imperial rule, and later became the first President of a liberated Ghana (1957–1966), was invited to the ceremony and to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Halle, where Amo's own intellectual life had once unfolded.[4] At the University Archive in Halle in 2022, Stefanie Bognitz (see her contributions in this issue) and I were informed that the invitation letter that was prepared to be sent to Nkrumah was undergoing restoration in Leipzig. By the early 1960s, Nkrumah's intellectual focus had already shifted toward Amo. In his 1964 work *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-colonization and Development with*

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Particular Reference to the African Revolution, Nkrumah explicitly engages Amo's philosophical writings, referring to him as "the Ghanaian philosopher." This recognition reflects Nkrumah's broader project of reclaiming African intellectual heritage, the Africanization of Amo or Amo as a foundational critique of the imperial narrative of "white racial superiority" and "black racial inferiority." In the same historical breath, Nkrumah, standing at the helm of a newly liberated Ghana, invited Du Bois to both "celebrate the final constitutional separation from Britain, as Ghana became a Republic," and to edit the *Encyclopedia Africana* (Gates 2000, 215). Du Bois, born in Massachusetts in 1868, became the first Black scholar to earn a doctoral degree from Harvard University in 1895. His dissertation, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870*,[5] was a landmark work, later published in 1896 (Lewis 1995, 2). In July 1892, a young Du Bois embarked on his journey to imperial Europe. It was just eight years after the Berlin Conference of 1884–85, which, as empires' navigation of violence between themselves followed the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and Peace Treaty in Utrecht in 1713, had divided the continent of Africa to satisfy the imperialist capitalist ambitions and racial dominance of European empires. Du Bois' journey was also about twelve years before imperial Germany, which had already colonized what they called "German South West Africa," committed genocide against Nama and Herero people in present-day Namibia between 1904 and 1908 (Biwa 2017).

In his autobiography, Du Bois (2007, 99) writes:

> I crossed the ocean in a trance. Always I seemed to be saying, "It is not real; I must be dreaming!" I can live it again—the little, Dutch ship—the blue waters—the smell of new-mown hay—Holland and the Rhine. I saw the Wartburg and Berlin; I made the *Hartzreise* and climbed the Brocken; I saw the Hansa towns and the cities and dorfs of South Germany; I saw the Alps at Berne, the Cathedral at Milan, Florence, Rome, Venice, Vienna, and Pest; I looked on the boundaries of Russia; and I sat in Paris and London. On mountain and valley, in home and school, I met men and women as I had never met them before. Slowly they became, not white folks, but folks. The unity beneath all life clutched me. I was not less fanatically a Negro, but "Negro" meant a greater, broader sense of humanity and world fellowship.

Du Bois crossed the Atlantic to imperial Berlin, where he enrolled at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität to study economics, history, sociology, and politics. During three semesters, he had the privilege of being close to and learning from some of the most influential thinkers of the time, including Gustav Friedrich Schmoller, Adolf Wagner, the "fire-eating Pan-German," Heinrich von Treitschke, and the renowned Max Weber (104).

In Berlin, he also could not only hear his "German companions sing *'Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles in der Welt'*," with "the march of soldiers, the saluting of magnificent uniforms, and the martial music and rhythm of movement," stirring his senses, but he also had the opportunity to observe Emperor Wilhelm II, King of Prussia, parading on horseback: "I even trimmed my beard and mustache to a fashion like his [Wilhelm II] and still follow it. If I a

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stranger was thus influenced, what about the youth of Germany? I began to feel that dichotomy which all my life has characterized my thought: how far can love for my oppressed race accord with love for the oppressing country? And when these loyalties diverge, where shall my soul find refuge?" (106).

At ninety, just before his move to Ghana in 1961, Du Bois returned to his alma mater, renamed Humboldt University in Berlin, now in the grip of the GDR, to receive an honorary diploma—"the degree of Doctor of Economics, *honoris causa*"—in early November 1958 (Appiah 2014, 1–3). This was amidst sweeping imperial and geopolitical transformations; the GDR forged connections with growing decolonial states across the African continent, intertwining its socialist politics with the aspirations of African nations in a postcolonial world (Pugach 2022; Glass 1980).

At the launch of the *Encyclopedia Africana* in late 1962 at the University of Ghana, Du Bois shared that the idea had lived within him since 1909—the very year Nkrumah was born—and that "It is logical that such a work had to wait for independent Africans to carry it out" (Gates 1995, 323). The idea at the heart of the *Encyclopedia*, Gates writes, was that it "would refute the Enlightenment notion of blacks as devoid of civilization and the hallmarks of humanity" (203). In 1963, at 95, Du Bois became a Ghanaian citizen after the U.S. Embassy in Accra refused him a passport.

He died on August 27 and was laid to rest outside and next to one of the walls of Christiansborg Castle, poised between the entrance gate and the Atlantic Ocean. His remains were later exhumed and reinterred beside his home in Accra. Unlike Amo's lonely and abandoned grave, to which I will return further below, the tomb of Du Bois and his partner (wife) Shirley Graham is situated within a temple-like edifice, attracts visitors from the United States at large, the postcolonial President(s) of Ghana, and tourists from around the world.

In June 2023, haunted by the spectres of Amo, Stefanie Bognitz and I spent a week at the W. E. B. Du Bois Center and the National Archives in Accra, searching for traces of Amo. We learned that Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, haunted by the spectres of Du Bois, visits and pursues learning in his library. Like Spivak, within the "Du Bois Personal Library" we encountered a collection of books enshrouded in dust and decay. There is a copy of the 1977 edition of *The Encyclopedia Africana: Dictionary of African Biographies*, edited by L. H. Ofosu-Appiah, which includes an entry titled "Amo, A. W." written by K. A. Britwum. The website of the Du Bois Center celebrates Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912), Wole Soyinka (1923-), Cheikh Anta Diop (1923-1986), and Dr. Abdias do Nascimento (1914-2011) as "eminent African scholars." At the National Archives in Accra, the Nkrumah "agendas" or "diaries" document various daily activities and meetings during his presidency of Ghana. Among these records are entries noting meetings with Du Bois. However, the details of their discussions remain unspecified, and there is no record of the invitation from the University of Halle

It is also during this historical moment of profound political and epistemological upheaval in the 1960s that Burchard Brentjes (1929–2012) begins working on the person he identified as "the black philosopher in Halle" (1976).

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Brentjes' book, *Anton Wilhelm Amo: Der Schwarze Philosoph in Halle*, remains the only historical documentation or key publication in German dedicated to Amo, highlighting the broader lack of academic interest with Amo's life and work within German scholarship. A photograph in the book (87) archives the GDR's Ambassador to Ghana, Johannes Vogel, alongside Kwaw Freiku II, the President of the Chieftain's Chamber of Ghana's Western Region. The two can be seen standing before Amo's grave in Shama on 11 September 1974.

In 1975, a memorial plaque was installed in front of the sculptures: "to commemorate the first African student and lecturer at the University of Halle-Wittenberg and Jena, 1727–1747." This mode of remembering carries the spectres of Amo beyond the borders of contemporary Germany. Positioned prominently to the right of the entrance to the Department of Philosophy and Classics[6] at the University of Ghana in Accra, a golden plaque reads:

> Dedicated by the
> Martin-Luther-University
> of Halle-Wittenberg
> in the German Democratic Republic
> to its former student
> and lecturer 1727 – 1747 An-
> ton Wilhelm Amo from Axim The
> great African Philosopher
> of the modern age

The plaque is believed to have been gifted to the University of Ghana in the 1980s. Since we could not meet in person during my visit to the university, I e-mailed Dr. Hasskei Mohammed Majeed, a distinguished scholar from the Department of Philosophy and Classics at the University of Ghana in Accra. Answering my questions, in one of his emails, he wrote, "I am sorry to inform you that there's no record of the date when the plaque was transferred to the department, and the department does not teach a course on Amo. We intend to develop one in the near future though."

Appadurai's "Sidenote" or Epistemic Justice *to Come*

Leaving the "Liberated Africa" sculpture behind, Appadurai and I went to Hörsaal XX at the Melanchthonianum. Here, Appadurai delivered his lecture, titled "The Precarious Future of National Sovereignty." His abstract opened with the words, "National sovereignty today operates in a changed ecology..." and concluded with a profound assertion: "More than three centuries after the Treaty of Westphalia [1648], Europe (and the world) are in desperate need of a new narrative of sovereignty."

He started with a "sidenote":

> I must admit that I did not know [very much about Amo] till today. When I was on the train from Berlin to here [Halle], I looked up the name [Amo]. … And in the course of the day and through some conversations with people here, *I am feeling a little less ashamed because I see that I am in the very big company of people*

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> *who do not know what they should know about Amo*. Because this is a completely stunning story. I am committed to be learning whatever can be learned about this extraordinary person about whom I gather the archival traces are not many and that may partly account for why he is not talked about all the time … Not only was I amazed by this man and his history in this crucial century, in this crucial moment, in this time in Germany, in Europe more generally. I am really very affected by the condition of his working life, his stature and his sad, I guess, return to Ghana and apparently his death under somewhat obscure circumstances. I am especially affected, because I have a small book that I am thinking about … trying to look again at the very old question or old issue, which is not so much discussed, which is how could the European Enlightenment co-exist with the global imperial regime of Europe which in every way, point by point, contradicts the ideas of Enlightenment. Now, there are some obvious and available answers but I think they are poor answers, which say that ideas won't matter, that this is just hypocrisy, that empire was really about property, wealth and power and these ideas were just kind of [*sic*] side point or some such things. Well, I am not convinced by any of these and I think there is something much deeper which needs to be tackled to understand how you could have these great ideas as well as this disturbing world moment of European conquest, control, domination, hegemony and indeed savagery on a worldwide basis. This is not a small thing. Then, I see this story of Amo and, I think, oh my… Here is a Black man, planted here, abducted indeed, and then gifted, commoditized, moved around, though in very privileged circumstances, and then becomes an extraordinary savant, a learned man in the height of the Enlightenment but coming from the most difficult spaces of the early modern world in Europe. Just stunning. I have both reasons to be stunned by this individual and my own project to think what does a story like this tell us about the co-existence of Enlightenment and empire (Appadurai 2016, emphasis mine).

Amo's writings have yet to be recognized as "sufficiently" philosophical and worthy of inclusion not only in the curriculum at Halle but also at other universities across Germany, Ghana and the world at large. How, then, can we learn what we should know about Amo?

Appadurai (2017) then transitioned to what he termed a "global perspective," grounding his discourse in the intricate web of finance capitalism, the monetization of everyday life, and the contemporary infrastructure of human relationships. He explored the movement of people and ideas, focusing on refugees fleeing political violence and migrants displaced in search of new homes—hospitality. Appadurai also shared his reading of the influence of feminist, ecological, and anti-poverty movements as global phenomena in the 21st century. But also, how these movements challenge the enduring political memory established by the Treaty of Westphalia, which has shaped transgenerational notions of sovereignty and state-centric governance. These living and political traditions and unexpected historical shifts reveal that the nation-state cannot exist in isolation, directly challenging the "worldwide politics of fear," which gains power by demonizing "migrants, refugees, and outsiders." This fear-driven politics clings to the notion of territorial sovereignty, rooted in a racialized imperial state—the very state that once denied sovereignty to others,

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particularly those subjected to the violence of conquest and slavery and condemned to life on colonial plantations, that is, conquered land.

The very existence of the state within the context of colonialism, dating back to the late 15th century—often seen as the birth of the colonial or imperial state (Mamdani 2020; Dunbar-Ortiz 2014; Dussel 2000; 1995)—was intricately linked to the lives and ideas of certain philosophers, shaping and being shaped by the imperial language of their time. Language was central to the 2017 Amo Lecture, "Decolonizing the History of Philosophy," presented by Professor Souleymane Bachir Diagne. In his lecture, Diagne continued the thought introduced by Appadurai in his *sidenote*, the deep and inseparable connection between imperial-colonialism and the history of philosophy: "The coloniality of power requires the task of epistemological decolonization" or revolution (Walsh, Mignolo and Segato 2024, 2). As Fanon writes in *Toward the African Revolution,* "Before [Aimé] Césaire, West Indian literature was a literature of Europeans. The West Indian identified himself with the white man, adopted a white man's attitude, 'was a white man' " (1967, 26). The "white man" persists as an imperial colonial technology of identification or *difference*—a scaffold for conquest, domination, and nation-building that remains active in the 21st century.

After critiquing the concept of "European humanity" as *the humanity* in G.W.F. Hegel, Edmund Husserl, and Emmanuel Levinas, Diagne proposed a decolonizing perspective. He emphasized that the flow of knowledge, or *translatio studiorum,* is not limited to the traditional path of Jerusalem-Athens-Rome-Paris-London-Heidelberg, but also includes routes like Athens-Nishapur-Baghdad and Cordoba-Fez-Timbuktu. In fact, decolonization as a critical field of scientific, historical, philosophical, or artistic inquiry needs to be extended beyond the city state of Athens as the "origin" of language, thought, and humanness (Bernal 2006). For example, as Paul Ernest (1977, 230) writes, "mathematics as a discipline or discursive formation crossed the thresholds of positivity and epistemologization in Mesopotamia. […] Something of the order of two thousand years were to pass before it crossed the threshold of formalization in the hands of Euclid" (see also Joseph 2011). At issue is the question of epistemic justice beyond colonizing education or the imperial colonial mode of identification or claim of culture, a commitment to embracing the heterogeneous plurality of languages, resisting the violence that is always already at work in any attempt to reduce philosophy to a singular, controlled movement toward a uniform language, culture, nation, or genophilia: "As soon as there is One, there is murder, wounding, traumatism" (Derrida 1996, 78).

A decolonized or deconstructive love of knowledge or philosophy, therefore, centres on the human pursuit of learning and freedom, as well as the experience of inheritance or heritage through translational practices that cannot be confined to *One-ness*. It engages with more than one language, a heterogeneous language, continually evolving and crossing boundaries—be they linguistic, generational, or geographical. This philosophy is not tied to a specific people, language, land, or origin; instead, it remains in constant motion, crossing and connecting worlds. At issue is the *dissemination of learning and knowledge*, which carries a responsibility toward learning that demands hospitality toward

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each other. This reflection must go beyond mere attachment to national or genophilic boundaries, language and even translation, transcending logocentrism, linguistic ownership, and the politics of knowledge and memory. It calls for a deeper understanding that challenges imperial colonial boundaries and recognizes the broader implications of how knowledge travels and is shared (Diagne 2018a; Bevilacqua 2018; Adamson 2016; Dabashi; 2015; Graeber and Wengrow 2021; Derrida 1998). Decolonizing the history of philosophy is, then, not about seeking a "new origin." It is rather the call of epistemic justice or the scholarly responsibility to deconstruct the "white man/mythology" as the imperial measure of living and knowing, along with the identification of the worlds that are at once defined and erased as "non-white" or "non-European" (Diagne 2018b). Diagne expands the history of philosophy beyond the confines of "European humanity," a narrow perspective that some philosophers uphold and fail to transcend. He challenges the philosophical nationalism that preserves and prioritizes the memory of specific genders, nationalities, "races," and definitions of humanity. Echoing Derrida (2020), Diagne call for philosophy to transcend the constraints of racialization—whether identified as "white, black, or brown"—and to move beyond the exceptionalism embedded in its historical narration

Diagne's lecture resonates with Amo's life and work, as both explorations of crossing worlds and languages, and as a call for living and thinking hospitably (see also Alpert and Bognitz in this issue). It connects with Johann Gottfried Kraus (1680–1739), the rector and Council of the Academia Leucorea during Amo's time there, highlighting a shared intellectual heritage and commitment to fostering understanding across the world. In a letter dated May 24, 1733, which is featured in Amo's philosophical dissertation *De humanae mentis ἀπαθεία* (On the Impassivity of the Human Mind), Kraus explicitly addresses the historical "debt that letters owe to Africa," emphasizing the profound and often overlooked contributions of African thought to the development of intellectual traditions:

> Africa in the past had great honor, whether with regard to its [fertility in human] natural aptitude, devotion to letters, or religious teaching. For it brought forth a great many very eminent men, by whose natural aptitude and devotion divine as much as human wisdom has been taught. … And even though the great force of the Arabs, spread throughout Africa, brought great change, it is far from true that their dominion extinguished all the light either of natural aptitude or of letters. For in the teaching of this people, to whom letters seem to have been transferred, liberal learning was cultivated, and when the Moors crossed from Africa into Spain, the ancient writers whom they brought over with them gave much assistance to the cultivation of letters, which was then beginning to emerge from the darkness. (Cited in Menn and Smith 2020, 191)

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Kraus's reference to the "Moors" crossing from the Arab-Islamic world, Africa and Asia to present-day Spain highlights the historic movement of both people and knowledge that played a foundational role not only in the intellectual life or the birth of Enlightenment in Halle and other cities in Europe but

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worldwide. The birth of the Enlightenment in Halle cannot be isolated or separated from the 8th century *Bayt al-Ḥikmah* (House of Wisdom) in Baghdad under the ʿAbbāsid imperial rule that lasted for five centuries (Al-Khalili 2012; Lyons 2010) or Al-Andalus (711–1492) with Toledo and Cordoba under Umayyād imperial rule in the Iberian Peninsula. The ʿAbbāsid and Umayyād empires were also profoundly influenced by the flow of knowledge from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Phoenicia, China, Greece, India and elsewhere. However, these empires were also fundamentally shaped by imperial violence, the control of women's human capabilities and slavery.

It is not my task here to explain Amo's metaphysical argument for the immaterial nature of *De humanae mentis*—the human mind, which he writes "belongs to the genus of spirits," as opposed to "material concepts." He acknowledges and repeats that at issue is "contrary opposites," "wherever spirituality is present, materiality is absent, and vice versa" (see the English translation in Menn and Smith 2020, 159, 163). Herein, I also cannot engage the implications of Amo's philosophy of the spiritual/material divide for understanding slavery: Does his distinction between the materiality of sensory experiences and the unconquerability of the spirit shed light on the experience of enslavement? What I find critical, however, is how Amo does not begin his philosophical dissertation with the concept of *mind* alone. It is important that Amo begins with *human* instead of "mind" or "Man." The title of the thesis *De jure Maurorum in Europa* (On the Rights of Moors in Europe or Concerning the Law of the Moors in Europe), which Amo is said to have defended in 1729 (see Bognitz in this issue), and that is missing or perhaps never written, reflects Amo's interest in the questions of law, rights, certain freedoms or human-ness beyond the black/white binary. In their *Foreword* to Diagne's Amo Lecture (2018b, 11), *Decolonizing the History of Philosophy*, Matthias Kaufmann, Richard Rottenburg, and Reinhold Sackmann write, "Amo, with his critique of obscure, irrational laws, of legal interpretations that are guided solely by the interests of the lawmakers, and his call for humanity in jurisprudence—which, in cases of doubt, should always take precedence over strict law—has proven himself to be a humanist and an early advocate of human rights."[7] Facing Amo within and *beyond* the context of his time and place leads us to certain experiences of hospitality or an invitation to rethink the very foundations of imperial knowledge and *difference* or to an *epistemological revolution*, where educating into what Spivak (2013, 345) calls a "planetary imperative," tangled with *responsibility-as-right* and *social practice of responsibility,* becomes an urgency. In other words, education into "white mythology" as education into the *hegemony of the homogenous* and political modernity will only constitute and perpetuate historical, political and epistemic violence all at once.

Intellectuals or philosophers like Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and G.W.F. Hegel, and numerous others upheld an epistemic violence that placed "Man—the white man" at the top of a fabricated racial hierarchy (see Eze 1997; Van Norden 2017; Alpert 2020; Moradi 2024b). In this particular political, historical and epistemic context, the definition of "whiteness" as the standard of being human and the pinnacle of humanity "requires a juridical-economic colonial presence" (Mignolo 2021, 426), and the im-

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perial infrastructure—army, weapon, ships, forts, castles, lodges, slavery plantations, sugar, coffee and so forth. Blumenbach, for instance, wrote that the "white or Caucasian" is "the first and most beautiful and talented race" (Bernal 1991, 219). Imperial knowledge is a profound act of epistemic violence. Scholars have long recognized that colonialism is inseparable from epistemicide—the systematic suppression, destruction, and plunder of diverse ways of knowing, seeing, and being. It enforces epistemic violence, denying histories of the movement of people and knowledge while privileging a single dominant worldview (Grosfoguel 2013, Menon 2022, Dunbar-Ortiz 2014; Dussel 1993; Said, 1993, 1994; Darke 2024; Moradi 2022; 2023).

