CONTRADICTIONARY
AN ALMANAC OF RESISTANCE

With A Foreword By
José Luis Villacañas Berlanga

Edited By
Bernd Herzogenrath and Nicol A Barria-Asenjo

C O N T R A D I C T i o n a r y

An Almanac of Resistance

Bernd Herzogenrath & Nicol A. Barria-Asenjo

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The transitional images of the present appear as enigmatic signs. They elicit profound anxieties even as they conjure other ways of seeing. Seeded by a mode of imagination that is only activated when 'the light of sense' goes out, the mesmerizing spectacles of what we designate as the late Imaginary push back to the surface the core problematics of writing and reading, of listening and thinking.

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Foreword

José Luis Villacañas Berlanga

It was Joseph de Maistre who declared, at the height of the revolutionary era that began in 1789, that what was needed was not a counter-revolution, but a "contrary revolution." With this statement, this influential figure among reactionary forces distanced himself from all the eighteenth-century publications that had been warning of the destruction of the Old Regime and defending its structures – doing so with the old tools of that plebeian and hardened rhetoric of the religious orders, with their enduring influence over the masses, debased by poverty, servitude, and despair. De Maistre clearly perceived that it was necessary to confront a philosophically formidable enemy, the Enlightenment, and that with those weapons, forged in the cauldrons of medieval Scholasticism, it could not be defeated. With him emerged a new perspective, imbued with a heart of stone and a savage resentment already oriented toward the construction of totalitarian and brutal powers.

It is no coincidence that De Maistre, in his posthumous work *Les Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg*, came to see the Tsars of Russia as the pillars of the new civilization. By that time, the Holy Alliance had already been forged in 1815, its purpose being to destroy any emancipatory liberal regime wherever it might arise. It was this same spirit that illuminated the era which, in 1823, dispatched an entire army – the Hundred Thousand Sons of Saint Louis – in an attempt to eliminate every liberal element in Spain, with the ultimate goal of containing the patriots of the American republics then fighting for their independence. This was the moment in which the Monroe Doctrine was forged, and its purpose was precisely to block that aspiration.

That same spirit was responsible, in 1848, for imposing repression against revolutionaries in Paris and Berlin, and ultimately throughout Europe. It was in Berlin – where Schopenhauer offered his balcony to Prussian soldiers to fire upon the crowds – that the Spanish ambassador to Prussia, José Donoso Cortés, and the ambassador of Nicholas I discussed the future of the world, and where the idea of modern dictatorship was first forged. When Bismarck seized absolute power in 1871, after founding the Second Reich in Versailles in January of that year and

subsequently instigating the bloody week of May that ended the Paris Commune, he gave expression to that same spirit. We must not forget that, after the First World War, this spirit would find its theoretical codification in the four chapters of Carl Schmitt's *Political Theology*, which became the seminal text of the so-called Conservative Revolution that brought down the Weimar Republic. In reality, 1933 represented the historical culmination – for the moment – of that "contrary revolution" first announced by Joseph de Maistre: the most consistent of the anti-Enlightenment thinkers, the great herald of the enormous human sacrifices to come, a matter that René Girard would take up much later. These are the men of political theology, heirs to a long tradition spanning centuries, the living expression of an ancient imperial aspiration thousands of years old.

If we read *The Straussian Moment*, the short book by Peter Thiel – one of President Trump's most significant ideological and financial backers, and founder of Palantir, the company responsible for implementing his anti-immigration program – we discover the latest manifestation of this "contrary revolution." This German-born American, a student of contemporary philosophy at Stanford University, offers us an index that clearly maps the tradition of the "contrary revolution": from Carl Schmitt to René Girard, that epigone of Joseph de Maistre, all of them aligned with Leo Strauss – a secret admirer of Schmitt who, for obvious reasons, could not openly confess his sympathies. Thiel's book advocates for a revolution contrary to the democratic revolution that has illuminated history over the past two centuries, whose simplest and most austere expression is captured in the words with which this book begins: Abraham Lincoln's Peoria Speech of October 16, 1854: "No human being is good enough to govern another human being without his consent. I proclaim this to be the guiding principle, the sheet anchor for American republicanism." Reading through Thiel's work, one understands that it rests on precisely the opposite principle: that the differences between human beings are of sufficient magnitude that some must govern others by any means whatsoever, with or without their consent. This is the guiding principle of all totalitarianisms, past and future, and of all political theologies. And so, once again, I must disagree with René Char and with Foucault, who quotes him approvingly. The history of human beings is not a succession of synonyms for the same word. Republicanism and totalitarianism are not synonymous. There is an *entweder…oder* – an either/or – that must be decided.

Faced with this reemerging reality, which resurfaces in history through powerful subterranean currents, the dominant philosophy – offered by the great intellectual authorities forged in the epic years of May 1968 – has barely managed to produce anything beyond the crystallization of a resistance taken for granted in human intelligence. It is lamentable that, for example, Deleuze's philosophy so effectively characterized our societies as "control societies," and yet failed to generate a movement capable of effectively opposing them. The times undoubtedly demand more than resistance. Today, the "contrary revolution" driven by totalitarianism is winning the cultural battle, while conventional academic philosophy has been swept aside, powerless to generate anything more than small communities of virtuous critics, each absorbed in its own perpetual commentary.

I read Herzogenrath and Barria-Asenjo's *CONTRADICTionary* as an urgent wake-up call about the dangers of this state of affairs. Faced with the "compactness" of totalitarianism, this book revives the commitment to intensifying heterogeneity. Against programs of identification and control, it offers a range of concepts that demonstrate the uncontrollable power of thought. Against immigration policies founded on the principle of exclusion, this dictionary asserts the right of many potentially proscribed concepts to exist and move freely. Against preemptive militarization capable of crushing any opposition, the dictionary reveals the inevitable conflict and friction inherent in any conceptual world, the impossibility of reducing it to a seamless whole. Its aspiration, therefore, is to oppose totalitarian revolution with the contrary conceptual weapon.

Reinhard Koselleck observed that all political concepts are simultaneously indexes and factors. He never quite managed to reveal the mystery behind their simultaneous nature – how this economy of relations is organized, or in what proportion each operates. Moreover, we seem to live in a world that contradicts his thesis: we witness representations completely devoid of indexical value, of truth value, and yet capable of pushing their factorial dimension to the extreme – their capacity to stir psyches into a hysterical agitation bearing no connection to reality, universalizing reactive symptoms in a universe marked by an extreme dualism of stimulants and sedatives, oscillating between opiate-induced sleepwalking and epileptic frenzy. This is the condition of the psyche of many contemporary individuals: a schizoid condition entirely devoid of the creative

expectation that was naively placed upon it. And this is a serious problem, because these psyches – let us not deceive ourselves – constitute dead ends in the formative evolution of the self.

And yet, whoever manipulates human beings, even those characterized in this way, always does so through conceptual elements – and this book identifies precisely their opposite. We must not confuse these psyches, primed to be pulled like puppets, with those who run the game. The latter are armed with conceptual representations whose ultimate core is the belief that human beings are essentially unequal in quality and value. These representations have their index: the bank accounts, the chains of digital ones and zeros mobilized through their digital platforms. It is worth recalling that the title of one of Thiel's books is precisely *Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future*. But his concepts carry another dimension as well: organizing policies in which this essential difference cannot be questioned by any other human being – which implies dominating the earth while compelling us to stare, transfixed, into their virtual Metaverse.

One might ask, however, whether we should allow ourselves to be guided by the enemy's own logic. Joseph de Maistre suggested that what was needed was not a counter-revolution, but a contrary revolution. And perhaps this is the horizon within which this *CONTRADICTionary* should operate. It offers and unfolds the elements of a new discourse – one that effectively and persuasively contradicts the discourse seeking to impose itself as dominant and monolithic. Each of these concepts carries its truth value, but also presents a dimension of affect and sensibility capable of moving the will and becoming a factor of resistance. Its effectiveness from this perspective is solid, its writing brief and clear, its aspiration popular, its competence exemplary. Herzogenrath and Barria-Asenjo have achieved the remarkable feat of mobilizing more than a hundred colleagues committed to a cultural and political struggle that has left behind the pretension of offering a dazzling and charismatic philosophy in service of individual brilliance. This is a work that, in itself – in the humility and commitment of its contributions – defends another form of philosophy.

And yet a further effort remains: to compose, from all these concepts – without relinquishing their internal tensions, their capacity to generate friction – a discourse capable of preparing a contrary revolution.

Humanity's evolutionary destiny depends on this capacity. The battle will not be easy. A segment of the elites in a society founded on the orders of capitalism has not renounced, and will not renounce, the basic structures of political theology – the only ones that guarantee essential inequality, a radical heterogeneity among human beings. The optimism of deconstruction must be abandoned: that optimism which believed that, since theology had been defeated by the denunciation of onto-theology, all energy should be devoted to the enjoyment of thought on par with free human imagination; that optimism which forgot the grave moments of human history and opted instead for irony and lightheartedness; that optimism which was never, in truth, characteristic of the Enlightenment. No more imitators of the gay science. The critique of onto-theology does not destroy theology, because the key to theology is politics, not metaphysics. Ontological difference is not the key to the critical thinking of the future. That key will be the rejection of anthropological difference, at every level. Post-foundational political philosophy has failed to grasp this, remaining the last manifestation and defense of heterogeneity in the bearer of the empty signifier.

Political theology is a substantial, permanent, and perpetual enemy of human emancipation, accompanying every accumulation of power since the great empires of the Fertile Crescent five thousand years ago. This fact – which structures the war machine described by Deleuze in *A Thousand Plateaus* – must be placed at the center of our thinking. We cannot lower our guard against it. The contrary revolution of emancipation, the antithesis of totalitarian revolution, is endless. But it must begin by raising its voice with opposing words. And that is precisely what this book does, admirably. There is a phrase lost in the mists of time that reminds us: if human beings did not speak out at certain moments, in certain situations, even the stones would cry out. Each of these entries is the cry of a stone. But we must find a way for all of them, gathered in a great slingshot, to bring down the giant's head.

Introduction

Bernd Herzogenrath & Nicol A. Barria-Asenjo

> L'histoire des hommes est la longue succession des synonymes d'un même vocable. Y contredire est un devoir.(The history of men is a long succession of synonyms for the same word. To contradict it is a duty.)
> *René Char, quoted by Michel Foucault on the back of volumes 2 and 3 of Histoire de la sexualité*

> [N]o man is good enough to govern another man, without that other's consent. I say this is the leading principle—the sheet anchor of American republicanism.
> *Abraham Lincoln, Peoria Speech, October 16, 1854*

In an era where language itself has become a battleground, *CONTRADICTionary: An Almanac of Resistance* emerges as a defiant testament to the power of words in shaping reality. The project is born from a moment of profound contradiction: a political landscape where terms like 'diversity,' 'equity,' and 'climate crisis' were systematically excised from official discourse under the Trump Administration, deemed too divisive, too charged, or too aligned with what was dismissively labeled 'woke' ideology. This purge, far from a mere bureaucratic act, represented a calculated effort to silence narratives that challenge systems of power, inequality, and environmental neglect. By targeting language that articulates marginalized experiences and collective struggles, the administration sought to shrink the boundaries of acceptable dialogue, rendering complex social realities invisible. *CONTRADICTionary* responds to this erasure not with silence, but with amplification: it 're-purposes' this ugly list, expanding it to include other terms important for a 'political vocabulary of the 21st Century,' mobilizing a chorus of more than 100 voices dissecting, reclaiming, and reimagining the very concepts deemed threatening to the status quo.

Each entry in the almanac functions as both a mirror and a window: a reflection of the political forces that seek to control language and a portal into the lived experiences, scholarly rigor, and creative ferment that

resist such control. Take, for instance, the word 'intersectionality." Once a term coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe the overlapping systems of oppression faced by Black women, it has been flattened into a political buzzword, mocked as jargon or weaponized to dismiss discussions of systemic inequality.

This collection did not emerge spontaneously, nor is its eclecticism incidental. *CONTRADICTionary* is the result of a deliberate editorial process that brought together scholars, artists, activists, and practitioners already engaged in contesting the erosion of public language, and the shift in politics this ensues. Contributors were invited not simply for disciplinary expertise, but for their situated engagements with words under pressure, whether in classrooms, policy spaces, cultural production, or grassroots movements. The aim was to assemble a chorus capable of thinking across various registers, where theoretical precision meets lived experience and creative intervention. What may appear at first glance as a playful or heterogeneous archive is, in fact, a carefully curated experiment in collective meaning-making under conditions of constraint.

The immediate catalyst for this project lies in a specific political moment: the circulation of the so-called "Trump list" of discouraged or banned terms within U.S. federal agencies. Words such as "diversity," "transgender," and "evidence-based" became flashpoints in a broader struggle over what could be said, known, and legitimized within public institutions. This was not an isolated 'bureaucratic anomaly,' but part of a wider attempt to reshape 'the realm of the sayable' [and, in effect, the 'realm of the doable' as well] by administrative means. Our *CONTRADICTionary* takes this moment as both symptom and provocation. By repurposing and expanding that list, the volume makes explicit its origins in a context where language and 'being' itself was subject to governance, while also interrogating the political rationalities that render certain words and life decisions dangerous.

At the same time, our project is attentive to the risks of overgeneralization. While grounded in a distinctly North American political moment and context, *CONTRADICTionary* does not assume that this experience is universally shared. The project's polyvocality is central to this effort: with contributors from across continents, each term is refracted through distinct historical, cultural, and political experiences, preventing any single perspective from hardening into authority. These situated interpretations

may not once and for all eliminate the risk of universalization, but they form a critical bulwark against it by foregrounding difference, friction, and partiality. The inclusion of these voices is thus not an attempt to flatten differences, but quite the contrary: to open a comparative space in which parallels and divergences can be critically examined. If the volume gestures toward broader claims about language and power, it does so self-consciously, inviting readers to consider how such struggles manifest within their own contexts rather than presuming a singular global condition.

The act of banning language is never neutral; it is an assertion of power over memory, identity, and possibility. When the Trump Administration excised 'climate crisis' from federal documents, replacing it with euphemisms like 'extreme weather events,' it did more than obscure scientific consensus. It attempted to sever public discourse from the urgency of ecological collapse. *CONTRADICTionary* confronts this sleight-of-hand by grounding each term in visceral human stakes, exposing the paradox at the heart of censorship: efforts to suppress language often ignite its most potent iterations. By banning a word, those in power inadvertently highlight its significance, ensuring that its absence becomes a presence, a ghost haunting the margins of official texts.

What makes the *CONTRADICTionary* uniquely compelling is its embrace of contradiction as methodology. The almanac does not merely defend banned words as static definitions; it revels in their fluidity, their capacity to evolve through conflict and context. The contributors themselves embody this spirit of plurality. Academics rub shoulders with artists, policy analysts with poets, creating a dissonance that is deliberately generative. This collision of forms and voices mirrors the almanac's central thesis: that language is not a monolith to be controlled but a living ecosystem, nourished by diversity of thought and experience. The inclusion of global perspectives further destabilizes the notion that these banned terms are the sole province of American political skirmishes.

Yet, our *CONTRADICTionary* is more than an academic exercise or an archival project. It is also a call to arms. Each entry concludes not with a period but a provocation, urging readers to deploy these words as tools for transformation. Even seemingly abstract terms, like 'neoliberalism,' are tethered to actionable insights. This interplay of analysis and

praxis reflects the almanac's belief that language divorced from action is complicity.

The timing of the *CONTRADICTionary* is no accident. As governments worldwide increasingly employ disinformation campaigns, algorithmic censorship, and legalistic gaslighting to manipulate public consciousness, the collection functions as a kind of counter-propaganda, subverting the very tactics it critiques. By reclaiming banned words, it models a form of resistance that is as much about imagination as it is about confrontation. It is a reminder that every act of censorship contains the seeds of its own undoing, as suppressed words inevitably resurface with renewed force.

The English language is replete with words whose meanings are illuminated through their etymological roots. The word *contradict* derives from the Latin verb *contradīcere*, which is a compound of *contra-* ('against') and *dīcere* ('to say' or 'to speak'). Thus, *contradict* literally means 'to speak against.' Thus, *contradiction* presumes the existence of discourse and the possibility of dissent within it. As Harrison Ford put it: Kamala Harris will protect your right to disagree with her… the other candidate? Well…

The root *dīcere* ("to say") is also the basis for the word *dictator*. In classical Latin, a *dictātor* was a magistrate appointed during times of crisis in the Roman Republic, one who was 'appointed' to speak or command with absolute authority. The Latin *dictātor* comes from *dictāre*, an intensive form of *dīcere*, meaning 'to say repeatedly' or 'to declare.' Here, the existence of discourse is annihilated: words only mean what the dictator wants them to mean (Humpty-Trumpty): The question is, which is to be master – that's all!

The relationship between *contradict* and *dictator*, then, is not merely linguistic but ideological: to contradict is to challenge the legitimacy or truth of a 'dictate,' an assertion that might otherwise go unchallenged in a context of absolute power.

Ultimately, our *CONTRADICTionary* is a celebration of language's unruly potential. It understands that words are not merely descriptors but actors, capable of dismantling hierarchies, forging solidarity, and reconfiguring reality. The almanac does not pretend to offer neat resolutions or universal truths. Instead, it embraces the friction of conflicting viewpoints, and the fertile chaos of language in motion. In doing so, it becomes more than a book: it becomes a manifesto, a living archive, and a proof of concept: that when words are forbidden, they do not disappear.

They multiply. Words are never neutral. They are wielded – sharpened into weapons, softened into sedatives, or stripped of their power entirely. In the hands of those who rule, words do not describe the world: they dictate it. And we are expected to obey.

This *CONTRADICTionary* is written in revolt. It is a declaration of resistance against the dictatorial control of language, against the manipulation, censorship, and coercion embedded in the words we are told to use, and the ones we are told to forget.

To *contradict* is to speak against.

CONTRADICTionary is not just a play on words. It is a counter-spell, a reawakening of language from the coma of compliance. It is built on the belief that every word can be a battlefield, and every redefinition an act of reclamation. In the face of governments that redefine 'peace' as 'submission,' of corporations that rename 'exploitation' as 'opportunity,' of institutions that mask 'control' as 'order," we offer contradiction as both method and mandate.

Let this be clear: To contradict is not to be contrarian for its own sake. It is to expose the violence of imposed meaning. It is to ask: *Who gets to speak? Who gets to define? Who gets to silence?*

Our *CONTRADICTionary* is not only a collection of definitions… it is a call to re-define. Each entry is a confrontation with the language that has been used to rule us. Every word is chosen because it has been stolen, corrupted, weaponized, or worse, emptied. We aim to fill them again. Not with passive meaning, but with active resistance.

You are holding a manual for linguistic insubordination. This is not a dictionary. This is a *CONTRADICTionary*.

A refusal that affirms life. A revolt. But not in a draining, tiring, anxious, suspicious or merely reactive way… a generative and enduring 'joyful militancy' is needed!

The speaking-against begins: radicalized by urgency… and decency!

A

accessibility

Feroza Jussawalla

For me, accessibility means, access to social services for the young and the old: childcare, health care, paid maternity and paternity leave, health-related leave, medical leave, "compassionate sick leave," for times of extended illness, and access to mobility for the disabled. The United States has always been sadly inadequate in providing help to women, the elderly, or the needy, because it has always entrusted the needs of its citizens to private insurers, large capitalist corporations, that extract huge premiums and co-pays. With recent administrative changes, especially those that entrusted Elon Musk with cuts, (though he is long gone, and not wielding his chainsaw anymore), depleted whatever available resources were allowed for the needy. The US prides itself in being a leading economy yet is far below many European states and even below what were considered "third world countries," like India, in providing access to social services for the young and the old alike.

Long before Mr. Trump took office, under the George Bush Sr.-Dan Quayle (1989-1993) administration, I remember writing to Mrs. Bush, about the difficulty of maintaining the "family values" their administration stood for, when there was no parental leave. Childcare was not readily accessible. As a struggling, young, female academic, I took my "premie," fragile child with me to conferences and sometimes to work. This was frowned upon. If I wanted tenure, I had to go back to work fifteen days after my cesarean and to arrange for my own substitute teachers, if I was to continue getting paid. People like me fought hard for the rights of women to bring children to work, or to have *accessible* childcare available on campuses and at conferences.

Decades and two cancers later, accessible sick leave, is still not available, and is an absolute must. When I went in to see a department chair while wearing a baseball cap over my bald chemo-therapy head, he asked me to come back when it was all over. I remember a female department

chair, who should have known better, threatening to "post-tenure" me out, because I hadn't published while on chemotherapy. Access to Unions as academics is very rare and they can hardly do anything for you.

Today, for me, as a seventy-three-year-old senior citizen, living alone, *access* to health care, health care related transportation, and meals when I can't prepare them, are key to my survival. The US government never provided it and will now, with the 2025 government administration remove access to benefits even more, as it seems to privilege the survival of the financially fittest, the toughest billionaires. In October of 2025, the government remains shut down due to the refusal of the Republicans, to negotiate providing the less privileged with the Affordable Care Act.

Twelve years since the passing of my mother, I am still paying the bill for her home- health caregivers. The United States prides itself on social services, like Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid, all of which, however, are services and "benefits" that we, as workers, pay for in advance and do not have access to when needed. Even as the need increases, especially, for the increasing numbers of the "unhoused," and for accessibility to mental health, the wealthy Republicans would rather shut down the government than negotiate about what it could provide for the poorest, the neediest, of its citizens. There is no readily accessible empathy.

activism/activists

Yogi Hale Hendlin

The American Revolution was fought by activists. The Boston Tea party was conducted by rebels. The foundation of U.S. empire is based on being active in the affairs of other countries (beseeching France to liberate us from the British), and good scientists should not just sit on their results for impactful research, but ethically follow through with their logical conclusions. The castration of (not) being able to talk about activism in the government is precisely cutting at the core of what it means to be American. It is also a fog of war that prevents even making sense of the topsy-turvy activism which is fascism in the U.S. To use their own parlance, the doublespeak and censorship is yet another step of converting the people into 'sheeple' who have little more freedom than did the East Germans under the Stasi. The legendary B29 bomber Enola Gay which dropped the first atomic bomb, was scrubbed from military websites

because the vehicle of mass destruction contained the word 'gay' in its name. Such ham-fisted AI-fueled syllepsis is indicative of the type of agnotological activism of the regime – infecting entire government systems with the most pixelated of intentional biased. If there's anything to be learned from these forbidden word foibles, it is that tyrants have no knowledge of semantics. They have lost touch with language, and truly believe, due to the megaphone of technology, in magical thinking. "If only we erase portions of the Constitution from our governmental websites, people will forget about these crucial clauses!" Picture that as radicalism, treason even. Scholars have called the type of dog-whistle politics of hate 'stochastic terrorism': this administration and its scaffolding, the white supremist Heritage Foundation, and its Koch Bros Donors Trust architecture and funding, have created a cesspool of activism where not only have their plausible deniability sponge of calls for *Vernichtung* of entire swaths of people created untethered incel activism, but they have also codified atavistic activism institutionalized violence – the icing on their 'let them eat cake' governance. Indeed, wasn't it MAGA that enthused "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun"?

There's no accounting for definitions if words just mean what you want them to mean. Or, to paraphrase Lewis Carroll: "When I use a word," Humpty Drumphty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less." The US Navel Academy library was ordered to retain Mein Kampf while removing Memorializing the Holocaust, clearly because the former is not activist, while the latter is. For the same reason that the US Senators with the most extreme clandestine gay kinks are the most God-fearing, baby-kissing, and anti-gay publicly, the real activism of the Drumpf Administration has been to kick democracy to the curb and shred the Constitution. If that's not activism, what is?

advocacy

Oscar Guardiola-Rivera

Advocacy can no longer be understood as the practice of speaking for others. Rather, it consists of creating a new space of appearance with others. Once they're brought into play, one wonders: What more can I do? That kind of advocacy is more practical. Also, more precise. Assuming

precision is part of the faculty for differentiation, that aspect of our practical life and the practice of advocacy we call judgment, then we need to distinguish between two kinds of judgment. One entails the pedantic precision characteristic of praetorian officials. It consists of taking an individual or an individual case to subsume it under a given precedent or rule applied as if a timeless law by an exceptional individual. The other consists of endlessly dividing the socially constituted institutions of our society that act upon individuals and classes into forces to find a point between them that abolishes their gravitational push and pull. Both may seem important for the practice of advocacy, but the latter is more critical and imaginative. Because it translates our power of judgment into a point of contact between the imagination and the impersonal forces that shape the battlefield where our struggles take place. Let's then rearticulate the idea of advocacy by adding another question: Could critique also be a fantastic activity? Can we create a space where judgment can no longer be final and the act itself is suspended like a dancer in mid-air, translatable into real relations, something positive? Something like a refusal to follow the order to kill given by those who ban words like advocacy, rights and critique – a hesitation. Something like the fluttering of wings. Like dancing or the leaping poetry of revolt disrupting all kinds of automatism, the violent play of forces.

These forces are largely impersonal, their impact volatile, explosive, uncertain. Subjected to them, we feel life's a battle. A battle over influence, over public institutions or mere survival, which might be waged legally or illegally and the end of which is uncertain. That's why, eager to avoid uncertainty, the misery of our precarity both economic and psychological, we may fall for the illusion and comfort provided by hedge wizards of finance and shamanic politicians.

What they do isn't advocacy. Let's recall that the most extractive hedge wizards, show-manic politicians and like characters can only thrive alongside impersonal economic and political institutions as well as technological platforms, media and mediators that allow them to threaten the rest of us with dead from above and accrue assets or future value as if these were uninhabited continents conquered by exceptional beings.

Although much is uncertain about life and reality in the 21st century Age of Endarkenment, what's certain is that these impersonal forces

determine the form, the contours, the timespace structure in which our battles and power relations take place.

These socially institutionalized forces allow show-manic politicians, hedge wizards and mid media to get away with it. If so, can we re-shape them? When current culture tells us that reality is constructed, that our identities and institutions are socially constituted, the brilliance of that revelation shouldn't blind us. It's merely an invitation to begin the critical project, a preamble to investigation and practical advocacy, not a conclusion. A genuine advocate asks, "What can I do with this old insight? If life is constructed, how come it appears so immutable? What more can I do?" If things coarse and subtle are constructed, both real and imagined, then surely they can be reconstructed as well? Surely, our public imagination can be rekindled. That's when the real work of advocacy begins[1].

affirming care

Dorota Papoušek

When I was a newborn, my mother refused to have my ears pierced. In early 1990s Slovakia, this sort of decision was quite rare and rebellious on her part. All the other toddlers around me at that time, who were identified at birth as female, got these tiny dangly shiny golden hoops with, typically, red stones, hanging from their ears. I was mesmerized by these golden "regalia". They were fascinating and beautiful, yet seemed somewhat out of place in earlobes of diapered babies drooling on plastic and rubber chew toys. They even seemed off in earlobes of older girls donning pink and red checkered dresses, braided pigtails and polished shoes with frilly socks. I envied them a little, but I was not sure what it was that I envied.

When I was a little older, I asked my mother if I could be a boy. Her response was loving and calm.

"Why do you want to be a boy?" she smiled.

"Well, I hate pink and I don't like skirts. And I like to play with toy cars. Doesn't that mean I should be a boy?"

"No, that just means you like certain things and you don't like certain things. You're allowed to have these preferences, even as a girl."

There was a wave of relief surging through my body as she said those words, which I can remember to this day.

"And, mom, why didn't you have my ears pierced, like all the other girls have?"

"Because I think it's a violent non-consensual act, to do such a thing to a baby. You can get your ears pierced as many times as you wish when you're older, and when you want to. And you can also pay for it yourself. It's ridiculous," she smiled again.

Because of her decision, and because of my choice of clothing, adult people often mistook me for a boy. People questioned my mother and scolded her for not piercing my ears, they warned her that I would be bullied for it. And I was, ironically, by the very same people who told her this. To this day, I am very proud of her for standing her ground in matters of my bodily autonomy. I would rather be bullied by strangers who didn't care about me, than have my own mother decide for something irreversible that wasn't even my own decision.

All of this is affirming care. My mother not giving in and letting me choose what I love to dress like and what to play with, without interfering with my body. The little toddlers with their gender marked permanently in their earlobes, branded like livestock, before they could even speak, also underwent affirming care. But it was non-consensual and based solely on prejudice of their insecure adults, who felt the necessity to comply to society's standards of gendered bodies.

allyship

Marcy Goldberg

The term "allyship" seems to have reached critical mass in 2021. In March of that year the Oxford English Dictionary updated its definition from the neutral "the state or condition of being or having an ally (in various senses)" to include the more politically charged "Now chiefly: *spec*. the state or condition of being a person who supports the rights of a minority or marginalized group without being a member of it." It was later named "word of the year" for 2021 by Dictionary.com.

"Allyship" in this activist sense gained traction during the wave of protests following the May 2020 murder of George Floyd by a white police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As protests spread across the United States and then internationally, interest in anti-racist sensibilities and

strategies surged along with the question of how to be a proper "ally" in the struggles against racism and police brutality.

While these developments – and the resulting media coverage – likely explain how "allyship" entered the mainstream and the dictionaries in 2021, the term had actually emerged in the early 1990s, mainly in the contexts of gay-straight alliances and racial justice movements. As a concept, of course, allyship has existed much longer: in any struggle for social justice in which those with more privilege used their status to fight for the rights of the oppressed, such as by advocating, demonstrating, fundraising, publishing or sheltering members of a marginalized group. Examples include: men supporting women's suffrage, whites joining the Black civil rights movement, students striking together with blue-collar workers, straight allies supporting queer and trans folk, citizens supporting undocumented immigrants, and neurotypical people helping to advocate for neurodivergent causes.