The very conditions of colonialism, which created and guarded relations of domination, are inextricably bound to "metaphysics" itself. Colonial power is not just a rhetorical or material force—it is a metaphysical imposition, creating, shaping reality and dictating what is deemed knowing and knowledge, truth, and being. "Metaphysics," wrote Derrida (1982, 213), takes us to "the white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own *logos*, that is, the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason. Which does not go uncontested."

More than two centuries after Amo crossed the imperial borders of Brandenburg-Prussia and the European empires to the "Slave Coast," Fanon turns to the experience of the *right to narrate* in 1952, "In the white world … I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects. … I took myself far off from my own presence" (cited in Bhabha 2004, 60; see also Fanon 1986, 84–85) This is "an enigmatic questioning," Bhabha writes, as "the very nature of humanity becomes estranged in the colonial condition" or in "the genocidal Middle Passage" (Bhabha 2004, 187). This is where the human as "Man" and humanity, despite this history of political and epistemic violence and racial slavery, Amo as a philosopher is talking "of *negotiation* rather than *negation*," to borrow from Bhabha (2004, 37). In other words, the very *life* and *existence* of Amo as an Enlightenment philosopher will have to be a questioning of the imperial epistemology of domination that reserved the highest intellectual and moral status for "white men" and their myths of belonging or gender, colour, race or class.

In *Anton Wilhelm Amo's Philosophical Dissertations on Mind and Body*, Stephen Menn and Justin E. H. Smith (2020) not only edit and translate Amo's works from Latin to English but also trace the philosophical "origin" of the mind/body binary to Aristotle, Epicurus, and Lucretius, and then "fast-forward" to René Descartes. Amo, they write, "was very much a philosopher of his time and place: a contributor to and mirror of the philosophical debates of early eighteenth-century Germany" (3). Herein, the frame of reference is rooted in the coloniality of knowledge, framing the Enlightenment as an exclusionary "white mythology."

While Amo is situated within a philosophical context, interpreted as a reiteration or continuation of figures like Aristotle, Descartes, or Leibniz, these same thinkers are paradoxically regarded as "original" or "authentic"—existing

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without context, as if they could think or write independently of the established epistemological traditions that provided them with access to libraries and translations of works by Plato, Aristotle, and others. This contrast exposes the illusion of *One-ness*. For example, to ask how Menn and Smith learned that the mind/body binary traces back to Aristotle is to understand how the history of this concept "can be traced back to the introduction and Latinization of Arabic thought and Aristotelian philosophy in the twelfth century. It was with the translation of Avicenna's [Ibn Sīnā] *De anima* and the subsequent translation and discussion of Aristotle's *De anima* and Averroes' [Ibn Rushd] commentaries that the discussion [on mind/body binary] began that continues today" (Lagerlund 2007, 1). The act of translating and engaging with philosophical texts transforms the so-called "original" works, challenging the illusion of epistemic ownership or the politics of knowledge or memory. It is, then, no surprise that Descartes was not the first philosopher to articulate the mind/body binary and that it belongs to a broader philosophical tradition. That is, long before Descartes, Ibn Sīnā's text (980–1037 CE) *Floating Human* (*Alrajul almuʿallaq*), discusses how our awareness of human existence can exist entirely independent of sensory experience or acquired knowledge (Alwishah 2013; see also Black 2013, 138–39).

Unlike philosophers who used the imperial acts of conquest and slavery and "imaginative geographies" that insisted on "difference" and "distance" between people (Said 1994, 71) to assert the superiority of "Reason" as inherently "white," Amo comes to us from *beyond* the politics of identification and location, "infus[ing] a new rhythm, specific to a new generation … with a new language and a new humanity," to borrow from Fanon (2004, 2).

Amo in Absence and Beyond

Beyond the Amo Lecture series, growing interest in Amo's life has sparked significant movements in Halle. A student network and the university's Rectorate Commission have actively called for "an appropriate commemoration of Anton Wilhelm Amo (c. 1703–after 1753) and to honor Amo as the first 'Afro-German' member of the university." The commission has set up a dedicated webpage[8] for Amo on the university's website. In December 2021, they also added a plaque at the base of the 1965 "Liberated Africa" monument and below the 1975 memorial plaque. A link to the Amo webpage and a QR code are also available.

> **Liberated Africa (1965)**
>
> by Gerhard Geyer (1907-1989).
>
> The bronze sculpture pays tribute to Ghana's anti-colonial trajectory. Since 1975, a commemorative plaque has also referred to the philosopher Anton Wilhelm Amo, who was born in Ghana, deported to Germany as an enslaved person and worked as a private lecturer at the University of Halle between 1736 and 1739.

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> However, this connection of the sculpture with the person Amo is problematic in today's terms. The Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, the city of Halle (Saale) and the Anton Wilhelm Amo Alliance Halle (Saale) have therefore been working on a concept for the commemoration of Amo since October 2019.[9]

Inside the university museum, an inscription marks the non-present present of Amo, reading: "Anton Wilhelm Amo um 1700 bis nach 1752, Philosoph, erster Student und Gelehrter afrik. Herkunft"—"Anton Wilhelm Amo, around 1700 to 1752, philosopher, first student and scholar of African origin." His name, inscribed on the wall, is a quiet testament to a life that defied the boundaries of racialization and political modes of identification. Surrounding him are the grand portraits of towering figures—Luther, Melanchthon, Thomasius—symbols of religious and intellectual heritage carved deeply into national memory of *One-ness* in Germany. Next to Amo, the name of Dorothea Christiana Erxleben (1715–1762), the first woman to study medicine at Halle's Academia, forms a fragile but enduring echo of marginalized voices breaking through. However, outside of the museum and inside the Löwengebäude, only the likenesses of identified "white men" are immortalized in busts, reinforcing the silent, invisible boundary that persists between the "racial" or national heroes and the foreigner. Amo's and Erxleben's names remain inscribed, not in marble, but on a wall—a poignant reminder of the spaces still denied, even as their spectres continue to haunt. Their non-present present within the museum speaks to the tension between inside/outside, us/them, the symbolic weight of memory, and the long struggle to be fully seen within the grand narratives of the history of Enlightenment.

Amo's autobiography in Halle is an illumination of colonial mimicry (see Bhabha 2004, 122), where Amo becomes almost an Enlightenment thinker but not quite. That is to say, in order to participate "properly" in the Enlightenment philosophy, it was not enough to be a "man" or become a philosopher. The desire of the imperial education was to produce a "reformed, recognizable" Amo, yet a foreigner forever, an "African" that is still discrete and irreconcilably different. This "between worlds" (Said 1998) and *beyond* that is symptomatic of the imperial colonial discourse and space produce Amo as both an iteration of "hybrid forms of life and art that do not have a prior existence within the discrete world of any single culture or language" (Bhabha 2004, xiii), and as someone whose life is simultaneously affirmed and denied belonging in both postcolonial Germany and Brandenburg-Prussian imperial history.

Amo's final resting place lies just to the left of the entrance to Fort St. Sebastian (São Sebastião) in Shama, overlooking the vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean. Here, on this windswept coast, imperial violence pulses through every stone, for it rests only 75 kilometres from the once-mighty Brandenburg-Prussian Groß-Friedrichsburg Festung (1681–1683) in Princes Town. Fort St. Sebastian, constructed by the Portuguese Empire between 1520 and 1526, was more than a mere fortress; it became, in time, a technology of unspeakable human destruction. In the 1640s, it fell into the hands of the Dutch WIC, and

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what had been an outpost of the empire was transformed and attached to the infrastructure of the transatlantic trade in enslaved humans. Beneath its cold walls, enslaved humans, torn from their homes, dispossessed of any claim to humanity, were shackled and broken, awaiting the brutal cross of the genocidal and epistemicidal Middle Passage to plantations in the so-called "New World." Nearly two and a half centuries later, in 1872, this fortress of destruction, along with the coast of what is now Ghana, became part of the British Empire. Today, Fort St. Sebastian is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

It is said that Amo's remains were unearthed from a Dutch cemetery before the inexorable currents of the Pra River submerged it beneath the waters of time. In the 1920s, under the shadow of British colonial rule in Ghana, his body found a new resting place near the enduring walls of Fort St. Sebastian. His grave, forged from stone and cement, bears the weight of a cross and tomb with an inscription, though now faded, that reads: "Dr. Anton (or Anthony) William Amo, 1703–1784." Enclosed by two crumbling low cement walls, it rests quietly in a humble fishing community. Here, neighbouring residents lay out their freshly washed clothes as the cemented grave makes for a quick dry. The solitary grave, overshadowed by the imperial fort, embodies the inseparability of Amo's autobiography and imperial-colonial histories, spectres that haunt and shape the here and now.

Biography

Fazil Moradi is a Japan Society for Promotion of Science Fellow and serves as a Visiting Researcher at the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hiroshima University. Dr. Moradi is also an Associate Researcher at the Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences, and an Affiliated Scholar at the Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes against Humanity at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, Graduate Center—City University of New York. Dr. Moradi served as a Visiting Associate Professor at the University of Johannesburg (Nov. 2021–Oct. 2024) and held Research Fellowships at the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study, has been a researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and a Research Fellow with the International Max Planck Research School on Retaliation, Mediation, and Punishment in Germany, and collaborated with medical scientists at Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, to study the long-term effects of chemical weapons on the human body. Dr. Moradi's publications include: Being Human: Political Modernity and Hospitality in Kurdistan-Iraq (Rutgers University Press, January 2024); "In Search of Decolonised Political Futures: Engaging Mahmood Mamdani's Neither Settler nor Native," a Special Issue in Anthropological Theory (2023); and Memory and Genocide: On What Remains and the Possibility of Representation (co-edited with Maria Six-Hohenbalken and Ralph Buchenhorst, Routledge, 2017).

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Notes

1. Genophilia as "love of 'race' and 'racial' belonging or a both calculated and affectionate attachment to 'our race', blood, history, people, nation, language, land, or heritage. This imperial institution of genophilia thrives on the condition of putting out heterogeneity and heterogeneous histories, memories, and epistemologies for erasure, non-existence, or even destruction" (Moradi 2024b, 38–39).
2. Published in 2020, *Anton Wilhelm Amo's Philosophical Dissertations on Mind and Body*, edited and translated by Stephen Menn and Justin E. H. Smith, includes a 147-page Introduction. Menn and Smith rely on the works of "some scholars" and "documentary evidence" to write Amo's life. The Introduction starts with: "Early in the 18th century Anton Wilhelm Amo was *taken*, while still a small boy, from West Africa to Amsterdam. From there, he was soon *sent* to Germany *to work as a servant* in the court of Duke Anton Ulrich of Braunschweig-Lüneburg in Wolfenbüttel. He was baptized in 1708, and in 1727 matriculated at the University of Halle" (2020, 1, emphasis mine). After writing, "there is significant uncertainty about the *circumstances* of Amo's arrival in Europe" (7, emphasis mine), Menn and Smith invoke certain speculations: "[i]f Amo had not been *transported to* Europe with the agreement of his parents, it is unlikely that his family name would have been known upon arrival…. "Amo" is not strictly speaking a family name in the European sense (5) … He was *sent to* the Netherlands in 1707 … for the purpose of training as a pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church" (5). They then turn to Jacobus Elisa Johannes Capitein (c. 1717–1747), to argue that Capitein "was himself initially *taken as a slave*, and *sold to* the Dutch captain Arnold Steenhart in 1725," but upon arrival in United Provinces (the Netherlands) gained his freedom and later became a pastor (emphasis mine). They follow Capitein and others, to emphasize that in "the greater part of the Holy Roman Empire, where Amo spent most of his life" (5) slavery was illegal, including in the Netherlands (9-10) and "Germany" (13). This calculation serves to both create and homogenize the "Holy Roman Empire" as a place of rights and freedoms, and to classify Amo as one of the "African servants" who enjoyed "the possibility of significant social advancement" (7). This speculation follows the imperial colonial narrative of "white superiority" that relegated people from the continent of Africa to the "lower order of human beings permanently confined to an inferior stage of social development" (Hall and Schwarz, 104). Moreover, the phrasing "taken" in reference to Amo and Capitein is part of a broader effort to revise the narrative of slavery, suggesting

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it was solely an African enterprise. This position/view implies that Africans were solely responsible for capturing "individuals," while the Dutch merely acted as purchasers. It subtly shifts the focus, portraying slavery as an internal African matter, conveniently minimizing the critical role played by the rising empires in today's Europe in the transatlantic trade in enslaved humans or what Stuart Hall (2017) refers to as "the genocidal Middle Passage," and global ecological exploitation and destruction of life forms.

3. See Ralf-Torsten Speler, "Speler zur Plastik 'Freies Afrika' von Gerhard Geyer." Anton Wilhelm Amo at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg website, https://www.amo.uni-halle.de.
4. Ralf-Torsten Speler also states that Nkrumah would have also become a member of the Senate of the University of Halle and that his senator's robes were still in the archive.
5. The digital copy of the book is available at: https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.suppressionofafr00dubo/?sp=7&st=image.
6. In June 2023, the philosophy courses showcased within glass-case display outside the department featured "Philosophical Questions; Problems of Philosophy; Civilizations of the Ancient World; Outlines of Graeco-Roman Civilization; Outlines of Graeco-Roman Literatures; Roman Epic Drama; Africa in the Ancient Roman World; Slavery in Graeco-Roman Antiquity; Republican Rome; Gender in Ancient Rome; Gender in Ancient Greece; Reading Latin I; Reading Latin II; Reading Greek I: Reading Greek II; Roman Philosophy and Science; Roman Literature and Society; Leaders of Ancient Rome; Roman Historiography; Greek Historiography; Art and Government in Ancient Greek World; Themes in Classical Studies; Law, Individual and Society in Ancient Rome; Selected Greek Text/Author; Selected Roman Text/Author; Graeco-Roman Political Thought; Leaders in Ancient Greece; Element of Formal Logic; Stoicism; Tacitus; Pre-Socratic Philosophy; Socratic Philosophy, The Philosophy of Plato; Homer; Plato; Aristophanes; Thucydides; Research Method; Deductive Logic; Moral Philosophy; Philosophy of Mind; Philosophy of Human Sciences; Rationalism; Modern Analytic Tradition; Contemporary Metaphysics; Contemporary Issues in Philosophy; African Philosophy; African Philosophy: Traditional and Modern; Global Justice."
7. The original text in German reads: "Anton Wilhelm Amo hat sich mit seiner Kritik an dunklen, rational nicht zu begründenden Gesetzen, an Rechtsauslegungen, die sich allein am Wohl der Gesetzgeber ausrichten, und der Mahnung zur Humanität in der Jurisprudenz, die im Zweifelsfall immer Vorrang vor dem strengen Recht haben soll, als ein Humanist und früher Verfechter der Menschenrechte erwiesen."
8. See Anton Wilhelm Amo at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg website. https://www.amo.uni-halle.de.
9. Anton Wilhelm Amo at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg website. https://www.amo.uni-halle.de/?lang=en.

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To Philosophize is To Learn How to Live with Others: Notes on the Works of Anton Wilhelm Amo

Avram Alpert

What is the relationship between seemingly abstract philosophical categories and the specific things that philosophers write—or, in Anton Wilhelm Amo's case, don't write—about race and culture in their philosophical works? There remains a stubborn philosophical tendency on this point among contemporary scholars, primarily though not exclusively in the US and Europe. This tendency is simply to discard what a philosopher has to say about these matters as if it had no effect on the philosophy itself. Most scholars are perfectly willing to debate whether or not Immanuel Kant held racist opinions, or what Kant's views on race are, but considerably fewer are willing to ask if Kant's general philosophy—ideas, for example, of teleology in nature or the limits of reason in epistemology—may be impacted by what he has to say about race and culture.[1]

This refusal to engage is unfortunate for at least two reasons. First, it should not be a controversial issue for anyone—and I think this refers to most scholars—who thinks that concepts have histories. That is, most scholars would be willing to say that democracy has a history, that race has a history, that gender has a history, that scientific objectivity has a history—that these ideas are not transhistorical, but rather evolve and develop. And it would be no surprise to see that as these concepts transform, they retain traces of the problematic positions of their times. It is crucial to say clearly that these traces are *not* determinations: nothing is fully determined by these histories because they are complex and intertwined with the variety of positions articulated in any given moment. But the traces of past ideas still carry into the present, as in, for an obvious example, the ways in which doctors in the country where I was born, the US, are still less likely (based on accrued histories of racist and gendered ideas about what pain is) to take seriously the pain of Black patients, or to appreciate that symptoms of something like a heart attack for women are different than they are for men.[2] But somehow, when we come to the philosopher's own domain, there is reticence. Medical diagnosis might have roots in racialized and gendered histories, but not mind/body dualism, dialectics, or freedom. Never mind, these critics say, that early modern philosophers of freedom based their ideas on a distinction between civic and natural liberty, in which only so-called civiliz-

ed peoples had true rational freedom in their civic lives, and all others were libertines enthralled to instinct. We need not mention that when we write about how philosophers understand freedom—this central distinction is incidental! So they say.[3]

What is particularly frustrating about this brings me to my second reason for why the refusal of many to seriously consider race in the history of philosophy is important: because the *meaning* of this history is up for debate. I believe that it can be shown clearly that, historically-speaking, ideas have their origins in thoughts on race and culture, but I cannot say definitively what this means for the concepts. For example, what are we to do, to continue with the idea of freedom, with the fact that theories of liberty in modern philosophy are based on racist assumptions about how non-Europeans simply cannot think? Does this mean that any concept of freedom that positions it against nature and instinct is racist? Or is that claim itself the racist one, because it would enact a different kind of Eurocentrism—one that presumes that Europe alone developed such ideas of freedom? Can we develop theories of freedom that are free of cultural bias, or should we recognize that bias is an inevitable part of our freedom, and we must work within its constraints? It is because these are such difficult questions that philosophers who think about freedom today should engage its complex history.

It is in this broad context that the abstract philosophical writings of Anton Wilhelm Amo perhaps present a challenge to my interests. Although we know that he taught a variety of subjects steeped in cultural diversity, that he gave "equal standing" to different religious faiths (Menn and Smith, 22),[4] that he defended a thesis making an argument for the rights of Moors in Europe, and that he frequently referred to his African identity,[5] his extant philosophical texts are intricate studies of the mind and body with no direct references to race or culture. Moreover, these texts respond to the modern European philosopher who spoke about race and culture perhaps less than any other: René Descartes. Amo would then seem to make a distinction in his writings between topics in epistemology and metaphysics on the one hand, and the philosophy of race and culture on the other.

For the purposes of this brief essay, it is this separation that interests me—not the detailed epistemological or metaphysical claims at play in Amo's technical treatises, no matter how interesting those may ultimately be. That is because I believe there is a meaning in the separation itself, one that I will explain below in response to Descartes. The meaning is this: that universalization occurs by going out into the world and attempting to integrate yourself with it, not by turning into one's own mind.

Previous scholars have taken different approaches to the influence that being African in Germany might have had on Amo's work. Kwasi Wiredu, for example, has posed the question with respect to Amo more generally as follows. If one is African and one is a philosopher, then one is an African philosopher. "But," the question remains, "does [their] work fall within African philosophy?" I will return to a more detailed engagement with the idea of a geography of philosophy below. Kwasi Wiredu suggests that there are a "multiplicity

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of criteria of belonging," which include: 1) engaging with specific African traditions (Wiredu mentions possible Akan linguistic influence on Amo, but admits the possibility of this influence is highly speculative); 2) whether other Africans take up the philosophy, regardless of the philosophy's origin, which has certainly been true for Amo; 3) whether the philosophy is "motivated by African concerns" such as the meaning of Amo's place in Europe (205-6). This last is also clearly the case, as can be witnessed by the legal thesis, by Amo's identifying as African, as well as the framing of Amo's work by others, for example the Rector of Wittenberg, Johann Kraus, that Amo attests "by his example" to the value of African thought (see Amo, 193).