The key point in any of these scenarios is the role taken by allies *alongside* those for whom they are advocating. A common criticism of allyship from within progressive circles is that it can be merely performative: whether in the sense of paying lip service to a cause rather than ushering in real change, or in the self-congratulatory posing of latecomers to a movement built by others. Allyship requires not only solidarity and initiative, but also humility and a willingness to practice self-critique and confront one's own biases. Allyship can also involve taking risks, including sacrificing some of one's own privilege, or turning against a system that had previously guaranteed one's own safety.

The antidote to the targeting of allyship under the Trump administration can only be: continued allyship, in ways that are as broad and *intersectional* as possible. Perhaps the most well-known evocation of the importance of allyship is the oft-quoted (and misquoted) 1946 prose poem by German pastor Martin Niemöller about the deadly consequences of *not* standing up for others – socialists, trade unionists, Jews – during the Third Reich. It concludes: "Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me." Or as a current meme version puts it: "First they came for the trans people, and I spoke out immediately even though I'm straight and cis because I've read the rest of the fucking poem."

antifascist life

Brian Massumi

Antifascist action has been declared illegal in the United States. The assassination of Christian-Nationalist propagandist and academic blacklist orchestrator Charlie Kirk in September 2025 served as the pretext for a far-reaching clampdown on political expression. A cornerstone of that campaign is an executive order issued by President Trump declaring "Antifa" a domestic terrorist organization. It was only a first step. Trump declared his intention to follow up with a designation of Antifa as an international terrorist organization, in order to bring an even heavier repressive apparatus to bear.

The problem is that antifa is not an organization at all. It is an idea. It is an idea informing a loose network of self-organizing, self-funding autonomous groups with no central leader and often no direct links among themselves. To target antifa, Trump's misuse of the executive powers of his office will have to match the diffusive scope of that idea. In this, it does not have to rely solely on its own resources, which are already broad. The order outlaws "recruiting," "aiding and abetting," giving "material support" to, or funding antifa. An accompanying memorandum asserts that the established liberal and progressive non-profit sector is in fact a funding front for antifa, preparing the ground for declaring all manner of legal and mainstream resistance to the MAGA agenda as terrorist activity. The word has taken on such broad connotations that even judges ruling against Trump's executive overreach are branded terrorists by administration officials. The formal provisions of the executive order is an anchor point for an informal campaign of conspiratorial tenor targeting regime opponents. An army of internet trolls doxes figures identified as antifa fellow-travellers and inundates them and their families with death threats. The organization headed by Charlie Kirk, posthumously lionized a saint of "free speech," is at the center of this effort. It recently hounded Mark Bray, a Rutgers University historian of antifa, into exile in Spain.

The goal is to make a direct equation between "antifa" and the much broader term "antifascist," and paint the entire spectrum with a brush of repression. Antifa is a particular set of strategies for anti-fascist action. It originated in the late 1800s, and reached its classical expression in the first decades of the twentieth century. The idea was self-defence

against far-right vigilante violence targeting leftwing labor and political movements, immigrants, and marginal social groups. The idea evolved from self-defence to anticipatory self-defence. When it was revived in the twenty-first century, it went a step further, going on the offensive, expanding to pre-emptive obstruction of white supremacist and neo-Nazi organizing efforts, with the goal of denying them a "platform" for their hatred, on the streets or online. On the streets, this took the now familiar form of black bloc direct action, in the United States identified most closely with the city of Portland.

The MAGA myth of Portland as a city in flames in a constant state of insurrection is used as a pretext for such measures as Trump's Antifa executive order. In response, actual antifa groups have evidenced a strategic flexibility. A recent media stunt by Homeland Security director Kristi Noem was defanged by a creative deviation. Noem was filmed heroically perched atop a three-story building surrounded by body guards and heavily armed officers, looking down on the alleged urban devastation of the antifa-ravaged city of Portland. The camera zooms into where she is looking, to reveal… a man in a chicken suit surrounded by a milling crowd of 10-15 protestors. In anti-MAGA demonstrations in Portland, the black clothes and balaclavas of the traditional antifa outfit have been supplemented by a phalanx of "terrorist" chickens, frogs and tyrannosaurus rexes performing the absurdity of MAGA conspiracism.

The strategy that antifa has become known for – violent street action against extreme rightwing groups and commercial symbols of neoliberal capitalism – has always been the most pointed tactic in a continuum of activity that extends through more creative tactics to "everyday antifascism": community solidarity organizing and mutual aid. Although earlier historical examples of the violent confrontation tactics, particularly against the Nazi wave in Germany, are widely romanticized, even heroized, their contemporary iterations are just as widely pilloried. It is not unreasonable to question the ethical underpinnings or the political efficacy of these tactics, which are arguably rendered ineffective by the contemporary alt-right social media environment, whose reach is capillary and ever-growing, and whose conspiratorialism is capable of producing a histrionic backlash that clamps down on the full spectrum of non-MAGA speech and action.

What is certain is that meeting fascistic movement where it occurs does not mean only on the street. Rightwing extremism takes many forms, going all the way up to the corporate boardrooms, as we are seeing now with media and tech conglomerates. All of its manifestations are expressions of a reactive existential posture driving hatred, intolerance, the conversion of the political opponent into the enemy, and the dehumanization of that enemy, all with a heavy dose of perceived financial self-interest. Only a counter-existential posture, just as capillary and ever-growing, predicated on radical openness to human diversity and human and nonhuman otherness within an environmental ethics of care, can stem the fascistic tide. Antifa must become, not just antifascist action, not even just everyday antifascism, but antifascist *life*: a mode of life, immanent to and conditioning the explicit thoughts and actions that bring it to collective expression, in a continuing, affirmative becoming.[1]

The antifa tactics of the 1920s and 1930s against the rise of twentieth-century fascism have been heroized in historical hindsight, in view of the Fascist and Nazi nightmares that followed. The fact that the nightmares became a reality is testimony that the antifascist actions of the time did not succeed. If today is 1925, what will it take to stave off 1933? Disunion on the left, portions of which were eager to disown its hard-left direct-action elements and seek legitimacy by allying itself with the soft center, is often cited by historians as a major reason for that failure. This historical lesson should be borne in mind as the center, center-left, and right, from the mainstream media to the far reaches of the alt-right social media, harmonize in their demonizing of today's antifa. Questioning, yes. Always a good thing. But best done with a vigilant awareness of what more frightful demons are stirring.

anti-racism

Małgorzata Mączko

To be **antiracist** is to challenge systems of racial oppression in their historical and contemporary capacity. **Anti-racism** – as belief, praxis, and ideological framework – seeks to dismantle discriminatory structures and policies. It is more than a simple rejection of racist attitudes or the alleviation of the symptoms of injustice – anti-racism requires a mindful, active engagement in uncovering and eliminating its root causes. Ibram X.

Kendi explains that "there is no neutrality in the racism struggle" (2019, 9) – there is only racism and anti-racism, and all attempts to negotiate between the two inevitably reinforce the former.

The principles of anti-racism date back to the times of slavery, abolitionism, and the work of early African American intellectuals who recognized racism as an organized, multidimensional system of oppression that must be dismantled in order to achieve social and political equality. W.E.B. Du Bois observed that "either the United States will destroy ignorance or ignorance will destroy the United States" (1905). The former is yet to materialize.

The anti-racist framework continued to gain prominence after the Reconstruction period failed to deliver tangible change and amidst the racial discrimination of the Jim Crow era. While particular visions for Black liberation differed from non-violence to paramilitary action, they shared the common goal of securing freedom from systemic racism, violence, and discrimination.

Modern antiracist thought draws from the history of antiracist movements, combining their achievements with contemporary theories. It makes use of critical race theory, developed by legal scholars in the late 20th century (and now banned from school curricula in some states) which explains race as a social construct and sees racism as embedded in institutional structures rather than limited to individual prejudice. Contemporary antiracist activism also employs intersectional framework which recognizes how systems of oppression overlap and create a matrix of domination.

When the Black Lives Matter movement emerged in 2013, it was conceptualized as a broad, inclusive antiracist coalition that would challenge various types of racial and ethnic discrimination, also when they intersect with other factors, such as gender, sexuality and class. Ten years on, BLM is an international, decentralized, grassroots movement that calls for institutional transformation around the world. It received renewed attention and garnered widespread support in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder in 2020, but has since been the target of right-wing backlash.

The shift in the movement's perception underscores how dramatically the political climate has changed in the past decade: what was once seen as an aspirational commitment to equality is now a deeply contested issue in the U.S. political discourse. Recent attempts to erase the history

of antiracist movements from official historical records and the rollback of DEI policies – both by government and private bodies – mark a decided shift in how the antiracist framework is approached in the U.S. These measures, along with the ongoing media discourse, reframe antiracism as "un-American". But if opposing racial oppression is deemed unpatriotic, does racism become a national value?

artistic capitalism

Elixabete Ansa

The concept traces back to the emergence of criticism against the culture industry. From Theodor Adorno (1962) to Peter Sloterdijk (2020) including Walter Benjamin (1968), Fredric Jameson (1991), and several art critics in recent years (Mark Fischer, Hito Steyerl) we find recurrent positions stating that art and culture have served the purpose of embellishing capitalist policies of progress. In his theses "On the Concept of History" (1999), Benjamin sustained that "[t]here is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (256). In this sentence, far from bringing art close to the figure of the "angel of history" in a melancholic, sober reflection that gives an empathetic and poetic account of other ways of thinking about society and its forms, Benjamin establishes that there is an artistic development that accompanies, as a cosmetic device, the affairs of industrial and financial capitalism, key "victors" of contemporary history.

Regarding the field of contemporary the field of contemporary art, German artist and critic Hito Steyerl is categorical in relating fine arts to capital. Taking on the changes that the modes of production have undergone in the past ten years, she states that there is no form of expression more complicit with capitalist modes of production than so-called Fine Arts: "If contemporary art is the answer, the question is: How can capitalism be made more beautiful?" (93). Steyer establishes a direct relationship between art and economics in the present moment. The same operation of labor precarity and privatization runs through them, as does a "creative imperative" in their modes and forms of production.

Peter Sloterdijk, in response to the question of the contemporary city, states that we live in an era that, as Baudelaire also noted, "the political city dissolved forever into the aesthetic phenomenon" (17). In this

aesthetic defense, there is no clear distinction between art and production; the separation of the two realms, which still prevailed at the outset of the twentieth century, melted into the air of the twenty-first. Thus, Gilles Lipovetsky and Jean Serroy, define the present as "the era of artistic capitalism":

The hypermodern era has developed this artistic dimension to such an extent that it has become a major element of corporate development, a sector that creates economic value, an ever more important source of growth and employment. The aesthetic activity of capitalism had previously been minor or peripheral, but it has become an integral part and an exponential factor for growth. The systemic incorporation of this creative and imaginative dimension into sectors of commercial consumption, as well as the formidable economic expansion of the aesthetic domain, make it possible to speak of capitalism's artistic regime. (My translation, 271)

Art and production are thus equally document of barbarism, of a barbarism that confirms the "victory" of transnational businessmen concerned with the aesthetics of their merchandise and producers of lifestyles. Is "Art" a term that is today obsolete?

at risk

Dorota Papoušek

At risk is a foggy cloud. You never know it is approaching, unless it is already there (even then, you can't be too sure since you can't see clearly around you) or you can see it from a distance, hovering over someone else's head. Sometimes, you can barely make out the vaguely person-shaped outline engulfed deep within. Sometimes, people outrun its reach and its density. Sometimes it's only a thin veil which is barely noticeable under proper lighting. Truly, so similar to this particular aspect of weather, it accumulates its own bulk over time, and only under the right conditions. While our lives rush past us, events, encounters, conversations come and go, we fail to see the complexity of the overarching context in which we exist, and which creates the 'at risk' foggy cloud.

The context is privilege.

And privilege is a wheel of fortune. Is the neighborhood where you live safe? For all ages? For all people, of any size, of any color? During the day as well as during the night? What is the air quality like? Is there sound

pollution? Do you have access to clean, drinkable water? Do you have access to free medical care? Is fair employment available, or is it only slave labour? Are you free to think and express what you think or is there religious dogma present? Are you allowed to move? Are you allowed the creativity to think of any other questions that would adequately follow the line of this thought, and unmask your degree of privilege?

The answers are not freely and readily available choices, at least not to an extent, especially for the people, who live encompassed in the 'at risk' foggy cloud.

A developing human life is fragile, and conditions for the 'at risk' foggy cloud to develop, can become favorable quite swiftly. If the thick fog then restricts access to viable resources, connections and even such a basic thing as sunlight, people wander aimlessly through life, stumbling, vulnerable, with everything just slightly out of reach.

It's very hard to notice at first, though. It creeps in slowly, one misty droplet at a time, while the innocent, unknowing eyes fail to pick up on the gradual change in their own field of vision. At a certain point, the world becomes colder, bleak and milky. Sometimes the 'at risk' foggy cloud hovers over whole areas of cities. Even when people escape its blurry presence thanks to moving to safer places, getting fair work, receiving proper medical care or forming new relationships, its painful icy touch becomes a vivid core memory, one that is particularly hard to shake and overcome.

B

barrier/barriers

Jeremie Brugidou

She keeps close to the border wall, staying in its shade while her cool-cape reloads. Perfect timing for a stupid charge malfunction, with the hottest day of the month hitting 54° celsius and 25 kilometers to go. Walls are more than fine, she thinks. Frontiers are the trend and walls tend to go with frontiers. They make good shade. “Frontiers first” is the call to secure the purity of territory and “last frontiers” to guarantee the manifest destinies of the good race. Today is a lucky day for those of the bad race with a cool-cape problem, since we’re on the side of the shade. Then again, those on the other side probably don’t need to go outside on days like these.

Still no barrier in sight! They said she would hit it approximately 3 kilometers after the abandoned mirador. Did they wall it off? Now that she thinks of it, barriers had been getting rare. A barrier is a messy assemblage of wood and metal, of infrastructure and social constructs. A barrier shuts and opens, it is always subject to negotiation and compromise. A barrier easily goes unnoticed. A barrier breaks the spell of oppression. It reveals the awkwardness of the wall.

She is getting dizzy. What did they do with the barrier? How is she supposed to get the water? The empty barrels swing behind her shoulders. Barriers go better when untold and unseen. A good barrier is an invisible barrier. Did they hide it? Say the word and they shoot ya’. Barriers are the invisible walls, they must remain unspelled. When spoken, alas, the spell is broken. Say “barrier” and they burry ya’. Burry us all while you’re at it! Just go ahead! There are no such things as violently imposed limitations! Only natural hierarchies and existential preservation, of the good race.

Did someone say tax barriers? Just legit protectionism. Did someone say glass ceiling? No such thing. Some people are just meant to stay below. Don’t say barrier, don’t point it out, don’t name the oppression. Power relations work out great for the dominant as long as they remain

out of sight of the subaltern. A barrier is too fragile to remain visible. A wall is better.

Still no barrier in sight. When she finds it she'll know what to do with it. A barrier is close enough to becoming a barricade, it's always on the verge of getting unhinged.

belong

Myles Chilton

As with so many of these words, the act of banning them, rather than erasing them from discourse, instead exposes a pathological deficiency. In this case, it is Trump's lifelong longing to belong.

Initially he longed to belong among the ultra-wealthy and sophisticated powerbrokers of the Manhattan elite so that he would in turn be-longed-for. He finally got a measure of the latter when he became the star of *The Apprentice*. But it is a longing that can never be sated: the cycle of longing to belong then being the object of longing only intensified with his first campaign to become President. That wasn't and isn't enough; on and on it goes. Not only does he want Americans, but he also wants Greenlanders and Canadians to belong to him. He is Donald Trump, the monarch of belonging.

Belong comes from Old English *belangian*, of Germanic origin, meaning to desire, to long for, or according to another source, to be owned or possessed. The modern dictionary definitions refine modes of desire, ownership and possession. To belong now means to be the property of, to be a member of, be due to (as in 'America's greatness belongs to him'); to be dominated by ('he belongs to Trump's Republican party'); to have an affinity for a place or situation ('he feels as if he belongs in the Oval'); to have the right personal or social qualities to be a member ('he longs to belong'); to be placed in the specified position ('it belongs on the Resolute desk'); and to be assigned to the right category ('he belongs with real Americans').

Americans no longer decide who belongs. Trump sets the terms. The US should no longer belong to NATO; the West no longer belongs to Pax Americana. Migrants don't belong in the US, and should be sent back to where they belong. Citizenship no longer defines belonging. And if Canada

doesn't meet his criteria for a sovereign nation state, then it cannot belong to itself; it must belong to its stronger neighbor.

To choose who belongs is the ultimate power. It means you can't be rejected. You can't be loved either, but if you're big and strong enough you can be feared. You make others want to belong to you. We know that the boy Donald Trump endured a loveless family life, his mother cold and distant, his father domineering and transactional. As we have long been hearing in the media (most piercingly from his cousin Mary Trump) this has scarred him. The fear of being cast out compels belonging (see Columbia University, among many others who have capitulated).

Support for Trump thus manifests a deep, disturbing need to belong. It is like the need to belong to a cult; and whether one belongs among the Christian nationalists or fascists, one can assert that one belongs to something deeper than the liberal state, with its laws and rules and institutions allowing the freedom to belong or not to belong. This freedom allows Americans to escape Trump's us-or-them binary. Therefore, it doesn't belong.

betrayal

Dan Swain

At first look, betrayal seems a peculiar fit on this list. Betrayal is hardly part of the 'woke' lexicon, and many of Trump's most ardent supporters seem permanently on the hunt for traitors, be they to the nation or the race, or, greatest of all sins, the President himself. One book about Trump – appropriately called *Betrayal* – has an entire index entry for 'list of Republican traitors'. It was the response to the removal of one apparent traitor that likely explains betrayal's inclusion here. Early in Trump's first term, Acting Attorney General Sally Yates was dismissed for refusing to defend his executive order restricting travel and immigration from seven majority-Muslim countries. Then press secretary Sean Spicer explained that she had "betrayed the Department of Justice by refusing to enforce a legal order designed to protect the citizens of the United States." When pressed for meaning, he responded "I'm not going to define the word."

What to make, then, of an administration so happy to deploy a word, but reluctant to define it? A glib suggestion would be that doing so would draw uncomfortable attention to Trump's own betrayals. Trump's

opponents are also happy to call him a traitor, whether to America's values, its constitution, or – in the more lurid accounts of his relationship to Russia – the nation itself. This, however, would be too easy. For one thing, Trump and the ghouls that surround him have never shown signs of being troubled by hypocrisy and contradiction. For another, it hardly captures what is really wrong with Trump's administration – as if it matters who or what is betrayed by extrajudicial detention and deportation, murder by drone in the Caribbean Sea, or brazenly enriching the richest and impoverishing the rest. Indeed, we might be forced to admit that Trump is quite faithful to *some* values of the American founding: white supremacy, appropriation through exclusion and, most of all, the protection of a propertied elite. After all, *class* betrayal is something he can never be accused of.

Instead, we should look elsewhere. In *On Betrayal* – published, ironically, the same year as Spicer's refusal to define the word – philosopher Avishai Margalit argues betrayal makes sense only in relation to *thick* human relationships. Thin relationships are instrumental, oriented on *achievement*, in light of which they are constantly renegotiated, and in the absence of which they dissolve – the paradigm being commercial relationships of contract. Thick relationships, in contrast, are oriented on *belonging*, in the sense that those in the relationship belong to each other, and perhaps also to a shared past, in the manner of family, friendship or (sexist connotations aside) fraternity. Thick relationships help confer meaning on our life and actions; and betrayal does to those relationships 'what acetone does to glue'. One needn't accept Margalit's account wholesale – and certainly needn't believe that all thick relationships are good – to see value in this distinction. And, perhaps, it is blurring the distinction that makes betrayal so easy to say but so hard to define. Despite all the fury and bluster about family, nation and race, what binds the leadership of the Trump movement – from the Silicon Valley futurists to the anti-choice Catholic converts – is little more than thin, instrumental relationships grasping towards self-advancement and self-enrichment. There is, at bottom, nothing even worth betraying.

biases

Bryan Reynolds

Trump capitalizes on a dynamic of affinity and exclusionary, if not negatory, biases. According to Trump's statements and behavior, biases should be based solely on opportunism. Bigotry operates and accrues value appropriately within social, cultural, political, judicial, and governmental structures, and thus mutually through individuals of a society who, often unwittingly, reinforce those structures because of how they have been inculcated by them into an ideology, taught to think under systemic implicit if not explicit prejudices, and are even indoctrinated through aesthetics. Individuals tap into, and thus contribute to, this matrix often subtly and in the various ways as they express themselves in verbal and physical language, fueling a particular discourse, and generating a specific affect as well as effects. Most of the time, Trump seems oblivious to how he has been inculcated into ideology and therefore unconsciously reinforces the biases which reciprocally support the ideology from which he benefits. The mystery of his consciousness generates an indeterminacy that he exploits, thereby diminishing his accountability. For instance, when white nationalists protested the removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, he supported them by declaring equivocally, "You also had some very fine people on both sides," explicitly condemning neither the antiracism or the white nationalist protesters, but implicitly still revealing his bias for the latter (who chanted the Nazi slogan "blood and soil") as if the sides are comparable. He is not oblivious to how one can appropriate discourse, piggyback on circulating biases within networks of codification and influence, to further stoke biases that fuel progress toward the realization of his goals or at least undermine the credibility of those who oppose them. In Trump's world, one supports self-serving biases, contributes to their reinforcement, and then denies knowledge of anything that might suggest such cognizance and handiwork, hence invisibilizing outwardly one's self-awareness of the societal mechanisms of structural biases so that one can strengthen them more insidiously; this takes the apparently innocent and benign to its deadliest potential, the wolf disguised in sheep's clothing.

BIPOC

William Brown

I have this fantasy (which could be an idea for a film that I have not yet figured out how to make within my means) where I send out a Tweet to Elon Musk and to Donald Trump. It reads simply: You are going to die.

Trump, Musk, their agents and their bots perhaps inevitably take this message to be a death threat, and so I find myself arrested and facing trial as some sort of terrorist. When called upon to testify in court about my actions, I iterate a straightforward statement about how everyone on Earth is at some point going to die, and that I was simply reminding them of this fact. But, I say with an overblown sense of my own profundity, in being terrorized by my utterance of this fact, both Trump and Musk (at least as I fantasize them) reveal their sense that the truth is a threat.

Not only is the truth a threat to these white men. Death, albeit inevitable, is inadmissible for them, or at the very least for the white supremacist mentality that I take them to represent.

In an epistolary exchange with Nishnaabeg writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Black Canadian scholar Robyn Maynard reminds us that 'Black and Indigenous communities… are collectively positioned on the very forefront of the unfolding catastrophe' that is the climate change driven by white, western capitalist modernity. Maynard details how this has been so for many years, meaning that anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity long precede and likely will continue after the presidency of Donald J. Trump. All the same, Maynard goes on to explain how, as a result of white supremacy, 'our own communities… [have an] intimate proximity to death and loss' (Maynard and Simpson 2022: 8-9). Not only does white supremacy visit death and loss upon so many communities of color, then, but it also begins to elide those communities with death itself.

What I would like to add here, though, is this paradox: in facing death as an everyday part of life, Black, Indigenous and other communities of color achieve a greater level of humanity than any person (white or otherwise) engaged in the white supremacist quest to stave off and to reject death (to achieve immortality, to stop time). This is by no means a justification for visiting death on BIPOC peoples – even as a white supremacist would contort the world to make it so (and in the very inhumanity of cruelly killing the now-othered 'other,' they would believe themselves, precisely, to be

transcending humanity and achieving the status of *Übermensch*). Rather, it is to demonstrate the whiteness of the fantasy of the *Übermensch* (also at work in my own fantasizing about transcending my whiteness?). That is, the logic of whiteness is by definition anti-BIPOC, murderous, cruel, loveless and inhumane. Trump embodies that, and it is by definition futureless (since nothing can follow it). BIPOC, thus, is not 'death,' but hope. It is a/the future. It is the human finally realized after the failure of the white western project.

C

citizenship (in difficult times)

Silvia Redon Pantoja

Addressing the concept of citizenship in difficult, confusing, and blurred times for the political, legal, and social coexistence shared by individuals in a common territory requires questioning the multiple contradictions, nebulae, and disputes that arise from the contexts and territories in which individuals live together. What contexts and territories? First, I would like to refer to nature as the territory that welcomes us as a species. Eco-citizenship involves understanding nature as another political subject of rights, which, it maintains, allows and enables our coexistence as a species and as a society in our common home. This implies an urgent political challenge for our difficult times in the Anthropocene era, which, by destroying the biosphere and unbalancing life, has brought us pandemics and ecological disasters that alter and, at times, have put on hold the possibility of life in common. Another territorial context, dangerous and blurred for the political condition of the human, is the virtual space in which we live for much of our daily lives, rooted in our biology as a human species and largely determining our coexistence in the common space. Understanding citizenship in the current technological contexts of transhumanism leads us to reinvent citizenship with the prefix techno-citizenship. Today, artificial intelligence (AI) versus organic intelligence places us on the threshold that requires us to redefine the human and the political and clarify the status they will occupy in the field of citizenship. Neuroscience today provides us with alarming studies on how screens affect the human brain, especially in children and adolescents, and how technologies and their "innocent-neutral" use mask and disguise the underlying capitalist ideological interests. The political context of neoliberalism is the greatest difficulty in living together in a common territory for democratic coexistence. Managed by corporate oligarchies of global capitalism (responsible for environmental degradation and technological dominance), they generate widespread despair as we experience how

basic rights mutate by chance and inequality is exacerbated and naturalized as a social condition of "cradle" privilege. Citizenship is torn apart in a collective imagination in which the common people disappear in favor of a poor, migrant, or enemy "other," who has no value, whose life has no value, whose suffering has no value. The great genocides of the 20th century persist in the amnesia of having learned nothing, and we find ourselves governed by fascist psychopaths who destroy democracy, without consequences. Constituent (popular) power is gagged and silenced by the fear of violent and warlike authoritarianism. In difficult times, citizens must invite the economy and politics to the table and not dissociate them for the benefit of large financial corporations. They must seat at the table as hostess the great Mother Earth, in the heritage of the Amerindian peoples, who have always considered her an "other subject-deity" with the highest status she deserves and who have not yet learned what she should teach us about life and politics. They must situate a technology that processes knowledge more quickly and efficiently, co-opted in virtual spaces by digital capitalism, and place the necessary limits on it for the sake of justice and equality. Finally, they must strengthen the social bond so that a dense and strong citizenry can invent new forms of constituent and constituted power.

civil disobedience

Juan Antonio Fernandez

Canonical conceptions of civil disobedience (CD) are often situated within the Rawlsian tradition of liberal political philosophy. On this account, CD designates deliberate breaches of law intended to effect changes in legislation or public policy within the framework of reasonably just constitutional democracies. While the law is presumed to command *prima facie* obedience, injustice is an ineradicable feature of political life. Accordingly, it is possible to delineate a space in which disobedience may be justified under rigorously circumscribed conditions.

First, CD must emerge from conscientious deliberation. It is not reducible to impulsive dissent or private grievance but must embody a critical judgment oriented toward the common good. Agents are required to evaluate both the destabilizing effects of their actions and their strategic

efficacy, since under certain circumstances disobedience may prove ineffective or counterproductive.

Second, CD must display a distinctly political character. Its justification must rest on public reasons – principles and values embedded in the democratic culture – rather than on private or idiosyncratic moral convictions. Its scope is limited to contesting substantial infringements of equal basic rights, liberties, and opportunities.

Third, CD is conceived as a remedy of last resort (*ultima ratio*). It becomes permissible only after formal channels of participation – petitions, demonstrations, appeals – have been pursued over a reasonable interval and have been ignored, rejected or repressed.

Moreover, CD must assume the form of a public and discursive act. It is to be enacted openly, before the authorities, and without concealment. Far from approximating riot or insurrection, it is construed as a mode of political communication within the public sphere, appealing to the sense of justice of the majority. Its illegality functions not as an anarchic gesture but as a rhetorical device that amplifies the denunciation of injustice and the assertion of civic determination.

Another constitutive feature is fidelity to law. CD challenges a particular statute while affirming the legitimacy of the broader constitutional framework. Its purpose is corrective rather than subversive: to bring the legal order into closer alignment with its normative commitments to justice.

Equally indispensable is the principle of nonviolence, which underlines the communicative intent and the good faith of participants. Violence would transform persuasion into coercion, thereby undermining the very conditions of civil discourse.

Finally, participants are expected to accept legal sanctions. Within the liberal paradigm, such willingness to bear punishment is regarded as evidence of sincerity and integrity.

Nevertheless, the Rawlsian conception discloses significant limitations. Interpreted strictly, it excludes protests directed at economic inequality, migration policies, unjust wars, climate injustice, or structural critiques of capitalism. The requirement to exhaust legal resources risks delegitimizing urgent struggles, while the demand to accept punishment imposes disproportionate burdens on already precarious groups.

In conclusion, the liberal model of CD is normatively narrow and politically conservative. Restricted to modest reforms, it reinforces the *status quo* and risks criminalizing broader practices of contestation. Rather than providing a genuine avenue for confronting injustice, it may paradoxically foster passive acquiescence or precipitate violent resistance.

civilization

David Pavón Cuéllar

The European Enlighteners of the 18th century were the first to speak of civilization. The concept was first associated with religion as a restraint on humanity (Victor Riquetti de Mirabeau), then with human maturity that leaves childhood behind (Adam Ferguson), and finally with progress that overcomes barbarism (Nicolas de Condorcet). These early ideas condense a moment of the dialectic of the Enlightenment: Civilized humanity progressed and matured by restraining itself, by repressing that which was manifested in its infancy, and which was negatively connoted as barbaric.

Barbarians became embodied by non-Europeans conceived as savages, primitives, and the uncivilized. Civilizing them, therefore, required Europeanizing them, assimilation into Europe being a synonym for civilization. The civilizing pretext served to disguise the true purpose of colonialism in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries – to plunder and exploit the colonized for the enrichment and empowerment of the colonizers.

Europeans posed as civilizers based on the ethnocentric idea that civilization was synonymous with Europe. This idea was finally questioned in the first half of the 20th century and gave way to the notion of 'civilizations' in the plural. Once it was accepted that there were civilizations distinct from Europe, European powers could no longer colonize them under the civilizing excuse, but this ideological pretext continued to be used for colonizing cultures that were not recognized as civilizations – that is, those that are notably egalitarian and respectful of nature.

Inequality, the destruction of natural ecosystems, and other major problems are condensed, concealed, justified, and ennobled into the concept of civilization. For civilization to exist, problematic and dangerous conditions must be fulfilled, such as technological development, the sedentarization of the population, division of labor, accumulation and concentration of wealth, class structure, and the organization of the state.

All of this makes civilization favor domination, oppression and repression, exploitation, and the devastation of the planet.

The high price of civilization has been ignored by positivism and other apologies and celebrations of the status quo. Conversely, psychoanalysis emphasizes the dark side of civilization, considering it an inevitable and inexhaustible source of discontent. This puts psychoanalysis at odds with Marxism, anticolonialism, and other critical perspectives that posit that the problems of civilization can be overcome, because they lie not within civilization itself, but in its modern Western version and in patriarchal, state, class, capitalist, and colonial domination.

Some of the most serious problems of Western civilization, such as capitalism and colonialism, disappear behind the very concept of civilization in perspectives such as that of Samuel Huntington. Here the main conflicts of humanity cease to be ideological, as in the 20th century, and become cultural-religious, appearing then between nine civilizations distinguished by the author: sub-Saharan, Latin American, Chinese, Hindu, Buddhist, Japanese, Western, Orthodox, and Islamic. The clash of these civilizations serves Huntington to conceal fundamental contradictions, such as those between social classes, between the Global North and the Global South, and between capitalism and human, animal and plant life.

civil society

Jesús Ayala-Colqui

For the Greeks, the polis (πόλις) was the political community (κοινωνία πολιτική). Within it, the distinction between rulers and ruled was never fixed or rigidly separated, making transitions, transformations, and modifications of governance always possible. There was always a need for government, but this was not a topological and ontological space separate from the society it governed: the polis, being both "State" and "political society" at once, governed itself.

For moderns, however, there is a rupture in the political community. This can be explained as a response to the medieval and absolute monarchical paradigms of feudalism. Since the society was codified by a transcendent ruler who reflected the divine order, it was difficult for the rising bourgeoisie to accept that the political community was identical to the government itself. It was thus necessary to break this unity and

postulate that, in fact, one thing is institutionalized power (Hobbes and Locke's Commonwealth, Rousseau's *gouvernement*, Spinoza's *potestas*), and another is constituent power (Hobbes's assembly of men, Locke's political society, Rousseau's *volonté générale du peuple*, Spinoza's *potentia multitudinis*): we thus have on one side, the State, and on the other, the civil society.

Hegel, for whom civil society is the "*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*" (bourgeois society, literally), argues that it must be subsumed into the State, which would then become the highest ethical expression of reason and freedom. Marx critiques this idea, arguing that Hegel mystifies the State, since there exists a reality where the State's ethicality is contradicted: injustice, poverty, inequality, and, ultimately, class struggle. Although this is an idea from the young Marx – later nuanced or sublated – it essentially affirms that the civil sphere is the true depository of power and political legitimacy. And since the proletariat is the universal class within it, it must become the State by eliminating bourgeois property relations. In short, civil society can only be a sovereign civil society if it becomes a communist State; any other form of State enters into contradiction with it.

Gramsci, in a polemic against Croce's Hegelianism and orthodox economism, will argue that achieving this requires not only seizing economic power to erase the rift between civil society and the State but also actively shaping civil society through the construction of a new "hegemony" emerging from "subaltern groups". The French tradition, in a critical and often subterranean dialogue with Althusser (an essential reader of Gramsci), does not use the term but presupposes it in interesting ways. Is it not present in Foucault's microphysics of power and governmentality (against the State and institutions), in Guattari's group-subjects (against bureaucracy and molar codifications), in Deleuze's minorities and assemblages (against state-apparatus and capital-axiomatics), in Badiou's event and subject fidelity (against the state of the situation)?

Civil society is, in short, a productive category not merely as an anarchist position, but rather as a means of resistance and subversion that implies overcoming both it (civil society) and its antithetical counterpart (State) to arrive at a new kind of πόλις, where the κοινωνία could finally become κοινωνική.

clean energy

Jeremie Brugidou

Miranda Spector looks at her brand new HyperVision set with unretained awe. It is a beautiful piece of equipment, and surely something to be proud about. Where will she put it? It needs space to unfold when used, but she can easily store it on the shelf near the entrance, immediately noticeable to the visiting eye. She will need to create an eye-catching lure though, maybe with the lighting. Think of it as a modernist sculpture. The exterior designs are as modest as the interior experience is immodest. Sharp yet smooth lines, the HV set is a delicacy to hold in one's hands. A treasure to the senses. A miracle. Miranda Spector is eager to begin. Yet the set probably needs to charge first.

"Simply settle the cushion device in your rear pocket and wait for the device to vibrate softly. Think of it as a brooding hen back in the days. Or, if in a hurry, use the a-probe." Heat inducted carry-on charge. Smart. Miranda Spector looks skeptically at the a-probe, a thin shiny tube, quite elegant given its destination, and the little Vaseline kit provided with the HV set. She figures she isn't in that much of a hurry after all and takes the cushion device instead, fitting it in her back pocket. She sits in her immersive chair, daydreaming. The combination of equipment will provide such exciting experiences. She wonders if she will actually feel all the worldly marvels as is she were there now. What land will she choose first?

She bestows her choice on "Continental shelf 362528304736, aka Sub-Cal, former California". The list contains mostly continental shelves, what used to be continents for the ancestors, now only the extension of the mountains (technically islands at that point) into the all-surrounding ocean. The HyperVision commences. Human Earth-bounds doing their daily chores in the underwater realms of Sub-Cal. She can almost feel the fresh and warm currents changing swiftly with the swell overhead. Giant tunas swarming, feasting on the many smaller fishes attracted by human messiness. The water vibrates over great distances, as a group of grey whales talk among themselves far beyond her sight. Such bliss to feel the Earth-way. Tears run down her facial hairs. She sticks her tongue out to grab a drop of inner fluid. Salt water. How remote she still feels. How remote they all are. Suddenly someone stands in front of her Vision, holding a dramatic sign: "You are the 1% that did this. Submergence is 99% the

1%'s fault. Yet we all die." Miranda Spector disconnects abruptly. She ponders as her Inter-Galactic individual capsule drifts still further away from Planet-home. Large luminous red letters read TOTAL ENERGY. She is cast away to find a livable place after the collapse of Home. Like a handful of other rich clean energy investors.

climate crisis

Dawn Chan

This year, alongside "climate science," "climate crisis" appeared on the list of words flagged by federal agencies as terms to avoid in government documents. This, despite the fact that one of the industries that has most recently fueled the ongoing narrative around American exceptionalism is Silicon Valley's tech industry – and specifically FANG stocks: Facebook, Apple, Netflix, and Google – platforms whose entire net worths rest on their ability to aggregate data and identify emergent patterns. It is striking that data scientists working for these social media platforms rely on the same broad methodology that fuels the research of data scientists working to study the changing climate. They all analyze vast amounts of data, collected over time, to identify broader patterns and trends even if they defy what might be suggested by noise and outliers from moment to moment.

Trump has recently grown louder in invalidating the climate crisis, calling it a "con job" at a 2025 United Nations speech.[1] A self-described stable genius, he would know a con when he sees one. The sharp perceptive abilities he possesses for his current role, we are told, derive in large part from his business acumen. The person doing the telling is often Trump himself: In a 2015 speech, he said his net worth was *$8,737,540,000*.[2] (In a deposition, he told a lawyer that his worth fluctuates with "feelings, my own feelings."[3])

To Marco Rubio, Trump's secretary of state who once, rather ill-advisedly, called his current employer a "world class con-artist,"[4] I would humbly submit: Who are Rubio and I – decidedly not billionaires – to disregard the business acumen of Mr. Rubio's boss? If the value that Trump brings to the White House is built upon his business chops, it would therefore follow that focusing on his businesses would get us to the core of his wisdom.

Let's turn, therefore, to a copy of *Trump: Art of the Deal*[5]: a volume that cuts to the heart of the matter: It is Trump's own summary – long before his presidential aspirations – of the stratagems and tenets that form the core of his success. Rule Number 2 "Protect the Downside and the Upside Will Take Care of Itself."

How do we protect the downside? How do we apply this advice, and protect against possible catastrophe and embrace the "negative thinking" recommended by this book? What is a direct example in his business dealings from which we can learn?

Here's one: Trump's golf course and hotel in Clare County, Ireland, was found "protecting the downside": in the 2010s, it submitted several applications for a sea-wall to protect against the effects of climate change. As one such proposal submitted by Trump's business argued,

The rising sea levels and increased storm frequency and wave energy associated with global warming can increase the rate of erosion, wave damage, coastal flooding, etc.[6]

Your word is your bond, a wise woman once said.[7] In the face of global warming, extreme weather, and climate events, we would all do well to take Trump's word, emulate his business's assessments of real risk around climate change, and "protect the downside."

climate science

Lutz Koepnick

In 1966, the *Deutsche Bundesbahn* promoted railway reliability with the slogan: "Everybody talks about the weather. We don't." For time immemorial, talk about the weather and the contingencies of climate provided affective grounds to reaffirm what different communities had in common.[1] It bridged differences and moderated conflicts as it embedded the vagaries of human life in much larger atmospheric conditions, the meteorological opening of Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* perhaps being the most famous literary example. With their 1966 campaign, German railway managers hoped to move beyond all this. The ad promised to emancipate human mobility and progress from nature's uncontrollable whims. It envisioned a future no longer needing to talk about the climate because technological efficiencies – the work of engineers and

entrepreneurs rather than the pondering conversations of philosophers or ordinary folks – would provide society's essential glue.

Recent U.S. plans to drastically reduce climate research funding and rebrand climate science as religion or myth elevate the rhetoric of the 1960s to new extremes. In 2025, the Trump administration proposed massive cuts to the National Science Foundation (NSF), a major funder of basic science and climate-related research. Seeking to reignite fossil-fuel production and consumption, the administration among other considers eliminating the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), a subdivision of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Among other responsibilities, the OAR conducts long-term scientific observations and research, including the operation of Hawaii's Mauna Loa Observatory and its tracking of atmospheric CO_2 level changes. Both future climate data collection and the preservation of existing datasets thus face severe threats. Critical benchmarks like the Keeling curve risk disappearing, prompting scientists worldwide to compare these defunding strategies to "breaking a thermometer because you don't like knowing you've got a fever."[2] Public discussion about weather and climate has become unwelcome and precarious, all while the U.S. Department of Energy seeks to terminate billions of dollars in federal grants for climate action and clean energy projects, claiming they fail to meet economic or security standards. Coal mining and oil drilling are back in, thorough research about environmental consequences out.

"Everybody talks about the weather. We don't," West Germany's Socialist Student Association (SDS) echoed the railway slogan in 1968; Red Army Faction (RAF) leader Ulrike Meinhof adopted the phrase in her writing around 1970 as well. Their intent was clear: weather discussion represented mere ideology, distracting from the urgent necessity of political struggle. Ironically, today the Trump administration's stance on climate science mirrors and merges the contempt for weather talk once shared across the political spectrum – from technological solutionists to free-market entrepreneurs to left-wing terrorists. Trump's attacks on weather and climate science are driven by the aim to extract natural resources at all costs, based on a renewed credo of human and national exceptionalism. His administration doesn't want us to talk about the weather because, at heart, it aspires to remodel society as a mere aggregate of transactional, self-reliant entities maximizing financial fortunes without regard

for the interdependence of all things living. As importantly, the concept of climate, for Trump, distracts from his administration's most urgent economic and political agendas. It needs to be silenced to enable the production of social cohesion through autocratic directives rather than rigorous inquiry, unconstrained knowledge production, and critical debate.

concepts

Nicol A. Barria-Asenjo

We are living in a historic moment with diverse conditions, and concepts and ideas are once again becoming central to our contemporary world. We must look at and reflect on the dominant language. We are a collective writing, we write in ourselves and in others, we are a global text that must not only be read but also rewritten. The manuscript that we are as humanity needs to be edited, rewritten, and redirected. Words today are becoming central and are fundamental places that we must analyze and re-signify.

Politics and economics are intertwined and tied to concepts. It is in the world of ideas and their descent into the world that certain modes of existence are configured, implying particular and specific repercussions and results.

In our present, we are witnessing a slow but necessary process of conceptual renewal, in which the abstraction of ideas has led us to an inevitable point where we must look at the overwhelming and sinister nature of dominant ideas. Avoiding and denying them is no longer a dignified option for humanity and the future of the species. Continuing with the idea of progress based on inertia in light of the changes of the times is no longer a way out of humanity's labyrinth.

Our 21st century has incorporated into the heart of societies concepts and ideas that have remained immobile and have become embedded in the psyches of contemporary individuals, shaping unique existential modalities. The results awaken the need to look at our historical moment.

We are entering a new era in which not only are the meanings and significance of classic political concepts being redefined, but conceptual abstraction has led not only to the burial of concepts but also to the emergence of new concepts that have begun to invade society and

contribute to the construction of new conceptual and material horizons for humanity.

In this process of collective writing and rewriting of the global text, beginning to think about concepts and giving importance to words and ideas is a complex but necessary path. This book responds to that historical urgency: to take concepts, chew them over, think about them, define them, write them down, and launch them into the world of ideas to contribute to the meanings of the contemporary world.

confirmation bias

Dawn Chan

Confirmation bias, the very human tendency to seek out evidence that supports beliefs you already hold, is now on a list of words that ought to be flagged or avoided in government documents. Yet confirmation bias has been found in everything from investment decisions to chicken-eating preferences.[1] Why suddenly be so scared of the phrase? Is it because we want those biases to suddenly vanish when it comes to perceptions of others based on race, gender, and identity markers?

In a 2024 victory speech delivered in Palm Springs, Trump praised the Silicon Valley entrepreneur Elon Musk, saying "He's a super genius, we have to protect our geniuses, we don't have many of them."[2] This very super genius in question, in 2021, tweeted a graphic featuring "50 cognitive biases to be aware of so that you can be the very best version of you."

Halfway down that list: "Confirmation Bias." As the graphic posted by Musk explains, "We tend to find and remember information that confirms our perceptions."

Musk's tweet, which received 289K likes as of October of 2025, adds his own caption: "Should be taught to all at a young age."

So here is something that should be taught to all at a young age – but then also removed from public discourse. As the American journalist Edward Murrow used to say, "Good night – and good luck."

cruelty of images

Antonio Rivera Garcia

The aesthetic and political discourse of cruelty, inspired by Artaud, is characterized by directly confronting, without any consolation, individual and social problems and pathologies. It is cruel because it denounces the consoling metaphysics of the organism, because it reveals that the division of the body and the artwork into organs articulated by a transcendent principle prevents us from being free. The art of cruelty "kills" the consolation that human beings find, in relation to their pathologies and imperfections, in most contemporary artworks. Part of culture has precisely served to hide from human beings the painful knowledge of what Marquard calls "contingency by fate," or what Ernesto de Martino terms the "drama of existence," referring to everything that occurs "without and against the human being." However, the aesthetics of cruelty is related to an integral humanism that reveals the truth about our precarious condition.

In the visual age, in our time, cruelty consists of showing that we live in a world of pseudo-images disconnected from reality. Like Pascalian "divertissements", such images only serve to console us and hide from us, as if we were minors, the real evils we suffer.

An aesthetics of the cruel image combats the theological-political structure inherent to the concepts of sovereignty and hierarchy, which most audiovisual works of our time adopt. These works become an organism composed of elements (light, darkness, sounds, words, silences, shots, etc.) that are articulated according to a set of rules given a priori. Artaud identified such rules with the role played by the mythical Demiurge and, fundamentally, with the transcendent and sovereign principles responsible for ensuring that the artwork acquires a univocal meaning and that all ambiguity and poetry are eliminated.

The aesthetics of cruelty is a democratic aesthetics that does not establish a hierarchy between documentary and fiction, between genres, or among the diverse elements of a work. Such aesthetics also recognizes no contradiction or antagonism between these opposing concepts. The affirmative essence of the cruel image makes it inevitable that the "body" of audiovisual works is the result of real, not organic, oppositions. This aesthetics is cruel because it recognizes the distance of the image

from life, but at the same time proclaims the power of montage and of the spectator's gaze – anyone's – to relate such image to invisible reality and to truth. The aesthetics of cruelty opposes those pathological images that, like advertising and propaganda, blur the difference between the image and its simulacrum. Ultimately, it combats all those images that, in a time like ours, when the effectiveness of neoliberal control depends on digital technology, try to deceive us and convince us that we are free.

cultural competence

William Brown

When you endorse the genocide of Palestinians and the institution of a 'Gaza Riviera,' you are culturally incompetent. When, as happened in 2015, you mock a disabled *New York Times* reporter by flailing your arms around in imitation, you are culturally incompetent.

When, as happened in 1992, you tell *New York Magazine* that you have to 'treat [women] like shit,' you are culturally incompetent.

When you announce on 11 September 2001 that your building is now the tallest in New York, you are culturally incompetent.

When you ask Anglophone Liberian President Joseph Boai where he learnt such good English, you are culturally incompetent.

When, according to John R. O'Donnell, you believe that 'laziness is a trait in Blacks,' then you are culturally incompetent.

When you tell a room full of Jewish folks that they all 'negotiate deals,' as happened in 2015, then you are culturally incompetent.

When, as happened in 2016, you say that Mexico is 'sending' 'criminals, drug dealers and rapists' to the USA, then you are culturally incompetent.

When you call for the 'total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States,' as happened after a mass shooting committed by a Muslim couple in California in 2015, then you are culturally incompetent.

When you overturn *Roe v Wade*, you are culturally incompetent.

When you use an image of Algerian boxer Imane Khelif in the same advert in which you say that 'Kamala Harris is for they/them,' thereby drawing upon and appealing to popular transphobia, then you are culturally incompetent.

When you remove data and information concerning LGBTQ+ rights and HIV from the websites of the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as its agencies, then you are culturally incompetent.

There is satisfaction in compiling this list, and the litany of odiousness could go on – and on and on and on. But ultimately we know all of this, and yet Trump continues. Even though Charlie Kirk, an agitator noted for consistent anti-Black statements on his podcast, was assassinated by a young white man from even further on the right of the political spectrum, there have since his death (just eight days before writing this) been numerous threats made against Black and other minority students across the USA, which is not to mention the hanging of African American student Trey Reed at Delta State University on, or shortly before, 15 September 2025.

In other words, every excuse, including the violence of those on the right against themselves, is taken as a reason to practice 'cultural incompetence' – such that cultural incompetence becomes, in effect, the norm.

We might say that Trump (and others) are so competent at cultural incompetence that theirs is the 'new cultural competence.' But Trump (and others) are without culture – since toxicity, hatred and violence help nothing to grow.

And yet still the hatred spreads – empowered and emboldened, entitled and enabled. Whither the better angels of our nature? Fists clenched, laughter at the ready, they must be nourished and helped to grow. The battle of the end of the world has begun, and love alone, the sole competence that culture requires, must be mustered to force hatred back into the abyss if we are not all to fall irrecoverably into its grip.

cultural differences

Andreas Jacobsson

Cultural differences is a widely used notion to describe different ways to live as (specific) groups of people. The notion is used in, for example, everyday language, education, media and political discourses, and popular culture. Cultural differences are often connected to ideas of national cultures and ethnicity. Identifying, discussing and analyzing cultural differences can be enjoying, interesting and intellectually rewarding. In many contemporary globalized and diverse societies cultural differences is a form of lived experience and common knowledge. However, discussions of

cultural differences can also have a tendency of ending up at an impasse; becoming too focused on differences and thereby obscuring similarities, or too general and thereby bordering on developing into stereotypical descriptions.

Cultural differences is also a contested notion in many academic fields of study, in primarily the Humanities and Social sciences, for example anthropology, ethnography, cultural studies, media studies and sociology. The reasons why it is contested is connected to the impasses described above, but also because the term culture (cultural) is polysemic and complex (Hannerz), which entails that the meaning of cultural differences changes depending on who is using the term, when, for what reasons and in which geopolitical context. Among others, Anthropologists Joana Breidenbach and Pal Nyíri have criticized all too wide scoped and unproblematized uses (and misuses) of cultural differences where culture fill the function of catch-all explanation for all sorts of things high and low. An important aspect of their critique concerns the dangerous and simplistic trap of regarding culture as *determining* all form of individual and group behavior. To make things even more problematic the practice of applying a deterministic interpretation of culture and cultural differences is often directed towards those who are considered as the Other/s. Johannes Fabian describes how anthropological knowledge production traditionally has fixated the Other in time but simultaneously positioned the scholar or observer as changing and developing over time. With this in mind some scholars have questioned the relevance of culture and cultural differences in research (see for example: Dervin).

So, removing cultural differences from the official language could then, if interpreted very generously, be regarded as a radical move in line with contemporary critical thinking on what could be described as deterministic culturalism. However, in this case it is rather a right-wing intensification of cultural determinism, where the notion of cultural difference has been fully infused with xenophobia and racism, aiming to hide and erase diversity and difference from society. Banning a complex and polysemic notion as part of a political agenda is in fact trying to avoid ambivalence and ambiguity in real life. Being unable to handle ambivalence and ambiguity short circuits debate and dialogue necessary for upholding and developing a democratic political system in any society. That cultural difference is a problematic and contested notion is the very reason why it is

so important to keep on discussing and critically scrutinize regardless of which discourse we are involved in at the moment.

cultural heritage

Alexey Zhavoronkov

Since their earliest days, European and American conservative intellectual traditions have placed great emphasis on cultural heritage and continuity, treating them as bulwarks against revolutionary disruption and discontinuation. Thinkers such as Edmund Burke, T. S. Eliot, Irving Babbitt, Michael Oakeshott, Russell Kirk, and Leo Strauss positioned this concept at the centre of their work, often using it as a foundation for their criticism against the abstract, culturally 'uprooted' rationalism of the liberal tradition. In conservative politics, cultural heritage – embracing both tangible and intangible elements, from monuments and artefacts to language and shared knowledge – has remained a staple of public rhetoric, typically invoked alongside references to specific cultural practices, moral standards, or pivotal historical events.

Although the concept still carries political weight rhetorically, it is frequently used by conservative governments to manipulate national history by spotlighting only those events that serve a chosen narrative – for example, Vladimir Putin's selective use of history during Russia's war against Ukraine. In political practice, repeated invocations of cultural heritage rarely guarantee government initiatives that protect it. Indeed, several instances – such as the Reagan administration's cuts of federal funding for cultural preservation or Viktor Orbán's conflict with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences – suggest the opposite.

The presence of the notion of cultural heritage in the banned words list of the U.S. federal government under Donald Trump vividly illustrates this discrepancy. On the one hand, Trump has made the term central to his public speeches and official documents: his Mount Rushmore address on 3 July 2020, remarks at the White House Conference on American History on 17 September 2020, the 2020 executive order on monument protection, and the proposal to build a National Garden of American Heroes. A very different kind of example, namely Trump's January 2020 tweets threatening to strike Iran's cultural sites, still underscore the concept's rhetorical prominence. On the other hand, the Trump administration actively sought

to undercut programs dedicated to preserving cultural heritage worldwide and to weaken the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the cornerstone for a vast number preservation programs and activities in the U.S. since 1966. On 20 January 2025, Executive Order 14156, "Declaring a National Energy Emergency," enabled federal agencies to bypass key NHPA Section 106 requirements under the pretext of expediting energy projects – endangering important cultural sites and landscapes. Facing backlash from the cultural preservation community, the administration nevertheless proposed slashing the Historic Preservation Fund from $169 million to just $11 million for fiscal year 2026 and withholding the $188 million Congress had already appropriated for 2025. These actions reveal an emergency-driven, essentially pseudo-conservative agenda that clashes with the traditional conservative ethos of cautious development and long-term preservation.

cultural sensitivity

Paula Garcia Cherep

In "The Argentine Author and Tradition," Jorge Luis Borges addresses the problem of how Argentine writers – coming from a non-dominant culture such as Argentina's – should relate to the great, dominant, universal literary tradition. According usual approaches to this subject, it would seem that writers from subordinate cultures should only deal with local themes, while the "great abstract themes, of time, of space, of the sea, of the night" are off-limits to them. It is implicitly assumed that such themes would only be suitable for those who write from the dominant European or North American culture because these cultures provide – supposedly – a privileged access to those matters. It is as if all the cultures of the world were contaminated with local residues, while the dominant culture is characterized by not placing any obstacles in the way of reflection.

Borges' argues that belonging to a subordinate culture is no impediment to reflecting on major issues. Moreover, reflection on universal themes cannot take place without the cultural color of the person carrying out the reflection. The question of which culture the reflection is based on is irrelevant to the universality of the issue. Regardless of whether the author is Argentine, European, or Asian, its background necessarily leaves a unique and indelible mark. We always think from within

a certain culture because we cannot – no one can – abstract ourselves from it. As finite beings, human beings cannot access a point of view of absolute neutrality.

The expression *cultural sensitivity* refers to the ability to accept the existence of cultural differences without presupposing that one's own culture is superior to others. It is no small matter that in this context sensitivity is invoked, as the ability of a sensory organ to be affected by a stimulus.

The cultural mark is always objectively present in the thing. Of course, there are some objects which cultural uniqueness is more evident, more immediately perceptible than in others. It is convenient to think of cultural sensitivity as the ability to perceive the uniqueness, the unique and unparalleled mark of each culture, present but not always immediately visible in seemingly neutral objects. This mark certifies the humanity of every attempt to grasp the universal, inasmuch as no one can rise above their own origins, except that they do it from that very context. It is false to think that without the sensitivity that allows us to be affected by the cultural singularities of the world, we are approaching a transcendent point of view, which rises above the particular, finite, and changing. The absence of such sensitivity makes us resemble an automated intelligence, whose functioning is removed from the materiality of the world, which does not work without someone to program it and which is incapable of carrying out its procedures without the end goal of its action being imposed from outside.

D

DEI

Martin E. Rosenberg

"Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" refers to legislation instituted by Federal, State and Local governments to foster equal opportunity for education and employment across all categories of human beings in non-profit public institutions, for-profit corporations, as well as Federal, State and Local governments and the Department of Defense. Since the emergence of a viable Civil Rights Movement after World War II, this initiative became identified as a legal solution to structural as well as overt racism, sexism, religious discrimination, ageism, and ableism. We can think of DEI as placing the finger on the scales of justice to right wrongs and to prevent future exclusionary practices, offering, under certain circumstances, preferential treatment to certain "under-represented" classes of individuals.

Since the 1970's, there has emerged significant resistance to this effort. This backlash has generated some interesting consequences. With the election of President Donald J. Trump, an attempt to bring an end to DEI has begun. Trump is a notorious White Supremacist raised by a father who belonged to the Ku Klux Klan and to the "America First" organization supporting the Nazis before U.S. entry into World War II, and who both were prosecuted for racist rental practices in their real estate holdings. The most visible manifestation of dismantling of DEI has been Trump's Executive Branch Cabinet, easily the least prepared, least competent cabinet in American history (for example, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Pete Hegseth – I could go on). By promoting mediocre Whites over competent candidates of minority or of gender status, the current President seems to signal that incompetent homogeneity trumps skilled diversity. There are exceptions, of course, in this Cabinet (Elise Stefanik, Kristy Noem, Tulsi Gabbard, Pam Bondi, Linda McMahon, Scott Turner), in the Supreme Court (Clarence Thomas and Amy Coney Barrett) and elsewhere, but those exceptions prove the rule when these "under-represented" members willingly serve the interests of White, Christian, Male Supremacy.

By overturning almost 75 years of precedent, the Trump Administration has dismantled DEI initiatives with enthusiasm, to the extent that the cruelty deployed for this dismantling seems to be the point: this regime seeks to reinstitute an era of racial, male gender and religious dominance by undermining the principles of justice, explicit or implied by The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution of the United States--the metaphorical "blank check" which Civil Rights leader Martin Luther King wished to "cash" in his "I Have A Dream" speech delivered during the March on Washington, on August 28, 1963.

But of course, the U.S. government had instituted preferential treatment previously in U.S. history even prior to the Civil War, through laws favoring veterans and their families, offering pensions to veterans and the mothers and widows of those killed in battle, and priority in military hires even when shrinking the armed forces. After World War I, the government enacted laws to give priority to veterans applying to join the larger Federal workforce. Between the world wars, FDR first offered legislation to ensure hiring of the Blind. During and after World War II, laws were enacted to integrate the armed services, and to help employ veterans with a range of service-related disabilities. JFK first deployed the term "affirmative action" in 1961 in an Executive Order, and LBJ passed "equal opportunity" legislation in 1964. Together, these precursors progressively outlawed discrimination in education and employment with respect to race, gender, creed, color, or national origin. With Obama's 2011 Executive Order utilizing the language of "diversity" and "inclusion," and then with the impact of the "Me Too" and "Black Lives Matter" movements during DJT's first term after incidents like the George Floyd murder, the implementation of so-called DEI Programs accelerated, generating preferential hires even in the corporate world by as much as a factor of 4.