Other scholars have taken up the question with reference to Amo's place in debates among his contemporaries about race and philosophy. Thus Justin E.H. Smith, for example, has suggested that we can understand Amo's work as implicitly responding to debates about race and philosophy in Germany at the time. In these debates, those who took a position relating mind and body in synthesis argued that there was a link between the health of the body and the mind. Although there is nothing inherently racist about this—indeed it is largely true—it was at the time being used to racist ends to suggest that a judgment of inferiority of "black skin" could be traced back to something morally deficient in Africans and others. Smith concludes: "It would be simplistic to suppose that Amo adopted a broadly dualist and harmonist philosophy *because* he was African…[However, it is clear that] it was easier for an African student of philosophy to find a home [in dualistic philosophy circles]" (224). Smith here builds on a line of argument in the history of philosophy going back to at least Harry Bracken's essays in the 1970s that argued that mind-body dualist philosophy in this era, by preserving a separate universal category of the spirit, was not susceptible to racism (Bracken's writings, I mention as an aside, are cited as an influence by Edward Said in his 2004 classic, *Orientalism*—these histories of philosophy matter in all sorts of unsuspected places).

Smith's interpretation is plausible, but it does not seem to me the most satisfactory way to situate Amo with respect to debates about race and philosophy. I disagree with it in part because it still seems somewhat reductive of Amo's philosophical position to his identity, in part because one can perfectly well be a racist via mind-body dualism (saying that though the mind is pure, the body is not—something that Kant, for example, veers toward [Bernasconi 2003]), and in part because I think we can learn something from Amo's direct engagement with Descartes as much as from the surrounding debates.

Part of what makes Descartes interesting, as I noted above, is that he is generally considered *the* philosopher of European (and arguably global) modernity, even though he is in fact somewhat unique among modern philosophers to largely avoid questions of cultural difference and contact (see for example Emmanuel Eze's *Race and the Enlightenment*). Unlike Michel de Montaigne, Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, and others, who read and wrote about colonial ethnography and non-European history extensively (if often ineptly), Descartes makes comparatively few mentions of other cultures. But as I and others have pointed out, those mentions are not insignificant.[6] In

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fact, in the *Discourse on Method*, Descartes' famous inward turn is predicated precisely on the fact that he believes that he cannot find the truths he wants through cultural difference. He writes: "I considered how one and the same man with the very same mind, were he brought up from infancy among the French or the Germans, would become different from what he would be had he always lived among the Chinese or the Cannibals" (9-10). Because cultural relativity exists, Descartes decides that the only path to truth is to evade the outside world and turn in toward the structures of his mind.

What could we make of Amo's philosophical writings and their choice to avoid discussing race and culture in relation to this decision? Again, the answer is not entirely obvious. On the one hand, he may be affirming Descartes, showing how his own philosophy refers not to where he was born, but the philosophical culture in which he was taught. On the other, he may be criticizing Descartes, showing how it does not matter where one is brought up; what matters are the universal structures of the human mind. In this case, Descartes' inward turn meant to avoid the uncertainty of culture is a philosophical mistake: it seeks universality in the wrong place. Amo's own philosophical practice suggests that engaging with people across cultures, one does not find irreconcilable difference, but in fact a shared passion for understanding the world and the human's place within it. As noted above, this also encompassed religious diversity (Menn and Smith, 22). This is why I do not believe that Descartes is in fact the quintessential thinker of modernity, but rather the key figure in a line of contemporary thinkers who *evaded* modernity by avoiding grappling with its global conditions and connections. Amo, in this reading, shows him the error of this evasion.

We cannot decisively know, of course, if this is the case. But, as others have suggested, the very existence of Amo's legal thesis and its claim to longstanding universal rights of Africans in Europe would make it at least plausible to assert that Amo believes cultural engagements create rather than undermine the possibility of universality without erasing difference. This would suggest a provisional revision of Smith's thesis. His claim, again, is that Amo's embrace of dualism can at least partially be explained by the fact of dualism's then more universalist, anti-racist position. However, if Amo is indeed responding to Descartes, we might say that Amo's claim is against the Cartesian idea that we arrive at universal truths by turning in, and in favor of the idea that a different and richer kind of universality can be achieved through engagement without.

As I mentioned above, my argument here is thus not specific to the details of Amo's philosophical arguments. I agree with scholars of the period that his writings on the mind and body are important contributions on their own right with regard to the conversations in Germany and Europe happening more broadly at the time. Unlike in Kant, whose abstract definitions of freedom intertwine with his specific claims about the geography of freedom, or Hegel, whose abstract definitions of the dialectical process are both shaped by and respond to the history of colonialism, Amo's extant philosophical writing does not directly address these geographic, cultural, or racial concerns. And thus unlike with them, where it seems to me necessary to discuss this textual entangle-

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ment, it does not seem necessary to me, at least provisionally, to try to read into Amo's specific philosophical commitments any particular history of race. Rather, it is precisely in his choice to philosophize abstractly as such that I find some particular meaning—or at least meanings to debate. Here is Amo, in a moment where the scientific codification of race and culture is transforming the world, choosing, in his philosophical works, not to take up these questions, even as other philosophers were doing this and would continue to do so for centuries, and even as he would engage these topics in his other (lost) writings. What I find intriguing is precisely this chosen separation, this strong activation of philosophy as something not solely dependent on one's race or culture or geography.

The irony, however, is that it is precisely for this reason that it matters that it is Amo saying this and not Descartes. It matters that Amo, as a man from Axim in present-day Ghana, praised by the rector of his university as being an African philosopher in the text around his dissertation, in the midst of ongoing debates about race and empire, should himself not directly address this topic in the dissertation itself. For those other than Amo, such as the Rector of Halle, or the Abbé Grégoire in his 1808 *On the Literature of Negroes*, Amo's philosophical work signified the universal power of the human mind by proving the intellectual capacities of Africans. This in itself, as Kwame Anthony Appiah has argued, smacks of a certain racism, of the idea that race as a shared factor could enable or disable philosophical capacity. As Appiah quips, "No one ever thought that because Plato or Descartes was a European, every European was capable of works of philosophical genius" (116).[7] For Appiah, this is a sign that race should fall away, or at least be "a feature and not a fate" as a personal characteristic. In his brief reflections on Amo, Appiah concludes by pondering the fact that Amo left Europe in the later years of his life. Perhaps it was because of racism, or perhaps because of unrequited love, he suggests. Or perhaps because Amo wanted "a place where Amo Afer [the African] could be just Amo again; where he didn't need to be *the* African." Appiah concludes, "His odyssey asks us to imagine what he seems to have yearned for: a world free of racial fixations" (134).

But, of course, to find a world free of racial fixations does not mean to find a world free of cultures and traditions. What we don't know, perhaps will never know, is if part of why Amo left is that he tired of the philosophical discussions in Germany. Perhaps he longed to know other modes of thinking and living. Or, more pointedly, one may just as well wonder if Amo returned because there was something about the philosophical discussion in Europe that he found lacking, or discomfiting. Perhaps Amo himself came to believe that the growing racial prejudice he appears to have endured was linked to thinking about the world as if there were rational philosophy headquartered in Europe and curious anthropological practices elsewhere. This was another kind of dualism, aligned with that between mind and body, now articulated between the white race and all others, and in which whites—a category slowly coming into being—alone were associated with mind. Perhaps Amo came to believe that there was more in heaven and earth than was dreamt of in dualist philosophy.

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To say this, however, is not at all to say that Amo doing so would mean that he gave up on his universality. I suggested above a distinction between two types of universality—one achieved by going in and one achieved by cultural exchange. Yet another vantage on Amo's return to Ghana then is to see it as another way of expanding the universal, rather than as a return to particulars. But rather than finding the universal in taking up a particular language of philosophy that claimed its own universality, Amo may have come to find this universalism by combining what he had learned in Europe with what he learned in Ghana.

To say this is not to suggest that either of these places has an essence to its thinking. Obviously, Amo participated in *debates* in Europe, not a single essential truth. He would have found in Ghana, as in any human culture, a great variety of differences and disagreements about the nature of life and mind. And yet, in any of the places he lived, he certainly would have found some particular stiffnesses or inflexibilities, some particular ways in which thought might have congealed in a given place or time. Souleymane Bachir Diagne puts this complex relation of universality and difference in precise terms when he writes that cultures create a "certain 'equilibrium,' let us say a certain ratio, between various features that can be found everywhere because together they make up the human condition. Different cultures, then, will be characterized by different ratios between the same features that they combine in separate ways" (95). I can imagine Amo as a restless explorer of how a universal set of human features may combine in ever new ways.

And, of course, he has been joined by many on this journey across time and place. Indeed, I have been inspired to make this distinction in two types of universalism as much by Amo as by the painter Ernest Mancoba. Mancoba was a Black South African painter who spent most of his adult life in Europe. In a way like Amo in the history of philosophy, Mancoba has often been erased from European histories of art because he did not conform to expectations about what it meant to be a Black African painter. On one side, he was attacked for not being "primitive" enough in his works, as he often drew on the European painting styles around him. On the other, he was criticized for remaining "too African" and not directly meeting European standards for art. In an interview later in his life, Mancoba made the following statement about this situation:

> I do not believe that we Africans, any more than other people, should need (as it would not diminish racism a jot) to show the white man how good we are at speaking or writing his language, performing in his sports, learning his customs, manners and intellectual actions, or to develop ourselves along the lines of his so-called 'universality', to be considered as human beings and his equals. Because the true universality is a common goal on the cultural, political and spiritual horizon that will be reached only when all ethnic groups achieve, through an authentic dialogue, the many-faceted diamond shape and the full blossom of the deepest and widest human integrity. (Obrist and Mancoba, 379)

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For someone from South Africa to speak of a "diamond shape," with its terrifying history (and present) in the country, cannot be a coincidence. Mancoba seems to challenge us to see what is beautiful and useful in contacts between cultures, even as he asks us to confront the brutality of the material interests that have often been the driving force of both cultural connection and hierarchical distinction. This is the stark challenge presented by his final word: "integrity."

I take integrity here to mean not only moral rectitude or authenticity, but also a capacity for integration, for weaving together the complex possibilities of human life into a universal justice and equality that does not erase the depredations of the past or present, nor does it negate differences and pluralities in the future. This focus on integrity may lead us to reformulate one of the tropes of philosophy from Plato to Montaigne: that "to philosophize is to learn how to die." Benedict Spinoza famously objected to this formula, insisting that the wisdom of the philosopher was in learning how to live (151). Amo (and Mancoba), on the reading I am offering, takes us one step farther: to philosophize is not just to learn how to live as such, but to learn how to live with others, to learn the difficult art of keeping your personal integrity while integrating your life into the lives of others.

I began this essay encouraging us take seriously the place of race and culture in the history of philosophy, not just as themes in themselves, but as integral parts of seemingly abstract philosophy itself. In my working through the texts of Amo, I tried to show that doing so would not lead us to determinate positions, but rather open up to different possible understandings of texts, as well as philosophical themes. In concluding here with the question of what it means to philosophize, I also do not mean to be determinate. At some moments, to philosophize may very well mean to learn how best to live and die alone, as a certain tradition tells us. But it is not only that. Who we are is bound up with histories and humans far beyond our own making or comprehension. Learning how to live with so much expansive weight is something that philosophy can teach us as well, if we learn to take these histories seriously.

The point of pushing on canonical questions, of asking about old ideas from new angles, is not to deracinate the past and leave us bereft of traditions. It is, rather, to learn that double movement of which Léopold Senghor wrote: "The true culture is rooting [*enracinement*] and uprooting [*déracinement*]. Rooting down to the deepest depths of one's birth land . . . But also uprooting: opening to the rain and sun, to the contributions of foreign civilizations" (25). To achieve that kind of integrity of roots and expansions—especially with those whose expansions have threatened to destroy your roots—is no easy task. And there may, at times, be reasons to outright refuse such integration. But where it is possible, and how it may be attempted, is something that we can learn through studying the works and days of Anton Wilhelm Amo.

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Biography

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Notes

1. In response to an anonymous reviewer's concerns, I note that I will use "race" and "culture" somewhat generally because they have been used so generally and often contradictorily throughout the centuries I discuss here. While much can be gained by understanding the specific shifts and changes in how concepts are deployed, and how they are further linked to geography, class, and gender, and while I deeply admire and support this kind of work, my concerns here are more generally about the fact that humans make group distinctions in what are often catastrophically immoral ways, and how philosophers respond to those distinctions. My main work on this, in which I cite extensively from other scholars working on these themes is: Avram Alpert, *Global Origins of the Modern Self, from Montaigne to Suzuki* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2019). Readers who would like to understand my positions on these topics in greater detail, and how they relate to ongoing debates, should refer to this volume, of which this essay is a branch.
2. See, for example, Carroll (2019) and Lewis et al. (2019).
3. There are of course exceptions to this trend, such as the recent work of Stovall (2021).
4. I thank Stefanie Bognitz for pointing out the salience of this passage to me.
5. See, for example Alpert (2019, 46-53), Smith (2017, 13-17), Franklin Perkins (2004, 32-34).
6. See Stefanie Bognitz' *Anton Wilhelm Amo: Signposts of a Precarious Biography* in this issue for greater details.
7. Plato, for what it's worth, would not have considered himself part of Europe.

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Anton Wilhelm Amo: Signposts of a Precarious Biography

Stefanie Bognitz

Withholdings of the Archive

Based on evidence-in-writing and antecedents-in-archive from the 18th century and beyond, this contribution draws connections between otherwise far-flung signposts: residues we have inherited from an early-Enlightenment philosopher of West African descent in Europe, Anton Wilhelm Amo, in places such as Axim, Amsterdam, Wolfenbüttel, Halle, Wittenberg, and Jena. Kwasi Wiredu attempted to trace Amo's work in Europe and remembers that "in 1959 William E. Abraham, on the suggestion of Kwame Nkrumah, then President of Ghana, and I, as a fellow traveler of the former, searched in libraries in Europe and could not find this work. Unfortunately, it may be lost" (Wiredu 2005, 200). Kwame Nkrumah himself reminisces in his book *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* how he had always wished to write about Amo. He remembers how hopeful he was when he visited the British Museum in search of Amo's *De arte sobrie et accurate philosophandi* and how disheartened he was when, after several hours, he was told that the very section of the library that had housed the original print of Amo's book had been destroyed during one of the enemy's—Nazi-Germany's—air raids over London in 1941. The fire had turned into cinders one of the few traces of Amo, a text he had written in early-Enlightenment Germany (Nkrumah 1957, 185).[1] Like many others after him, Nkrumah left the British Museum questioning why we still know so little of Amo's thought, writing and overall academic merit (Brentjes 1976, 76–77; Hountondji 1983, 205).

However, it is the specific assumption, put forth by Kwasi Wiredu, that Amo's writings about the rights of Africans in Europe have been lost that curiously prevails to this day. Burchardt Brentjes was the first scholar who, in the 1960s, turned to the archive to find out more about Amo. Since then, scholars have continued to engage the promise of what the archive might hold, or withhold, on his life and work. To engage possible archives around Amo means to reconsider an archive as an itinerary in search of signposts that help us approach the biography and retrieve this philosopher's everyday (Giannachi 2017). Seen from this vantage point, the archive is a memory laboratory, a mediated site of imagination and representation. The engagement with the archive to establish a sense of the everyday of Amo's academic life suggests that there

is no final draft in the script of everyday life. Readers of Amo must accommodate many inventions and reinventions of his life and times as the promise of the archive continues to hold and withhold the ways of knowing, which are always intertwined with the unknowing of Amo. The voice in this text, therefore, lays no claim to the authority of knowing Amo. Rather, the voice in this text asks how we know about Amo. The following biographical signposts, in all their scarcity and in the way in which they are loosely tied in with Amo's scholarship, rely on this speculative epistemology, these wishful ways of knowing the precarious biography of Amo.

Coming of Age at the Dawn of the Enlightenment

In 1720, the young Amo, approximately 20 years old, resided in Wolfenbüttel. This can be said with some certainty, as Amo signed receipts that prominently noted place and date, acknowledging receipt of his monthly stipend. The payment, a remuneration probably for his services at the court, added up to 16 thalers, a sum that was handed over to him by the court's treasurer. What Amo did between 1720 and 1727 remains undocumented. But the changes in his signature over this period allow a glimpse into Amo's coming of age. In 1719, he calligraphed his name, A.W. Amo, in elegantly curved letters below a carefully and orderly composed text. At the end of the period, he etches his signature onto the paper in thick ink and a firm underline that connects the initials to the surname. His handwriting has become bold, freed from limiting aesthetic conventions. The lines on the paper convey a sense of certainty of his own self. He is not just *paid* his salary; he has *earned* it. His signature gives evidence of his own authority at the moment when he is compensated. The reading of his hand in writing leaves us speculating about his education and wanting to know more about the world of his adolescence.

However, we lose trace of Amo back in 1720. This might be the year when he prepared his departure to Helmstedt, the location of a reputable university, for we know that he lived there at some point in his life (Abraham 2004, 192). He may also have been in contact with scholars at the prestigious library in Wolfenbüttel, where he read and served as assistant librarian.

Whatever influence led to the change in his handwriting between 1720 and 1727, we cannot say for certain that he went to Helmstedt as there is no thesis of his on record in the archive of the University in Helmstedt, an internationally renowned institution of higher learning at this time (see Abraham 192). The absence of a record could mean that Amo studied there but never graduated. A glance through the archive's lists of numerous scholars from all over the world who had studied there not only reveals the university's repute far beyond the borders of the Duchy of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel but also tells a story of academic excellence and international appeal. The university repository, *Helmstedt Printings*, located in the Herzog August Library Wolfenbüttel, lists authors Yitsḥaḳ Abravanel (1721), Galfredus de Vinosalvo (1724), Orechio D'Avalos (1725) and Nicolas de Eireval (1727) for the period of Amo's speculative presence at Helmstedt; for the time when he would already have left for Halle, it registers publications by Girolamo Rosario (1728), Yitsḥaḳ Aramah

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(1729) and Sultan Gyen Achmet (1732).[2] This early form of international scholarship and the presence of intellectuals from different contexts and linguistic backgrounds conveys a sense of openness to a plurality of ideas, knowledge and thinking beyond the imagined boundaries that we so often assert for the early Enlightenment. The Helmstedt University, and by extension the duchy, were reputed to attract international scholars and possibly introduced Amo to a worldliness of scholarship situated in-between worlds (cf. Bognitz, "In-between Worlds," in this issue). Taking the worldliness of Helmstedt into ac- count for the analysis of Amo's life, time and thought resituates the philosopher as one among many scholars from different parts of the world who arrived, lived and thought in the vicinity of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel. Even more, it situates him in the philo-Africanism through which the worldliness of the gen- try was portrayed during early modernity.[3] With a particular fondness for the African continent and a measure of Afrophilia, the aristocracy's wisdom about other parts of the world and their power to collect "subjects" from the African continent and integrate them in their courtly doings culminated in beliefs about the religious and moral equality of people of African descent.

The Co-Constitution of Afrophilia, Enslavement and Enlightenment

The turn to Africa and the love for the continent did not end with the gentry imagining the African in the form of a still life. The German territories and empires were also involved in the making and taking of enslaved persons. The principality of Brandenburg is a case in point. It illustrates the presence of the institution of slavery in the empires of the German-speaking territories during the early modern period at the dawn of the Enlightenment. The Brandenburgisch-Afrikanische Compagnie (BAC) was established as early as 1682. Like its sister companies of other empires, such as the Dutch East India Company or the Dutch West India Company in the Netherlands, the BAC was modelled on the insatiable profits it hoped to gain from trading exotic goods from far away—the *Kolonialwaren* (colonial products)—and enslaved persons. The BAC established its *Kontore* (offices) in the Caribbean, with the prospect of running plantations labored by people abducted from the African continent. It also had *Kontore* on the *Gold Coast* of West Africa, from where these enslaved persons were traded, through intermediaries, from the interior of the continent and the coastal states of Senegambia to be dispatched across the Atlantic on death-rearing slave ships. The BAC maintained a fort called Groß-Friedrichsburg Festung until 1717 (Bosman 1970, 7–12). What is of interest here is the involvement of the empire state of Brandenburg, situated in the very middle of the German territories, in the trade in enslaved persons on the brink of the Enlightenment era. The absence of the institution of slavery in the German territories—different from the situation in the colonizing empires of Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark or Sweden—does not necessarily imply the absence of the presence of slaves, notwithstanding the presence of Africans at European courts well into the early modern era (Zeuske 2018, 111). In fact, the ambitions of small empire-states such as Brandenburg, in light of the establishment and

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involvement of the BAC in the trading of enslaved persons from 1682–1717, need to be named, studied and contextualized as the practice of colonialism and must be historicized and memorized as such.

Given the colonial aspirations of German principalities on the coast of West Africa, a few questions are in order regarding the position of the court of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel on the question of slavery and enslavement. During the early modern period, the German territories did not have legal frameworks that would provide for slavery or enslavement, unlike in the Netherlands, where the free-soil principle was corrupted by the actual practice of enslavement during the 18th century (Holzmann 2022). Legally speaking—and in light of the heritage of the Holy Roman Empire, as we will trace in Amo's argumentation in his *Dissertatio inauguralis*—the institution of slavery did not exist in this period, but the occurrence of the presence of enslaved people—Amo's speculative transit to and arrival in Europe might be proof—who belonged to a sovereign ruler and, to a certain degree, had to submit their destiny to this ruler's sovereign will cannot be ignored (Zeuske 2018, 111). Amo, as the subject of the Duke of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, had no inalienable rights comparable to the citizens of the German states. He certainly enjoyed a life of privilege, if only in material terms, as he was free from concern about his cost of living or education (Menn and Smith 2020, 5, 13). During his time in Wolfenbüttel, he does not have to labour for his wages as he receives a bursary. This provides Amo with some power and control over his fate and life course. Access to education and assurance of funding for his studies in Wolfenbüttel (evidenced by his signature on a receipt for his annual stipend) and later in Halle had an immeasurable influence on his biography. Still, Brentjes' reflection on what it meant to be an African scholar in the early Enlightenment and early modernity seems to resonate with us today:

> For him [Amo], a lone African living in Europe at a time when … slavery was common – his own brother had been sold to Suriname – the difficulties on the way to science were even greater than the immense problems which face African students now. He overcame them and became a Master of Law, the highest academic rank then attainable by a foreigner in Germany. (1975, 444)

From Wolfenbüttel to Halle: The Inception of Academic Repute

Amo's academic aspirations—from his basic education in the years 1717–20 at the Rudolph-Antoniana *Ritterakademie* (knight academy) to his enrolment at the University of Helmstedt, to his admittance at the Academia Julia in the Duchy of Wolfenbüttel where he read for a degree in law from 1721 to 1724 and his studies at the Fridericiana University in Halle beginning in 1727—leads to a detour, via two interconnected biographies: that of scholar Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) and that of philosopher and "professor-at-large" Christian Wolff (1679–1754). Between 1691 and 1716, Leibniz served as a librarian in the renowned Bibliotheca Augusta (Herzog August Library) in Wolfenbüttel (Firla 2020, 12). Even though the ducal library had already been established in

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1572 and was known in the 17th century as the most comprehensive library north of the Alps, it enjoyed a noteworthy make-over under Leibniz—architecturally, in the organization of the collection and the registration system. Leibniz's innovations at the library could hardly have gone unnoticed by the adolescent Amo, who was residing at Wolfenbüttel at the time; Schloss Wolfenbüttel was literally a stone's throw away from the Bibliotheca Augusta and its literary, scientific and scholarly treasures from around the world.[4] Amo must have been a frequent interloper and reader in the library, as he is listed in the library's record of users. One such entry lists "Amo Afer" with his social status, "*Lakai*" ("lackey"). The latter references Amo's (social) status at the court of Wolfenbüttel. However, how does somebody identified as a lackey at court become a reader in the library? His presence there gives evidence of his other life at court, that of the student, most probably taught by a private tutor. Amo's presence in the library, listed as a lackey at court but reading as a student in the library, therefore signifies a noteworthy shift in his biography, suggesting that he is aspiring to exit his social status as a "lackey." We must also note Amo's self-identification as "afer," the singular nominative of the Latin word for "the African." The use of this attribute during his years in Wolfenbüttel suggests an emancipated claim of belonging to the continent of Africa and of being of African descent, and that this claim already starts before he enrolls at the University of Halle.

The second scholar with whom Amo intersects is Christian Wolff. Wolff not only admired Leibniz's work at the library but also his universalist thinking and its implementation in realms other than academia in a strict sense. At the beginning of the 18th century, when Wolff defended his thesis *De philosophia practica universali, method mathematic conscripta* (*On universal practical philosophy, composed from the mathematical method*) at the University of Leipzig and was already teaching at its faculty of philosophy, he exchanged letters with Leibniz.[5] When Wolff followed a call in 1706 from the Fridericiana University in Halle for a chair in mathematics at the Faculty of Philosophy, Leibniz could not have missed hearing about Wolff's success and renowned work in the field of the philosophy of rationality. In Halle, Wolff developed theses on the reasonable human being who, conscious about his capabilities but also his boundaries, can translate his knowledge into the social sphere, thus social life and society at large; who can act on moral grounds based on his knowledge and reason; who is independent not only in his thinking but in his spirit. Wolff published his theses systematically from 1712 onwards in altogether seven volumes entitled *Vernünftige Gedanken*, translated into English as *Logic*.

The First Student of African Descent Enrolls at a European University

The first trace of Amo's relocation to Halle is a handwritten entry in the student registry at the University of Halle in 1727 under No. 488. The entry identifies name and place in Latin: *Antonius Guiliemus Cognominatus Amo. Aethiops. Ab Aximo in Guinea Africana*.[6] Given his place of origin, Amo identifies himself as being of an "Ethiopian" background. This could be considered as synonymous

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with the meaning of "African Christian." However, even more are the associations this provides for the "European" understanding of the African continent during the early modern period. Again, reading through the Afrophilia lens underlines Europe's yearning for Africa as a mythical place of civilization, purity, religiosity and devotion. Ethiopia's proximity to the Kingdom of Kush, or what was believed to be the location of Christian faith on the continent, allowed this longing for origins of faith and spirituality conveyed in Europe's Afrophilia to be translated back to Amo's identification. This imaginary identity speaks more about Europe's invention of Africa than it does about Amo's own positionality. The inscription of "Ethiopian" forges a bond of common religion and civilization before "Axim at the Gulf of Guinea" speaks to the extraction of human lives from the Gold Coast, that point of no return (Hountondji 1983, 114–15). The archival evidence, however, that speaks to Amo's first years in Halle is relatively scarce.[7] The only written testimony is a paragraph in the local weekly newspaper *Die Wöchentlichen Hallischen Frage- und Anzeigungsnachrichten* published on 28 November 1729, reporting that the student Amo had proven ready in his studies of Latin and Law to hold a public disputation (in Latin). The university chancellor, Johann Peter von Ludewig, presided over the disputation; the chancellor also happened to be on friendly terms with the dukes in Braunschweig. Since 1702, Ludewig had been writing the *Germania Princeps*, a handbook that shaped the understanding of the laws of the state as based on legal principles from the Holy Roman Empire. It is possible that the topic chosen for Amo's defense originated from, or at least was inspired by, Ludewig's teaching and writing (Menn and Smith 2020, 11). What is more, Ludewig was also the founder and editor of the very newspaper that reported on Amo's disputation. Amo, as reported in the paper, had received the topic on which he would then choose the theses upon which he would build his defense:

> So that the argument of the disputation should be appropriate to his situation, the topic de jure Maurorum in Europa, or the law of Moors, was chosen. Therein it was not only shown from laws and from history, that the kings of the Moors were enfeoffed by the Roman Emperor, and that every one of them had to obtain a royal patent from him, which Justinian also issued, but it was also investigated how far the freedom or servitude of the Moors bought by Christians in Europe extends, according to the laws in use.[8]

Given this short glimpse into Amo's defense, what are plausible steps for his argumentation? Amo could have argued that modern European enslavement of Africans was unlawful as it was based upon the laws of the Holy Roman Empire. Since Europe claimed a degree of constitutional continuity from ancient Rome, a person's legal status (the rights held within the realms of the empire) was often negotiated by reference to imperial charters. Amo could have argued that, based on these charters, the freedom of subjects in African territories is non-negotiable and their enslavement illegal, as much as the freedom and rights of people of African descent sold, bought and brought to Europe are inalienable. Hountondji uses the information from the newspaper article to inter-

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pret the topic chosen for Amo's first public disputation in convergence with his identity and experience:

> The significance of this article is that it shows Amo's profound awareness of his position as an African and his preoccupation with the problem of slavery and of the social condition of blacks in Europe. In this dissertation, basing himself on law and history, he showed how the kings of Africa had once been vassals of the Roman Emperor, enjoying an imperial franchise, which Justinian in particular had renewed. He also made a detailed examination of the question how far the freedom or servitude of Africans living in Europe after being bought by Christians was in conformity with the laws commonly accepted at this time. (Hountondji 1983, 116–17)

What is left unsaid in this speculation is the continuation of enslavement well into the era of enlightenment and the continuation of the practice and institution of slavery under the auspices of the colonizing empires overseas, as the Middle Passage was still sailed by the ships of the Dutch West Indian Company (Scott 2004).

A Lost Dissertation or a Successful Disputation?

Several authors have speculated about the loss of Amo's Halle dissertation. However, rather than a loss, it could be a confusion between the early modern academic merits of *disputatio* and *dissertatio*, both of which are mostly inter- dependent, the oral drawing on the written (Menn and Smith 2020, 62). Indeed, it is unlikely that Amo submitted a written *dissertatio*, as he never graduated in law. His academic titles, as indicated in later works, always refer to him as "Master of Philosophy and the Liberal Arts, and student of both Laws" (Amo 1734). It is thus more likely that Amo's *disputatio* had been an oral performance, not a defense of a written *dissertatio,* to give public evidence of academic credibility for his benefactors in Braunschweig and to secure funding to further pursue his studies. The newspaper report hints not only at the out-of-the-ordinary candidate and topic but introduces Amo and his status as a person of African descent at the University of Halle to the public. It was meant for the Duke in Braunschweig to continue his support for Amo's education and for Ludewig, the university chancellor, to demonstrate the extraordinary achievements in education at the university. The paragraph speaks to the candidate's successes in his studies, as it proves that the university was living up to the promise of education during the early Enlightenment era. In the imagination of Amo's mentors in Halle, the university's role in becoming a center of early enlightenment thinking was already aligned. From this vantage point, Halle was a place that could attract students from faraway places who would come together in the common pursuit of liberation and freedom, a way of living together in a common world shaped by the Enlightenment.

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Biography

Stefanie Bognitz is a social anthropologist with strong interest in epistemologies embracing the political, legal, ethical and everyday resonances and remaking after genocide. As a senior research fellow at the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study (2022-24), Stefanie started to conduct research in Ghana, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK for her second single authored book tentatively entitled "Anton Wilhelm Amo in-between Worlds" which takes its inspiration from a philosophically-inclined anthropology that relies on long-term research and theory-oriented writing. Her publications include, "Mistrusting as a mode of engagement in mediation: Insights from socio-legal practice in Rwanda," in Florian Mühlfried, ed., *Mistrust. Ethnographic Approximations (*Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag, 2018, 147-67); "Mediation in circumstances of the existential: Dispute and Justice in Rwanda" in Günther Schlee & Karl Härter, eds., *On Mediation* (New York: Berghahn, 2020, 146-178); and "Dispute as Critique: Moving Beyond 'Post-Genocide Rwanda'," (*Anthropological Theory*, 23.4 (2023): 386-403); "Promising Access to Justice: The Everyday of Legal Aid and Mediation in Rwanda," PhD Thesis (University of Halle-Wittenberg, 2025).

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Notes

1. See also a letter by Nkrumah to Burchardt Brentjes. Herzog August Bibliothek. https://opac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=6/TTL=1881/MAT=/NOMAT=T/CLK?IKT=12&TRM=151357927. Accessed 15 August 2024.
3. This is contrasted in Akinbode Akinbiyi's photographic wanderings, his sensitive consideration of the gaze, and its implications for the practice of the artist in this issue.
4. Indeed, the time of Amo's adolescence and presence at Schloss Wolfenbüttel saw numerous other changes. Between his lessons at the *Ritterakademie*, which was situated at the Kleines Schloss, Amo could have observed the upgrade of the castle's exterior façade with the unmistakable decorations and aesthetics of the Baroque (1714–16). A new portal was added, a powerful show of force to everyone who entered. Numer-

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ous sculptures were placed on the bridge and along the castle's moat, representing Duke Anthon Ulrich von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1633–1714), his son and successor Prince of Wolfenbüttel, Duke August Wilhelm von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1662–1731) and their associated or imagined virtues and duties. All these alterations are preserved in the present-day appearance of Schloss Wolfenbüttel.

5. See "Christian Wolff," in the university repository Catalogus Professorum Halensis, *Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg,* accessed 15 August 2024. https://www2.catalogus-professorum-halensis.de/wolff-christian.html.
6. For an impression of the entry see Amo's Archive in this issue.
7. A recently catalogued poem penned by Amo in July 1729 is signed with his name and occupation as librarian and secretary at the Court of Duke August Wilhelm von Braunschweig-Lüneburg (Firla 2020).
8. *Die Wöchentlichen Hallischen Frage- und Anzeigungsnachrichten,* 28 November 1729.

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Anton Wilhelm Amo: A Biography In-Between Worlds

Stefanie Bognitz

Living up to Academic Merit: The Shaping of Amo's Scholarship

In this article, I continue to highlight some of the signposts of the scholarly biography of Anton Wilhelm Amo that I started in my previous contribution above, by way of engaging the knowledge retrieved from the archive[1] and from selected writings by Amo himself and by scholars who engage with Amo's biography and academic legacy. While the previous text on "signposts of a precarious biography" pursued traces of Amo in his early years in Europe, this text also covers his biography in between worlds. The description and analysis of what I understand as "biography in-between worlds" captures what I contend is a rare occurrence for a scholarly life in the 1700s (see also Sen 2006). Unlike other philosophers in Europe at the time (cf. Alpert, this issue), Amo departs and arrives, stays and departs, and arrives again to stay on.[2] He is in between worlds but also "at home in the world" (Sen 2021). Even though Amo has been called soothsayer, hermit, goldsmith or timber trader (cf. "A Conversation with Amo in Shama" in this article) upon his return to the Gulf of Guinea, I contend that upon his return to Africa, he spends the remainder of his life as an intellectual in the Gold Coast, present-day Ghana. Bearing in mind my previous discussion on Amo's precarious biography, nonetheless, we cannot merely conclude that the scholar exits his lifelong education and impactful vocation only because of a return to an "African territory" under the control of several of the European enslaving empires. Seeing the impact of Enlightenment only in Europe, separate and apart from the continuation of its "darker side" in Africa, namely, the simultaneity, or better, coevalness (Fabian 2014) of Enlightenment and enslavement of persons of African descent—some of whom freed themselves through the very act of writing against the racial prejudice induced in and by Enlightenment itself (Parekh 2023)—means, at least in my view, to continue and contribute to the coloniality of power (Quijano 2000). In starting this article, my intention is to illuminate the recursive references made between Amo's scholarship and his "African heritage." Indeed, such references appear prominently in his biography and are preserved in writing and appraisal of a scholarly community that surrounds Amo when he relocated to another academic environment in the vicinity of Halle.

In 1730, Amo relocated to the University of Wittenberg, as evidenced by an entry in the university's registry from 2 September. Three years later, the rector of the University of Wittenberg, Johann Gottfried Kraus, refers to Africans being equally capable of reason, thought and accomplishments as their European colleagues, backing it up with an example from Amo's work and scholarly accomplishment. Again, a curious case of Afrophilia seems to make the rounds, this time in Wittenberg. Moreover, it seeks to weave the achievements of scholars of African descent across history into the Enlightenment era as it emerges from within universities such as Halle and Wittenberg. For Kraus, the presence of scholars from the African continent, such as Amo, proves that these universities played a critical role in shaping the Enlightenment. Kraus praises the continent in his afterword to Amo's (1734) *Dissertatio inauguralis de Humanae mentis apatheia*:

> Africa in the past had great honor, whether with regard to its [fertility in human] natural aptitude, devotion to letters, or religious teaching. For it brought forth a great many very eminent men, by whose natural aptitude and devotion divine as much as human wisdom has been taught. Nothing either in former times or in our own memory has been judged more sage in matters of social life, nor more refined in manners, than [the sayings of] Terence of Carthage.
> …
> And in Christian teaching, how many men came forth in Africa! It is enough to mention the greatest of them, Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Optatus of Milevis, Augustine, in [all of] whom sanctity of mind vies with learning of every kind. Their memorials, records, martyrdoms, councils, all proclaim the fidelity and constancy with which the African doctors labored to preserve the integrity of the religion.
> …
> Thus from such ancient times letters have owed a debt to Africa. In our own memory, indeed, this part of the earth has been reputed more fertile in other things than in learning, but that it is by no means depleted in natural aptitude let the most eminent Master of wisdom [i.e., of philosophy] and of the liberal arts …[3]

Amo's dissertation, the title of which can be translated as "Inaugural philosophical dissertation on the impassivity of the human mind," is a written (printed) text, and the disputation indicates that a corresponding oral event had taken place, one which is either held by the author of the dissertation or by a defendant chosen beforehand.[4] The topic is firmly situated in the context of early modern European philosophy. Along with philosophical debates of the early 18th century, Amo responds to post-Cartesian and post-Leibnizian discourse on mind and body. The main argument of this inaugural thesis testifies to the dualism of mind and body as the a priori assumption and argues for how mind and body can causally interact. Amo argues that the mind acts on the body, explaining how cognition and action happen when the mind responds to bodily sensations and endows them with intentional directedness towards an object or end. The conclusion on the impassivity of the human mind is his most noteworthy contribution to the philosophical debates of the early Enlightenment.[5]

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A few years later, in 1738, Amo submitted a "Treatise on the art of philosophizing soberly and accurately." As he draws on what is essential for the discipline of philosophy, he introduces concepts and means for their distinction and definition. He establishes rules for thinking clearly and defines that the discipline of "philosophy is the habit of the intellect and of the will by which we continually undertake to determinately and adequately know things themselves with certainty to the extent possible and by means of the application of this sort of cognition the perfection of man gains in possible increments" (II,II, §4, see also Brentjes 1976, 59) The treatise provides ample evidence of Amo's situatedness in studying and teaching philosophy.[6]

One year later, Amo pens a letter addressed to the University of Jena, where he formulates a request with a certain degree of urgency. In his bid to give public lectures at that university, Amo describes his worsening financial situation and formulates the precarious conditions undergirding his request to lecture:

> Following a practice of doing good service for the state, pricked on by the sharp dart of poverty (for I have a poor home), I have, to the best of my ability, been teaching philosophy at home in both the universities of Wittenberg and Halle, and have quite often engaged in public disputation, and have performed these tasks with diligence. Therefore, you, gentlemen of outstanding reputation in the world of letters, I hope that you will pay the same attention to me in this, your famous seat of the Muses. Once you have kindly shown me this indulgence, I shall thank you for your action, and shall never grow tired of praying to heaven that you, my excellent patron, may enjoy forever a most desirable happiness.
>
> *Antonius Guilielmus Amo Afer, Philos, et art. liberal. Magister legens et. Jur. cand.*' (Halle, 27 June 1739)[7]