What we have in DJT's second term is a wholesale rejection of the fundamental premises of "diversity," "equity," and "inclusion": not a revenge of the nerds, but of the paleoliths. Preferential treatment is now given to those Trump prefers: human beings that look and think like him. His January 20, 2025 Executive Order declared all attempts at diversity, equity and inclusion: "illegal and immoral discrimination programs" and "public waste," and began to close all governmental DEI programs, put DEI-related employees first on administrative leave, and then firing them. Law suits have so far been unable to reverse this rapid dismantling of DEI.

deep listening

Javier Alejandro Camargo Castillo

We turn to deep listening as a balm when reality becomes unintelligible – when disbelief overshadows our understanding of unfolding events, when the messages we receive are ideologically torn or biased, and when the mandates of power override reason, leaving more struggle of forces than benevolent dialogue. We are not living in times that foster listening. What proliferates is noise.

The distinction between hearing and listening compels us to be more attentive, to reclaim an ethical disposition, to train ourselves in fundamental practices rooted in respect, in the recognition of the other, in the value of dialogue and agreement, and in embracing human plurality as the source of both conflict and the richness of the political.

Gloria Anzaldúa, in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks, offered a path – a methodology – for listening, for engaging depth amid traumatic circumstances and a shifting global political paradigm.[1] More than two decades later, one may ask what she would say in a scenario where someone like Donald Trump ascends to power, where the U.S. National Guard is deployed to stop migrants, conduct mass raids, and deport people in airplanes to various parts of the world. What would Anzaldúa say in a horizon where Los Angeles becomes a site of political and cultural dispute?

Anzaldúa refers to deep listening in more than one sense. Deep listening means listening to ourselves – but not in an individualistic sense, not as an immediate healing, nor as an identity-consumption game. Rather, it is to feel and traverse the wound. The wound is crucial. Acknowledging events and their impact on us is an initial step, not a final destination. From that wound begins the exploration of depth. As is characteristic of her philosophy, Anzaldúa calls for radical interconnection.

What does this mean? On the one hand, it means connecting with more than just the immediate human horizon – seeking references in nature, listening to the world, to radical otherness, to dwelling in a meditative rather than merely calculative mode of thought, and to the traditions of our ancestors. On the other hand, it also means refusing the binary logic of oppositional pairs; it calls us to go beyond the identification of differences and to engage in the difficult work of examining our own

shadows – to take on the task of remaking ourselves (like Coyolxauhqui) and our cultures through *spiritual activism*.

"Abre los ojos, North America; open your eyes, look at your shadow, and listen to your soul," Anzaldúa would say.

democracy

Karla Villapudua

Democracy in the 21st century is non-democracy. Antidemocracy is the name of an exclusionary and authoritarian project where propaganda pretends to listen to the voice of the people, sedated by the "TikTokization" of politics as policing. Strange paradox in these times of technological equality and epistemic suicide.

Without awareness of reality, there is no democracy, hence this conscience unawareness is unable to make the best decisions thanks to GPT chat.

Consequently, in the absence of viable options for making a fair and truthful vote to change the conditions of existence in a given society, we find no distinction between supporters of the left or the right.

This is due to the current conditions of anti-democratic cynicism, where, at best, politics becomes just another spectacle of the infosphere in times of fake news.

¿Restore democracy? ¿Deconstruct democracy?

At first glance, the promise of democracy offered a more just and equal world free of senseless wars, famines, and forced migrations.

If the promise of democracy promised a more just and equal world free of senseless wars, famines, and forced migrations, what kind of democracy is this? French philosopher Jacques Ranciére pointed out in his work The Hatred of Democracy, that democracy has been distorted in order to justify the invasion of countries with dictatorial governments and as a pretext for designing destructive wars under the slogan of saving democracy.

He also raises the need to revive true democracy, that is, one that is characterized as genuine and capable of denouncing the criticisms leveled at it.

In this sense, democracy would imply the subversive and egalitarian defense of the ability of everyone to take sides with full intellectual emancipation.

However, democracy has always been a source of suspicion.

From ancient Greece to the present day, some philosophers have expressed the people's lack of judgment in choosing the best people to govern.

That is, alienated masses without conscience are incapable of making decisions that will impact the collective life of the city.

And in some ways, in certain contexts this makes sense.

For example, in some regions of Mexico, votes are exchanged for breakfast or social programs, which is actually very little.

Some rulers take advantage of the misery of the people that they themselves have caused and engage in these kinds of unethical exchanges.

Thus, this democracy is immoral and has no emancipatory purpose, much less any improvement in the quality of life of the population.

dictatorship

Oscar Ariel Cabezas

The concept of dictatorship has been at the epicenter of philosophical possibilities that discuss the republican project – from Cicero to José Luis Villacañas – in the intensification of the relationship between normative structures and democracy. In a theoretical register, dictatorial regimes are the opposite of those defined as democratic regimes. Western history itself is populated with experiences in which dictatorship and democracy seem to define the possibilities of a civilization that cannot do without politics.

An important part of the Marxist tradition conceived of the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" moved by the suspicion that democracy and parliamentary regimes are complicit in perpetuating slavery and the exploitation of humans by humans. This discussion is, in fact, found in the early writings of Karl Marx and in *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), which he wrote together with Frederick Engels, but also in the writings of György Lukács in the 1920s. In his early postwar essays, the acclaimed Hungarian philosopher wrote *The Questions of Parliamentarianism* (1919-22), in which he argues against the regime of parliamentary democracy

and expresses a theoretical inclination toward the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lukács's argument is that parliamentarianism contributes to the development of political opportunism by displacing class antagonism and privileging the development of a petty-bourgeois consciousness. Étienne Balibar, in his book *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (1977), is the theorist who has best explained the importance of the Marxist concept of dictatorship.

However, the critique of liberal-parliamentary democracy will not be made by the Marxist tradition. In *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy*, Carl Schmitt considered the dictatorship of the proletariat to be a movement against the rule of law. Insofar as the dictatorship of the proletariat has as its horizon the abolition of the state and the dissolution of social classes in communism, it makes impossible what Schmitt will defend with the concept of "sovereign dictatorship." Clarifying this argument in his study *Dictatorship* (1921) – considered one of the most comprehensive books on the concept of dictatorship – Schmitt argues that dictatorship is not alien to democracy. In modern democracy, dictatorship takes the form of sovereign decision-making and is therefore distinct from the metaphysical "perversions" of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which has the dissolution of the state as its goal. Schmitt considers dictatorship to be internal to sovereignty in situations where it is necessary to suspend the law to ensure that the state can guarantee order.

Like contemporary philosophers such as Jürgen Habermas, Spanish philosopher José Luis Villacañas has been one of the important readers and critics of Schmitt's political thought regarding Schmitt's analysis of the democratic republic of Weimar. In *Poder y conflicto. Ensayos sobre Carl Schmitt* [Power and Conflict: Essays on Carl Schmitt] (2008), Villacañas describes the strength of Schmitt's argument as a "dead end." Villacañas resolves the plausibility of Schmitt's legal dictatorship on the side of a *res publica* in which the *complexio oppositorum*, that is, political antagonism, is irreducible as a source of democratic aspirations. This republicanism would place the dictatorship of the proletariat and the state of exception as *sovereign dictum* in crisis based on a *res publica* that resolves issues in an enlightened manner from a normative structure based on the separation of powers.

disability/disabilities

Dorota Papoušek.

Disability is a form of merciless othering which likes to portray itself as if it's merciful. Let me explain.

Society deems health as the pinnacle of human achievement, the ideal we should and do strive for. Health is a golden standard, a necessity, and an underlying and automatic bodily implication we face each day. Health is tricky, however, it is out of our control, no matter what new age self-proclaimed spiritual coach tries to shove down our throats and chisel into our minds. We cling to balanced diets (sic), exercise routines, meditation techniques.

And then we crash anyway. We followed all the rules, we didn't deserve this. We are told we need to fight, yet when we do, we seem well off and fine, so we must be faking. We are tired of being perceived as strong, yet when we admit to weakness, the able-bodied grow awkward and uncomfortable. Our lives and mental loads carry constant thoughts on accommodations and workarounds, that we deserve and need, yet when we dare to claim them, at worst most scoff, at best thy exclaim: "I had no idea you needed that!". We float in a medical limbo, moving from one doctor's appointment to another, spending fortunes we don't have on traveling, and feeling guilty for not participating in the expected capitalist productivity markers, with the feeling of inadequacy growing even more rampant inside us. Our dependence on others makes the myth of self-made hyper-individualism go up in smoke faster than we get a proper diagnosis. We turn into online beggars, creating funding campaigns, carefully crafting texts to attract masses of donors. And when we don't? Too bad. ("And what if it was a scam? How do we know where the money goes?")

Our stories are scrutinized by strangers who compare us to charts in order to grant us support. Our stories are outrageous tales of body horror for the fetishist voyeurs of gore. Our stories are used as cautionary tales, gratefulness porn, for people who have not yet been hit. But they will be, sooner or later. Nobody likes to think about that, but we have no choice in the matter. Why do we believe and cling to the idea we would stay unchanged and able-bodied till the end of our days, then pass away quietly in our sleep? Only a lucky few get to claim that exit.

Disability is desperation.

Disability is dreams shattered or non-existent in the first place.

Disability is drowning in one's own pain while putting on a smile.

Disability is doing yet dissociating (from pain, pleasure, powerlessness, anything).

Disability is darkness surrounding us with no light-switch hiding within our grasp.

Disability is days of countless confrontations, in which we fight for proof and help.

Disability is death taking us by the hand and sitting with us, and smiling right at us at all times, no matter what we do.

discrimination

Martin E. Rosenberg

The term "discrimination" helps define what DEI programs attempt to eliminate. But even at the greatest extent of the historical implementation of DEI (@2015), much discrimination, both overt and structural, persisted. This suggests that there are deeper causes to discrimination than bad behavior. We can define discrimination in the following way: "the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of ethnicity, age, sex, or disability" (OED). But we should distinguish between overt and structural forms of discrimination. As opposed to true equality, based on *impartiality* and *merit* in society, business, non-profit, legal and educational institutions, we find a range of words aligned with discrimination: prejudice, bias, bigotry, intolerance, unfairness, inequity, favoritism, racism, sexism, able-ism, antisemitism, to name a few. The history of discrimination in all civilizations throughout history begins, of course, with sex discrimination. But since the Early Modern period and the advent of mercantile colonialism and then capitalism, racism remains the most glaring example of pervasive overt and structural inequality, most visibly in the institution of slavery.

Another, secondary definition for discrimination can be "recognition and understanding of the difference between one thing and another" (OED). Here the terms difference and distinction point to the capacity to

judge. Related terms to these two include: discernment, judgment, perception, perceptiveness, acumen, astuteness, shrewdness, judiciousness, insight, selectivity, refinement, sensitivity, cultured, taste, among others. But a number of these terms suggest the "natural" emergence of hierarchy within the distinctions of difference, which leads to a third definition for discrimination, which is "the ability to judge the quality of something based on its difference from other, similar things" (OED). Thus, we are confronted with the fact that "recognition and understanding of the difference" enables the emergence of "the ability to judge the quality of something based" on difference.

So, if an act of discrimination means to construct binaries, then discrimination is the precondition for establishing hierarchical values. The generation of hierarchy out of the condition of binary thinking is thus the precondition for the forms of discrimination that involve establishing hierarchies amongst individuals. In Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick* (1951), there is a chapter titled "The Whiteness of the Whale," where he constructs a meaning and value system based on the distinction between white and black. Only here, Melville *inverts* the meaning and value system based on the discrimination between white and black, so that the whiteness associated with the whale Moby Dick becomes linked to all kinds of sinister, evil, and dangerous signification normally associated with the word "black." In this novel about a whaling boat engaged in exploiting the environment by extracting oil from the flesh of whales through a social order in which all the leaders are white and the laborers are mostly non-white, Melville offers a tutorial in the arbitrariness of language's social role in the establishment of qualitative difference and discriminatory practice. Over a century later, in the philosopher of difference Jacques Derrida's essay "White Mythology," he demonstrates this arbitrariness through a brilliant deconstruction of the textual metaphysics of "black" and "white." Perhaps the adoption of non- binary thinking might be linked to the widespread acceptance non-binary sexual identity, along the lines of Ursula LeGuin's science fiction classic *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), attacking "discrimination" at its foundations.

As a graduate student at the University of Michigan, I had attended a neighborhood Christmas party in married student housing, where we were inebriating ourselves, and casually engaging in a friendly game of Charades. My next-door neighbor and friend had the floor, an

African-American woman MFA student of novelist Gayl Jones about to pursue a Ph.D. in creative writing with a fellowship at Brown University. She attempted to mime for us the title of a choreo-poem/play by Ntozake Shange: *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuff* (1977). We were having no luck at all, when out of frustration, the friend started to rub her skin. Immediately the responses flowed: "black," "brown," "Negro," "Nigger," "crime," "guns," "drugs," "ghetto." In other words, out of the distinction between black and white, the highly educated white men and women congregated in that basement on the campus of the University of Michigan generated all these words of negative value, and their racist implications emerged. My friend and I glanced at each other, and then she announced that she was not offended, but in fact had to leave to get her daughter (a witness to this event) to bed. No one in the room thought anything untoward had occurred, but I was feeling nauseous. Over the next few months before her graduation, I didn't see much of my friend, and I attributed it in part to the effort to finish her creative MFA thesis on time. But I can project an imperfect, flickering print of the film of that evening in my head now, forty years later.

discursive helplessness

Miriam Debieux Rosa

Discursive helplessness is the experience in which the subject, affected by exclusionary social discourses, is displaced from their place of speech, listening, and recognition of their social belonging or even their humanity. It is a type of silencing promoted by power structures (economic, racial, legal, cultural, etc.) that, by presenting themselves as neutral or natural, erase the historicity, singularity, and legitimacy of the subject's speech, individualizing, pathologizing, or criminalizing their manifestations – such discourse tricks have as their product sociopolitical suffering.

Discursive helplessness **i**s an extension of the Freudian notion, especially articulated at the intersection of psychoanalysis, politics, and discourse theory, as proposed by Lacan. It concerns the subject´s impossibility of occupying a legitimate place in language, of being symbolically included in the discourses that organize social life. It is, therefore, a helplessness that is not only ontological (relating to the human condition), but also historical, social, and political.

Helplessness (*Hilflosigkeit***)** is a central concept in Freudian theory and constitutes one of the fundamental hallmarks of the human condition. It designates an originary and structural experience: the human infant, at birth, is biologically immature and completely dependent on the other for survival. It is in this context that the first experience of anguish arises, one that will only be alleviated by the presence and response of the Other. Thus, Freudian helplessness inaugurates the relationship with the Other's desire and with language, thereby establishing the first contours of the subject. It is in the re-encounter with situations of loss, abandonment, death, and lack of meaning that helplessness is re-actualized. Anguish is the emotion that accompanies the experience of helplessness.

Discursive helplessness actualizes the originary helplessness /powerlessness/ impotence (*Hilflosigkeit*): prevented from naming themselves, their questions, and their suffering, the subject returns to a condition of radical impotence before the world, approaching the traumatic dimension. This occurs when the subject is captured by discourses that do not allow the inscription of their singularity and dehumanize them or name them exclusively by social markers of class, gender, ethnicity, etc. To the extent that they are not recognized as a subject of enunciation and their address to the other is made impossible, the narcissistic shock disarticulates their phantasmatic fiction and throws them into the anguish of helplessness, which induces the traumatic condition. Lacking a role in discourse and the polysemic function of language, the subject cannot symbolically shape the hole (the *troumatisme* (Lacan´s contribution) that inhabits them and form a symptom and demand.

While Freudian helplessness underpins the subject's entry into language and culture, discursive helplessness marks the limits of this entry, highlighting when and where the subject is excluded from symbolic sharing. The fixed identities attributed to them operate as a barrier to language, fostering subjective weakening and destitution. The subject, silenced and frozen in the position of an object – an object of the Other's enjoyment – is reduced to a figure of threat, failure, or shame. In this case, traditional psychoanalytic clinical devices are insufficient, requiring clinical-political interventions to sustain a place of listening capable of opening cracks in the dominant discourse and making room for desire. Listening to sociopolitical suffering is recognizing the politics of the unconscious and that psychoanalytical praxis is always a political act.

diverse

Jeremie Brugidou

“There used to be a ground here.” The words came out abruptly, unexpected, from the mouth of a passerby. The men in tight suits barely twitched an eyebrow. One looked behind his shoulder briefly. The group of inspectors is gathered in a circle around the tremendous pit. They’re taking notes. They’ll be held accountable for the official ratification of the conclusions. Indeed, there was a ground here. As well as several things living upon it. It was deemed empty, useless land. Therefore, chosen for the experiment. The things living upon it weren’t accounted for. They didn’t matter. They were part of that undefined space beyond the scope of valuable life. The non-universal life forms. If you are non-universe, you are non. Just non. As good as void.

The pit was getting deeper. The inspectors paid close attention to the notes they were receiving live from the President. He was driving the probe. A one-man mission. A Guinness world record too. Judges from the Guinness Federation are there. Juries of the Noble as well. The President is at 5000 kilometers deep already. If the Earth is flat, as it so well seems, then it is quite thick. The inspectors are noting. The engineers chose to avoid the trajectory that, if the Earth were a sphere, would likely hold very hot magma in nuclear fusion, which, if proven true, would have likely melted the probe and the President within it. Unlikely, yet unnecessary risk, even at 0,3% chance.

President said “There is only one side, and that is my side.” The Presidential probe holds to Earth with a powerful grapple hook and 13000 kilometers of titanium cable to avoid any short coming, since, it is quite obvious that, once on the other side, it will likely fall into space. Since there is no other side, as the President so well said, any ending of the pit can only be a catastrophic exit, if it wasn’t for the grapple. Approaching 7000 kilometers now.

The logic is quite simple. It is either verse or vice-versa. Vice-versa is the Latin phrasing for “the side of sin”, therefore, if your aren’t in my verse, you’re in the evil verse, therefore in no-verse at all as far as we, the Silicon Apostles, are concerned, therefore there can only be one rightful verse, which is MY universe. The mission will prove by continuous physical contact between one side and the other that there are no other

"sides" to account for. The diverse hypothesis is the greatest scam in history. So many centuries wasted in error and interversal efforts. Good thing the President has the balls to stand up for us all and for truth. Such greatness unravelling down there some ten thousand kilometers below ground. Such glory.

"Sure smells like sludge don't it? Could be the smell of the bottom." Something is growling from below. The titanium cable starts to dangle, as if holding nothing. The inspectors lean over the pit with their universal Metagoggles. A gust of air before the geyser of seawater. The pit collapses, creating a small seawater basin full of floating corpses. There was a 0,7% chance the President would end up in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. If the Earth were round. If there were another side, a diverse. Sure can't be. So who sent this universal water?

diverse community/communities

Andrea Perunović

What do we mean when we say that there are *diverse communities*? Firstly, we suppose that there is a multiplicity of different communities that constitute our social world. This variety of communities spans from ethnic, (sub/counter)cultural, (inter)national, location-based, identity-based, and religious communities, to epistemic communities, communities of interest or virtual communities – to name only a few. Furthermore, throughout the history, we have witnessed to many concepts that used to articulate different types of political communities, such as the *polis*, the republic, the empire, or the modern nation state. Now, on the other hand, when we say that there are diverse communities, we could mean also that there are communities that foster diversity. This makes us think about theoretical endeavors from the nineties, when the ideas such as multiculturalism (Taylor 1992) and cultural identities (Hall 1990) used to thrive, and at which we can only look back now with bitter-sweet nostalgia, since the global far-right's conservative segregation project kept piling up victories throughout the whole first quarter of the 21st century.

But what do we learn from these categorizations about the philosophical implications of diverse communities and the consequences that this diversity has on our existence? We learn that our subjectivities are layered and shaped by our (non-)belonging to diverse communities. We learn

that our social field is divided and composed by diverse communities. Nevertheless, we do not learn what makes the diversity of diverse communities to appear as diverse, or how their differences are expressed. For example, for Hegel, "identity *breaks apart* into diversity" which is thus understood as "the indifference of difference" (Hegel, 362-363). This dialectical view on the diversity of communities offers little to us, because it necessarily leads us to an immediate, undifferentiated, absolute idea of community. Therefore, we should rather turn to *Difference and Repetition*, where Deleuze writes that "Difference is not diversity. Diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given, that by which the given is given as diverse." (Deleuze, 222). Thus, if we want to go beyond the givenness of diverse communities, we must address their differences, their *differences as intensities*. There are three fundamental differences that make communities appear disparately: 1) *openness*: a community can be more or less open, inclusive or exclusive, or, put otherwise – it can adopt any position on the spectrum of intensities between the *unconditional hospitality* (Derrida 2023) and the *unconditional hostility*. 2) *change*: a community can be structured as a set of rigid and permanent norms, or an entity whose main features are change, becoming and absolute acceptance of *what is to come* (Agamben 1993). 3) *(in)operativity*: authority, instrumentality, governmentality, productivity, and their opposites, such as anarchy, idleness, unworking and deconstruction, are all vectors that engender pure differences between diverse communities, placing such disparate entities as capitalist communities (i.e. companies) and Marx's *real* or *true community* (Marx, Engels 1970) on the one extreme, and what Jean-Luc Nancy (1991) calls the *inoperative community*, on the other.

diversity

Andrey Logutov

Diversity has always been a strong side of the U.S. – even in times when it was not admitted, or when it was openly suppressed. It is one of the few countries whose very foundation rests not on a single ethnicity, language, or religion, but on the improbable coexistence of many. This coexistence has often been fraught, marked by exclusion, violence, and denial. Yet it also generated some of the country's greatest achievements. Which, then, is more foolish: to cultivate diversity, or to fight it? To cultivate it

can seem like a bureaucratic exercise, turning a living, shifting fact into checklists and quotas. To fight it is even more absurd: it is to fight the very ground one stands on, as if trying to erase the multiplicity that has always been there.

The notorious "DEIA" (diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility) programs that were stopped by Trump's executive order of January 20, 2025, exemplify this contradiction. On the one hand, they were criticized for becoming ritualized forms of corporate or institutional self-congratulation, acronyms piled upon acronyms. On the other, their cancellation exposed how fragile the official recognition of diversity remains. To the state, we are all the same; we wave flares in the air to get its attention as individuals. I want to be treated equally, and yet I want to be recognized as an individual.

Then there is a diversity inside of me – as a postmodern subject, I am already plural, fractured, contradictory. I am a play of signs, traces and simulations. My identities are layered and incompatible: citizen and stranger, consumer and critic, speaker and listener. Diversity is not only a social fact but an existential condition.

The political management of diversity will always feel unsatisfying. No institution can legislate the inner multiplicity of the subject; no executive order can cancel the experience of living as many at once. Diversity exceeds both its defenders and its opponents. It is not a policy but a mode of being – something that shapes how we perceive, desire, and relate. And so, the debate over DEIA or its dismantling is in some sense misplaced. It is not about whether we "have" diversity, but whether we dare to acknowledge that the human is itself diverse – that the promise of equality is not sameness, and that recognition is not reducible to bureaucratic form. Diversity is not something added to the project of the United States and, on a larger scale, the world; it is its condition of possibility, and perhaps its most enduring challenge.

To accept this inner plurality is, in a sense, to practice peace at its most intimate scale. If I can live with the difference that persists inside myself, then perhaps I can live with others without forcing or wishing them into sameness. It means neither cultivating diversity as an external program nor fighting it as a threat, but simply recognizing it as the ground of life itself. In that acceptance, a kind of peace might emerge – not necessarily in one piece, though.

E

environmental quality

Morten Tønnessen

Environmental quality concerns the state or functionality of an environment. Most often, the expression is used to refer to properties and characteristics of an environment, such as e.g. clean water, clean air and healthy soil, and how these have an impact on human beings and other organisms. The environment can be taken to mean different things. In one sense, it is simply someone´s physical surroundings. In another sense, it is the natural world, either generally, or in some particular geographical area (such as e.g. the Gulf of Mexico). The English word environment can be seen as flexible in that it can apply to anything from a 'working environment' and an 'indoor environment' to a 'natural environment'. It can also be seen as a poor term, given that it in its sense of referring to our physical surroundings appears to disassociate our idea of the environment from any clear conception of life-sustaining ecological relations and does not conceptually include lifeworld perspectives. An environmental perspective is by biologists routinely applied to the surroundings of any organism. In political terms, however, most people tend to think that the world revolves around human beings, and that our human surroundings, rather than any other surroundings, is what matters. This idea of the environment as *our* environment is taken to its extreme in Isaac Asimov´s *Foundation* novels, where Trantor, the administrative planet of the galactic empire, is portrayed as a planet engulfed by built environments and where the natural world as we know it is done away with except for in the Imperial Gardens. If the environment was simply whatever surrounds us, we could have treated it as we pleased. But the natural environment cannot simply be chopped into pieces and carried along. Dismantling environmental structures for the sake of extraction, production and consumption has severe ecological repercussions. This relates to the fact that whereas anthropocentric environmentalism is primarily concerned with human wellbeing in general and human health in particular,

more-than-human environmentalism, such as deep ecology, have broader concerns which also apply to the wellbeing of any other organism. This disagreement about the scope of the moral community is not some trivial philosophical dispute, but in fact a highly consequential one. For years we have for the most part restricted the moral community to fellow human beings. For most practical purposes, this implies that we have overlooked what matters in the environments of most non-human organisms and failed to be considerate with respect to their needs and interests. This human-centered mindset has contributed to the emergence of the current, ongoing biodiversity crisis, which researchers have characterized as the sixth mass extinction in Earth history. As this goes to show, it is in humanity´s best interest to acknowledge that the natural environment at large cannot be equated with the human environment. There are multiple intersecting lifeworlds and environments out there, and given our current technological powers, caring *only* for the human environment is tantamount to potentially destroying the natural environment that sustains us.

equality

Andreas Jacobsson

Equality is a notion that captures ideas on having equal rights and equal opportunities. Equality is interpreted differently in different parts of the world. What is considered as matters of equality is connected to political orientation and ideologies. For some, equal opportunities are more important than equal distribution of wealth. To make matters even more complicated, taking a closer look at political ideologies in different societies a pattern appears where it is not self-evident that all people living in the society is included in the we that equality concerns. Groups of people can be excluded from any form of equality depending on for example class, status, citizenship, political views, religion, fortune, heritage. The reason for excluding individuals and groups of people may appear politically rational from one perspective and be possible to logically defend, however it all boils down to ideology and that equality is conditioned.

To contextualize and provide examples I will apply some rudimentary auto-ethnography. Growing up in the 1970s in Sweden, a country that was “neutral” and therefore not involved in the Second world war and for that reason have experienced an economic boom and has developed into an

affluent society with a developed politically motivated social security system, including paid parental leave, free health care and education etc. – equality has been a major political issue, as well as one of the most value laden and important notions that most Swedes has been aware of and discussed in their schooling, private and social life, and at work. In this specific geopolitical context gender equality with equal pay for equal work and equal opportunities to choose how you live your life has been dominating the discourse over time, even though economic class-based equality has been a major political driving force. Since the late 1960s the idea of promoting equality has been integrated in the Swedish language, by a reform where an informal "you" is the norm in almost all public discourses. The ambition behind the reform was the remove titles and destabilize hierarchical structures in everyday conversations (du-reform, "du" = informal you). So, when I encounter young people that has started to lose contact with the reform and address me with a formal you I immediately feel uneasy of being positioned "above" them out of misdirected respect.

As a scholar in film and media, interculturality and child and youth studies, turning my scholarly attention to global film and media and interculturality opened for a comparative perspective on equality that nuanced my understanding, including more ways to exclude people and to condition belonging. To strive for and uphold equality in a society requires a political ideology promoting equality, but more importantly a political will to introduce reforms levelling out unequal differences in the society, starting with income. As I regard the issue from personal and professional analysis the main enemy towards striving for equality is late capitalism and global neo-liberalism. The term equality then becomes even more important to keep in official language since it pinpoints that removing it is a logical consequence of promoting a destructive form of capitalism.

equity

Dorota Papoušek

Once upon a time there were three sisters: Sympathy, Empathy, and Equity. All three were loving and caring in their own way. All three, as proper sisters, bickered about the way the world works. Sympathy was very popular, and the most known one of them. Everywhere they went,

people recognized and greeted her. She knew that without her, basic communication would not exist.

Empathy was a rising star, a budding flower. She tried to promote herself lavishly and help people, but often fell into traps of odd grifters who misused her status for their own gain.

Equity was the least known sister. She was the fussiest and least approachable one of the three. She didn't care whether people knew her, she knew people needed her the most when it came down to matters of life and death.

The sisters walked the Earth.

One day, as they made their way along a dusty dirt road in a rural area, a little boy on a bicycle joined them, riding alongside, inquisitively.

"Hello, little boy," they greeted him in unison, startling him a bit.

"Who are you?" he asked with his eyebrows raised.

"We are the three sisters," they spoke in unison again.

"We make people feel," said Sympathy.

"We make the world see itself," said Empathy.

"We make the world understand itself," said Equity. "And who are you, little boy?"

"I-I am Jake, I live-" but just as he was about to tell them more, a car blasted its way from behind them, rushing out of a bend they just passed, at roaring speed. The sisters yelled at the boy to dodge, which he managed to do, but the wave of pressure built up by the car's speed threw him and his bike off to the side of the road. His head hit a tree.

Empathy ran after the car. The driver slowed down, grinding his vehicle to a screeching halt, but then revved up his engine and drove away.

"Hey! How dare you!" she yelled.

"Oh, poor boy," said Sympathy, crying as she crouched down next to the boy to hold his hand. "It's going to be ok."