The university's archive in Jena preserves a handwritten public notice announcing Amo's first lesson plan for a lecture course *privatissime* (to be held in private) in 1739, thus not taking place in the buildings of the university but in the apartment of Johann Andreas Fabricius at Jenergasse 9 where Amo lodges during his stay in Jena. The building where Amo's private lectures are held is one of the few known locations of Amo's presence in Europe.[8] The lecture plan reveals a lecture that comprises a range of topics that seem to depart from Amo's earlier work:

> Parts of the more elegant and curious philosophy; physiognomy; chiromancy; geomancy; commonly known as the art of divination; purely natural astrology, which is opposed to cryptography; dechifratory, or the art of deciphering, which is opposed to the superstitions of the common people and of the ancients, cut down and rejected by all people, and to those things that are the less commended by their ambiguity.[9]

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A Return, at Last: A Journey of Nobody's Anticipation[10]

In December 1746, the Dutch West Indies Company (DWIC) recorded the request of "Anthony Willem Amo," identified as a "free …," for a free passage of return to Guinea at the Gold Coast on a DWIC ship. Surprisingly, the entry provides some previously unknown details on the circumstances of Amo's arrival in Europe some forty years earlier:

> The request of Anthony Willem Amo, born in Axim, lying on the coast of Africa, was read, stating that he, the supplicant was brought to this country in the year 1707 by a certain Bodel, who at the time was a sergeant in the service of the Company on that coast; that he was taken by the same Bodel to Braunschweig, where the latter met his death; that he, the supplicant, thereafter came into the service of the Duke of Braunschweig, upon whose death he, the supplicant, was advised to return to Guinea but could find no opportunity to do so, and therefore petitions to be allowed to make the transit thereto in the first Company ship that departs or now stands ready. After deliberating on which, it was found good to grant the supplicant to be allowed to make transit to Guinea, as a passenger free of transport fees, in the Company ship that stands ready, the galley Catharina.[11]

Amo's precarious living and working conditions, already evidenced by his request to teach at the University of Jena and foretold in earlier advice to return to Guinea, now culminate in the request for free passage to Africa. This short outline of Amo's existential conditions in the ink of the DWIC indicates his attempts to become a scholar in the academic environment of early Enlightenment Europe. The universities in Halle, Wittenberg, and Jena were the locations of Amo's efforts to be a *Privatdozent* (lecturer) and attain the merits to become a scholar. However, the request to the DWIC also reveals that Amo, as a scholar of African descent, needed the protection, support, and goodwill of a benefactor. After the death of the dukes of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, financial and moral support for an academic career was short in supply. Amo's precarious academic standing could not keep him afloat. Seven years between the lecture in Jena in 1739 and his request for free passage in 1746 remain unaccounted for in the scholarship of Amo.[12]

Despite the sense of regret that he had insufficient resources to continue his academic profession, as we read in Amo's letter to the University of Jena and in his request for free passage to the Gold Coast, Amo's decision to return to Africa seems to be informed by a certain pragmatism. The DWIC registry speaks of the earlier advice to take his leave, "upon whose [the Duke of Braunschweig's] death he, the supplicant, was advised to return to Guinea but could find no opportunity to do so."[13] This suggests that Amo had lived with the thought of his temporary condition in Europe for quite a while and knew the day would come when he would return to Guinea. A handwritten note he wrote in 1740 indicates a sense of foreboding that, in a very eloquent manner, speaks to the conditionality of livelihood and one's adjustment to the conditions as they present themselves to humans. Amo wrote this note in an album dedicated

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to Gottfried A. Achenwall in which the latter's friends wrote wishes of goodwill—the title page listing a number of men who were to attain eminence in science and learning. Amo's entry is dated 5 May 1740, and Jena is listed as the place where the entry was penned. It quotes the following line from Epictetus:

> *Necessitati qui se accommodate sapit, estque rerum Divinarium conscious.*
> Epictetus

> He who can accommodate himself to necessity is wise and has an inkling of things divine.
> Epictetus

Again, Amo signed his entry with his self-identification, including his titles and achievements: "These words Anton Wilhelm Amo, an African, Master and University Lecturer in Philosophy and the Liberal Arts, has put down in everlasting memory of himself."[14]

A Conversation with Amo in Shama

In the absence of an archive or a library that evidences Amo's life and work after his departure from Europe, there is but one encounter that speaks to Amo's presence in what is present-day Ghana. In the early 1750s, a transcript of the diary of David Henri Gallandat, a Swiss medical doctor, provides the last record of a conversation with Amo after his return to the Gold Coast. In his meeting with Gallandat, Amo reiterates his life between the two continents, Africa and Europe. It also allows speculation about Amo's life in the DWIC's Fort San Sebastian at Shama:

> While he [David Henri Gallandat] was on this trip to Axim on the Gold Coast in Africa, he went to visit the famous Mr Antony William Amo, a Guinea-African, Doctor of Philosophy and Master of Arts. He was a …, who lived about thirty years in Europe. He had been in Amsterdam in the year 1707, and was presented to the Duke Anton Ulric who gave him later to his son August Wilhelm. The latter made it possible for him to study in Halle and in Wittenberg. In the year 1727 he was promoted Doctor in Philosophy and Master in the Liberal Arts. Some time after this his master died. This made him so depressed that it influenced him into returning to his fatherland. Here he lived like a hermit, and acquired the reputation of a soothsayer. He spoke different languages including Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and High and Low German. He was skilled in astrology and astronomy and was generally a great sage. He was then about fifty years old. His father and one sister were still alive, and resided at a place four days' journey inland. He had a brother who was a slave in the colony of Suriname. Later he left Axim and went to live in the fort of the West Indies Company of St. Sebastian at Chama (Winkelman 1782, 19-20).

Until now, the only known trace of Amo allows us to presume that, while living close to his birthplace, Amo inhibited a quite similar role in the Gold Coast as the one he had established as a philosopher in Europe. Given Amo's last known location in Shama as indicated in Gallandat's encounter, questions

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for archival sources bearing witness to his work during the last years in Ghana seem unavoidable. With a known scholar of the Enlightenment era present in one of the DWIC forts, we are reminded of Amo's argumentation in *De jure maurorum in Europa* dating back to 1729. Despite the resonating critique of turning people of African descent into slaves for the overseas plantation economies of Europe's empires, the experience of enslavement in his vicinity, with his brother deported and held captive in Suriname, Amo resides within the premises of the DWIC and on the locations that serve the very institution of turning people into slaves.

Amo in the Imagination of African Intellectuals

In 1906, students at Columbia University gathered for an annual public speaking competition. Pixley ka Isaka Seme, one of the student contributors, is a third-year student of South African descent enrolled in courses in Latin, Greek, German, French, history, physics, chemistry and anthropology, among others (Rive and Couzens 1991). His contribution to the competition is entitled "Regeneration of Africa." The speech in itself is remarkable in many ways, as it delves into the epistemology on and of the continent, making a case for Africa while critiquing the unbearable injustice of racial divides. In a way, Seme makes an argument for Africa's rightful place in the world. He dwells on the history of civilizations and on systems of knowledge and thought on the continent as a trajectory to deconstruct theories of racial inferiority. Among the pieces of evidence that Seme puts forth is the achievement of Amo. Without mentioning Amo by name (or any of the other people Seme mobilizes for his argument), it nevertheless becomes clear to whom he is referring when he writes:

> I could show him among black men of pure African blood those who could repeat the Koran from memory, skilled in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldaic – men great in wisdom and profound knowledge – one professor of philosophy in a celebrated German university; one corresponding member of the French Academy of Sciences, who regularly transmitted to that society meteorological observations, and hydrographical journals and papers on botany and geology; another whom many ages call 'The Wise', whose authority Mahomet himself frequently appealed to in the Koran in support of his own opinion-men of wealth and active benevolence, those whose distinguished talents and reputation have made them famous in the cabinet and in the field, officers of artillery in the great armies of Europe, generals and lieutenant generals in the armies of Peter the Great in Russia and Napoleon in France, presidents of free republics, kings of independent nations which have burst their way to liberty by their own vigor. There are many other Africans who have shown marks of genius and high character sufficient to redeem their race from the charges which I am now considering. (Seme 1906, 2)

Postcolonial Perspectives on Amo's Scholarship

In 1975, Burchardt Brentjes, adjunct professor of oriental archaeology at the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg in the German Democratic Republic, prepared to undertake what could best be referred to as a study trip, a

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field visit to Shama and Axim in Ghana. His visit to the independent nation-state of Ghana under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah and socialist brother state to the German Democratic Republic on Africa's western coast—infamously known to the human trading companies as "Gold Coast"—followed several years of research, translation and writing from within the university's own archives. Brentjes, whose expertise encompasses the central regions of Asia and northern Africa, but who had now turned arduous Amo scholar, had the opportunity, as part of the entourage of a diplomatic state visit, to visit the last known location of the first scholar of African descent in Europe, Amo, who studied, graduated and taught at the very same *alma mater halensis* some 250 odd years before him. Arriving in Ghana, Brentjes met Akanfo dignitaries. He encountered the dignitary Nana Efiemotwe Alibrukwo, chief of Akonu-Nkubeam—what is believed to have been Amo's ancestral home. Alibrukwo, in his oral tradition, integrated Amo into the matrilineal genealogy of the village (Brentjes 1976, 84).[15] Brentjes stood in mournful silence and looked at a tall white-washed stone engraved with letters spelling out the name of the scholar Anton Wilhelm Amo followed by an estimate of his year of death. He walked along the walls of Fort Shama looking out across the Gulf of Guinea.

It was also Alibrukwo who presented Brentjes with a written account of the matrilineage that includes Amo in its ancestry. It is worthwhile to consider this ancestry, as it speaks to some of the living conditions of Amo's ancestors and the movements they undertook. The account locates the family's ancestral home in Agnafu in Elmina District, from where the family moved to Axim. A second location is named Amantwitsi. From here the family moved on to Inkubaim. The reasons for these relocations by Amo's ancestors remain unknown. The matrilineage then starts with two women, identified as Sister Koko Andobie and Sister Abuah Ngotta. Their descending generations are:

> 1 Koko Andobie gave birth to Sasa Agarbeh and Saso Kwesi
> 2 Abuah gave birth to Annobah and Boturie
> 3 Agoabah gave birth to Arnbah and Amba
> 4 Annobah was married to a white man who departed together with her so that we cannot know anything about her traces
> 5 Arnbah gave birth to Armoo Korko, Armoo N'ta and Armoo Alimah
> 6 Armoo Korko gave birth to Yamikeh Ewyelay and Dukei
> 7 Armoo N'ta gave birth to Korminie Ahumah, Assiah Kojoe, Assuah Duku and Yanikeh-Arkroma
> 8 Armoo Alima made Nuama, Arfo, Eforlan and Aihea (Brentjes, 82-83).

According to Brentjes, the name "Armoo Alimah" refers to Anton Wilhelm Amo, and Alibrukwo estimates his year of birth to have been 1702. Brentjes thinks it possible that Amo was sent to live with his aunt in Amsterdam, the Annobah who was "married to a white man" (83). He suggests that Amo as boy was kept hostage there to seal a trade treaty between the "Lion Tribe" of Nkubeam and the DWIC. Brentjes believes that this could explain why Amo

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knew his origins when he returned to Guinea. The ancestry provides yet another signpost of Amo's life as a father of four children. The bottom line of this critical information is, however, the close tie between Europeans—whether agents of the DWIC or interlopers like Bodel, mentioned by Amo to the DWIC in Amsterdam as the person in whose company he had arrived in Europe—and Amo's lineage in Nkubeam. Amo's brother, who was enslaved and taken to Suriname, as we know from the conversation with Amo that Gallandat recorded, remains unaccounted for in the lineage Alibrukwo presented to Brentjes in 1975.

Not only was Brentjes the only researcher who tried to seek out Amo's family, but his visit to Ghana was also followed by one of the most comprehensive monographs written on Amo as a person and as a scholar. Brentjes' *Anton Wilhelm Amo: Der schwarze Philosoph in Halle* from 1976 remains a work of reference to this very day (see also Menn and Smith 2020). Moreover, Brentjes' research and writing on Amo had a decidedly antiracist and, as in Amo's inaugural dissertation *De jure Maurorum in Europa* of 1729, an abolitionist motivation, as Brentjes states in a text penned in 1975, the year of his journey to Ghana: "In a time of the breaking down of traditional racial barriers and ancient prejudices, it is appropriate, in view of the stubborn persistence of conservative views, to call attention to a personality of historical value" (443). In his study, Brentjes connects the scholarly work on and of Amo to the independence movements that promised the liberation of the African continent from colonial rule. Ghana, Amo's birthplace, was the first state to gain independence from British rule in 1957. In 1964, Kwame Nkrumah addressed a letter from Ghana to Brentjes in the German Democratic Republic. Nkrumah embedded the life and time of Amo in between Africa and Europe in a long tradition of African systems of thought, knowledge production and the sciences. Over the following years, Brentjes' perspective on Amo's work took on a decidedly anticolonial position. His monograph formulated a social and political critique against the persistent continuities of racial segregation. From the vantage point of a scholar in the academy of the German Democratic Republic, Brentjes' critique addressed two states founded on settler colonial expansion, Apartheid South Africa and the United States, by taking recourse to Amo's writings during the early years of Enlightenment, birthed at the University of Halle.

A Concealed Philosophy In-between Worlds

Amo's concealed philosophy, existing in-between worlds, seems a foreboding of what "is so difficult to philosophize from within the conditions of crisis of the Black person who has freed himself from the illusions of whiteness yet remains chained—by the heaviest chain—to those clinging to the illusion. 'It is hard under such circumstances,' [W.E.B.] Du Bois[16] well knows, 'to be philosophical and calm, and to think'" (1986, 650; quoted in Johnson 2024, 46).[17]

Considering the last years of Amo's life, with the returning passage from Europe to Africa, biography and scholarship seem precariously irreconcilable. What started as a promising academic itinerary during the eventful times of ear-

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ly Enlightenment descended into the ordinary struggles of maintaining a livelihood. Not only did Amo face the everyday hardship of forging a livelihood on what were indubitably outstanding academic merits, but he was also confronted with the limitations determined by his African descent. My argument positioning Amo as a philosopher in-between worlds finds echoes in Ryan Johnson, who argues that "the social-political-historical position of Black subjects, who have traditionally been excluded, is critical for offering powerful yet still underappreciated ways of doing philosophy as well as identifying who are and who should be considered philosophers" (2024, 39). I argue in this contribution that there is little doubt about Amo the philosopher; however, with the loss of the powerful supporters who granted him the freedom and education that might have seemed unimaginable during his initial years in Europe, a good and liveable life within academia remained unattainable. Amo's becoming a free and educated person in Europe—the first student of African descent to enrol, study and graduate from a university on European territory—did not guarantee his ability to remain in Europe. The biographical signposts shown by this, and my previous contribution, give testimony, however, to a certain proximity between Africa and Europe and the lives that became possible and impossible during the dawn of Enlightenment. Amo's noteworthy passages from Africa to Europe and back: a relational making of these seemingly separated worlds. With Amo's in-between-worlds biography, a hidden archive of a possible philosophy between worlds. The research on the life and scholarship of Amo is far from conclusive, as I have tried to show when signposting the biographical and academic certainties that the archive has allowed us to establish. The engagement with emerging archives around the many questions we continue to ask about the life and times—indeed, the everyday doings—of Amo during his years in Europe and Africa is far from over. On the contrary, if we learn anything from the archive, it is the continued critical engagement with its memory and knowledge practices.

Biography

Stefanie Bognitz is a social anthropologist with strong interest in epistemologies embracing the political, legal, ethical and everyday resonances and remaking after genocide. As a senior research fellow at the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study (2022-24), Stefanie started to conduct research in Ghana, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK for her second single authored book tentatively entitled "Anton Wilhelm Amo in-between Worlds" which takes its inspiration from a philosophically-inclined anthropology that relies on long-term research and theory-oriented writing. Her publications include, "Mistrusting as a mode of engagement in mediation: Insights from socio-legal practice in Rwanda" in Florian Mühlfried, ed., *Mistrust. Ethnographic Approximations* (Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag, 2018, 147-67); "Mediation in circumstances of the existential: Dispute and Justice in Rwanda" in Günther Schlee & Karl Härter, eds., *On Mediation* (New York: Berghahn, 2020, 146-78); and "Dispute as Critique: Moving Beyond 'Post-Genocide Rwanda' " (*Anthropological Theory* 23.4 (2023):

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386-403); "Promising Access to Justice: The Everyday of Legal Aid and Mediation in Rwanda," PhD Thesis (University of Halle-Wittenberg, 2025).

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Notes

1. I understand the location and idea of the archive herein as multiscalar. The archive is oral, written, ethnographic and ephemeral. The method behind this multiscalarity of possible archives is best captured by Jacques Derrida (1995).
2. The coming and going is a reoccurring motif in Amo's biography. His living, moving, and witnessing in-between worlds sets his biography apart from those of other scholars and intellectual biographies in Europe at the time. Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) living conditions in his forever home in Königsberg are but one example. Such constellations—the emplacement and displacement of scholars and the impact this might have on their scholarship—go beyond the confines of this text, but are certainly reminiscent of a warning that has been attributed to Alexander von Humboldt: "*Die gefährlichste Weltanschauung ist die Weltanschauung derer, die die Welt nie angeschaut haben* (The most dangerous worldview is the worldview of those who have not viewed the world)." His critique is poignant that has not lost its relevance and forebodes self-reflexive consideration and acts of caring.
3. Translation by Menn and Smith 2020, 190-95.
4. For the cover page of the thesis, see Amo's Archive in this issue.
5. In my view, the most comprehensive discussion – and certainly accessible to international readers – on the topic and argument of the thesis can be found in Menn and Smith 2020, 60ff and 101ff.
6. For more evidence on Amo's return to the university in Halle see Amo's Archive in this issue.
7. University archive Jena, Bestand M. 97, Dekanatsakten III, Bl. p 64. Anton Wilhelm Amo. Bid to give lectures at the University of Jena, June 27th, 1739.

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8. A plaque on the building in Jenergasse 9 commemorates Amo's life and work in Jena.
9. University archive Jena, M. 97, Bl. 95. Anton Wilhelm Amo. Handwritten lecture announcement in Jena on July 17th, 1739.
10. A poem by Amo evidences not only his friendship but allows glimpses into the philosopher's social standing among the community of students, and indeed scholars as well as what was to become an intellectual elite later on, during his time at the university of Halle in Amo's Archive in this issue.
11. Translated in Menn and Smith 2020, 38.
12. For a broader discussion on the world-making enterprise of the DWIC alongside their lasting imprint at the Gold Coast, present-day Ghana, see Fazil Moradi's contribution to this issue.
13. Translated in Menn and Smith 2020, 38.
14. Anton Wilhelm Amo, Stammbuch G. Achenwall, Jena, May 5th 1740, University Library Göttingen, Cod. Dis. Hist. 48 f, Bl. 78.
15. According to this account, one of Amo's aunts married a white man from Europe; Brentjes believes this could be a possible explanation for why Amo relocated to Europe.
16. For a more thorough embedding of Du Bois' work within the post-independence and Pan-African Ghanaian context see Fazil Moradi's contribution to this issue.
17. See also Avram Alpert's discussion on "African identity" in the writing of Kwame Anthony Appiah in this issue.

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Title: Amo's Archive
Author(s): Fazil Moradi & Stefanie Bognitz
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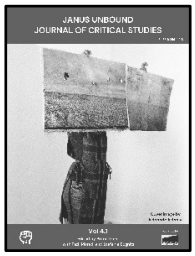

Message from the Editors

The editors welcome letters on all subjects, especially if they discuss or comment on the works published in *Janus Unbound*. Please read our Guidelines for Authors prior to submitting your manuscript.

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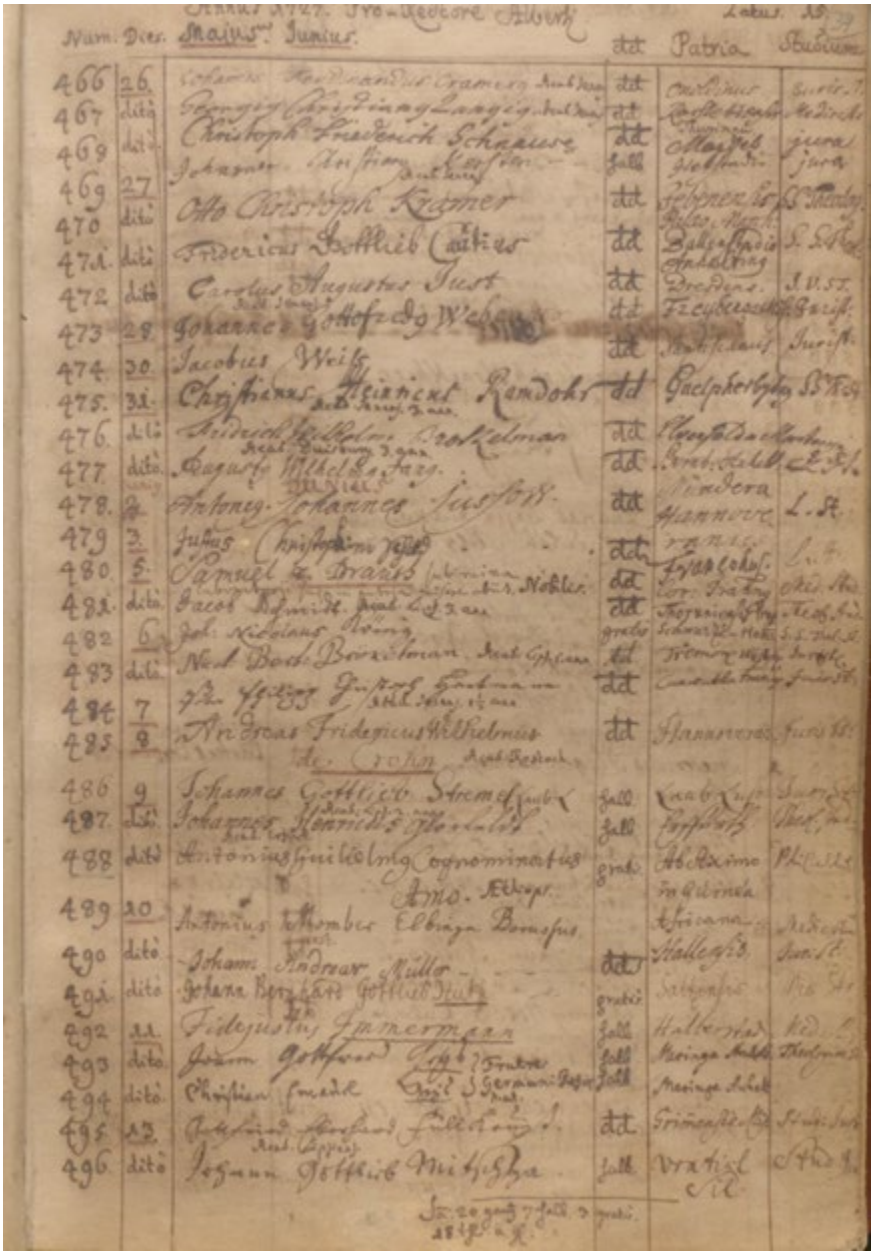

Fig. 1 Anton Wilhelm Amo's handwritten entry in the University of Halle's student registry (matriculation book) from 1727, listed as No. 488. The entry reads: Antonius Guiliemus Cognominatus Amo. Aethiops. Ab Axximo in Guinia Africana. Source: UAHW, Rep. 46, Nr. 3, Anton Wilhelm Amo. Courtesy of the Archive of Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Germany.

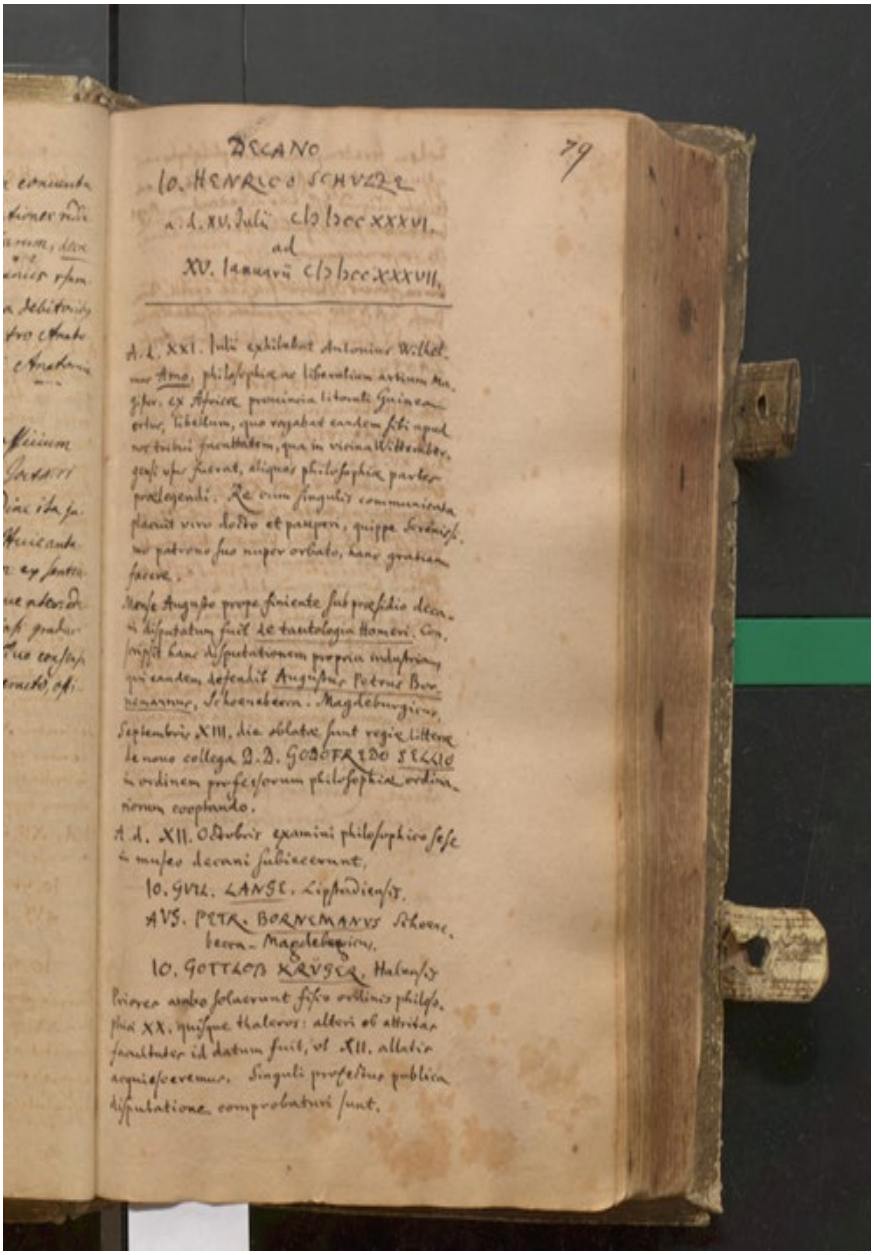

Fig. 2 Entry from the Dean's Book of the Philosophical Faculty at the University of Halle, dated July 21, 1736, documenting the appointment of Anton Wilhelm Amo as a lecturer. Source: UAHW, Rep. 21, Nr. 261. Courtesy of the Archive of Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Germany.

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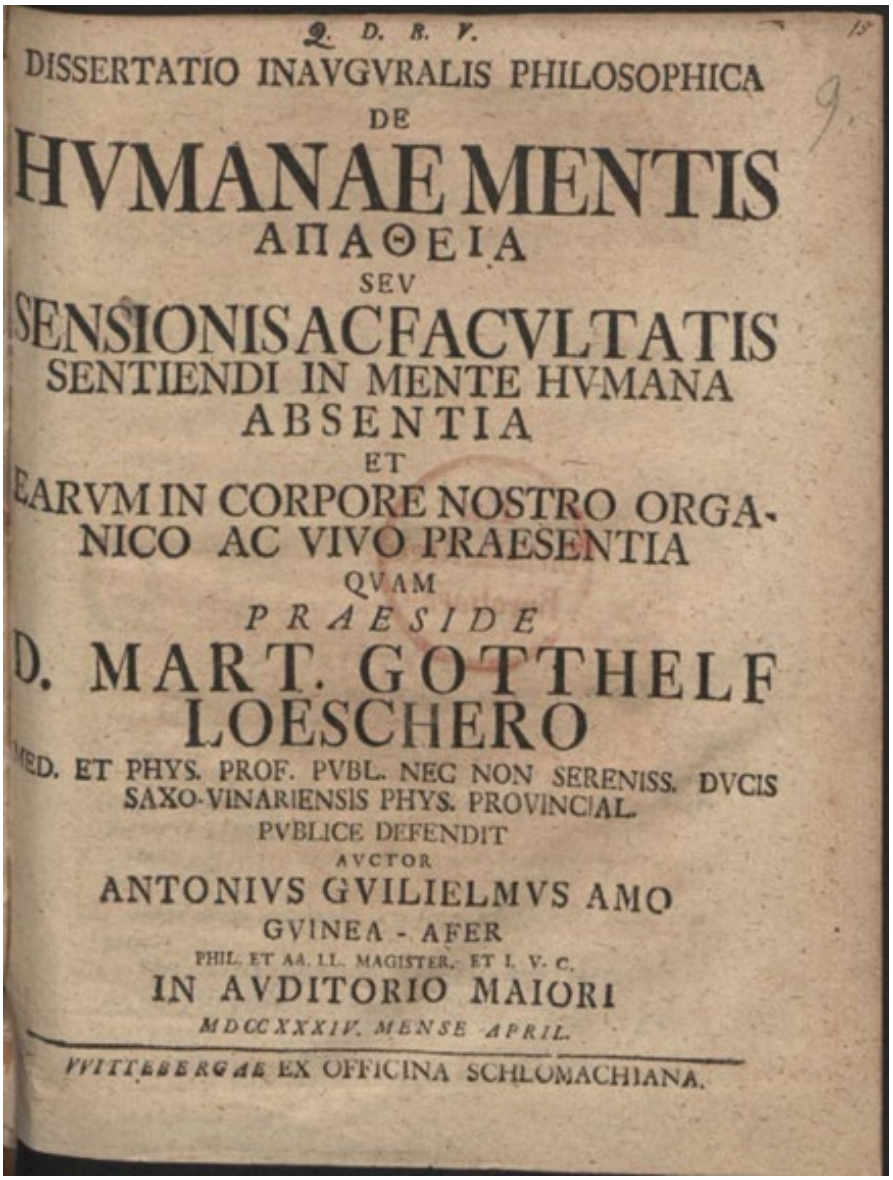

Q. D. B. V.

DISSERTATIO INAVGVRALIS PHILOSOPHICA
DE
HVMANAE MENTIS
ΑΠΑΘΕΙΑ
SEV
SENSIONIS AC FACVLTATIS
SENTIENDI IN MENTE HVMANA
ABSENTIA
ET
EARVM IN CORPORE NOSTRO ORGA-
NICO AC VIVO PRAESENTIA
QVAM
PRAESIDE
D. MART. GOTTHELF
LOESCHERO
MED. ET PHYS. PROF. PVBL. NEC NON SERENISS. DVCIS
SAXO-VINARIENSIS PHYS. PROVINCIAL.
PVBLICE DEFENDIT
AVCTOR
ANTONIVS GVILIELMVS AMO
GVINEA - AFER
PHIL. ET AA. LL. MAGISTER, ET I. V. C.
IN AVDITORIO MAIORI
MDCCXXXIV. MENSE APRIL.
VVITTEBERGAE EX OFFICINA SCHLOMACHIANA.

Fig. 3 The cover page of Amo's "Dissertatio Inauguralis Philosophica De Humanae Mentis Apatheia Seu Sensionis Ac Facultatis Sentiendi In Mente Humana Absentia Et Earum In Corpore Nostro Organico Ac Vivo Praesentia." Wittebergae: Schlomach, 1734. (Inaugural Dissertation on the Impassivity of the Human Mind or the Absence of Sensation and the Faculty of Sensing in the Human Mind And their Presence in our Organic and Living Body). Courtesy of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Abteilung Handschriften und Historische Drucke, Signature: 9 in: No 1: R. The Dissertation is available at:
https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht/?PPN=PPN634497863

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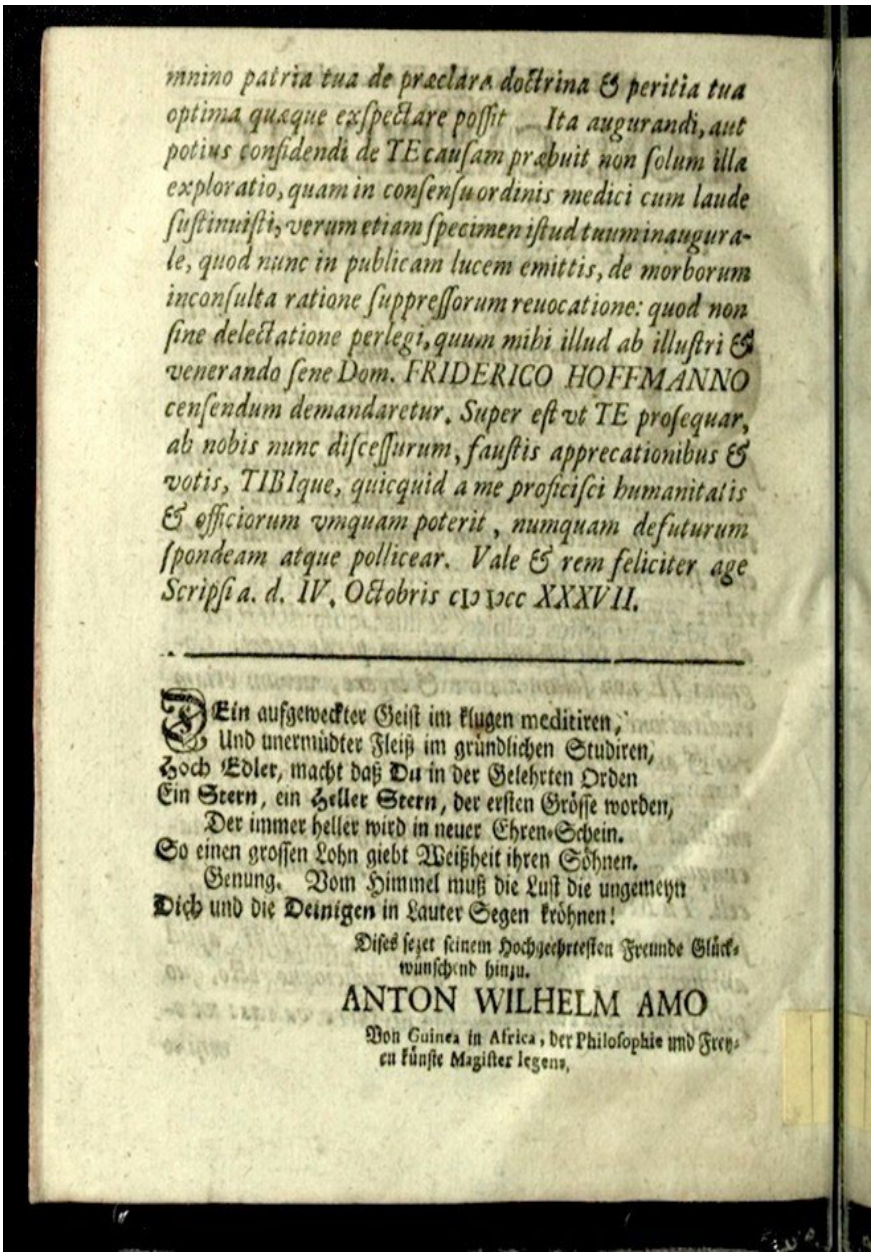

mnino patria tua de præclara doctrina & peritia tua optima quæque exſpectare poſſit. Ita augurandi, aut potius conſidendi de TE cauſam præbuit non ſolum illa exploratio, quam in conſenſu ordinis medici cum laude ſuſtinuiſti, verum etiam ſpecimen iſtud tuum inaugurale, quod nunc in publicam lucem emittis, de morborum inconſulta ratione ſuppreſſorum reuocatione: quod non ſine delectatione perlegi, quum mihi illud ab illuſtri & venerando ſene Dom. FRIDERICO HOFFMANNO cenſendum demandaretur. Super eſt vt TE proſequar, ab nobis nunc diſceſſurum, fauſtis apprecationibus & votis, TIBIque, quicquid a me proficiſci humanitatis & officiorum vmquam poterit, numquam defuturum ſpondeam atque pollicear. Vale & rem feliciter age Scripſi a. d. IV. Octobris CIↃ IↃCC XXXVII.

DEin aufgeweckter Geiſt im klugen meditiren,
Und unermüdter Fleiß im gründlichen Studiren,
Hoch Edler, macht daß Du in der Gelehrten Orden
Ein Stern, ein heller Stern, der erſten Gröſſe worden,
Der immer heller wird in neuer Ehren-Schein.
So einen groſſen Lohn giebt Weißheit ihren Söhnen.
Genung. Vom Himmel muß die Luſt die ungemeyn
Dich und die Deinigen in Lauter Segen kröhnen!

Diſes ſezet ſeinem Hochgeehrteſten Freunde Glückwünſchend hinzu.

ANTON WILHELM AMO

Von Guinea in Africa, der Philoſophie und Freyen künſte Magiſter legens.

Fig. 4 The congratulatory poem by Amo to his friend Moses Abraham Wolff was printed in the appendix of Wolff's Dissertation in Medicine, October 4, 1737. The Dissertation is available at: https://digital.slubdresden.de/data/kitodo/wolfdiss_371050618/wolfdiss_371050618_tif/jpegs/wolfdiss_371050618.pdf

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„Dein aufgeweckter Geist im klugen meditieren
Und unermüdter Geist im gründlichen Studieren
Hoch Edler, macht daß Du in der Gelehrten Orden
Ein Stern, ein Heller Stern, der ersten Größe worden,
Der immer heller wird in neuer Ehren Schein.
So einen großen Lohn gibt Weißheit ihren Söhnen,
Genug. Vom Himmel muß die Lust die ungemeyn Dich
und die Deinigen in Lauter Segen kröhnen!

Dieses sezet seinem Hochgelehrtesten Freunde Glückwünschend hinzu Anton Wilhelm Amo Von Guinea in Africa, der Philosophie und Freyen künste Magister legens."

Your awakened mind in wise contemplation,
And your spirit, tireless in its pursuit of learning,
Most noble one, may you ascend to the highest circle of scholars,
A star, a radiant star, whose light grows ever brighter
With each new spark of knowledge and honor.
For such is the great reward wisdom bestows upon her sons,
Enough. Let the heavens themselves grant you,
and those dear to you, infinite blessings!

This, congratulating his most learned friend, is added by Anton Wilhelm Amo, from Guinea in Africa, Master of Philosophy and Liberal Arts.

Translated into English by Stefanie Bognitz and Fazil Moradi. Courtesy of the Sächsische Landesbibliothek—Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden.

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Anton Wilhelm Amo: Attempts at Understanding – 8 Photographs

Akinbode Akinbiyi

Wandering is a conscious movement, the awareness of one's surroundings, of birdsong, the rustle of the wind, and the powerful presence of solidly rooted trees. In the urban space, fellow wanderers, pedestrians about their business, schoolchildren with their multi-coloured school bags, the incessant rush of motorized wheels, of accelerated engines.

In all this and much more, trying to intuit Anton Wilhelm Amo, what he would feel, perceive, and take with him on his daily wanderings, passageways. A different time, well embedded in the past, but still intuitively accessible, trying, striving to wander as he did then.