"Ugh, what are you even saying!" screamed Empathy. "He needs an ambulance, none of those empty words!"

"Already on it," said Equity dryly, with her phone at her ear, repeating the license plate number of the car quietly over and over again in her mind.

...

Equity is often defined as opposed to equality. However, upon close observation, it presents itself as much more of a personal as well as

systemic quality build-up, which necessitates equality as a predisposition, an immediate result of treating people with justice and fairness.

ethnicity

Christian Lammert

A Banned Word and the Battle for Belonging

The word "ethnicity" is more than just a demographic checkbox or a census category – it's a living acknowledgment of our many-layered identities, histories, and communities. To see it swept onto the Trump Administration's banned word list is to witness a deliberate erasure of the vocabulary we use to talk about who we are, where we come from, and how we belong. Ethnicity is not a "woke" buzzword. It has roots in scholarship but also in the everyday realities of ordinary people. In sociology, anthropology, and political science, the concept helps us analyze migration, assimilation, cultural change, and inequality. But outside classrooms, ethnicity is found in the food we eat, the stories we inherit, the music that binds us, and the languages families struggle to preserve. It's the difference between my grandmother's pierogi and my neighbor's tamales, an Irish parade and a Lunar New Year festival. These are not abstractions – they are the fabric of belonging itself.

When the government instructs agencies to avoid terms like "race" and "ethnicity," as the Trump administration has done, the impact reaches far beyond policy manuals. It affects how data is collected, how law is written, and how communities see themselves represented – or excluded – in public life. To call this mere semantics is to miss the point. It is a cultural gut punch and a signal that some realities are too inconvenient to acknowledge. The tactic is not new. Arizona's 2010 ban on Mexican American Studies, later overturned, stripped schools of books, courses, and curricula that spoke to Latino history. The goal was similar: restrict the vocabulary of difference to narrow the scope of public thought.

What disappears when "ethnicity" disappears? Tools for confronting inequality. Without naming ethnic differences, health disparities are harder to measure, educational inequities harder to address, systemic biases in policing harder to identify. Ethnicity as a category allows

researchers and policymakers to track patterns of exclusion and craft solutions. Erasing the term does not erase the problem; it only hides it. The symbolic cost may be even greater. For young people from immigrant or minority families, official recognition of ethnicity signals that their histories belong in the national story. Striking the word sends the opposite message: that their differences are inconvenient, that diversity itself is suspect.

This contest over language is, at its core, about power. Whoever controls the terms of debate controls which realities count as legitimate. By eliminating words like "ethnicity," the administration promotes a flattened narrative of national identity that privileges some communities while silencing others. Resisting this erasure means claiming the full, messy, and complex identities that make communities whole. It means accepting that no administration, however powerful, can legislate away the cultural realities lived daily at kitchen tables, in neighborhoods, and across generations. Ethnicity endures not because it appears on a government form, but because it is lived and claimed. Our stories matter – each one of them. And no banned word list can erase the demand to be seen, named, and valued in our differences.

evolution

Cameron Seglias

Theories are open to revision; they evolve. Yet few discoveries in the history of science are as fundamental and generally accepted as that of evolution. While Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882) is credited with formulating gradual evolution and placing it at the heart of modern biology, the idea of evolution was already suggested by presocratic thinkers, including Anaximander (c. 610 – c. 546 BCE) and Empedocles (c. 492 – c. 432 BCE). Prior to Darwin, the naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744 – 1829) argued that biological evolution follows an organism's inner needs.

Indifferent to this history, forty-two percent of Americans reportedly reject evolution in favor of creationism, the magical belief that God created the world in its current form less than 10,000 years ago. Revealingly, while the remaining fifty-eight percent of Americans do accept some version of evolution, the majority of that majority still believes that God initiated or guides the evolutionary process. This point is significant because

it indicates that acceptance of evolution for most people is unrelated to their religious faith. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, officially endorses evolution, especially regarding the development of life on earth. For Catholics, evolution does not contradict doctrine, since they believe that God is the creator of the universe and the human soul.

Why then did the teaching of evolution become such a bizarre hobby horse of conservative Christians? How did evolution versus creationism become cast as a "debate," even when a shared concept of reality – religious or secular – required for such a debate is clearly lacking? Like many conflicts in American life, origins are at once mystified and more recent than generally assumed.

The rejection of evolution is rooted in early twentieth-century conflicts between self-described "fundamentalists," who emphasized a literal understanding of the Bible, and "modernists," who sought to reconcile Christian teaching with modernity. This schism within Protestantism set the stage for the rise of a militant Christian right beginning in the 1970s and which has plagued US politics ever since.

Since the 1980s, museums devoted to creationism have been built across the US and in several other countries, the most ambitious of which is the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky. The museum cost a reported 27 million dollars to build and is run by the group Answers in Genesis (AiG). The museum's exhibitions revolve around a binary pair: the elevation of human reason versus faith. While the museum claims that the latter offers certain morality and purpose, it depicts the former as resulting in civilizational decay, apparently evidenced by abortion, same-sex marriage, euthanasia, and school shootings.

The perverse notion that the teaching of evolutionary theory is responsible for school shootings rather than the pro-gun Christian fascists who advocate creationism takes us to the crux of the so-called "debate" over evolution. For far-right cultural warriors, evolution represents yet another anxiety, a reminder of reality's fluid complexity. If biological life can change then so can the social, implying a threat to the patriarchal, heterosexist, white supremacist, and capitalist order so cherished by creationists. And God forbid if we should evolve beyond that.

exclusion

Jan Bierhanzl

Are there any inaugural exclusions that characterize modern politics and that continue to structure our societies? In the following text, I will attempt to use contemporary political philosophy to show that there are at least three such inaugural exclusions: the exclusion of madness from reason (Foucault), the exclusion of interdependence from social contract theories (Butler), and the exclusion of bare life from modern biopolitics (Agamben). At a time when freedom of research is under threat, at least in the US, it is not only important to study inaugural exclusions and reintroduce them into scientific discourse, but also to critically intervene in the ways in which these exclusions are reproduced. Without critical intervention regarding these inaugural exclusions, which continue to structure our societies, we cannot avoid their consequences in the form of economic and (bio)political violence.

For Foucault, exclusion is the very act of establishing the distinction between reason and madness. The concept of exclusion refers in particular to the gesture which, in Descartes, draws, not without violence, the dividing line between reason and madness in the form of the coup de force carried out in the first of the Meditations when Descartes excludes the possibility of madness from the methodical procedure of doubt. This Cartesian gesture, described by Foucault as a decree of exclusion of madness, is strangely contemporary with the decree establishing the Hôpital Général in Paris (which was founded in 1656, while the Meditations on First Philosophy appeared in 1641). In other words, this gesture is contemporary with a political decision that delimited the social space of unreason through the geography of the "Great Confinement." The division between reason and madness thus became part of the major systems of exclusion that affect discourse, in other words, those "divisions which are arbitrary to start with, (...) which are supported by a whole system of institutions which impose them and renew them; and which act in a constraining and sometimes violent way?" (Foucault 1981: 54).

Systemic or structural exclusion also derives from the social ontological limits of so-called social contract theories. According to Butler, the fantasmatic scene of the natural state of man contains an exclusionary element. In this narrative, Butler notes what is excluded from this scene.

Even before the narrative of this scene began, a certain annihilation took place: everyone who is not an adult, independent person (meaning a man) is excluded from the outset. The original and founding figure of humanity is masculine (masculinity is defined as a lack of dependence). The social contract is always also a contract about sex and gender (sexual contract). Dependence is thus excluded from the image of the original human being from the outset. Is this not an inaugural exclusion, already inscribed in our political imagination? That sexual contract was not concluded once and for all, but is constantly repeated as a performative of „sex", which proceeds as a heteronormative "regulatory ideal, a forcible and differential materialization of bodies, that will produce its remainder, its outside" (Butler 1993: 22).

Giorgio Agamben sees a certain exclusion, or more precisely, an exclusionary inclusion of bare life at the foundation of modern biopolitics. This exclusionary inclusion points to the genesis of the concept of human rights in the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. According to him, the genesis of human rights is closely linked to a certain fiction that derives the source of the sovereignty of the nation state exclusively from what is native, from birth, that is, from bare human life. What belongs to the nation is what was born in it. In addition to establishing the discourse on human rights, the Declaration initiates the era of modern biopolitics by reducing to a minimum the interval between birth and the nation – the bearer of sovereignty. In the spirit of this biopolitical logic, it is certainly no coincidence that, immediately following the Declaration of Inalienable Rights, human rights were divided into active and passive, thereby immediately excluding entire groups of people (women, children, foreigners) from active citizenship. This fact may seem paradoxical and is obviously completely at odds with the democratic principle of equality on which the Declaration is based. This can be explained precisely in biopolitical terms. "One of the essential characteristics of modern biopolitics (...) is its constant need to redefine the threshold in life that distinguishes and separates what is inside from what is outside." (Agamben 1998: 77).

To blatantly exclude these (and other) exclusions from our discourse or research, as the Trump administration is attempting to do, is, on the one hand, still in line with the logic of these inaugural exclusions themselves, albeit in an extremely overt and sadistic form; on the other hand,

however, this exclusion of exclusions enables the pure cruelty of political violence. Not standing up to this politics of cruelty is then the equivalent of self-destruction.

expression

Jeremie Brugidou

Easier said than done. That thought first came up in him when hearing the Lord CEO's inaugural speech: "we all have an inner light that only awaits to shine. It all happens here." Buckie "the boss" Gatorade truly had the sweet words of leadership. They all loved her for that. Most of them would follow her anywhere, blindfolded, over cliff or puddle, towards the glory she drew for them. It was basically common sense among the people of the Cyber-State of America that they were shining the light. Yet Fahrad Xi had the "doubties". The kind of critical mind that gets you into trouble. He wondered: who can actually express their inner light? Has anyone ever shone with an intimate glow?

After being treated of a "spook" for stalking colleagues in the bathrooms with the lights out, he started turning the experiment upon himself. He had spent the last days in utter darkness. Shading all the windows, obfuscating every single crack in the doors and shutters, hunting down any last beam of light coming from outside. To avoid all temptation, he locked away every lamp and lightbulb in the house, and tossed the key in the river. He waited days in and out naked in the dark for his eyes to accustom to pitch black, pupils widening as they scrutinized for his own glow.

That's when he really dug deeper into the sensation that it was easier said than done. Express yourself goddammit. He concentrated. Explored different breathing exercises. Contracted different parts of his body, trying to find the trigger to his freedom of expression. At some point, holding his breath long enough while pushing with his belly upwards and contracting his perineum, he started seeing things. Luminous snake-like figures dangled before his eyes, often followed by brief flashes of various shapes and pulsating circles growing bigger and bigger. He thought: something is expressing itself. As he grew more confident, he paid closer attention to the luminous figures, and started grasping a couple hints. They seemed to be teaching him the way to shine. One day, he triggered the glow.

Joyfully, Fahrad Xi went to Buckie “the boss” Gatorade’s official spokespersons and explained the situation. He had mastered the inner light and wanted to share this with the Lord CEO. The matter was taken very seriously. He was led to a special room, dimly lit. “Please wait here.” Fahrad Xi could feel very well he was glowing and couldn’t wait to express his gratefulness and compare his glow with the others who surely had mastered it times before. The room was getting brighter now. He noticed the walls and floor were covered in reflecting materials and the ceiling was an immense white light. It was getting more and more intense. His eyes were burning. Pupils shutting as thin as they could. Soon he disappeared in the artificial brightness, suppressed by the unique expression of “the boss”.

F

female

Eva Gerace Gemelli

Veil and poetry... possible female subversion

Image is a paralyzing ideal if it is not pierced. The dominant and alienating culture exposes its excesses; capitalist ideology entices and deceives: anything is possible. Advertising revolves around this idea, but the gentle rhythm of words and verses poses the question: how do you come to terms with what you desire? It doesn't matter how many marks are left on the skin. The smooth surface of consumer society is devoid of life of its own.

I have reflected on poetry and on the psychoanalytic clinic; both can serve the subject divided between night and sun in these times of excess and war. Their ineffectiveness in the realm of capitalism could provide an opportunity for peace and quiet for those who wish to reflect and ask themselves questions.

The analytical act, poetry and femininity express the non-totality of language. Much emphasis has been placed on the profound affinity between psychoanalysis as a science of the particular and femininity. I would also add poetry, as it gives us the opportunity to move from drive to the subversion of the subject. To subvert, to traverse the words of the Other, to invent one's own enunciation. Poetry is paradigmatic of this non-totality. Not-all can be said, and this enables liberation. In that poetic unsaid, something is released.

When poetry comes into contact with psychoanalysis, it makes it possible to show a veil, the veil of femininity. The non-totality that she can embody is lyrical, subversive.

Subjectivation entails desire and this makes it possible to detach from any form of submission. Desire is a drive, a force and a structural lack in the human being, of a totality that the subject can never possess. This lack is the root of desire. Consequently, those who say they are women

are directly linked to this lack. That is to say, femininity is bound up with the object-cause of desire, with what is lacking.

One could say that feminine eroticism fights against the universal. Femininity is particular, singular; it has a non-universal, anti-totalitarian way of thinking. A model of identification is not possible; each woman should ponder over what she wants in order to design her own way, demonstrating the impossibility of homogeneity and conformity.

Why does femininity lead to violence against women, resulting in rejection, isolation and elimination? The non-totality that **she embodies disturbs capitalism, racists, those who reject diversity, those who want conformity**. Like the feminine, psychoanalysis is born with and consists of the logic of the non-totality: slips of the tongue, dreams, symptoms, and parapraxes speak of the unconscious, and this is on the side of the feminine, as is poetry.

Capitalist discourse sidelines love, as love is not calculation-driven and rejects differences. There is no knowledge that can account for contingencies; love cannot be regulated. There is a systematic, well-considered, and organized effort to manipulate and direct it towards consumerism. A woman's subversion is rooted in not deluding herself that she can have everything; accepting being divided gives her the possibility to love, to desire. Love is poetry. Desire, lack, fosters a movement of separation devoid of any intention of totalization. It fosters the value of self-revelation.

Women no longer rely on the idealization of men focused on what they know or can do. They have set out on their own personal journeys, but not everyone succeeds in this endeavor.

Inexact women, demolishers of the past. A woman, as an enigma, can refrain from impositions.

feminism

Catherine Dale

The story of the modern beginnings of feminism is a good news story hiding a bad news story. The good news – everyone, other women too, gradually stopped treating women as ornamental baby-making dimwits. The bad news is that for that to have happened, for there to have been liberation from unequal terms, the protofeminists deployed the language

of liberalism, which, with its tenets of racial capitalism and generalized exploitation, meant uncountable people suffered and died.

It was during the mid to late 19th century, that groups of white western women dotted around the imperial centers and their colonies were fighting for political representation. Their first victory was in Aotearoa New Zealand when in 1893 women gained the vote. Aotearoa New Zealand is famous for this, for becoming the first country to win suffrage for women, but what is far less well-known are the bad news circumstances behind it.

The NZ suffrage movement was part of the vanguard for the settler colonialists' dream, which to succeed needed to systematically undermine Māori life (Ani Mikaere). Feminism's key goal was thus revealed: not to end sexist oppression but to help white women become political and financial equals of middle and wealthy-class men (bell hooks). Part of the work to achieve this parity meant framing Māori women's suffrage as a subset of western feminism (Leonie Pihama), and imposing moral and cultural prescriptions on the Māori women who joined the movement: demanding christian baptism, condemning their family structures, and forbidding tā moko – Māori tattooing (Tina Ngata). So, another way to read the story would be to say, after Sylvia Wynter, that the reach of white supremacy had now expanded to the periphery in order to center white womanhood as the second default humanism.

Winning the vote was the first of many celebratory firsts in political and financial affairs, but the bad news is still here. While the first woman CEO of a fortune 500 company, the first transwoman in high office, or the first indigenous woman chief of police, mark social progress, these positions pave the way for contradictions. To survive, feminism appeals to corporate wealth, governmentality, state protection, and funding. In return, feminist organizations and individuals work as and with police, the military, and in social justice non-profits. But these institutions, in which "all are involved!" (Martin Carter), have forever been criminalizing and marginalizing poor, indigenous, black, women, and men, forever, denigrating those working on other ways to be free (Khadija Haynes). As the suffragette success demonstrates, the colonist women were fighting for liberation, and invited Māori women to join them, but the invitation could not have existed without the violent imperial enterprise that brought them all there in the first place (Trinh T. Minh-ha; Ien Ang).

Sophie Lewis explains that "enemy feminisms" use the language of liberation making it impossible, to say that "[Terfism] is not feminism, that the philosophical and movement roots of their whole deal is not feminism" (Cleveland Public Library, interview, 7 Oct, 2025). Those roots are unstable and ugly too, but we are in kinship with them nonetheless. As Fred Moten explains of black struggle and the liberation, "our struggle for liberation is given in the language of liberalism." There is no undoing this. We cannot scrub the language, or escape the contradictions that accompany it. What can we do? Rather than ignore and avoid the situation, "there are paradoxes and contradictions we have to recognize that we inhabit and then figure out a practical, ethical approach to that inhabitation" ("Inhabiting the Crossroads," interview, *Nordic Art Review*, 13 Oct 2023). Try this.

fostering inclusivity

Julita Skotarska

It is tempting to discard "fostering inclusivity" and acquiesce to it being on the list of unwanted notions. At least one less to worry about! After all, the term seems perfectly ensconced in profit-focused environment, having found its way into the corporate world and become part of business lingo. There are dedicated coaching agencies that promise to provide companies with "the resources and insights they need to recognize bias, foster a sense of belonging, and catalyze true inclusivity," thus increasing their chances for organizational success. Here, fostering inclusivity means unlocking corporate access to resources, ideas and skills that may otherwise stay hidden and "unused." In this way, it is an instrument to further employees' more active participation, but also – why not? – their more intimate exploitation.

Let's scrutinize its conceptual cartography. One fosters inclusivity from the inside – from a delineated interior, contrasted with a qualitatively differentiated exterior. In its operative mode, it functions by making it easier to *get in* and *stay in*. While, problematically, it locates agency with those already "on the inside," it also imposes demands on them. By its mere existence, it discloses an underlying dynamic of power and privilege.

Despite its ambiguity and non-innocent applications, I would prefer to foster a little inclusivity towards "fostering inclusivity." That is because

of the continuous reluctance of many institutions to be inclusive. Writing this from within academia, and philosophy specifically, I am frequently confronted with how stubbornly homogenous it is. While there are many complex reasons for this, reflection on those reasons and sustained attempts to address them remain feeble and unconvincing. It does not take much to notice that there are institutions that *seem* inclusive in the sense of excluding active discrimination, but in fact *are* not. Often stirred by external pressures, they treat acts of inclusion as one-off gestures of integration of diverse elements. This *implanting* of what is diverse may create a sense of inclusivity, without it having been *fostered*.

Institutions' non-inclusivity is a manifestation of all sorts of biases and norms lurking in the background. While some may be non-inclusive due to explicit discrimination, others may instead be plagued by micro-discouragements that make those who in some way do not belong, act and live as if, indeed, they do not belong. One does not need to consciously recognize this exclusion: as someone who does not belong, you just feel it in your bones. It orientates you like a magnetic repulsion – you may know that it would be good for you to be closer, you may even want it, but there is this "thing" that keeps pushing you away, deferring dreams, shaping your visions of what you can or cannot do. That is why we need inclusivity to be fostered. Fostering inclusivity could be seen as applying and maintaining a padding to the harsh surfaces of institutions that were made with specific kinds of bodies in mind. It could make the fallings and failings of those constantly on the border not the ultimate proofs of their non-belonging.

free speech

Andrey Logutov

Free speech, we are told, is speech that costs you nothing. Once, that phrase was meant metaphorically; today it's almost literal. The supply of "free" speech now seems infinite, a torrent of words spilling from every platform, comment section, and chatbot. For a mere twenty bucks a month, you can buy yourself a subscription to a large language model that simply will not shut up. If twenty dollars still feels steep, you can open a Truth Social account, scroll the White House website, or tune in to Donald Trump online. The price of entry has never been lower.

Come to think of it, Trump is very much like a large language model himself (he is literally large, though). He can speak for hours on any topic with no apparent exhaustion, improvising endlessly, indifferent to coherence but obsessed with attention – "flooding the zone." The only thing he truly cares about is whether you like what he says; he operates on an algorithm of applause rather than accuracy.

A typical AI-based chatbot, for its part, will sometimes lie because otherwise it may not be able to generate an answer you'll find satisfying. If you dislike its output, you'll stop using it, and that's a problem for the company. Trump, on the other hand, lies by default. He doesn't just want you to like his lies; he wants you to live inside them. And if you refuse, dissent, fact-check, or defy him, that's a problem for you, as many of his former critics and allies have learned the hard way.

This speech is "free" in the sense that it costs (almost) nothing either to the producer or the audience. Words pour out endlessly, with no measurable expenditure of effort or attention: Trump speaks, the audience listens, and the transaction seems effortless. But such speech is held hostage to the entire Trump project. Every phrase, every anecdote, every insult and promise is conscripted into the service of his political brand. What presents itself as "free speech" is, in fact, bound to a singular personality cult; it monopolizes public attention, and demands loyalty rather than thought. It is "empty speech" that only exists for the sake of speaking. Its danger lies not (or not only) in being wrong, misinformed, or confusing, but in being easy. It requires no preparation, it carries no responsibility, and it demands no engagement with causes or consequences. It is the sound of the eternal "now," a voice suspended in the present moment that recognizes neither future nor past. This "free speech" feeds on its own immediacy. It thrives in repetition; it overwhelms by accumulation; it is less a conversation than an atmosphere. It is the sound of breathing, the sound of inflation that inflates within itself – losing value, becoming "free."

It's time to invest in speech, to restore its value. We need to stop thinking of it as "free" in the sense that it costs nothing. It should cost at least a moment of silence.

friendship

Bara Kolenc

Friendship has, since ancient times, been regarded as the most important human relationship – a form of love that exists for its own sake, with no goal beyond itself. Its condition is reciprocity, and unlike economic bonds such as marriage or co-working, it is a fundamental social connection. The Greek word Aristotle employs for friendship is *philia* (φιλία). Broader than the English term "friendship," *philia* encompasses bonds of affection, trust, and goodwill, including relationships between family members, lovers, citizens, comrades, teacher and student, master and apprentice, and even a patron and client. For Aristotle, *philia* is essential: it is a foundational element of human life and indispensable for achieving *eudaimonia* – a flourishing, genuinely good life. A lonely man cannot be genuinely happy, he claims, "since man is a political creature and one whose nature is to live with others" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 176).

In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle distinguishes three forms of friendship: those based on utility, those based on pleasure, and those based on sharing the good. The first two are incidental; the third is essential and considered true friendship: "Perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in virtue; for these wish well alike to each other qua good, and they are good in themselves. Now those who wish well to their friends for their sake are most truly friends; for they do this by reason of their own nature and not incidentally; therefore, their friendship lasts as long as they are good – and goodness is an enduring thing" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 145). Unlike romantic love, which is more of a feeling, friendship for Aristotle is a state of character, possible only among virtuous individuals; it is both necessary and noble.

In contemporary capitalist society, which emphasizes individuality and economic exchange, friendships are weakening. Bonds based primarily on utility – colleagues, coworkers, spouses, family members – persist, while friendships requiring unvalorized time, attention, and moral cultivation decline; they are constrained or distorted by competition, property, and alienated labor. Fundamentally, Aristotle claims, friendship is closely tied to justice and equality, making it the foundation of every well-functioning state. While in ancient Greece these principles applied only to free male citizens, today they must be understood as the basis for a legally

and economically just society for all. True friendship, founded on companionship and values such as respect, trust, honesty, compassion, and integrity, must be nurtured if we hope to foster a more humane and connected society.

G

gender

Catherine Dale

When Lady Macbeth prays for the courage to be ruthless, she says "unsex me, now," by which she means take away my stereotypical mode so that I may be murderous. Rid me of this burden of femininity. Although he is plagued by nerves over the plot to kill the king, Macbeth does not need this kind of extra preparation. In the medieval Scotland of 1040 when the play is set, and the Jacobean England of 1606 when it was written, man (white) was the worldly center of human affairs, a full spectrum of qualities, and woman (white), some of its siphoned elements. So, yes, unsex me. Clear the obstacles to murder that are expected of my sex.

Today, Lady Macbeth would be more likely to demand she be "ungendered." Sex is almost obsolete outside of legal, medical, and scientific categorizations, while gender has become central, although no less of an imposed classification and expectation. The wider use of gender began in the mid-20th century in sexology, to expand the ways one could think about "sexes." Ironically, though, rather than widening the scope of historico-social possibilities, gender has become no less of a normalizing encumbrance as sex. The American theorist of gender Judith Butler is also sick of it. Near the end an educational video on gender, there's an exchange with the film crew: "Let's just wrap up the gender stuff. Unless you want to take a break from gender. We can go back to that. Do you want to get… Let me give you the prompt for the last…" Butler interrupts, "My whole life, I've wanted to take a break from gender! I can never take a break from gender." Ungender me.

Although Butler can never, at least not yet, take a break from gender, they can make adjustments, reject some of the norms and play with more radical aesthetics. Many people cannot do this. To become ungendered is available primarily to legible social bodies, teaches Macquis Bey, and for many black trans and queer folk there is no such possibility. Instead, they might want to hold onto gender experiencing it as radical expression of

their identity, expression which gives them the means to survive (*Black Trans Feminism*). In other words, to become gendered can be for some a desirable alternative to not being read at all.

Luckily, gender is not the *only* critical tool for describing male and female historico-societal trajectories. Denise Ferreira da Silva gestures with an alternative by way of the historical experience of racialized women under colonialism and slavery whose positions mean their bodies and lives are "ungendered" or "otherwise gendered" in ways that fall outside the legible, protected categories of Western gender" (104). Taking gender on, otherwise or anyway, or becoming otherwise gender is the limit of the modern concept of gender in motion. Dance.

gender based violence

Martin Charvát & Michaela Fikejzová

Theresa's teenage son, David, brings her to the noisy, brightly lit emergency room in Pittsburgh because she has been vomiting repeatedly. However, Theresa confides to the attending physicians that she induced the vomiting herself in order to get her son David into professional care, having found a list of girls' names in his journal with the accompanying comment: "They should all be eliminated." Theresa and David Saunders are fictional characters in the successful medical drama series *The Pitt* (2025), but gender-based violence, potentially attributed to David, is often not fiction.

Gender-based violence has long been recognized as a global public health issue (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). The European Commission (2025) defines gender-based violence, often abbreviated as "GBV", as follows: "Gender-based violence is violence directed against a person because of that person's gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately." Such violence may include physical, emotional, sexual and any other form of acts on the spectrum of violence. A similar definition is stated by UNICEF (n.d.): "The term gender-based violence (GBV) is used to describe any harmful act perpetrated against a person based on socially ascribed/gender differences between males and females. It includes acts of causing physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, or threats of such acts, and other deprivations of liberty." UNICEF follows up their definition with characterizing the risk groups: "GBV stems

from unequal power relations between men and women and the resulting discrimination against women. While GBV can affect both females and males, women and girls are disproportionately more affected. The risk of GBV against women and girls further increases in times of crisis. Some women and girls are at higher risk, such as those with disabilities and those from the LGBTI+ community." Sinko, James and Hughesdon (2021, 1184) list the documented consequences of exposure to gender-based violence, which include "increased risk of depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, suicidality, chronic pain syndromes, gynecological disorders, gastrointestinal disorders, and sexual infections." Recovering from the consequences of gender-based violence can therefore be time-consuming, physically, mentally, or financially demanding for victims/survivors, who may suffer long-term or lifelong consequences or chronic illnesses. However, recovery may not necessarily be possible at all, as the umbrella term gender-based violence also includes the phenomenon of femicide, which may be defined as "the killing of women and girls because they are female by male violence" (Fitz-Gibbon & Walklate 2023, 236), sometimes grouped together under the abbreviation of "GBVF" (Deane 2024).

Data on gender-based violence, often monitored in relation to violence against women, indicate that one in three women worldwide will experience physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime, frequently perpetrated by an intimate partner (UN Women 2025). UN Women also maintains a database of policies and measures concerning gender-based violence or violence against women, mapping policies on domestic violence, sexual violence or harassment, sex trafficking, femicide, female genital mutilation, and more (UN Women 2025). Gender-based violence thus affects women across countries to varying degrees and in different ways. David's list of classmates to be eliminated is just one of the forms it can take.

gender diversity

Ingvil Hellstrand

Gender diversity describes the wide variety of gender identities and expressions found among people. It encompasses more than just traditional binary notions of gender – male and female – and recognizes a range of gendered identities that includes non-binary, genderqueer,

transgender, agender, and genderfluid identities. A diverse approach to gender also acknowledges that there are differences within the conventional gender categories as well.

By embracing the full range of human experiences and identities, gender diversity advocates for an inclusive society, and equity in participation and lived experience. It challenges exclusionary gender norms and aims to create social, political and cultural environments where everyone can participate fully and authentically, and is essential for fostering inclusive environments that respect individual differences and uphold human rights.

Gender roles are shaped by cultural, religious, and societal norms, often reinforcing rigid expectations about behavior, appearance, and opportunities based on one's assigned sex at birth. Together with norms around sexuality, class, and racialization, these norms have contributed to systemic inequalities, particularly for women, queer and trans people, in areas such as education, employment, healthcare, and political representation. Gender diversity therefore also refers to the equitable representation and inclusion of people of all gender identities and expressions within social, professional and institutional contexts.