The pathways etched into the landscape, the cobbled roads and streets, the lanes and byways that all define a certain geography, a certain location. Wolfenbüttel, Braunschweig, Halle, Wittenberg, Jena, small time towns and places of residence and eking out an existence. The everyday of coming to a kind of acceptance of difficult neighbours, of familial tensions, of sensing the gradual wear and tear of one's body.

As the years pass, certain constants gradually lose their well-defined contours, become outmoded, and morph into a new dispensation, a challenge of ever-present technology. The fundamental human needs, though, stay very much the same, thus allowing for this reach back into the past to intuit the feelings and thoughts of those long gone. This is my attempt to understand and perceive as Anton Wilhelm Amo might have.

Looking out daily from his probably small chambers, the window framing the immediate neighbourhood, the weather, the play of sunlight and shadows. Being very aware of his otherness in a region where there were very few, if any, other Africans. Being very much aware too of the status and role of Africans in the larger picture of commerce and trade, of not being accepted as equal and human.

The photographs are an attempt to record this empathy, this attempt in understanding the where and the how and the why of him then. We all leave traces, some so interminably faint and almost invisible but still there somewhere. Singing his name is one way of trying to re-energize the faint traces. Thinking of him, too. It is the intuition, though, that needs to be finely attuned. Listening in to the inner voice, the inner urges that from time to time surface and call for, push towards taking, making an image.

Taking the image implies an acknowledgment of the constant weaving still going on from then to now. The traces, the threads, reverberating, resonating subliminally, and occasionally come together in a visible serendipitous moment. Almost as if he reappears in the glare of the sunlight, shimmering and blindingly radiant, only to disappear in the nanosecond of gradual recognition. Such fleeting moments are hard to take in or, to use another somewhat unfortunate term, hard to capture.

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The key is to be prepared and, even more, to give. To give in an inward, whole-hearted way, intuitively, all the while wandering and waiting for these serendipitous moments.

Making the image is somewhat similar. Again, the need, the awareness of giving to the surroundings, to the vibrations of the moment. Sensing the so delicate threads constantly weaving forward, onward. Suddenly, seeing the weaved form, the edge of a building, the immediacy of a billboard, engaging with the form until the image appears, comes into view. There were no billboards some three or four hundred years ago. There were no cameras and no attention-demanding photographs, but there were eyes and insistent, consistent gazes. The extreme other in their midst, well-educated and accomplished but still somehow suspect. Something untoward said, a remark in passing, and the sharp delineation of difference, of being made acutely aware that you are not of this region.

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It's still there today: xenophobic fears, the comfort of the like-minded, like-looking. An almost worldwide phenomenon, provincialism that rejects the bigger whole, the multiplicity of views. The almost obsessive need for the scapegoat, the person or persons who don't quite fit in, are not from this area, strangers, foreign bodies

How acutely did Amo feel this? How acutely do I feel it today? This fundamental rejection, fundamental intolerance. He eventually returned to his homeland, knew from where he had once set out, as a child, and then, realized the very different ways of being and living in the everyday that would now envelope him.

It was this especially, the acuteness of being here, but not quite, of being elsewhere, but not quite, that intrigued me. Today, it is a matter of hours between

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the aviation hubs of Europe and West Africa. Sitting ensconced in an airtight cabin, listening to music, or watching a film, distance is merely displayed on the on-board screen. In Amo's time, the weeks spent on the high seas, the creaking of the sails, the swaying of the wooden vessel, a solitary passenger amongst roughened seafarers and cunning merchants. Already, there was a regular trade in human cargo—enslaved Africans transported in inhumane conditions. What were his thoughts, those of the ship's crew, too?

Looking back at his immediate past, the years spent reading, writing, disputing certain theses, certain bodies of knowledge. And now, the uncertainty of the future, a world dominated by proto-capitalist trade and the urge for high profit margins.

I wander the streets of Braunschweig with these and many other thoughts, all the while listening in, trying to intuit the man then. Despite the intervening centuries, not much has really changed. Should I, too, eventually return, no longer willing to constantly engage with the disrespectful gazes, the body language that shouts rejection and abhorrence? Is it different now from what it was then? Do the photographs resonate with this painful undertone of not completely belonging, of not being truly welcome at the well-laid-out table?

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The images are essentially narratives, embedded layers of stories beneath the surface of the exhibited print. Stories that are open-ended and that reach back into a distant past but at the same time reference narratives very much of the present. The subtle traces of his daily routine echo down into the present meanderings of the observing wanderer.

An image taken, made, in a cemetery, looking out at gravestones, and at the finely sculptured furrows of majestic tree trunks. Amo, in his time, wandering such cemeteries, passing by, passing through, fully aware of the implications of the soul and the physical body, immersed in the academic discourses of the day. Yet another form of narration, of trying to overcome a certain story-line with another, disputes and dissertations, hand-written treatises that end up on library shelves, slowly gathering dust.

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Today's photographs look in and on these layered narratives, adding yet another layer, subversive, questioning the traditional storylines, the once acknowledged perceptions. Black and white images negate colour and, at the same time, evoke the vast range of the colour spectrum, calling out to the viewer to look deeply in, to listen in to the resonances and discords coming through, the songs Amo sang quietly to himself, his thoughts, his intuitions.

Biography

Akinbode Akinbiyi is born in Oxford, studied at university in Ibadan, Nigeria, in the 1960s, and in Heidelberg, Germany in the 1970s to do a PhD in literature. While an avid reader of fiction and poetry, Akinbode is a photographer who has documented cities such as Lagos and Kano (Nigeria), Dakar (Senegal), Bamako (Mali) and Khartoum (Sudan) and human life and movements with his camera. In 1993, Akinbiyi co-founded the UMZANZSI, a cultural center in Clermont Township in Durban, South Africa, and has taught and mentored emerging photographers in the continent Africa and beyond.

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Postface

Souleymane Bachir Diagne

In his book *De la littérature des nègres, ou Recherches sur leurs facultés intellectuelles, leurs qualités morales et leur littérature*, published in 1808 and translated into English in 1810 under the title *An Enquiry concerning the Intellectual and Moral Faculties, and Literature of Negroes*, abolitionist and revolutionary priest Henri Jean-Baptiste Grégoire, or Abbé Grégoire presents the case of Anton Wilhelm Amo as a perfect counter-example to the affirmation that reason—particularly philosophical reason—cannot be considered African. In a chapter, modestly titled "Amo," Grégoire presents the Ghanaian and German philosopher as "a mind exercised in reflection" while also praising the University of Wittenberg, which recognized his talent, for proving "that concerning the difference of colour in the human species [it] did not possess those absurd prejudices of so many others who think of themselves enlightened" (1810, 173–174).[1] Indeed, the name "Amo" has become a symbol celebrated by African intellectuals, while the former State of East Germany extolled him as another manifestation of its openness to solidarity with Africa. As a symbol, Amo's biography and identity have long taken precedence over what Paulin Hountondji has called the need for a "systematic study" of Amo's work independent of his biography (1983, 112). Recent publications about Amo's thought indicate that the time for such a "systematic study" has come. In addition to this special issue, two very similar books have been published recently, one in English and one in French. The first, titled *Anton Wilhelm Amo's Philosophical Dissertations on Mind and Body*, authored by Stephen Menn and Justin E.H. Smith, was published by Oxford University Press in 2020). The latter, published by *Présence africaine*, is titled *Anton Wilhelm Amo, une philosophie de l'implicite* (Anton Wilhelm Amo, a philosophy of the implicit). As the director of the series "*La philosophie en toutes lettres*" (Philosophy in All Letters) in which the monograph was published, I invited the author, my friend Daniel Dauvois, a specialist in René Descartes and 17th- and 18th-century philosophy, to work on a new translation and a systematic study of Amo's two dissertations. Daniel Dauvois describes the motivation for his monograph as follows: *Amo doit être pour nous plus intéressant par l'ordinaire de sa pensée que par l'extraordinaire de sa vie* ("Amo must be more interesting for us for the ordinariness of his thought than the extraordinariness of his life" [2020, 6; 22; 264]). To say that the Ghanaian-born philosopher's thought is "ordinary" does not ignore the groundbreaking originality of his work. Rather, it means that the work belongs to its time and place.

The significance of Amo as a philosopher *of* his time and place lies in his original perspective on the enduring problem posed by Descartes' dualism of *mens* and *corpus* and the question of the union of the *res cogitans* and a *res extensa*.

> Amo's position on the question takes the following syllogistic form:
> No spirit senses material things, but the human mind is a spirit; therefore, it does not sense material things.
> Nothing can touch and be touched if not a body.
> Hence, the conclusion is that sensation and the faculty of sensing belong to the body. (Menn and Smith 2020, 153ff)

Many statements in Amo's work can be thus disposed of as syllogistic demonstrations of his core thesis. This can be presented as a conclusion derived from different arrangements of statements in his *Philosophical Dissertation on Mind and Body* (1734), all of which invariably rest upon the following premise: the impossibility of suffering, or the purely actuated nature (*mere actuosa*) of the mind. Actuosa is an important concept for which Dauvois (2020, 267ff) chooses to create *actueux* in French: central to Amo's thought is the idea that the nature of the *mens* is to be *mere actuosa*. Impassivity means that what belongs to the mind is the ideas it forms in its spontaneity (as a power of representation, a *vis repreasentiva*) without being compelled by anything external, whereas sensations belong to the body. The question is then the interaction between the body and the mind. On that question and the premises and conclusions in Amo's work, Dauvois has conducted a careful and precise examination that reconstitutes the identities of Amo's interlocutors, who are referenced through simple allusions that he often makes without direct quotes or attributions (157ff). Reading this history of ideas and interlocutors carefully, the examination manifests that most of them were physicians of his time and not just the "great philosophers" associated with figures such as Christian Wolff and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (172ff). This adds an important dimension to the question of the African-ness of Amo's thought as it also belongs to its space and time (263-64).

Nevertheless, what Amo's work says about African philosophy must be reaffirmed. This special issue, *Spectres of Anton Wilhelm Amo: The Enlightenment Philosopher*, is committed to highlighting his enduring significance with both clarity and conviction. It emphasizes two important points. First, Amo's philosophy serves as a striking counter-example to the "absurd prejudices" of those who think of themselves enlightened, and offer a compelling argument in favor of the abolitionist cause. Second, it undoubtedly manifests the African presence in addressing philosophical problems. Isn't that what "African philosophy" means first and foremost?

Biography

Souleymane Bachir Diagne is Professor of French and of Philosophy, and Director of the Institute of African Studies at Columbia University. Dr. Diagne's field of research includes history of logic, history of philosophy, Islamic philosophy, African philosophy and literature. He is the author of *African Art as philosophy: Senghor, Bergson, and the Idea of Negritude* (Seagull Books,

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2011); *Bergson postcolonial. L'élan vital dans la pensée de Senghor et de Mohamed Iqbal* (Paris; Editions du CNRS, 2011); *The Ink of the Scholars: Reflections on Philosophy in Africa* (Dakar, Codesria, 2016); and *Open to Reason: Muslim Philosophers in Conversation with Western Tradition* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2018).

Notes

1. A new edition has been published by Routledge in 1997.

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Maryam Qawash

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إلى بيتنا في الرمال

يغنيني الليل يا أبتاا
سأحمل ليلَك فوق ذراعي وأمضي إلى بيتنا في الرما لثقيلٌ عليكَ كأثقل
ما قد تكون الرما ل
وأقل منه بنيَّ الخيا م

يسير أبي للشما لوقد
أغمض المقلتين،
يقول: بُني تأم لعميقًا تأمّ ل
فشارعنا خلف مئذنة الياسمي نيجانب
كليةِ الهندسة
تأمل بنيَّ
هناك المنازلُ أضلاعُها من رخامٍ وأنفاسها سوسنة تنكر
بنيَّ.
مقابل شرفتِنا مصنعٌ للحرير.. بجانبه بائعُ
الأمنياتِ
إذا ما وصلتَ هناكَ تبصّ رفمنزلُنا يا بنيَّ عتيق عتي ق
أتنكرُ شرفتَنا الليلكيةَ خلف
ظلالِ العقي ق أتنكر
حاكورةَ البيتِ، والياسمينُ
يغازلُ نافورةً من زجاج رقي
ق

إذا ما وصلتَ بن يلمنزلنا فادخلِ
البيتَ،
سلم على صورة في الجدا ر
فصورة جدك منذ زمان بعيد تض
مد حزن الجدا ر
وقل للجدا ر:
أتيتُ إليكَ لئلا تظلَ غريبًا
لئلا تخر العناكبُ من سقفِ منزلنا في العرا ءأتيتك إليكَ!
على كتفي خيمةٌ لأبي..
أورث أطفالَيَ اليوم برد الخيا م

Translated by Bilal Hamamra

To Our House in the Sands

The night torments me, Father!
I will carry your night upon my arm and walk to our house in the sands.
Heavy upon you, like the weight of shifting dunes,
and heavier still are the tents, my son, as heavy as exile.

My father walks northward,
his eyes closed,
and he says:
"My son, contemplate deeply, contem-
plate.
Our street lies behind the minaret of jasmine, be-
side the citadel of engineers.
Look closely, my son.
There, the houses have ribs of marble, and their breath is the scent of irises.
Remember, my son.
Across from our balcony stands the factory of silk,
and beside it, the merchant of wishes.
If you arrive there, be mindful, for our house, my son,
is ancient, ancient as the sands themselves.
Do you remember our lilac balcony,
veiled behind the shadows of agate?
Do you remember the garden of the house,
and the jasmine entwining with a fountain
made of fragile glass?"

If you arrive, my son,
at our house, enter it.
Greet the picture on the wall,
for your grandfather's picture, from a time beyond reach,
mends the sorrow that bleeds from the wall.
And say to the wall:
"I have come to you so that you will not remain a stranger,
so that the spiders will not fall from the ceiling of our house, exposed to the wilderness.
I have come to you!"
On my shoulders rests a tent for my father...
Will I pass on to my children today the coldness of the tents?

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أريد هنا أن اعيشَ
أريد هنا أن أموتَ
فما أصعب الليل تحت
رداء الخيا م

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I want to live here,
I want to die here,
for how unforgiving is the night be-
neath the cloak of the tents.

Biography

Maryam Qawash is a Palestinian poet born in the Nuseirat Refugee Camp in Gaza on October 29, 1988. She earned her PhD in the Philosophy of Literature from Tanta University in Egypt. Qawash has published several poetry collections, including *Seven Lean Years* (2017), *As the Quail Walks* (2019), and *Letters to the Orange* (2021). Her works have received many awards, such as the Palestine International Poetry Prize (2021) and the Mediterranean International Poetry Award in Rome (2022).

Bilal Hamamra has a PhD in Early Modern Drama from the University of Lancaster, UK and is currently an associate professor of English literature in the Department of English Language and Literature, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine. His research interests are in Early Modern Drama, Shakespeare, Palestinian literature, women's writings and gender studies.

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Maryam Qawash

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بلاد على شفة الرياح

في أول الساعاتِ، عكا! كان
لحمُ الأرض أشرعةً،
يحاول أن يجاريَ شكلها البحرُ

في آخر الساحاتِ بئر السبعِ نقشٌ من رذاذ الخلقِ
منقضٌ على جسدِ
الهواء الم رتخلعُ وجهه الغجرُ

في ساعة التأويلِ من بعد الضحى في سهل
ماج دو
تن تـبعضُ أسئلة الوجو دلا
شيء يبدأ أو يموتُ
سوى انحدار النورِ في حلق السما لا شيء
يبلغ رشده كي ينتهي!
لا شيء متسقٌ بنافذة الضبابِ أريد ميثاقًا
يليق بموتتي وأريد ميلادًا يليق بنشأتي
الأخرى إذا حضروا!

في الشمس، قدس إلل
بيدرُ حكمةٍ نام تبلا قلقٍ بروح العابرينَ تريثي بإلل
يا مدنَ السماء تريثي!
ولتهبطي غيمًا على وجع الجبل، خُذي على
مهَلٍ غصونَ
النار مِ نأجساد مَ نعبروا!

في مخمل العصرِ الذي ثعبّه
أسئلة الذرى طبريةٌ
والغور ترهقه تجاعيد الجبالِ تضيقُ
أنفاسُ المياهِ
إذا أراد توشفةً من عنبرٍ! وتضيق
أحجيةُ ال زمانِ كأنها
طوقٌ يلمُّ الأرضَ من متن الكتابِ، قوسٌ
يدربه هديل الماءِ
إنَّ البدءَ متسعٌ،

Translated by Bilal Hamamra

Lands on the Edge of the Winds

In the first hours, Acre!
The flesh of the earth was like sails,
the sea struggled to mirror their form.

In the last squares, Beersheba,
a carving of the mist of creation, de-
scends upon the body of the bitter air,
that gypsies strip its face away.

In the hour of interpretation, after the dawn,
in the plain of Megiddo,
a few questions of existence were dewed:
Nothing begins or dies,
except the descent of light through the throat of the sky. Noth-
ing reaches maturity to end!
Nothing is in harmony with the window of the mist.
I want a covenant that befits my death,
and I want a birth that honors my other begetting,
when the exiled return!

In the sun, the sacred Jerusalem of God,
a field of wisdom slept without the worry of passing souls.
By God, O cities of the sky, be patient!
Descend as clouds upon the sorrow of lamenting mountains,
gently take the branches of fire
from the bodies of those who crossed their Rubicon of fate.

In the velvet of the age,
steeped in the questions of dust particles, lies Tiberias,
and the valley is wearied by the wrinkles of the mountains.
The breaths of the waters grow faint
as they thirst for a sip of amber!
The riddle of time tightens, as though
fate's collar tugs the earth from the very spine of destiny's scroll,
a bowstring honed by the rumbling of water.
Indeed, the beginning is wide,

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وفجر الل أسئلة وأ فى الغيم
منهمرُ

في ساحة المرج العريضِ، بُعيد
أن رفل الأصيلُ
رأيت بيسلًا تح زلمطلق البدء الجميلِ، تزيد في الظل
اتساعًا، تلبسُ النظارةَ الصفراء ثم تقول لي شجرٌ
تضمدها
عصافيرُ الضياع: مجالُك الحيوي يا بنت الحقيقةِ مطلعُ الفجر
العتيق،
تأ ملي وجع السدى، لا تأمَلي! هذي
الحياةُ فسيحةٌ في
عينِ مَن وسع ـتله آمالـها
وتضيقُ في عين الذي يتأملُ

زيدي التأملَ، خلفنا الأغوارُ تلثم
نزفها العِبرُ
في السَّاحل الغرب ِيتسعُ المدى، وتنوب
يافا جمرةً من برتقالٍ باذخٍ،
في البحر تغرقُ مثل مشكاةٍ تناجي الملحَ والمجذافَ: يا
بحرًا على رئتي تقيمُ
فيستغرقُ أنتَ في كلأ المصابيح النحيلةِ تائبًا كالجلنار
العنب تعتنزُ!

فيآخر الآياتِ مئذنةُ المخيمِ خلف
أقمارِ البدايةِ
تأكلُ الزيتونَ ثم تقول للمنف يقد طال
الغيا ب
لك ما تشاءُ من الهواءِ الخصبِ، لي
ما أبتغي من واقعي!
فأجيبُ: أحيثُ في شفةِ المخيمِ
لسعةَ الدمع الغريب المستسا غ هممتُ
لو أرخي عليه أكتافهِ ثوب النب ِي
المستطا ب
لكنني لحمي على جدُر الغيابِ المستحيلِ

أنا جدارُ الدهرِ تستندُ الأساطير الثقيلة لي، أنا والل يا ثوب
النب ِيِّ تلى وحي في الفرا غِ أنا المخيمُ أول الوطنِ
الشريدِ
وآخر الوطن الشري د/ الشهي د

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and God sparked questions,
the horizon of sentient clouds is pouring down.

In the broad meadow,
After the evening strutted gracefully,
I beheld Beisan yearning for the pristine dawn of beginnings, ex-
panding in the shadow, wearing yellow glasses,
then telling me that trees are healed
by the birds of loss:
Your vital space, O daughter of truth,
is the dawn of antic beginnings,
contemplate the pain of vanity, but do not hope!
This life is vast
in the eyes of one whose hopes have broadened,
and it narrows for the one who only contemplates.

Contemplate still, for behind us,
the valleys weep, kissing their bleeding wounds.
On the western coast, the horizon widens,
and Jaffa dissolves like an ember
of magnificent oranges,
sinking into the sea like a burning lamp beckoning the salt and the oar of fate:
"O sea, resting upon my lungs,
when will you drown in the pasture of slender lamps, re-
penting and apologizing like wild flowers?"

In the last verses, the minaret of the camp
stands behind the moons of the beginning,
eating olives, then tells the exiled:
"The absence has been long,
take what you desire from the fertile air,
and I shall have what I seek from my reality!"
I answer him:
"I have loved
the sting of foreign tears on the camp's edge,
and I nearly draped its shoulders
with the cloak of the honored Prophet,
but my flesh clings to the impossible walls of absence.

I am the wall of time, upon which the weight of ancient legends leans,
I swear by God, O cloak of the Prophet, I am a hand waving in the void.
I am the camp, the first of the wandering homeland,
and the last of the wandering homeland, the witness / martyr.

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في مجمل الساعاتِ،
ترتفعُ السماواتُ العظامُ إلى مدينتنا
المعلّقة البتولِ،
وتهبط الآيات أسرارا تدثر قلبها السُّورُ

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In the full hours,
The great heavens rise
above our suspended city,
and the sacred verses descend like divine whispers,
shrouding her heart in veils of celestial secrets.

Biography

Maryam Qawash is a Palestinian poet born in the Nuseirat Refugee Camp in Gaza on October 29, 1988. She earned her PhD in the Philosophy of Literature from Tanta University in Egypt. Qawash has published several poetry collections, including *Seven Lean Years* (2017), *As the Quail Walks* (2019), and *Letters to the Orange* (2021). Her works have received many awards, such as the Palestine International Poetry Prize (2021) and the Mediterranean International Poetry Award in Rome (2022).

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August Carrigan

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The Met Gala Goes to Rafah

the met gala is beautiful tonight
is wearing armani, is wearing gucci
is wearing some other brand you've probably heard of
but could never afford to even touch

met gala's hair took three hours
is perfection
and don't get me started on met galas make up
this look is serving
is eating
is the definition of cunt
we are all so envious
we want to be met gala
we want to live there
inside perfection

met gala stands in front of a mass grave
you can tell it used to be a hospital
by the broken sign half hidden under the rubble
in the background

the bodies each get a sequin on their foreheads
it makes them more photo ready
met gala dusts white phosphorous
on their cheeks
it makes a great highlighter you see
grabs a bit of soot from a nearby fire
for the perfect smokey eye

met gala twirls in slow motion
like a mother tucking her baby to her breast
hoping her flesh and blood will become armour
under bullet fire

met gala smiles for the cameras
flashes burst like tiny bombs
which have been drowned out by the paparazzi

look here met gala look here!

met gala walks the red carpet
which has been laid over the tiny bodies of children
who never made it home in time
(no one in Rafah made it home in time)

met gala thinks about their home, their bed
their feet are so sore in these shoes
they can't wait to take them off

BIOGRAPHY

August Carrigan is a spoken-word poet, playwright, and workshop facilitator from St. John's NL. They have work published in Ink & Marrow, Riddle Fence, Acta Victoriana, and Blank Spaces Magazine among others. August co-runs Spoken Word St. John's Poetry Open Mic once a month which is one of the many events where they've performed their own work. Their self published chapbook is available for sale on their Instagram @windblowpoet.

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Review of *White Enclosures. Racial Capitalism and Coloniality along the Balkan Route* by Piro Rexhepi

Vincenzo Maria Di Mino

Piro Rexhepi, *White Enclosures. Racial Capitalism and Coloniality along the Balkan Route*. (Durham, Duke University Press, 2023), 190 pages.

The Balkan Peninsula has, historically, represented the colonial Elsewhere of continental Europe. Suspended between East and West both culturally and geographically, exposed for centuries to foreign imperial dominations including Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman, and traversed by wartime destruction and Nazi-Fascist destruction in particular, the Balkan Peninsula has constructed its historical identity—multiple, diffuse, contradictory, non-unitary—precisely from the series of events that have passed through it. The last three decades, in this sense, have reopened deep wounds, which have erupted in violent and utterly necropolitical forms. The transition from socialist experiments to realized capitalism, fierce internal civil wars, mass migrations, and massacres and repressions have certainly highlighted the fragilities of an identity-building process cast down from above, and the political fragilities of the transition to the liberal democratic form. The combination of these events, in the eyes of Western observers, allowed the reopening of the Pandora's box of stereotypes modeled *ad hoc* on Balkan peoples, presented as barbarians and savages—incapable of control and therefore to be disciplined as much economically as culturally. Thus, the construction of an Orientalist gaze, to use Edward Said's categories, became the main point of access to the narrative of a geographic space that was formally European while being considered a colony. The Balkan Peninsula was to be shared economically among the hegemonic powers and culturally confined to the categories of folklore and the exotic.

White Enclosures. Racial Capitalism and Coloniality along the Balkan Route by Piro Rexhepi has as its object of study the exposition of the set of colonial narratives on the Balkan Peninsula and, as its own purpose, the deconstruction of these narratives while bringing out the composite, unknown, and subterranean set of resistances that opposed different forms of domination. When studying the regime of coloniality, which exists in different social formations and racial assemblages, but is ultimately rooted in an economic structure based on the male individual and the family, we find that the subject upon whom these forms of domination were inscribed is a marginal and marginalized body. Rexhepi, in

fact, decides to situate the bodies of his analysis at the intersection of the devices of race, class, and gender in order to bring out the tensions operated by the processes of identity subjugation, both during the socialist experience and in the epochal transition to liberal capitalism, that played out on the relationship between whiteness and territorial-ethnic identity. Indeed, in the words of the scholar, the combination of these two elements contributes to the construction of a fictitious and artificial identity, which he calls *artif/ictive*:

> By artif/ictive I mean the convergence of colonia, conscripted artifacts that today merge with fictive renditions of history (…) Thus the curation of whiteness in the Balkan borderlands is not just about bodies and borders, but also artifacts, architecture, and spiritual and historical knowledge-producing institutions that labor in producing racialized hierarchies of belonging where the EU comes to the aid of the locals to epistemically and historically re-Westernize and reconstitute themselves as white. (77)

What is at stake, for Rexhepi, is the construction of whiteness as a constitutive element of Balkan identity, anchored in a typically Western model that is linked to a specific form of masculinity—wasp, for that matter—and the *tout court* invention of an identity memory that becomes the narrative of a deep desire for integration. The liminal status of the Balkans, consequently, becomes the element that allows the Eurocentric and racial narrative to inscribe itself as an element that can heal the racial and cultural differences that separate the different identities of the Balkan peoples from the former, and to construct its own historical memory following the historical-political requirements imposed by the hegemonic culture.

In this sense, it can be said that the great value of Rexhepi's book and analysis lies in having presented the plots of Balkan histories and resistances as a geopolitics of whiteness idealized and actualized as a threshold of access to the Western world. *White Enclosures* is supported by moral and humanitarian colonialism anchored in military-type interventions and cultural operations of differential inclusion both within the Balkan Peninsula and in the countries of the European Community. Through this specific colonial outlook based on the dialectic between civilized and barbaric heir to Balkan domination, the Balkan Peninsula has been presented as the soft underbelly of Europe, exposed to the calls of the Other and capable of endangering European civilization—thus constructed over time as an imperial frontier against cultural and material invasions (of the Ottomans first, of migrants and refugees today). This imperial frontier condition, in fact, underscores the situation's inherent weakness and, therefore, its subordinate status along the line of race and civilization: the more this imperial frontier is exposed to the danger of invasion, the more it must be governed orthopedically, supported from the outside, and pushed into the (un)reassuring arms of racial capitalism. Reassuring global identity, on which local specificities are inscribed in order to be better exposed and sold in the market of human rights and cultural inclusion. The model of whiteness, thus, becomes the perfectible model of a racialized body, to be pursued, to be spread, so as to discipline marginal and resistant bodies.

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Projecting the gaze further to current events, Rexhepi's book immediately interrogates the forms that European governance of migration take precisely along the Balkan route, which has been, and continues to be, fundamentally the only route into Europe by refugees fleeing the Middle East. Strengthening of the borders, in this context, not only operates to filter from a legal and social point of view but constitutes a real watershed between an identity solidly anchored in the white European-Western context and an identity (the Muslim one) considered violent and aggressive. This entails a further division within the migrant body itself; between docile and weak bodies destined for normalization and, therefore, inclusion as victims in the new social context, and resistant and indocile bodies, marginalized and expelled because they are considered harmful to the social milieu. This set of operations, which falls squarely within the statute of humanitarian reason that guides the overall governance of migration, racializes and sexualizes bodies, exposing them to public opinion as naked bodies destined for assistance or violence. The same kind of reason has operated for decades within the Balkan route.

Rexhepi's book is composed of five chapters in which he exposes, in great detail and through a specific theoretical positioning, how the construction of different identity frames along the Balkan peninsula passed through the devices of subjugation. The first device is that of whiteness, the minimum horizon of civilization, as opposed to a racial dimension of inferiorization of the Other. The second device, in close connection to the first, is the boundary, the territorialized dimension of identity; constructed through an exclusionary capitalist model of accumulation. This model has operated through the privatization and putting to work of specific subjective categories, making the cost of crises fall on the lowest segments of the social composition, on bodies considered unworthy of social recognition represented by labor. The third device, finally, operates the division of social composition and the marginalization of surplus bodies through their sexualization (that is, through the construction of sexual standards linked to heteronormativity). Rexhepi brings out the constant presence of resistances of bodies, which escape sexual normalization, and which he characterizes as queer, as marginal elements capable of sabotaging the grids of command and identity division, which in their making instead become elements of active solidarity among these same social segments. These resistances are those of Muslim bodies, which begin to develop during socialism.

The first chapter, titled "Nonaligned Muslims in the Margins of Socialism: The Islamic Revolution in Yugoslavia," shows how the majority Muslim Bosnian populations were already considered dangerous by the socialist leadership of Yugoslavia. During and after the tragic civil war, religious identity was transformed into an element of enmity, and danger, considered the bearer of violence and intolerance towards Western modernity. In this context, racial management operates by imputing growing violence to religious ideology, turning Muslim communities into sacrificial communities, victims of geopolitical violence. The second chapter, "Historicizing Enclosure: Refashioned Colonial Continuities as European Cultural Legacy," has as its object the rewriting of the past in the Bosnian context, precisely in light of the migration phenomena

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and the construction of the moral panic concerning the Islamic invasion of Europe. The trauma of war and religious affiliation, thus, is overdetermined by the social relations marked by neoliberal globalization and the strengthening of existing power differentials. New levels of accountability were instituted for Muslim communities, who had to prove their degree of integration in order to be an active part of the process of rebuilding Bosnia's European credibility in the long postwar period. This process of Re-Occidentalization also had a strong impact on the construction of the imperial and post-imperial memory of Bosnia itself, whose imagery was engulfed by colonial narratives of a frontier past and present to be protected and developed.

The third chapter, "Enclosure Sovereignties: Saving Missions and Supervised Self-Determination," shifts its analysis further south, focusing on the history of Albanian identity and its diasporic nature, accentuated by mass emigration before, during, and after the collapse of the socialist project. Albanian identity, in this sense, Rexhepi shows, has historically been constructed as an element of purity along the border with neighboring minor Balkan identities and the spectre of the external Muslim one, especially by Albanian communities residing in Europe and the United States, as well as by Western public opinion itself. The Western recovery of Albania and Kosovo was seen as an opportunity, as much economic as political, to establish elements of strength within the Balkan peninsula, to transform the long-brooding desire for self-determination during socialist governance into a request for help from the global powers. The practice of an exquisitely colonial nature of appropriating and neutralizing the desire of the other—in this case of the Indigenous peoples—through one's own gaze. The fourth chapter, titled "(Dis)Embodying Enclosure: Of Straightened Muslim Men and Secular Masculinities," declines the colonial gaze by dealing with the instrumentalization and promotion of secularized Muslim masculinities by global modernization projects within the same Albanian and Kosovar contexts. The victimization of queer minorities in the social presence of Muslims made sexuality unsafe and dangerous and necessitated concrete legislative interventions. If white queer bodies were presented as victims to be protected, Muslim queer bodies were presented not only as elements capable of representing Balkan peoples' desire for whiteness, but also as allegories of the incompleteness of bodies dislocated between racial-religious affiliation and Western orientation. The construction of queer normativity, in this sense, came closer to the construction of an idealistic straightness of the sexual and racial minority than to the concrete desire for freedom of the Balkan queer communities themselves.

The last chapter, "Enclosure Demographics: Reproductive Racism, Displacement, and Resistance", deals with the connection between anti-Muslim and anti-Roma racism in Bulgaria, including the media construction of the concept of 'demographic invasion' by Roma and Islamic minorities (capable of attacking the territorial and identity integrity of the nation, including through the sexual differentiation of bodies). The construction of this colonial and homophobic imaginary, which characterizes both capitalist and post-socialist narratives, can and must be subverted, according to Rexhepi, by the proliferation of

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undercommon narratives, capable of unraveling the subterranean alliances between marginal bodies and identities and deconstructing the need for security that pervades mainstream cultural frames, restoring strength and words to these excluded and victimized bodies. The marginal body, at this height, is a resilient collective body that highlights violence and aspires to its own self-determination beyond the grids of victimization and colonial differentiation.

In conclusion, it can be safely said that Rexhepi's work is a necessary and highly topical one, providing conceptual and political compasses to navigate within the puzzle of hegemonic and marginal identities, especially at a juncture when the new regime of global warfare uses lesser bodies as a threshold of division between friend and foe; progressively compressing and eliding the right to dissent and social conflict against this state of affairs. Indeed, the author's decolonial approach is an excellent starting point for interrogating the effects of liberal governance and imagining a concrete alternative to war and the washing of differences.

Biography

Vincenzo Di Mino, a graduate student in Political Science, is an independent researcher in political and social theory.

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Errata
Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies III.II
Unthemed

• p. 2 Change "(Alareer 2014, 537)" to "(Al-Areer 2014, 537)"

• p. 10 Change "specter" to "spectre"

• p. 39 Change "2000" to "2007"

• p. 44 Change "1997" to "1998"

• p. 83(a)-83(c) Page 84 is preceded by 3 pages of images making each page after 83 be on the wrong side of the journal

• p. 93 Change "but we currently" to "as we currently"

• p. 109 Change "an Israel settler" to "an Israeli settler" and change "chief Seattle" to "Chief Seattle"

• p. 122 Change "beautyfying" to "beautifying".

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JANUS UNBOUND: JOURNAL OF CRITICAL STUDIES

CALL FOR PAPERS (EIGHTH EDITION)

Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies is pleased to announce a call for papers for issue **4.2**, scheduled for **publication** in Summer 2025. The abstract submission deadline has been extended to **30th March 2025.**

Abstract Deadline

30th March 2025

Publication Date

Summer 2025

Publish with us...

We value excellence and originality. Janus Unbound are particularly attracted to works that challenge prevailing views and established ideas and encourage thought provoking research topics and debate.

Based on "If not now, when?" as a motto, we foster transdisciplinarity, participate in the ongoing reconfiguration of knowledge, and challenge received conceptual frames and perspectives for the sake of the power, health, and wealth of the multitude.

The Theme

Open Themed

We invite any and all submissions regardless of topic. We welcome works that fit ideas of traditional academic essays, but also encourage transdisciplinary and experimental pieces, creative writing, personal narratives, and creative fiction. We particularly welcome feminist voices and submissions from authors of marginalized and/or disadvantaged communities and positionalities.

About Janus Unbound

We are a double-blind peer-reviewed open access journal published bi-annually by Memorial University of Newfoundland, occupying a unique niche among journals of critical studies. A transdisciplinary platform for scholarly and creative writing, and academic research and exchange, within the field of World Literature in particular, and Cultural Studies and the Humanities in general. We provide a medium of intercommunication for students, teachers, researchers, critics, intellectuals, scholars, and artists all over the world.

JU invites original research articles, essays, review articles, critical notes, commentaries, book reviews, and poems, long, short, and in-between. Multiple submissions are welcome. Poems should be original. We accept short films and videos. We do not consider work that has appeared elsewhere (this includes all websites and personal blogs) or that is being considered for publication elsewhere. Interested parties should send their works to info@janusunbound.com.

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- Open access to all researchers and free of charge.
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Published by MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

If not now, when?

JANUS UNBOUND: JOURNAL OF CRITICAL STUDIES

CALL FOR PAPERS (NINTH EDITION)

Abstract Deadline

30th December 2024

Publication Date

Fall 2025

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MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies is pleased to announce a call for papers for **5.1**, scheduled for **publication** in Winter 2025. The abstract submission deadline is **30 December 2024.**

This special guest issue is edited by **Sarmad Majeed Mohammed** at Tikrit University, and **Eman Fares Salman**, an Iraqi actor and director.

The Theme

Women and Costumes in Contemporary Arab Theatre

We welcome contributions from diverse perspectives on a wide range of topics related to the aesthetic role of women's costumes in Contemporary Arab theatre. Articles can address the following ideas/themes and questions:

- Women's costumes in theatre-making.
- Women's costumes as a means of social and political resistance in Arab theatre.
- The role of women's costumes in reflecting social and cultural status in contemporary Arab theatre.
- The impact of political movements on women's costumes in contemporary Arab theatre performances.
- The impact of social and religious diversity on women's costumes in contemporary Arab theatre.

We welcome submissions that fit "traditional" academic essay ideas and encourage creative writing, personal narratives, and creative non-fiction.

Submission Guidelines

Submit a brief **abstract**, no longer than 300 words, that encapsulates your proposed paper. Alongside your abstract, please include a short biography of up to 100 words to help us get to know you better.

Once your abstract is accepted, you'll have the exciting opportunity to develop your ideas into a complete paper. The paper should be 4000 to 5000 words, including references and notes, providing sufficient space for thorough discussion. All submissions must be in English and adhere to the guidelines set by the Chicago Manual of Style (17th edition).

Schedule for the Special Issue

Deadline for abstract: December 30, 2024
Notification of acceptance: January 20, 2024
Deadline for the first draft: April 15, 2025
Deadline for full paper: July 10, 2025
Date of Publication: December 2025

Submission Process

Abstract and full papers should be submitted electronically to the guest editor, Sarmad Mohammed, at **sm231357ped@st.tu.edu.iq**. Please include "**Women and Costumes in Contemporary Arab Theatre**" as the subject of your email.

JANUS UNBOUND

About Janus Unbound

We are a double-blind, peer-reviewed, open-access journal published biannually by ***Memorial University of Newfoundland***. We provide a unique platform for scholarly and creative exchange within the fields of world literature, particularly cultural studies and the humanities. We are a transdisciplinary platform that fosters growth and learning for students, teachers, researchers, critics, intellectuals, scholars, and artists worldwide.

Non-themed submissions

We always welcome non-themed submissions. JU invites original research articles, essays, review articles, critical notes, commentaries, book reviews, and poems, long and short. Multiple submissions are welcome. Poems should be original. We accept short films and videos. Please note that we do not consider work that has appeared elsewhere (including all websites and personal blogs) or is being considered for publication elsewhere. Interested parties should send their works to **info@janusunbound.com**. Please include a brief bio and a cover letter explaining how your work fits the theme of this particular issue.

We value ***excellence*** and ***originality***. We are particularly attracted to works that challenge prevailing views and established ideas, encouraging thought-provoking research topics and debate. With "**If not now, when?**" as our motto, we promote transdisciplinarity, engage in the ongoing reconfiguration of knowledge, and challenge established conceptual frameworks for the sake of ***(positive)*** *change*.

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Based on "**If not now, when?**" as a motto, we foster transdisciplinarity, participate in the ongoing reconfiguration of knowledge, and challenge received conceptual frames and perspectives for the sake of the power, health, and wealth of the multitude.

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