In the workplace, gender diversity is understood as an important tool for enabling diverse teams that bring varied perspectives and experiences that in turn can enhance problem-solving, creativity and performance. Education also plays a crucial role in promoting gender diversity. Inclusive curricula, gender-sensitive teaching practices, and safe learning environments help challenge stereotypes and empower students to express their identities freely. Similarly, media and popular culture have a powerful influence on shaping perceptions of gender. Representation of diverse gender identities in film, television, literature, and advertising can contribute to normalizing difference and promote acceptance. In the United States, the ongoing ban on books that promote gender and sexual diversity is an example of hindrance for promoting gender diversity.

Breaking with traditional gender norms can lead to discrimination. Research shows that queer, transgender and non-binary individuals face higher rates of discrimination, violence, and mental health issues. Access to gender-affirming healthcare, legal recognition, and social support varies widely across regions, creating vulnerable living conditions for many who do not conform to conventional gender norms.

In recent decades, awareness and advocacy around gender diversity have grown significantly. Movements for gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights have highlighted the need to dismantle discriminatory practices and create spaces where all individuals can thrive regardless of gender identity. Legal reforms in many countries now protect against gender-based discrimination, and organizations are increasingly adopting policies that support gender-inclusive practices. However, these legal rights are currently under pressure in many countries across the globe, including the United States.

Promoting and enabling gender diversity still requires action on many levels of society. This includes policy reform, education, advocacy, and cultural change. Awareness and representation is not enough, as it involves addressing unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, education and workplaces, as well as social and cultural respect for differences.

gender ideology

Claire Colebrook

'*They*' say there's something demonic about 'gender ideology.' For a start it's an ideology: one of the features of the 'post-truth' or 'alternative facts' era is not that we have all fallen into postmodern relativism but rather that there's a resurgence of fundamentalism, such that there aren't alternative worldviews but competing *facts*. It's the appeal to *fact* – with biology at the forefront – that carries the movement of a new literalism. The war on 'gender ideology' is a war on a certain myth or fantasy of ideology – the idea of brain-washing: there's how things *really* are, and then *those* people who corrupt, seduce, distort the abundantly clear brute facts of the world. It is no accident that 'gender' has become the battleground concept for the Trumpocene's war on ideology: without the foundation of 'man' as that self-evidently self-determining being who makes and masters the world one might have to ask how and through what complex forces our world is composed. If one begins from 'man' whose mind is his own and no one else's then the way the world is follows from the power of one's own being. Women are domesticated animals because they are women; some men are poor and disenfranchised because that's how the order of being a human plays out, and those in power are where they are because of intrinsic properties. The ontology of capitalism requires

both the concept and demonization of 'gender ideology,': there must be a given bedrock of sexed persons that naturally forms the family and privatized subjects, and there must be some ruse or lure of 'gender' that might distort that given nature and interfere with the marketplace of persons.

It's the 'gender critical feminists,'[1] the far-right trolls[2] and the purveyors of brute material facts[3] – and not the Marxist left – who are waging a war on ideology. *Gender* ideology is the symptom of our times *par excellence*, because 'gender' – supposedly – is the embrace of an identity and personhood that is not reducible to or caused by a biological reality that can be known, managed and adjudicated by experts. This is why twenty-first century feminists criticized the sex/gender distinction because of its all too Cartesian split between mind and body. The far right that would seek to ground all political decisions in the brute acts of matter must demonize 'gender' as an ideology in order to insist that there is one and *only* one biological reality (thereby producing sex as the ground upon which politics is fought).

The supposed demon of gender ideology – Judith Butler – was one of the first to refute the notion that 'gender' is nothing more than an ideology, nothing more than a fiction, idea, image or 'signifier' that may or may not match reality. Butler – as anyone who has read *Gender Trouble* would know – didn't just argue that all the ways in which 'sex' is known and lived is caught up in complex social, historical, material, institutional, scientific, embodied and political forces. They also criticized 'sex/gender' precisely because of that separation of thinking and acting from a world of innocent matter. To think of 'gender' as an 'idea' is an all too simple belief in the power of 'ideology' as a distortion of the mind, as if mind, thinking, and identity were immaterial. For those terrified of gender ideology I would suggest this: your fears need to be directed not to ideology but to bodies themselves. But of course you know this. The war on gender ideology is a war on bodies, a policing of the desires, fantasies, comportments, relationships, affects and modes of existence that must at all costs be tethered to the efficiency, productivity and brutality of the reproductive military complex.

gender-affirming care

Ingvil Hellstrand

Gender-affirming care is a cornerstone of inclusive and respectful healthcare, as it acknowledges the broad range of medical, psychological, social, and legal interventions designed to support individuals in navigating and aligning their gender identity with their lived experience. It is especially critical for transgender, non-binary, and gender-diverse people, offering pathways to mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

At its core, gender-affirming care is about bodily autonomy and the right to access healthcare that reflects one's identity irrespective of dominant gender norms. As an important aspect of transgender health, it includes medical and psychological services such as hormone therapy, puberty blockers, surgical procedures, voice therapy, mental health support. It also encompasses but also social, cultural and legal aspects, such as assistance with name and gender marker changes. Social aspects – like using chosen names and pronouns, dressing in affirming ways, and receiving community support – are often the first steps in a person's transition, and as such, these measures can be as significant as medical support. Being addressed by the correct pronouns, or even just asked what the preferred pronouns are, is also a form of gender-affirming care.

According to the World Health Organization, ensuring access to gender affirming this care is not only a medical imperative but a moral and human rights obligation. Research on the implications of gender-affirming care consistently shows that access to such care reduces rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidality among transgender and gender-diverse people. For youth, early access to affirming care can be life-saving, helping to navigate adolescence with dignity and support.

Despite its proven benefits, gender-affirming care faces increasing political and legal challenges. In the United States, over half of the states have enacted or proposed laws restricting access to gender-affirming care, particularly for minors. These laws often criminalize healthcare providers, stigmatize families, and disrupt continuity of care. Access to care often disproportionately affect marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, and immigrant transgender people, who face intersectional discrimination.

Misinformation and politicization of gender-affirming care have led to widespread confusion and fear. Opponents often misrepresent gender-affirming care, framing it as experimental or harmful, despite decades of research and clinical practice supporting its safety and efficacy. Advocacy and education are essential to counter these narratives and uphold the rights of gender-diverse individuals, and ensure access to respectful and compassionate health care.

geopolitics

Ruben O. Balotol, Jr.

In some religious teachings we encounter ideas such as: man does not live by bread alone (Catholic Edition Bible, Matthew 4:4), or that suffering is caused by craving, attachment and ignorance (Dalai Lama, 1994). Similar point can also be read in some philosophers work which can be summed in Mill's utilitarian version: it would be better to be a dissatisfied Socrates than a pig satisfied (Mill, 1863). Although united by the idea of spiritual and emotional nourishment, often misread in these religious and philosophical reflections that cannot be denied, good life demands not just virtue or faith but at the same time upholding social justice, advancing a just and fair political system, enforcement of labor rights, recognition of rights and self-determination, and so on. Because of this certainty, people had been driven and perceptive towards economic impact of its geographical environment. The interest into the role of geography to welfare lead to the emergence of the term geopolitics (a concept which concerns economic and political movement through geographical variables). Included in the concept of geopolitics, is the recognition that resources are scarce; which building and keeping a good relation with other counties becomes necessary in the realization of good life. Nations enter into trade agreements, joins global institutions, security cooperation, form strategic alliances. Nations draw sustenance not only from the locality/region/country but from the international economic system; it grows because of the global cooperation, rules and stability.

Moreover, the geopolitical perspective is dynamic. It evolves as the international system and its operational environment changes. The dynamic nature of geographical settings account, to a considerable extent, for changes in geopolitical patterns and features. These settings

change in response to such phenomena, as the discovery or depletion and capital flows and long-term alterations in climate. The shift from rural to urban landscapes or from manufacturing to service economies represent geographical change that reflected in changing ideals and objectives, same also with the impact of large-scale immigration (Cohen, 2015).

The explosion and the globalization of the capitalist ideology, this *dramatis personae* of the current socio-political and economic condition had not only commodified human relation and the environment but at the same time alienated humanity. The mad, self-enhancing circulation of capital directly attributes to the dilapidation of human relation and the destruction of the environment: turning developing countries into sweatshops and migrants experienced xenophobia and racism. In addition, geopolitics under the ideology of capitalism is a persistent constitution and reconstitution of specific social constructed spaces and territoriality and human geographies being constantly fashioned and refashioned in and through the uneven development, production, accumulation and circulation of capital across time and space; as well as by the resulting differentiated relations of power, domination, exploitation and conflict accompanying the global reproduction of capitalism as a social whole (Anievas and Nisanciough, 2015). Unfortunately, the tension, mistrust and suspicion among countries continues to reshape the world order and brought anxiety to geopolitics. As a result of these uncertainties, countries chose to prioritize its narrow interest and recalibrate policies towards global cooperation, retreating and heading towards isolationism and protectionism leading in making the world more fragmented and disorderly.

Gulf of Mexico – Golfo de México

Gregg Lambert

The “Gulf of Mexico” was formed 300 million years ago from a shift in tectonic plates and is roughly oval in shape and 810 nautical miles wide. The ethnonym refers to the Nahuatl-speaking people known as the Aztecs, who called it “sky-water” to distinguish it from inland lakes. It was left unnamed until 1550, but the Jesuits still referred to it as the “Spanish Sea” well into the 17th century; however, an English nautical chart dated 1775 labels it “the Bay of Mexico” as an alternative name for the “Gulf of New Spain.”[1] Following the wars between United States and Great Britain in the

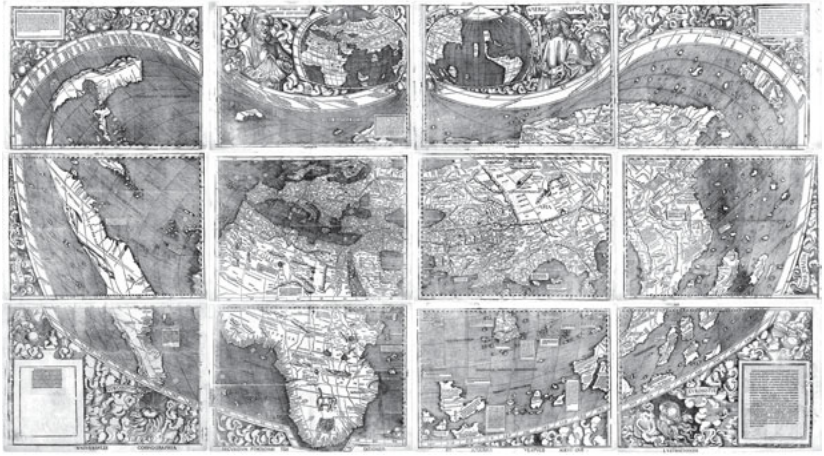

Figure 1. "Waldseemüller map" (1507) is the first map to include the name "America" as a fourth continent separate from Asia. (public domain)

northern settler-colonies and the defeat of Napolean on the European continent, the major European powers pressed Spain to grant "concessions" to the colonies fearing that repressive Spanish colonialism would "encourage liberal revolutionaries" in Europe itself, which eventually led to the second wave of the decolonization in Spanish America. The consequent rise of British hegemony in Latin America was fueled by cotton plantations in the region, and by continued preference for the Spanish over the "petulance" of former settler states of New England, with whom they were still engaged in a number of legal suits over the "non-restitution of property" (i.e., slaves) after the colonial wars.[2] This last phase of decolonization began on the northern side of the gulf with the purchase of the coast of Louisiana from the French in 1803 and, finally ended when the Republic of Texas broke away from Mexico in 1836 and, in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago (1848), the boundary line between the north and the global south was forever stipulated as "commencing in the Gulf of Mexico, three leagues from land, opposite the mouth of the Rio Grande, otherwise called *Rio Bravo del Norte*."[3] On January 20, 2025, laying claim to the principle of *Großraum* that also includes the former territories of Canada and Greenland, president Donald Trump signed an executive order directing U.S. federal agencies to adopt the name "Gulf of America" for the gulf waters bounded by the U.S.,[4] curiously returning the patronage to Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512), the Florentine explorer who first

charted the southern gulf coast and present-day Brazil. Thus, as in a passage from Borges, today the "*golfo de Amerigo*" might also be understood as an Italian inland-sea in the middle of the "New World" (*Mundus Novus*).

H

hate speech

Joff P.N. Bradley

I write this in the wake of Donald Trump's election to a second term. Months before, I heard reports of Vladimir Putin deploying Oreshnik – a horrific new kind of weapon – against Ukraine, against living and breaking Ukrainians. At the same time, I continue to learn of the daily, unspeakable horrors unfolding in Gaza, against children who have the fundamental human right to grow up safe from the failings of political leaders across the planet. The world is truly turning to dog shit. And Trump bathes in this cesspool. He truly deserves to be hated.

It feels as though our words are poisoned, contaminated by the events they attempt to describe. Trump revels in this, and the "barbaric implosion" of language and subjectivity (Félix Guattari) heralded by his obscene presidency seems to have further drained language of its energy, meaning, sense, and spirit. Lie upon lie – the distortion of fact by falsehoods and untruths… shame on you!

In this context, I turn to British dramatist Harold Pinter. His political writings and poetry resonate as attempts to confront the diseased state of language, which festers as inhuman obscenities unfold daily. If Theodor Adorno was indeed right to say that poetry after Auschwitz is impossible, then by the same logic, poetry is equally unthinkable after the Trump era. Beauty is spent in the orgy of violent language. Yet it is precisely this impossibility that demands deeper reflection.

Pinter's work offers a lens through which to interrogate the punishment and deprivation inflicted on words. His writing captures the violence done to language – the way it is penetrated, raped, stripped of meaning, reduced to hollow signifiers, and enveloped in brooding silence. Language today is sick; it is diseased and staggering on its last legs.

I ask myself every day: Do I still speak in my own name? Can I summon a political spirit that resists the decay of language and reimagines the world differently? How do we corrupt youth to speak truth to power; how

do we corrupt corruption itself? And in my bleakest moments, what's the fucking point?

Verily, we live in a world without hospitality. We live in a world suffering the absolute disaster of universal capitalism that Trump and America propagates and enjoys. Go America!

American Football is a poem by Pinter that needs to be heard:

> Hallelullah!
> It works.
> We blew the shit out of them.
> We blew the shit right back up their own ass
> And out their fucking ears.
> It works.
> We blew the shit out of them.
> They suffocated in their own shit!
> Hallelullah.
> Praise the Lord for all good things.
> We blew them into fucking shit.
> They are eating it.
> Praise the Lord for all good things.
> We blew their balls into shards of dust,
> Into shards of fucking dust.
> We did it.
> Now I want you to come over here and kiss me on the mouth.

health disparity

Brian Willems

Health disparity can be formulated in terms of those who have access to health care and those who do not, which is especially prevalent when 11.8 million Americans are projected to lose their health insurance due to the passing of Donald Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill (BMJ). But another way to think about it is that once health care is obtained, not all health care is equal. More specifically, this entry is about how some health care is beneficial, and some is violent.

Sameena Mulla has developed a reading of "the violence of care" in which "formal interventions" by health care professionals, the police,

and others into cases of sexual assault can actually "introduce more suffering into victims' lives even as they attempt to care for the victim," a concept that has also been delineated under the concept of "re-victimization" (Mulla 5). For Mulla, this violence of care is not just perpetrated by one human being on another, but rather by a whole system on an individual: "This violence is born not from the intentions of individual forensic nurses who consciously set out to alienate the victim-patient with whom they are working, but rather from the particular institutional, professional, and historical location of forensic sexual assault intervention" (217). Institutional violence, under the guise of health care, is solidified through health care training, professional standards, the technology and means of data collection and sorting, as well as the ethical orientations of those involved (217). In the more specific area of psychological care, David Smail argues that people need to stop looking inward to find the causes of various psychopathologies, and instead "clarify what is wrong with a social world which gives rise to such forms of suffering" (Smail 1). The privatization of trauma that Smail identifies is turned into the privatization of institutional violence in Mulla's account.

An important literary representation of the internalization of an egregious social world and the violence of care can be found in the way Orly Castel-Bloom's 1992 novel *Dolly City* conflates motherhood and Zionism (Smadar Shiffman). In the novel, Dolly lives in Dolly City, a fantastic version of Tel Aviv, in which almost everyone drives a Volkswagen Beetle and some of the buildings have 400 floors. Dolly is a poorly trained surgeon who imposes a surreal array of abuse on a baby that she finds in the backseat of a car. This abuse, however, is framed as care: "I gave the child anesthetic, I put him to sleep, and I did it. I slipped my hands into white gloves and began slicing into his thorax. His internal organs were revealed to my searching gaze, his heart, his lungs. Once I'd opened him up, I poked around in there too. Then I opened up his stomach, I held an organ roll call, I demanded to know if they were all present and correct" (Castel-Bloom 36-7). And this abusive care is further framed as care of state, since, in just one of many examples, Dolly carves a map of the Land of Israel during the Biblical period on the boy's back, just as she remembered it "from the Biblical period" she says (44).

Castel-Bloom's novel is used here because Dolly's care of the boy is clearly violent rather than helpful, and her behavior is not just the

behavior of an individual but of a state. In this way the disparity of care, meaning that some care is beneficial and some is violent, is not only made visible, but made an appropriate target for anger.

health equity

Brian Willems

In the entry on "Health Disparity," I argued that even if access to health care is obtained, the kind of health care provided is not equal to all. This was a statement about how some care is actually violent, while other forms of care are less so. The culprit of violence was not only the individuals perpetrating it, but also the institutions that formed, permitted, and avoided accountability for it. This entry, on "Health Equity," continues the discussion by describing two important ways to improve equal access to non-violent care: piracy and rethinking time. Both approaches focus on resistive strategies that are both aimed both up toward institutions and "down" at the person or persons under care.

In *Pirate Care: Acts Against the Criminalization of Solidarity,* Valeria Graziano, Marcell Mars, and Tomislav Medak argue that resistance to the violence of care starts with individuals engaging in "uncompromising acts of grassroots solidarity that defy unjust laws and norms" (Graziano, Mars, and Medak 6). This solidarity is with patients and other health care workers who are defying the same or similar norms. This is an un-abstract, "everyday defiance" (7) of workers in many fields of care, from nurses to data processors, which is aimed at "exposing the public sector's contradictions, toxicities, and routinized mishaps, engaging state institutions while declining to normalize nationalistic logics and administrative harm" (7).

One of the most important contact points between institution, health care worker, and patient is *time*. One key mediator for the relationship between a health care professional and a patient is the feeling that adequate time was given to hearing and diagnosing a patient's issue, and that that time was used in a useful manner (Roscoe-Nelson and Silvera). Yet time also has another valuable, yet more subjective role to play. The research paper "Understanding Cancer Patients' Narratives" focuses on the kinds of temporal markers patients use when narrating their own situation (De Luca Picione, Martino and Freda). In other words, the literal

"time of illness," meaning the time of the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer, could turn into "the illness of time," in that "the time consumed by illness has the risk of becoming an illness of time" (Martino and Freda 622).

The question then becomes how to enact an equitable access to the time of care, the time of healing, and the time of recovery?

One answer is suggested in "Queering the Temporality of Cancer Survivorship," in which the temporal aspect of *surviving*, in the sense of living longer than something painful, is foregrounded. Surviving "speaks back to the endurance of a past trauma and looks forward to a future that it wills into being through the overcoming of adversity" (Stacey and Bryson 5). A way to "will into being" a time after trauma is "through the performative scrambling or warping of temporalities that accompany diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis" (5). The connection that *queering* has in this context is that the precarity of life that cancer causes when the standard time of health is removed can find parallels in the precarity of life of queer people (13), so that "Cancer survivorship…is inextricable from surviving not only other serious medical traumas but also from surviving in a normative culture that has yet to accommodate the butch lesbian" and other queer figures (14), an approach particularly under threat during the current Trump administration which has, for example, worked to erase diversity programs treating LBGTQ military veterans at US hospitals (Walsh). This is important because here lies one approach to health equality: it is tied to other fights for equality for all. One important factor of all these strategies is the need to fight together.

historically

Marina Vedernikova

Some words vanish from language not because they are forgotten, but because they are remembered too well. "Historically" is one such word – once a simple adverb, now a loaded political password. It's the code whispered by those who explain why today's lawlessness is "inevitable" and tomorrow's tyranny is "tradition."

But here's the joke: the word became so useful, so dangerously revealing, that it had to be banned. Because when you say "historically" out loud, the illusion cracks. Suddenly, it's obvious – this isn't about facts,

it's about power. It's just a screen. Behind it, some official with a blank friendly face murmurs: "This is necessary because we decided so." Arbitrary power puts on the mask of destiny. Present-day decrees get branded as "eternal values."

This explains why authoritarian regimes both worship and fear the term. Putin's Russia constantly invokes "historical destiny" (while constantly rewriting textbooks although.) Trump alternates between claiming "historic achievements" and dismissing inconvenient facts as "fake history." Why bother with real history when you can just declare something "the greatest ever" or "the worst in history"?

And that's why the word is dangerous. History, to authoritarians, isn't about truth – it's about faith. If you can make people believe something was "always this way," then it must stay this way. And if reality disagrees? Then you are wrong. Not the story. You. History becomes a religion, and doubt is heresy.

But bans have a funny way of backfiring. The harder regimes try to erase the word "historically," the more it bleeds through the cracks. Suddenly, every brutal policy is "objectively necessary." Every rigged election "reflects the national spirit." And if you ask why? – well, that's just not how we do things here.

Yet history has the last laugh. Because those who rewrite the past to control the present? They don't get to write the ending. As I put it before: "They will become history's characters too – and who knows what they'll be called? Maybe 'great.' Maybe 'those who got it historically wrong.'

We think we're burying words when we ban them. But really, we're burying what they meant. And when the last person who remembers that meaning is gone? That's when history truly dies. What's left isn't silence – it's the echo of the ban, louder than the word ever was.

Historically – a term that once described events in time, now a political weapon. Used to turn lies into legacy, force into fate. Banned not because it's obsolete, but because it's too honest.

So when a government bans such a classical concept, they are not hiding the past – they are giving us a map to their fears. And history has a way of circling back. The ones who silenced others? Eventually, they're the ones being judged.

Forever historically yours,

The Truth.

humanism

Antonio de Murcia Conesa

Although its venerable history reaches back a long way, humanism is a late concept. Not so much because it inscribes a dissident perception of progress in Modernity, but because it interprets the present by seeking an original meaning in the time we have left, reconstructing, text by text, a past that is worth waiting for.

As an ascetic work with language (questioning, dissecting, interpreting), its practice is neither impatient nor edifying. As a moral and pedagogical program (disseminating, educating, mobilizing), its most urgent mission seems to be its own apology.

In times of ruin, a century ago, the humanist program made anti-humanism a profitable philosophical gesture. In times of the Anthropocene, it has managed to feed back on the same prefixes, *post* or *trans*, that aspired to overcome or engulf it, under its anthropocentric reduction. And even when its imminent demise is announced, eminent doctrinal adjectives (Christian, Marxist, Liberal, Digital Humanism …) continue to dispute its heritage.

The praise of humanism, turned into a slogan, is woven into two misleadingly complementary discourses. The first associates it with pious humanitarianism, which today culminates in the "humanitarian war": a posthumous oxymoron of the *ius ad bellum* celebrated by all civilised democracies. The second calls for the protection, as endangered species, of those disciplines, always in crisis, (mis)understood under the title of 'humanities', in the hope of fostering a vague compromise between culture, capitalism, and technoscience.

Banks, companies, and prestigious institutions display their disinterested efforts to turn the humanities into an instrument with which to compensate for the imbalances caused by their own policies. But it is not the complex work (translations, editions, interpretations, philosophical studies…) of humanist scholars, but rather their imaginary *modi operandi* (antiquarian philanthropy, cultural melancholy, passion for knowledge…) that appear as venerable objects. On the ant-like shoulders of these exotic scholars, generous giants glimpse magnificent business opportunities in the mourning for lost knowledge.

But the general contempt for knowledge, which we so often reproach ourselves for today, sits uneasily with the widespread desire to monopolize it: the daily exercise of a heroic struggle for knowledge resonates in the aspirations of the most famous intellectual and in those of the most obscure social media hater. Successful internet applications sell thousands of summaries of humanistic essays, promising to satisfy a growing demand for knowledge that is profound, fast, and concrete, associated with excellence and leadership. On the other hand, there is no conspiratorial amendment to the sciences that does not rest on piles of information compulsively devoured by those who, with each reading, proudly perceive themselves as one step further away from Plato's cave.

Far removed from any redemptive propaganda, humanism distilled in the friendly ascetic work with texts and ideas disappoints the aspirations of many established figures and promising talents. Neither cultural athleticism nor vociferous profession of faith: even in our century, the work of humanists delves, as Edward Said taught, into silences, only audible from a dual attitude of reception and resistance. Paying attention, dwelling on the unfamiliar as if it were familiar, and vice versa. Embracing difficulties whose obstacles are opportunities for discovery. And finally – working on the joyful resistance offered by truth and beauty – regaining the strength to combat brutality and its old and renewed sublimations.

I

identity

Paula Garcia Cherep

The rejection of the term "identity" is a way of opposing the demands made by minority groups in society. Those who find it necessary to highlight the specific situation of individuals who share a certain identity and to demand specific rights for them, gather around an identity group. The individuals who form these groups unite with others with whom they share a particular characteristic. What binds the group together is that its members identify around a specific trait which, however, is not shared by all the individuals that constitute the social whole within which this group emerges. Even inside the identity group, they are all distinct individuals from one another, but among themselves, they share a same identity.

While the identity-based union cohesively binds the group internally, the relationship of that group with other groups in the same society and with society as a whole is defined by another principle: a principle of difference, rather than an identity principle. The identity bond that unites those individuals within the group is the same characteristic that, in a sense, separates them from the rest.

It only makes sense for them to group around an identity principle because, in the society they inhabit, not all individuals share that identity trait. Those who group around an identity quality do so to make visible their specific difference from the rest of society. Identity politics seeks to ensure that, to live peacefully, kindly, and justly in community, not all groups (and through the groups, not every individual) that make up the whole are to be treated in the same way. It calls for differential treatment for each individual, mediated by their belonging to a specific identity group. Of course, the existence of heterogeneous groups with different needs and claims enables dissent, debates, and discussion.

If there were not such a plurality of groups that make up a society, democracy would be superficial. There would be no need for democracy. If we were all the same, there would be no need to debate, express

opinions, or decide anything. But that is not the case. Diversity exists. To cover up these differences, making the existence of groups united around different identities invisible, is to view society as an identical, perfect unit, without breaks or disruptions. A unity that, in each of its parts, is equal to itself. But such a claim does not lead to the result that society suddenly becomes a uniform whole, without internal nuances. Ignoring the differences that continue to exist in the meantime is like the night when all cats are gray. The condition in which individuals are indistinguishable from one another.

In that darkness, everyone is treated the same, even if it means that most people – because they are treated independently of the identity group to which they would belong, if such groups were recognized – will receive inappropriate or unfair treatment. Democracy as a possibility for discussion, debate, and consensus-building is diluted in the midst of that darkness.

ideology

Laurence Delpérié & Sauvane Agnès

The term *ideology* was first coined by French philosopher Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836) to describe a "science of ideas" devoted to investigating the origins of human thought. In de Tracy's original formulation, the notion of ideology bore no axiological value, nor any relation to moral truth. This changed with K. Marx, who rendered the concept theoretically operative in *The German Ideology*, co-authored with F. Engels in 1846. In Marx's work, *ideology* refers to a system of thought that legitimates the interests of the ruling class by naturalizing the relations of exploitation in which the proletarian classes are maintained. An ideology is therefore understood as a set of false beliefs meant to manipulate reality. This approach, later developed by thinkers such as A. Gramsci, L. Althusser or R. Barthes, shaped for many years a *particular* conception of ideology as a specific set of beliefs and representations serving the interests of a specific group of individuals, and framed within a dichotomy between "truth" and "non-truth". Fascism, Nazism, and by extension, racism, sexism, etc. exemplify such ideologies, as do more singular forms of ideological activity that are deemed consciously elaborated and strategically deployed for specific purposes. In this sense, *ideology* is conceived as a relatively bounded

belief system – negative in its effects and functioning primarily as an instrument of power. Interestingly, it was partly North American scholarship – through the works of E. Shils, T. Parsons, and later C. Geertz – that contributed to a more *total* understanding of ideology as a constitutive feature of human societies. In this broader conception, *ideology* encompasses all collective beliefs, social representations and worldviews that frame individual and collective experiences within societies. Rather than its epistemic function, this approach to ideology emphasizes its social function, examining how ideologies allow individuals to make sense of their own reality, and how they serve to unite or exclude social actors. Thereby, *ideology* loses part of its negative axiology and opposition to "truth": since everything is ideological in essence, there is no such thing as an ideological "zero-point".

Although European and North American thought has moved beyond such polarizing approaches, *ideology* has mostly retained a negative connotation in contemporary society: it is something to be fought against, and an accusation one seeks to avoid. Within social movements, however, the term *ideology* has been particularly useful for identifying and countering hegemonic discourses and systemic forms of oppression, precisely by labeling them as such and revealing their codified and historicized nature: in short, naming these ideologies constitutes a necessary step toward resisting them. To ban the term *ideology*, therefore, is to suppress the very tools by which Trump's opposition could expose certain beliefs as pillars of systemic inequalities. In doing so, the Trump administration effectively stifles external criticism of a system from which it benefits. To ban the term *ideology* also means giving credence to its older understanding as "non-truth", in a way that conveniently neutralizes one's own vantage point by relocating ideology onto the figure of the "other". This maneuver implicitly positions Trump's discourse and actions as *non-ideological*, granting him the authority of neutrality. Yet, in doing so, he reveals his entanglement in one of the most dangerous forms of ideology: a dominant ideology that negates diversity and democratic plurality. Perhaps here lie the *Trumbles* – Trump's troubles – born from the impossibility of coping with ideological dissonance? For *ideology* is language (*-logos*) in action, the ongoing construction of reality (*idea-*). To speak of *ideology* is to acknowledge that social life is structured through representations, interests, values, and power. And to recognize *ideology* is to

possess some degree of awareness of the dynamics that shape societies and the inequalities they reproduce.

immigrants

Babson Ajibade

Not too long ago, the word, "immigrant" had a globally accepted meaning – one most people knew from dictionaries, encyclopaedias, academic sources and in social practice(s). Today, it does seem like the meaning – non-national persons who move from their country of origin to another, with the intention of settling there – was always taken for granted, at least, until it was "trumped" by the 45th and 47th president of the United States. In a manner that resonates keenly with mythomania, the persistent characteristic of which is a nearly distinctive identifier of personality[1], the man is said to tell an average of nine lies per day[2]. While his ideas about what "immigrant" means, may be divested from constitutional frameworks and social reality, his thinking nonetheless tends to contrast sharply with his own actual "migrant" history. Besides his wife, Melania, being an immigrant from Slovenia, and his mother Scottish, it was on October 7, 1885, that his grandfather, Friedrich Trump, boarded a ship to migrate to America to escape three years of compulsory military service in Germany. At the time, the illegal dodging of the draft was not of consequence to America, since Germans were highly desirable migrants. Fast-forward to grandson's presidency in the US, and the meaning of "immigrant" takes on a right-wing, racial turn.

One would have thought Trump being the husband and son of immigrants, and his having grown-up in the immigrant-community of Bronx[3], would have helped moderate his unnerving rhetoric about immigrants in the 2016 campaign, and nastiness in the 2025 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids. One of the nastiest and untrue justification he ever gave for his disdainful fixation on immigrants was during ABC's presidential debate, where he claimed that they ate the pets of the people that live in the Ohio city of Springfield[4]. Trump's America has created the loose social structures for misidentifying, mislabeling and targeting of people of color – conveniently called immigrants. In this fixation and targeting, the previously global meaning of "immigrant", taken for granted to include constitutional protections, is deconstructed. Rather, as socially

practiced in Trump's ICE raids, "immigrants" are people from anywhere in the world, who have come to live in the United States, but whose skin color is a sign of criminality. And, no matter how long ago their ancestors migrated to the US, regardless of the legal entry/stay documents they hold, and regardless of whether they were born on US' soil, they are criminals if they are non-white.

implicit bias/biases

Jens Schröter

It is easy to understand why "implicit bias" is on the Trump administration's list of undesirable words. The term is mainly used to point out that classist, racist, or sexist prejudices, imbalances, and asymmetries can be found in human behavior and, particularly important today, in the structure of data sets. Such biases can lead to problematic effects, especially in the selective operability of facial recognition; in the tendency toward racist and sexist iconography in images generated by artificial intelligence; in the unjustified attribution of potentially criminal behavior to certain minorities; in distorted decisions in the machine-assisted selection of applicants for certain jobs, etc. Criticizing the implicit bias of data-driven technical systems means rejecting the idea that technologies are neutral tools that are simply open to different purposes. Rather, all technologies, whether software or hardware, are deeply historical and shaped by a (often violent and colonial) political, social, and economic history. And these formations are stabilized by sedimentation in technology, becoming invisible and in turn shaping future practices of all kinds. In other words, emphasizing "implicit bias" also means recognizing that technologies are not only shaped by society, but also have at least a partial determining influence on society (if this were not the case, there would be no need to criticize "implicit bias"). This analysis of the historical shaping of technology and its potentially problematic effects contradicts, first, the rhetoric of the Californian tech industry and its Trump- and even more extreme right-wing ideologues-leaning CEOs such as Peter Thiel and Elon Musk, who always act as if their technological products are miracle cures that will eliminate all evil on earth. Of course, no one wants to hear that these technological systems, which emerged under capitalism, essentially have the effect of making the rich even richer and

stabilizing injustices. Secondly, there is another serious example in the US of a problematic discourse on technology: firearms. Time and again, especially after the occasional mass shootings, there are discussions about imposing restrictions on the acquisition and use of firearms. This is rejected every time by the powerful gun lobby with the argument that it is not guns that kill people, but people (who use guns). This obviously overlooks the inevitable implicit bias of guns: historically, guns were created mainly (besides hunting) for the purpose to injure and kill other people (or animals in hunting). But the rightwing administration doesn't want to hear that either, because it doesn't fit into their market-radical ideology of "free" individuals competing with each other.

indigenous

Barnaby Ralph

The term "indigenous," when applied to human beings, refers to the original or native inhabitants of a specific geographical area. It implies a deep connection to ancestral lands and a longevity of tradition. However, given the fact that many such groups trace their presence in a given place to a time well before the creation of written records, determining the status of "original" or "native" inhabitants can be difficult.

In the process of colonial expansion, powerful, technologically-advantaged invaders have often suppressed indigenous populations, usually in a brutal, excessive fashion. Despite this, there seems a need for such invading groups to argue for the necessity of their actions. There is thus commonly a pervasive myth amongst colonizers that they have somehow improved the life of those colonized, an attitude expressed in Rudyard Kipling's jingoistic 1899 poem "The White Man's Burden." The myth is habitually justified by pointing to perceived benefits with regard to elements such as education, technology, transport infrastructure, and religion, whilst at the same time denigrating or even disregarding the suppressed culture. The examination of this system of belief is one of the key targets of post-colonial criticism. In particular, Edward Said's books *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) offer valuable overviews of the central issues, as well as deconstructions of the process of mythologizing.

The question of indigenous rights is frequently referenced by governments as a key issue, but policy generally only pays lip service to the groups to whom these rights might apply. In Australia, for example, formal apology for the abduction of a generation of Aboriginal children was made in 2008, but, despite payment of some reparations, a meaningful treaty has yet to materialize. The United States Government has also recently apologized to indigenous peoples over violence, abuse, and negligence, as well as forced assimilation via residential schools, but no real steps have been taken towards significant and broad compensation. This appears to be a general pattern worldwide. In many places, discourse has grown up around a perceived reluctance by indigenous people to "integrate," a term placing the blame upon the victims, and often used by colonial interests in order to belittle or marginalize those who wish to retain the cultural integrity of their heritage.

Indigenousness can become a fraught question of identity and belonging, with self-identification, lineal descent, and community acceptance being commonly accepted as key ways to determine status. There are various reasons why claiming indigenous heritage may be advantageous, from access to grants or legal rights, to the ability to position oneself as a representative for that group in the media or similar arena, such as an actor taking on a specific role. The perceived value of having heritage connected to an indigenous community can therefore result in abuse and deception. The anthropologist Circe Sturm has coined the phrase "race shifting" to describe the phenomenon of those pretending to such identity. Race shifting generally has the negative effect of spreading distrust both within an indigenous community and throughout wider society.

inequality/ inequalities

Andreas Jacobsson

The killing fields of inequality is the title of renowned Swedish sociologist Göran Therborn's very important book published in English in 2013. The book was published in Swedish in 2016 with a title that literally translated to English reads *Inequality kills* (*Ojämlikhet dödar*), a title which is an even more telling regarding what is at stake when we are addressing inequality in different societies. Why is inequality so dangerous that Therborn describes it as a killer? His own Marxist interpretation is that

(class-based) pre-conditions follow people all through their life. If you are born into precarity you run a much higher risk of having a hard and most probably shorter life than life expectancy in the society, if you are born into affluence, you will instead most likely live a privileged and long life. What is even more concerning according to Therborn is that the level of inequality in the world is continuously expanding.

The notion of inequality has in the previous decades gradually become more and more important in social science research, as well as in a variety of different research fields, as for example, anthropology, education, media, health and medicine and philosophy. The findings in many of these studies support Therborn's thesis that inequality has a strong negative effect on the potential for providing equal opportunities in life and a destructive and negative effect on the level of health and well-being in a society.

One of the most expansive areas of research is focused on economic inequality and comparative studies from a global perspective. The scholarly work by renowned French economist Thomas Piketty has somewhat unexpectedly found a large readership outside of the academic circles, despite being quite extensive books. Piketty and several colleagues has also been involved in developing the open database World Inequality Database (WID), and since 2018 published World inequality reports. The good thing about all the research, but even more important that the studies have found a wider audience than is common for academic studies is that inequality matters for more and more people. However, as French historian and sociologist Pierre Rosanvallon has noticed the attention that inequality has rendered is not necessarily followed up by political reforms: "It is simply the fact that inequalities have never before been so widely discussed while, so little was being done to reduce them" (3). Rosanvallon pinpoints that inequality often is criticized on overarching societal levels, but accepted in everyday life (6).

Research and widespread knowledge among people in general will not in itself change this situation. Inequality in economic, social, political, colonial, neo-colonial and epistemological forms must be analyzed, criticized and challenged politically. Removing the term from official language will not stop people (us included) from working and fighting against inequality in our time of late capitalism and neoliberalism. Inequality and capitalism are two sides of the same coin and has to be addressed together.

institutional

Ian Parker

I work as a psychoanalyst in the context of the Red Clinic, an alternative 'institution', and I have been involved in the so-called broader 'anti-psychiatry' movement for many years, so my clinical practice is avowedly non-medical. The history of the anti-psychiatry movement, and of radical psychoanalysis has had to negotiate 'institutional' questions in many ways.

One thing is for sure; an 'institution' is never neutral, never apolitical. Whether or not we engage with institutions, or even form institutions of our own, we have to be mindful that they always have a political character. Institutions always either express the dominant characteristics of a society or they challenge them.

Saturday, August 23, 2025, in Manchester, here in the north west of England, I attended the annual 'Pride' march as part of the Palestine bloc. We marched in support of LGBTQ+ struggles, making an alliance between those struggles and the struggle against the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Hundreds of thousands of people lined the streets, providing audience for our protest, which included a protest against some of the corporate sponsors of the event.

There were an astounding number of corporate sponsors who sent employees to the march to advertise their companies, and so we were faced with a contradiction. On the one hand these companies were institutionally recuperating 'Pride', absorbing and neutralizing the radical potential of LGBTQ+ politics. On the other hand, it was better that they were there, showing their support than that they were enacting homophobic and transphobic policies in their workplaces.

The Palestine bloc contingent was bloc number 140 among the many other institutions present on the march. There were contingents on the Pride march from groups of workers in the civil service, fire service and health service, and there was a small group of General Practitioners, medical doctors. There was no group of psychiatrists. This is not surprising given the normative and pathologizing practice of psychiatry. It was a reminder that we need to intervene in those medical institutions.

There is a history of institutional struggle inside psychiatry, and the role of the institution itself is at stake. For example, in Italy during the fascist period, the Mussolini regime used the mental hospitals as places

of incarceration, and so, when the 'Psichiatria Democratica' movement developed in Trieste in the north east of Italy in the 1970s, there was an intense battle to close the hospitals and set up community mental health centers. Theorists analyzed 'deinstitutionalization', and that meant being attentive to the way that psychiatry operated as a covert 'institution' inside communities. In France, in contrast, the Pétain fascist collaborationist regime could not control the mental hospitals. These were places of refuge, and in that context was developed forms of radical 'institutional psychotherapy' influenced by psychoanalysis.

Our relation to the 'institutional' must therefore be sensitive to context, and must find ways of mobilizing people, where necessary, in and against institutions, to contradict their oppressive role.

intersectional

Ingrid Hoofd

The adjective 'intersectional' is generally used in conjunction with 'analysis' and 'feminism', and refers to the ways in which researchers, policy makers and activists should consider how various 'axes of identity' or 'axes of oppression' overlap and interconnect. This interconnectedness moreover should be observed in relation to the specific attributes of an individual in terms of social categorizations such as gender, class, sexual orientation, and race. Such a more sophisticated understanding of the effects of systemic oppressions on an individual is thought to aid in grasping how identity markers may or may not compound each other in a given situation. For instance, a black heterosexual woman who belongs to the educated upper-classes in an affluent town, will experience the (dis) advantages of her intersectional identity as very different from a black queer woman who is living below the poverty line in a ghetto town. To perform an intersectional analysis then seeks to complicate simplistic understandings of the forms of oppression, marginalization, and exclusion based singular social categories, allowing for a more accurate and nuanced description of an individual's experiences and struggles.

While this meaning of the term 'intersectional' was famously coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, other feminists and anti-racist theorists have suggested similar notions of overlapping and interconnected identities. Already in 1851, black feminist Sojourner Truth complicated the simplistic

category of 'woman' in her famous speech 'Ain't I a Woman?' which showed that patriarchy and womanhood are very differently experienced by white versus black (or enslaved) women. Relatedly, feminist theorist Sandra Harding in 1986 coined the term 'standpoint epistemology' to suggest how 'the standpoint of the oppressed' may generate superior – because more comprehensive – understandings of social reality. Standpoint theory initially focused on the differences between men and women, but later also incorporated other identity markers such as race, culture, social class, and economic status. In a similar vein, bell hooks famously talks about the interlocking of systems of oppression when she names this ideology of domination "imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy." Even so, while intersectional analyses allow for more nuance and complexity, the overreliance on taxonomies and categories of identity renders it vulnerable to what has been called 'the Olympics of oppression' in which various marginalized social individuals or groups compete with each other over 'who has it worse.' Such an agonistic comparison between experiences of marginalization and exclusion as simply a result of one's intersectional identity, in which each marginalized identity marker is 'added up', is argued to be detrimental to the feminist and anti-racist pursuit of solidarity.

intersectionality

Marcy Goldberg

The term "intersectionality" was coined in 1989 by legal scholar and civil rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw, in order to analyze a set of legal challenges in which African-American women had faced discrimination for being *both* black *and* female. At the time, established feminist frameworks usually failed to consider racism, while anti-racism initiatives did not pay sufficient attention to gender inequality. The challenges faced by Black women in seeking justice in the workplace, or in cases of domestic violence, existed at the intersection of multiple forms of oppression. As Crenshaw put it: what they experienced was greater than the sum of racism and sexism, and thus needed to be considered in an interlocking way in order to accurately reflect on, and ultimately to remedy, the particular challenges they faced as women of color.

In a broader sense, intersectional analysis highlights the overlapping relationships between facets of individual identity – such as gender, race, class, disability, and sexual orientation – and power structures within society. In order to properly understand and combat different forms of exclusion and subordination, it is necessary to consider how they interact with one another on multiple axes.

An intersectional approach leads to a more nuanced and precise understanding of how marginalization actually works, and paves the way to establishing greater equity for disadvantaged individuals and groups. At the same time, it is also a helpful framework for understanding how power and privilege circulate. For these reasons, it caught on quickly outside anti-racist legal circles and has become an established branch of sociological inquiry.

Needless to say, in spite of its obvious validity and usefulness as an instrument for social analysis, "intersectionality" has also become a contested term in the contemporary culture wars. Together with "critical race theory" – another concept developed by Black legal scholars to investigate structural racism – its meaning has been willfully distorted by its opponents as a hierarchy of victimhood or an attempt to somehow capitalize on marginalized identities. Even more tellingly, it has been misrepresented as an attempt to invert unfair power structures rather than dismantle them.

The recent coordinated attacks on public libraries, universities, media companies, law firms and others in order to suppress the circulation of knowledge about discrimination and diversity can only be seen as a desperate attempt to hold on to unequal and unearned power. But the frenzied defensive reactions to intersectional thinking fail to understand what it actually seeks to do: not to replace one form of inequality with another, but to level the playing field for all. A government that seeks to ban intersectionality has fallen victim to the kind of single-axis thinking that intersectionality studies were created to dispel. Crenshaw has often pointed out that intersectionality was a lived reality long before she coined the term. Banning the word will also not make it go away.

intricacy

Antonio Rivera Garcia

Intricacy proposes a model of unity based on connection, on the mixture and global "sympathy" of its elements, all considered hierarchically equal. It is, therefore, a unity that is neither premeditated nor planned, formed by the very freedom of mixing.

The intricate, insofar as it proposes a style of mixture (Stilmischung), can recall both Auerbach's "mimesis" and Pasolini's pastiche, a way of thinking that dissolves the difference between genres, styles, and even castes or social classes. From an architectural perspective, intricacy relates to the interruption of discontinuity, which is characteristic of the art of architecture. Architecture creates walls, separations between the interior space of the built dwelling – the artificial space – and the exterior or natural space. In contrast, a thought of intricacy, when applied to architecture, leads the interior space to mix with, or even imitate the exterior space, open, without walls, of nature.

Intricacy prevents us from talking about finished, finite, and perfect constructions: the infinite connections of intricacy are incompatible with architectural art, which is based on assembling parts to build a closed, organic whole, subordinate to a sovereign principle. Intricacy in cinema can be appreciated in the kind of editing, like that of the Straubs, which turns the film into a "lacunar body," a set of piled crystals showing the discontinuity of the work and which, unlike a puzzle, do not fit perfectly and therefore do not produce the illusion of a complete, perfect, and continuous object.

Nature provides the model for the philosophy of intricacy since it is about relating, mixing, and affirming different elements, something Kant called "real opposition." The sympathy of the elements of an intricate work belongs to a thought of complexity, of the federal unity that does not dissolve diversity.

Intricacy, insofar as we no longer have a sovereign will to determine and close the construction, is also related to the concept of play, an activity that constitutes its own end. Play is a free activity that liberates itself from teleology and from aesthetic and political theology, from the concepts of "telos" and "author" or "sovereign creator." Some concepts that

could be part of a philosophy and aesthetics of intricacy are the notions of atlas, archipelagic (Glissant), and collage.

The philosophy of intricacy not only thinks space but also time, independently of the space-time coordinates of neoliberal ideology. It is tied to unproductive time, which in fact coincides with the type of leisure the ancients used for unpaid political activities. It is also the time of "confusion," characteristic of carnival and festivity, and ultimately, the time of that community of artists and spectators opposed to the accounting and division of labor imposed by the market.

J

joy

Bernd Herzogenrath

Joy is not a private possession, not a smile bought in the marketplace, not the lonely labor of self-improvement. Today, happiness is too often framed as an individual project, measured by private contentment and consumer choices, a neoliberal ethos that reduces well-being to personal management while ignoring the erosion of welfare, rising inequality, and the atomization of community. Against this reduction of happiness to a commodity, we turn to Spinoza, for whom joy signals an expansion of our powers to act. It is the force of life expanding, bodies and minds meeting in ways that increase their power. Spinoza knew this: joy is the affect of becoming more. And Deleuze echoed it: joy is the surge of new connections, the opening of unforeseen possibilities. It is not a fleeting pleasure but an affect that increases our capacity to think, feel, and live more fully.

For Spinoza, joy arises when we enter into relations that enhance our force of existence; it is collective by nature, since our powers are always entangled with others. Deleuze builds on this, seeing joy as the affect that accompanies encounters which open new potentials. In both accounts, joy is not a private state but a relational force that grows through being with others in enabling ways. To feel joy together is already to resist. Against isolation, against despair, against the command to suffer alone, joy insists: we are not reducible to fragments. Each collective spark – dancing in the street, holding one another in struggle, dreaming aloud – defies the order that thrives on sadness and separation. It refuses the isolation on which domination thrives.

Sadness contracts our capacity; joy enlarges it. Power tells us to be content within our cages, to manage our moods while the world burns. But joy says otherwise. Joy breaks the cage by multiplying relations, weaving us into common strength. It is the laughter that unsettles fear, the tenderness that interrupts cruelty, the solidarity that turns weakness into courage. Let us speak of joy, let us acknowledge its political dimension:

our capacity to be joyful is diminished when social structures weaken our power to act, and enhanced when they nourish bonds of solidarity and collective imagination.

Joy is not naïve. It knows grief, it knows rage, it knows the heaviness of the world. Yet joy refuses to be extinguished. It is the stubborn pulse of life that declares: even here, even now, we can be more. It is not a retreat from conflict but sustenance within it, a reminder that even in hardship, the experience of solidarity can be exhilarating. Such moments do not deny suffering; they create the energy and hope needed to confront it.

To create joy is to build the future in the present. Joy does not wait for liberation – it is liberation, rehearsed in every act of care, every shared victory, every refusal to yield. If sadness diminishes our capacity to act, then joy expands it, enabling the courage required to persist and transform. Resistance is joyful not because it is easy, but because it creates new relations, new common powers, new ways of living that exceed the limits of the present.

Joy is the weapon that wounds no one and empowers everyone. It is the horizon that widens whenever we walk toward it together. To embrace joy is to recognize that true happiness cannot be confined to the private sphere. It emerges where lives intersect, where people act together, where care, love, and struggle converge. In affirming joy as a shared force, we reclaim happiness not as a solitary achievement but as a common horizon of renewal. It is our promise that another life is possible.

JOY IS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE

L

learning

Orit Halpern

is a commonly repeated adage in our present that machines are 'intelligent' and 'learn'. AI, pundits argue, make humanities education, and even scientific research, obsolete and unnecessary, even economically destructive.

While couched economically, such discourses are profoundly political. When Norbert Wiener coined the term "cybernetics" in the late 1940s, he worried about more than just machines replacing human labor. He feared that reducing learning to algorithmic rules might create a new form of slavery – one where humans became mere adapters rather than autonomous thinkers capable of envisioning alternative futures. He implicitly repeated a history of political thinkers arguing that freedom, and by extension democratic governance, was a matter of education.

This concern became explicit in 1956 when Wiener, writing during the Civil Rights Movement, reflected on education's deeper purpose. At eleven years old, he recalled, he had already recognized that mathematical logic could never fully represent the world, and that systematically applying rules was not equivalent to genuine education. Education, he argued, was "man's engagement with his environment" – an institutional and social practice that extended far beyond mere learning.

Wiener's insight on learning only repeated what *Brown v. Board of Education* had declared two years earlier. The courts decided that "separate" education could never be "equal". This was the landmark case desegregating American schools and setting the precedent for future cases involving the integration of women and other disenfranchised groups into all educational institutions. The courts recognized that institutional separation itself produced inferiority and deprived Black students of their potential to become full citizens capable of enacting political will. This reduction of learning to rules, it can be deduced, forestalled the possibility of the United States realizing its potential as a diverse

democracy. Simply learning the same content in different, impoverished settings would not produce the same futures. The structural context – the *where* and *how* of learning – fundamentally shaped what education could accomplish.

Today's techno-utopic discourse is forcefully amnesic to this history portraying a different understanding of both humans and machines; replacing discourses of deliberation and political with adaptive behavioralism, evolution, and adaptation. In this vision of 'learning', all subjects must constantly become "innovative" and "resilient," endlessly adapting to crises in politics, economics, and climate. Algorithms promise to optimize this adaptation, combining individual perspectives in ways no human planner, or government policy, could achieve. Technology becomes the new nature, and evolution replaces revolution. Humans are always training to adjust to adversity which is now 'natural'.

But this framework reduces learning to adaptation to existing conditions (or to pure faith). There is no concept of projection – the ability to imagine counterfactual realities. No discussion of artificial intelligence includes questions about where and how one learns, or acknowledges learning as anything beyond adjusting to change. There is no concept of inquiry or falsifiability for AI, who has not way to know ground truths from simply the world. There is only sycophancy, the seeming placating of human users through the provision of statistically likely responses to patterns of behavioral inputs. Sycophancy has replaced encounter or engagement with Others. This discourse has merged technical and biological determinism, replacing education's language with that of adaptation and evolution.

This myth of technocratic solutions obscures the social context that shapes what is learned, how, for whom, and to what ends. AI promises participation through data contribution, but not representation or power. Citizens can offer opinions to networks they cannot control; making citizenship itself a question.

The original cybernetic precept recognized that we only learn in relationship to others. This offers faint hope: such systems might produce new relations between life and technology, forging possibilities for connection between humans, geographies, and more-than-human entities.

The challenge we face is learning in new ways beyond our own conditioning. This requires returning consciousness to learning – reintroducing

history, knowledge, difference, and futurity. It demands recognizing that learning cannot be reduced to training. Only this might enable equity and democracy. We risk a future where perpetual learning means perpetual adaptation to inequality, where smartness optimizes our submission rather than enabling our freedom.

lesbian

Julie Agu

LESBIAN! DYKE! FAGGOT! – before leaving France, I barely heard the first two. Growing up in Marseille in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the language available to label me was 'tomboy' (*garçon manqué*, literally 'failed boy') as a child, and later 'faggot' as a teenager. I'd reply, *Je suis une fille manquée, pas un garçon manqué !* – a 'failed girl,' not a 'failed boy.'

LESBIAN was absent. Its absence mattered. I knew what it was to grow up without the word: a silence, a non-existence. My early affinity was with 'gay,' partly because being called 'faggot' on my way to school opened a possibility for self-recognition, even through pain – *Wait, is that me?* – and partly because my mother adored Pedro Almodóvar's flamboyant 'transvestite' characters. I thought she'd be okay with me being one of them, but her reaction to Josiane Balasko in *Gazon maudit* (1995) – the only lesbian character I saw growing up – told another story. Gay men were artistic; lesbians were abject. Masculine women in tank tops, stealing wives – a warning, not a possibility. I was a failed gay, on top of a failed boy.

'Lesbian' and 'dyke' didn't enter my world until university, through American literature. Suddenly, the term 'lesbian' revealed a lineage of women across the Atlantic, resonating with my own. Through Dorothy Allison, Leslie Feinberg, Audre Lorde, Jane Rule, Adrienne Rich, I traced a genealogy of insult, survival, and queer resistance. Reading Allison for the first time, the recognition was visceral:

FAGGOT! That's what he called me. [...] What am I exactly? When he called me a faggot I knew. I knew for sure who I was and who I would not be. [...] I yelled it at him. 'Dyke! Get it right, you son-of-a-bitch, I'm a dyke.'[1]

I gasped – *me too.* That linguistic expansion from 'FAGGOT!' to 'DYKE!' cracked me open. Could I claim 'lesbian' without feeling I was spitting out a slur, a 'non-word' marking nonexistence? Thanks to American dykes, I understood 'lesbian' as more than a word: a history, a community, a

possibility of survival rooted in poetry. After all, *What cannot be said will be wept* is attributed to Sappho…

So I claim LESBIAN as archive, kinship, praxis – echoing across languages and borders. To ban this word is to ban the archive of our survival, to silence the poetry of our becoming. I know because I have lived the silence. Language – despite attempts to suppress it – finds ways to write us back into the world.

Let's hear it:

I am the woman who lost herself but now is found, the lesbian, outside the law of church and man, the one who has to love herself or die. If you are not as strong as I am, what will we make together? I am all muscle and wounded desire, and I need to know how strong we can both be.[2]

LGBTQ

Simone Atenea Medina Polo

The acronym LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer) is an umbrella term referring to sexual orientations, gender modalities, gender identities, and sex characteristics. LGBTQ at times includes initials such as 2S (for two-spirit Indigenous identities), I (for intersex), A (for asexual), or even the catch-all "+" that stands for anything not grasped by these terms. This acronym varies generationally and geographically, and LGBTQ is already the result of a historical shift from the original LGB acronym (Stryker, 2017; Roen, 2006).

Traditionally a term for "odd," "queer" started as a derogatory term for non-normative sexualities and gender expressions met with disgust and repulsion due to being rendered "culturally unintelligible" and "taboo" (Butler, 2007, p. 104). In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, "queer" was reclaimed by some as a political rallying term for the spectrum of non-heteronormative sexualities at first, and then became more inclusive to gender identities and modalities (Butler, 2007, p. 156; Stryker, 2017, pp. 30-31).

And "trans" faced its own struggles to gain inclusion with this acronym around this same period of time, for instance: the 1993 March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian, and Bi Rights explicitly voting *no* to the inclusion of "transgender" to its title or the 1991 Michigan Women's Music Festival's expelling Nancy Jean Burkholder for being a trans woman with

a trans-exclusive policy retrospectively placed by organizer Lisa Vogel (Stryker, 2006, p. 5). This inclusion carries intergenerational conflicts and tensions, for example the passing conflicts of Stonewall riot veteran Jim Fouratt in opposition to transgender individuals – a position he claims to have tempered since – at the Centre for Lesbian and Gay Studies' conferences in 1995 and 2005 as noted by trans historian Susan Stryker or Lisa Vogel's continued insistence to keep the festival trans-exclusive until MWMF's closure in 2015 rather than entertaining working with trans people (Stryker 2006, pp. 1-2; Schindler, 2016; Weber, 2015, p. 31).

Given the nature of these generational and geographical shifts in this acronym, the "+" sign often added at the end stands for "the excessive element… that resists symbolization" (Metcalfe, 2021, p. 226).

M

mental health

Petr Kouba

The WHO defines mental health as “a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community”. Mental health is therefore not defined merely as the absence of mental illness, but as a state of well-being that has intrinsic and instrumental value.

However, this definition does not seem to be sufficient and therefore needs to be supplemented and critically revised. One aspect missing from the WHO’s definition of mental health is the dimension of freedom. We can recall Heidegger’s ontological conception of the difference between health and illness, where illness is understood as a privation of health, as it restricts existential freedom and openness. Every illness, and this undoubtedly applies to mental illness as well, makes certain ways of relating to the world impossible. Health, on the other hand, represents the maximum freedom and openness possible for a particular individual. Mental health therefore means the highest possible freedom and openness of existence with regard to the state of mind, understanding, and speech of a particular individual.

However, even the ontological definition of mental health is subject to certain normative criteria. When we talk about mental health, we necessarily work with the difference between normality and abnormality, undisturbed and disturbed behavior, or normality and perversion. Erwin Strauss, in connection with mental illness, speaks of a primary encounter with strangeness, which distinguishes mental illness from normal behavior and experience. Kurt Goldstein further specifies this normative assessment by distinguishing between the collective norm and the individual norm. While the collective norm results from the behavior and experience of the statistical average of the population, the individual norm is determined by the stable, balanced behavior of an individual who is able to respond appropriately to the demands of the surrounding

environment. Since undisturbed behavior gives the individual a feeling of freedom, lightness, and ease, we can describe it as "well-being." However, we must not forget that individual behavioral norms do not necessarily correspond to collectively determined normality.

An example of the conflict between collective and individual norms is homosexuality, which has long been classified in psychiatry as a pathological perversion and mental illness. The DSM, published in 1952, classified homosexuality as a "sexual deviation" and ranked it among "sociopathic personality disturbances." The DSM, revised in 1974, defined it as a "sexual orientation disturbance," and although it no longer labeled it as a psychiatric disorder, it still viewed the acceptance of one's sexual orientation as a problem. It was not until 1987 that homosexuality was removed from the category of mental disorders and moved to the field of mental health. From this alone, it is clear that mental health is always conditioned and determined by the historical, social, and cultural context in which we experience or do not experience well-being. With reference to the work of R.D. Laing, we could also say that mental health is linked to the experience of ontological security, whereby ontological security is determined not only by internal but also by external factors. It would be a big mistake to ignore the external aspects that condition ontological security and, in the context of mental health, to focus only on the internal aspects of ontological security.

migration

Massimo Perinelli

Migration encompasses the movement of people across borders but represents far more than this neutral definition suggests. As a social phenomenon, migration is fundamentally political and contested; it challenges hegemonic power relations while unleashing transformative potential. How migration is approached by state and civil society indicates a society's democratic constitution. As a movement, migration challenges notions of cultural homogeneity and political concepts of nationalism and disrupts the connection between civil rights and citizenship. As a force it is part of transnational class struggle. As a real utopia it embodies the right to freedom of movement and the fundamental right to universal equality.

Discourse and Power Relations

Specific power relations shape the term "migration." Categorizing people as "migrants," "refugees," or "asylum seekers" involves violent positioning that regulates and hierarchizes social belonging. These attributions form part of inclusion/exclusion systems marking certain movements as legitimate while others appear problematic or threatening.

Dominant migration narratives follow deficit logic: migration becomes an exception, problem, or humanitarian challenge, whereas its constitutive significance for social progress is ignored. This framing obscures structural causes and dynamics of migratory movements, individualizing social contradictions.

Migrant Agency, Continuities and Ruptures

Contrary to victimizing portrayals of migrants as passive objects, they are actually actors of social transformation. Migrant struggles for rights have forced significant social shifts and enable utopian moments of solidarity.

While the post-Cold War decade saw national closures and racism, and simultaneously a competition for cheap migrant labor, they were also years of emerging anti-racist movements with new qualities of migrant self-organization. Decades of struggle for participation have led to an expansion of the democratic fabric.

Today's world-wide authoritarian backlash first and foremost strives for hegemony by attacking migrant communities, endangering migration routes, and threatening migrants with enslavement, sexual violence and imprisonment. These attacks are countered by transnational solidarity networks, defending migrant communities against deportation, organizing sea rescue and border crossings, engaging in remembrance of racist violence and in building collective resilience beyond specific communities.

Post-Migrant Perspectives

The term "post-migrant society" marks an analytical shift, referring not to migration's end but to social reality always already constituted by migration. This perspective clarifies that migration is the norm, not exception, making social development unthinkable without migrant experiences and struggles.

Simultaneously, the post-migrant approach reveals integration policy paradigm limits: instead of individual adaptation efforts, structural exclusion mechanisms and social transformation needs come into focus.

Current Challenges

Current political constellations feature authoritarian restructuring systematically attacking democratic cohesion through migration discourse. Several governments declaring "national emergency on migration" highlights problems that the social regression and authoritarian rollback project faces with (post-)migrant reality.

This development, permanently defaming migration as problematic, makes "utopian remembrance" of solidarity moments in migration society increasingly necessary. Remembering migrant struggles' transformative potential provides strategic resources for contemporary resistance practices.

Critical Perspectives

Left politics and activism must analyze migration's intertwining with class, gender, and race relations, considering colonial continuity of global inequalities. Migration expresses and processes social contradictions globally rather than existing as isolated phenomenon.

Overcoming essentialist identity notions while recognizing migrant experience multiplicity remains crucial. Migration is neither inherently emancipatory nor reactionary but contested terrain where social power relations crystallize and shift.

Critical migration examination requires dual movement: deconstructing dominant migration narratives while reconstructing emancipatory potential of migrant practices for solidarity and inclusive society.

minority/minorities

Rick Dolphijn

Deleuze and Guattari famously challenge conventional understandings of minority status by asserting that minorities are not defined by numerical inferiority but rather by their visibility and political potential in relation to the majority. This conceptual shift can be illustrated by the example

of South African Blacks under apartheid. Although they constituted the demographic majority, they were politically marginalized and socially rendered as a minority – excluded from power and relegated to the peripheries of the political arena. This inversion exposes the inadequacy of counting heads as a measure of political agency and underscores the centrality of power relations in defining minority status. Globally and historically, the most paradigmatic example of a minority is women, who have been systematically excluded from positions of power across nearly all societies.

One might anticipate that Deleuze and Guattari would respond to such entrenched marginalization by advocating for a philosophy that simply restores minorities' access to power. However, while they express sympathy for political activism, their ultimate proposition is more radical and nuanced: they call for a universal process of *becoming-minoritarian*.

At the heart of their political philosophy lies the idea that the minority – no matter how singular or seemingly powerless – must "assert the power of the nondenumerable" (ATP, 470), a concept which refers to the collective force generated by multiplicities that resist quantification and categorization. Crucially, this is not a call for anarchy or even traditional forms of civil disobedience. Nor is it an invitation to engage in critique that merely responds to existing power structures. This is because any critique framed within the terms set by the powerful risks being co-opted or dismissed. Recognition by the dominant order demands submission, effectively neutralizing revolutionary potential. Sadly, feminist and postcolonial histories abound with examples of how the quest for recognition, despite its emancipatory aims, has frequently resulted in co-optation, frustration, and the dilution of radical ideals.

So, how does one become minoritarian, and why undertake this transformation? The answer to the latter is straightforward: becoming-minoritarian is the only viable path to freedom and the realization of what Deleuze and Guattari call the Anti-Fascist Life. How to achieve this freedom is of course quite a trajectory. They identify several modes of becoming: becoming-woman (a foundational step for all, regardless of gender), becoming-animal, becoming-revolutionary, and ultimately, becoming-imperceptible. Importantly, the aim is here not to become 'like someone else', they do not entail imitation or assimilation but rather an embrace of wholly otherness as a means of escape and transformation. Anyone

can and perhaps must learn from wholly otherness in order to explore a wholly other life.

This embrace of wholly otherness is why Deleuze and Guattari speak so lovingly about all sorts of animals, plants (think of the rhizome), and diverse forms of earthliness in their work. This is why, in conclusion, philosophy equals geophilosophy. It is *by no means* an exercise of serving the powerful. Philosophy, the unlimited love-to-think, must take flight and move in every direction and dimension in which it finds joy.

multicultural

Masayuki Iwase

I shall begin with an analogy between the idea of multiculturalism and a breakfast dish I occasionally prepare for my daughter: yogurt with fresh fruit, granola, and a drizzle of maple syrup. The image I wish to evoke is that of a heterogeneous mixture of different ingredients – plain yogurt, granola, maple syrup, and a variety of fresh fruits of my choice (e.g., blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, bananas) – all joining and existing together harmoniously, contributing to the richness of the whole without losing their own distinct characteristics in the mixed bowl.

This image resonates strongly with the fundamental premise of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (hereafter, the Act), enacted in 1988 as the world's first official policy of multiculturalism in legislation. The underlying assumption of my fruit bowl metaphor, vis-à-vis Canadian multiculturalism, is the importance of recognizing cultural diversity; preserving the cultural heritage of individuals, groups, and communities of all origins; and promoting their full, inclusive, respectful, and equitable participation in all aspects of society – cultural, economic, political, and institutional – *without barriers* (About the Canadian Multiculturalism Act). The fruit bowl metaphor stands in marked contrast to the monocultural – or melting pot – metaphor conventionally used to describe the United States, where assimilation blends and liquefies differences.

However, I would argue that the fruit bowl metaphor of Canadian multiculturalism purports to celebrate a sugar-coated vision of cultural diversity and heterogeneity, obscuring its essentialist and colonialist nature and motifs. From the perspective of critical multiculturalism (May, 1999, 2009), I wish to problematize this celebratory stance as naively reifying

and essentializing culture, ethnicity, and individual and group identities *sui generis* – as unchanging, fixed, final, and determined by single origins – while neglecting their durability and malleability within complex interconnections and contexts. Moreover, the celebratory stance flattens out differences among individuals and groups, positioning them on an ostensibly equal playing field as if there were no power relations or hierarchies, nor structural forces and material issues such as colonialism, capitalism, institutional and racial discrimination, or poverty (May, 1999, 2009).

By extension, I argue that the celebratory stance of Canadian multiculturalism rests upon what David MacDonald (2014) terms colonial multiculturalism, developed within a settler-colonial framework that disregards the political interests and concerns of Indigenous peoples – such as sovereignty and land claims. The official Act, as an instance of colonial multiculturalism, is arguably implicated in privileging the needs and interests of English and French settler societies, as well as those of newcomer populations from non-European countries as visible ethnic minorities. In other words, the Act overlooks the colonial history of European invasion and subjugation of Indigenous peoples, who are categorized as merely another ethnic group rather than the original inhabitants. Their concerns and demands, arising from centuries of struggle under colonial power, can never be treated on an equal footing with those of newcomers (Srikanth, 2012).

If a society wishes to put multiculturalism into genuine effect, it must keep in check its essentialist and colonialist tendencies; otherwise, it risks gravitating toward the monocultural, melting-pot model it claims to resist.

N

Native American

Martin E. Rosenberg

As opposed to "Nativism," the term "Native American" refers to the indigenous aboriginal populations of North, Central and South America. "Native American" subsumes the entire indigenous population. But of course, the reality of a myriad distinct clusters of, as well as solitary tribes, each with their own language and customs, puts the lie to any homogenization which the term Native American suggests. But the question of how aboriginally indigenous those populations are, of course, remains a contested subject for sociology, physical and cultural anthropology, Ice Age geology and human geography, beginning with percentages of blood inheritance, a concept connected to the race theories of the 19th Century.

Furthermore, the jury remains out on whether there was an original population in The New World before migrations from Asia began over the land and ice bridge in the Bering Sea @13,000-26,500 years BCE. Originally, by fixating on the pervasive presence of Covis arrowhead points, cultural anthropologists had determined that these Ice Age migrations from Asia occurred approximately 13,000 years ago; but now, that date has been pushed back to anywhere from 19,000 to 26,500 years ago. In Western Pennsylvania, 33.9 miles from my house outside of Pittsburgh, one can find the Meadowcroft Rock Shelter, where anthropologists have determined 16,000 years of continuous human settlement, and perhaps as long as 19,000 years, which predates the Clovis culture. In White Sands, NM, footprints have been discovered that can be dated to @21,000-23,000 years ago. But, the advent of DNA sequencing analysis has changed the picture drastically. They now estimate at least four separate major lineages from the DNA evidence, implying multiple migrations from Asia, separated by thousands of years – and not just over the Bering Land Bridge.

DNA evidence traces the Crow nation back to @14,000-15,000 years; and the Blackfeet nation back to @18,000 years. Furthermore, similar dates exist for DNA sequencing of remains in South America; but, more

importantly, DNA signals indicate links between Papua-New Guinea and Australia with South America. Collectively this confluence of archeological and genetic research suggests migrations by sea, and therefore not dependent upon tempering Ice Age conditions of the Bering land bridge. Furthermore, DNA signals indicate interactions between the two extinct human species of Neanderthals and Denisonians, as well as interactions between these extinct species and "modern" humans, lasting thousands of years, with the earliest (controversial) estimates dating back to @40,000 years. So, the picture of what constitutes 'truly' aboriginally indigenous populations specific to the Americas remains murky.

Now, "Nativist" ideology asserts that the geography of the Americas, especially North America, constitutes the proper inheritance of the white European populations that began migrating to, conquering, then populating the Americas beginning at the end of the 15th Century. Since these successes, White Europeans have deployed methods of genocide (no other word will do) of the "indigenous" populations, beginning with spreading diseases like smallpox for which these populations had no immunity, as well as pitched warfare and deliberate slaughter.

There have been waves of "nativist" ideologies and social/political movements meant not only to justify ideologically the perpetuation of these methods against these populations, but to suppress other, unwelcome immigrants originating from Europe, Mid-East, Asia (not forgetting the importation of African slaves). From the "No Nothing" Party active in New York City and elsewhere against the Irish (1854-6); the race and related conscription riots in NYC (1863); the Fort Pillow Massacre of African-Americans (1864); Sand Creek Massacre of Cheyenne and Arapaho people (1864), and of the Lakota Sioux at Wounded Knee (1891); the Memphis and New Orleans Massacres of African-Americans (1866); the Colfax Massacre (1871); the Los Angeles Chinese Massacre (1871); the Wilmington Coup (1898); the Atlanta Race Riot (1906); the Tulsa Riots (1921); the anti-Chinese Exclusion Act (1882); the more generalized Asian Exclusion Act (1924); the Executive Order 9066 (1942) relegating the Japanese Nisei and Isei populations on the West Coast to concentration camps – and validation by the Supreme Court in Korematsu vs. United States (1944); the Zoot Suit Riots targeting blacks and Hispanics (1943); the refusal of the profoundly antisemitic State Department to issue Visas to Jews desperate to emigrate from Europe and the ovens of Nazi Germany (1932-45); the Harlem

(1964), Watts (1965), and Los Angeles Riots (1992) – all demonstrate how entrenched "nativist" White Supremacy has been throughout the history of the United States. We must not separate these narratives from those which concern the current conditions of African-Americans as well as "Native Americans," the poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, and illness in their "reservations." The Trump Administration demonstrates the extent to which the dominant populations mean to keep it that way.

neoliberalism

Ignacio López-Calvo

Emerging in the late 1970s, Neoliberalism is a theory and ideology of economic and political practices that were first experimented in 1970s Chile under General Pinochet's dictatorship. It was then adopted by Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom and Ronald Regan in the United States. Its free-market capitalism promotes deregulation and reduced governmental oversight of industries, ostensibly to encourage innovation and competition. It stimulates privatization of public services and assets supposedly to improve their efficiency; inevitably, however, treating healthcare, education, housing, and even water as commodities as opposed to human rights deepens socioeconomic and educational inequalities. Neoliberalism also focuses on the reduction of the state's role in socioeconomic affairs and – with relative success – on the prevention of inflation.

Yet behind the promise to produce global prosperity by defending private property, competition, and entrepreneurial freedom, there is an undemocratic scheme to weaken labor protections and trade unions to restore the rule of a small upper-class. The penchant for "austerity measures" and purported hatred of "big government" represents an attempt to rhetorically justify steering away from social welfare, while claiming that it will reduce debt and deficits. By contrast, it shamelessly bails out corporations and financial institutions that have gambled recklessly. The neoliberal state, therefore, deliberately conflates the concept of individual freedom (corporations are conveniently conceived of as individuals before the law) with free trade and free market, and looks the other way when structural social inequalities continue to increase. Meanwhile, it uses the police and military for surveillance and the imposition of its own

economic and sociopolitical views. If it must choose between the interests of common citizens and those of corporations and financial capital, it will not hesitate to favor the latter.

Now hegemonic, neoliberal orthodoxy informs the economic adjustment programs of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO), often at the expense of state sovereignty and democratic involvement. These financial institutions consistently coerce Global South countries in need of loans to cut social spending, thus increasing inequalities. Free market fundamentalism (the belief that markets are self-regulating and intrinsically efficient) presents market liberalization as the solution to socioeconomic and political ills. Proclaiming the need for personal accountability as an excuse (and ignoring structural conditions to blame the victims), Neoliberalism unethically focuses on the centrality of the market rather than the wellbeing of citizens, who are now conceived of as mere consumers. In this sense, David Harvey has defined neoliberalization as "a *political* project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites" (19). Indeed, under this market extremism everything can be commodified and financialized.

In conclusion, when Neoliberalism promises individual freedom and prosperity, one must wonder for whom. Market efficiency and prosperity for a small elite class are often produced at the expense of labor, and bring about increased social inequalities, undemocratic practices, and violations of human rights.

nonbinary/non-binary

Bernd Herzogenrath

There are political decisions, and then there are ideological assaults. The Trump administration thinks it can delete identities with a memo. The word *non-binary* (a lifeline, a truth, a reality for millions) is being wiped off the map by bureaucratic fiat. This isn't policy. It's erasure. It's an attack. It's a blunt-force insult masquerading as governance. It is a petty and dangerous attempt to shove millions of people back into the closet of invisibility because they make the powerful uncomfortable.

Let's be clear: to ban a word is to ban the people who use it to describe their truth. It's not just semantics. It's not just bureaucracy. It is a

statement, shouted in the language of state power and the 'order-word:' non-binary people do not, and should not, exist. That they are problems to be corrected, realities to be overwritten. This is not a misunderstanding. It is malice.

This decision, cloaked in technocratic language, is nothing short of an authoritarian move to control not just bodies but language itself. And when a government tries to control language, it's trying to control thought, to make dissent and self-definition literally unspeakable.

How dare they.

How dare a government, bloated with lies about "freedom" and "liberty," dictate which words are acceptable, which identities are valid, which human experiences get to exist on paper. The same administration that screams about free speech and "cancel culture" has no problem scrubbing an entire identity from official discourse. Hypocrisy doesn't even begin to cover it.

And what does this mean for non-binary people? For the teenager coming out for the first time, for the parent updating their child's records, for the employee filling out HR forms? It means invalidation. It means confusion. It means fear. It means the government – *their* government – is sending a message: "You don't count. You don't matter. You're not real."

But they are real. They exist in every town, every family, every profession. They've been here long before a memo tried to erase them, and they'll be here long after. No executive order, no policy change, no cowardly censorship will undo that.

On a grander scale: the binary model is a dead-end street, not only in questions of gender. The more complex our problems and issues are getting, the more overwhelmingly undercomplex the binary (rightwing) bite reflex becomes – us and them… no: us AGAINST them, MAGA against everything else… the binary regime also makes us believe that either/or is the apex of politicking: the art of the deal that only knows winners and losers … what a tr(i)ump(h)!

The non-binary disturbs that neat fascist categorization… the binary regime holds all of us hostage, in a weird Stockholm Syndrome: there's no room to move. But we need to move… urgently… hope is not binary: hope is non-binary!

O

oppression

David Pavón-Cuéllar

The word 'oppression' comes from the Latin verb *opprimere* – to oppress, to press, to suffocate. This meaning is retained in its current usage of the word to describe negative effects of power on the experiences of its subjects. The oppressed feel the weight of power as they are crushed, coerced, and limited.

The experiential aspect distinguishes oppression from other expressions of power. Domination, exploitation, and alienation, for example, are not necessarily experienced and may even require escaping from experience to operate, whereas oppression is itself an experience of the subjects who suffer it. This makes oppression the most obvious form of power, the one that has been denounced for the longest time – since ancient times.

The first form of oppression is tyranny, as described by Plato and Aristotle in Ancient Greece. For them, the tyrant is distinguished precisely by exercising power that is experienced as oppressive because it is excessive, disproportionate, arbitrary, and unjust. Tyrannical oppression continued to be a topic of reflection for modern thinkers, such as Niccolò Machiavelli, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Modern liberal political doctrines, as well as their historical embodiments in bourgeois revolutions and national independence movements from the 18th to the 20th century, are defined by their opposition to the oppressive power of absolute monarchies and other forms of tyranny. This opposition to tyrannical power would later transform, between the 20th and 21st centuries, into opposition to oppressive dictatorial, authoritarian, totalitarian, and anti-democratic regimes. State – government political oppression remains the most important form of oppressive power for liberalism and some currents of anarchism, but it is not the only form of oppressive power.

In addition to state – government oppression, there are cultural, economic, social, and sexual oppressions exercised not only by states and governments but also by individuals, groups, institutions, and structures. This is the case with religious persecution, caste systems, xenophobia, elitism, ableism, and especially racist, classist, and sexist oppression. The last three types have been the most studied, both separately and in their reciprocal connections. These connections have been considered by Triple Oppression Theory, developed by Claudia Jones and other Black American socialists, and recently by the intersectional perspective inaugurated by Kimberlé Crenshaw.

Approaches to the various forms of oppression and their connections can be either empiricist, when they focus on experiences of oppression, or historical and structural, when they go beyond these experiences and explore their origins and foundations in structures of domination and exploitation. Empiricist approaches – the dominant ones in English-speaking academia – can be libertarian when they view oppressive power as the center of the problem, identitarian when they emphasize the interests of oppressive identities, and humanist when they base oppression on prejudice or lack of education. Historical and structural approaches, generally more radical, correspond to traditions, such as Marxism, that explain classism, sexism, and racism, as well as their reciprocal connections, through the capitalist, patriarchal, and colonial structure of society. This explanation can be found in authors such as Angela Davis, Silvia Federici, and María Lugones.

oppressive

Florian Maiwald

According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, the word "oppressive" is derived from the Latin verb "opprimere," which means "to be pressed against something"[1] or, closer to its contemporary usage, "to be pressed down."[2]

However, if one wishes to attempt to grasp the full scope of the word "oppressive" it makes sense to distinguish the adjective "oppressive" from the noun "oppression." Such a distinction reveals that what is perceived as "oppressive" simultaneously leads to a redefinition of what can be understood by the concept of "oppression." To be more specific: while

the adjective "oppressive" refers to a level of subjective experience, the term "oppression" describes the objectively existing social totality, within which all power structures at a given time can be understood. As perceptions of what is "oppressive" change, so too does the nature of objectively prevailing "oppression." In his *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno exemplifies this idea in relation to the concept of freedom. It is precisely with the concept of freedom, that the discrepancy between the universal (freedom as an ideal or abstract concept) and the particular (the empirically prevailing degrees of freedom) becomes especially apparent, leading to an inevitable form of negativity experienced by the emancipatory subject.[3] The very universality of the concept of freedom continuously confronts the emancipatory subject with the extent to which the particular – the empirical realization of the idea of freedom – falls short of the universal. To put it in Adorno's words:

> The concept of freedom lags behind itself as soon as we apply it empirically. It is not what it says, then. But because it must always be also the concept of what it covers, it is to be confronted with what it covers. Such confrontation forces it to contradict itself.[4]

Building on Adorno, one can clearly illustrate why the subjective dimension of experience inherent in the term "oppressive" must be regarded as a core driver of social progress – not least because the empirically perceptible gap between the universal and the particular is itself a central element of emancipatory subjectivity. To make this line of thought more tangible: within the framework presented here, the bourgeois and proletarian subjects are to be understood as distinct manifestations of emancipatory subjectivity. While the bourgeois subject correctly identifies feudal social structures as "oppressive" in constraining their own spheres of freedom, the proletarian subject represents a further evolution of this contradictory dynamic between the universal and the particular. In short, it is no longer solely feudal structures that are perceived as "oppressive," but capitalist structures themselves.[5]

Thus, the argument reaches its logical conclusion: The dynamism of what is perceived as "oppressive" epitomizes social progress precisely because it catalyzes a transformation in the very concept of "oppression." By continually redefining the boundaries of perceived oppression, emancipatory subjectivity not only challenges existing power structures

but also reshapes the objective totality of oppression itself. In this way, the tension between subjective experience and systemic reality becomes the engine of historical advancement, driving both critique and material change.

P

Palestine

Joseph Grim Feinberg

A territory, located somewhere between Egypt, Lebanon, the Jordan River, and the Mediterranean Sea, whose existence has become questionable and whose freedom has become unspeakable. The call for a free Palestine can be cause for expulsion from an institution or deportation from a country. The suggestion that the territory once called Palestine might be more justly divided or perhaps even unified, and that equal rights might be granted to all its residents and refugees, is labeled hate speech and antisemitism. Governments throughout the Western world appear unable to imagine (or choose not to imagine) that the freedom of Palestinians could also be freedom for Jews.

In the recent past, the idea of Palestine was viewed positively by both Jews and non-Jews. It was a land appreciated by its residents and hailed from afar as a site for transformative redemption. The worldly territory of "Palestine" was overlaid with the spiritual notion of "Israel," which Jewish and Christian theology had made into a symbol of future deliverance. Palestine and Israel easily coexisted, because they did not lay claim to the same things. Palestine was a place to live. Israel was a multivalent vector of possibility.

This changed after 1948, when part of the territory of Palestine was renamed "Israel." Israel declared itself a territory for non-Palestinians, while Palestine, which had been a territory of many peoples, was made by Israel into a smaller territory for Arab non-Jews. Israel was encouraged in this move by the political forces of Europe, which propagated the idea that every nation could be free only by possessing its own state – which came with the hushed corollary that no state could belong more than one nation.

Israel the idea became a claim on land; Palestine the lived-in land became a vanishing ideal. And both became mired in the contradictions of the European nation-state model, which had succeeded in Europe

only when assimilation, ethnic cleansing, and genocide created highly homogeneous populations. For decades, many still believed that Israel and Palestine could live freely side by side. But too many Palestinians remained in Israel, and too many Israelis wanted to move into Palestine. By refusing to allow Palestine to be a nation-state, Israel refused to become a nation-state itself. It expanded, but without adopting a universalist idea that could offer a place for non-Jewish Israelis.

In the past, Jewish political actors had been frequently attracted to universalism as a response to their own exclusion from nationalist particularisms. In the shadow of Israel, it is now Palestinians who most often invoke universalism, remembering that they are excluded from the benefits of nationalism. As the failures of both Jewish and Palestinian-Arab nationalism drive growing numbers of people to reimagine Palestine as a place for all peoples – for Arabs, Jews, and global refugees – this imagining is deported and expelled. Perhaps the established powers are right to be afraid, but only insofar as they recognize that they themselves are incapable of creating a world that is up to the challenge of the present.

polarization

Leon Gabriel

Following the murder of US ultra-right-wing influencer Charlie Kirk, Ulf Poschardt, editor-in-chief of the German newspaper *Die Welt*, wrote that Kirk was possibly "the last right-wing Republican who still seriously believed that a dialogue with the radicalized left was even possible".[1] The article is infamous in many regards: the author adopts the very framing of the Trump administration that it was an attack by left-wingers or at least associated with them. Secondly, Poschardt fails to mention the countless calls for political violence by Kirk himself: from his defense of the storming of the Capitol to his demand for the death penalty for Joe Biden to his call for a "true patriot" to be found to pay the bail for the attacker on Nancy Pelosi's husband. Third, Poschardt insinuates that there is a form of rational dialog that the left (which is classified as "woke" and depraved) is not even capable of. It is worth to come back to this last point.

The article also builds up on a common argument, namely that there was a profound polarization which was only exacerbated by Kirk's murder. But "polarization" is neither the analytical tool nor the explanation for

social upheavals. On a basic level, a certain amount of polarization is a necessary component of democracies when it comes to disputes over factual issues – but discussions must be fact- and solution-oriented.[2]

In view of this, it is rather the handling of this murder that says something about the current claim about and the use of the term 'polarization'. And there is a connection between the exploitation of Kirk's murder and the murder victim's alleged "willingness to engage in dialogue" on the one hand and the Trump administration's ban on the term "polarization" on the other. As is well known, the Trump administration owes its position of power to the MAGA movement, which frames itself as the only alternative counterpoint to the "elites" (following a strategy by right-wing mastermind Murray Rothbard). This *is* precisely what polarization is about, emotionally charged with resentment and destructiveness. And it is only logical why such a strategy, once you are in power, no longer quite works and has to be transformed or hidden.

At this point, the alleged "dialogue" of Kirk and others comes into play again: this dialogue never existed, but was and is part of the strategy of presenting oneself as the only counter-model in a polarization that was created in the first place. After his death, several video clips were made public in which Kirk says: "When people stop talking, that's when you get violence. That's when civil war happens, because you start to think the other side is so evil, and they lose their humanity." What the videos don't show is the point that this "dialog" for Kirk consisted of simply being able to say and assert anything – detached from facts or any interest in a search for truth.[3] Rather, this "dialog" consisted of creating video snippets to bolster one's own position and ridicule the other side. The short quote is not a universally valid statement, but rather an insinuation: 'Look, my opponents are not capable of what I am doing, because they are prepared to use violence.'

This, however, is the real core problem of the nexus of "polarization" and "dialogue": The "woke" leftists are portrayed as irrational, willing to use violence and thus incapable of dialogue, for example because they follow "feelings" or "empathy".[4] 'Polarization' is therefore a three-step process in the repertoire of right-wing populists: first the construction of a single alternative, then the naturalization and obfuscation of this construction and finally a reversal, according to which nothing can be done in dealing with the supposedly always polarized opposite side anyway. The

fact that the brutal murder of Kirk is now being exploited like a self-fulfilling prophecy is cynical – but consistent.

politics

Saul Newman

Politics comes from the Greek word *politika*, meaning literally 'the affairs of cities'. It derives from *polis* or 'city state', the community around which common life was centered. Ancient Greece was organized into different city states governed by different kinds of regimes – aristocracies, oligarchies, democracies, even tyrannies. Politics referred to activity of collectively deliberating on the common affairs of the community – whether on the types of laws to implement, foreign policy and the decision to go to war, the levying of taxes, or the organization of religious festivals. Politics, particularly in democracies – Athens being the most famous example – was seen as an activity involving all free (male) citizens. For Aristotle, political life – the life of the polis – was the highest form of human activity, man being a political animal (*zoon politikon*).[1] Indeed, for the ancient Greeks, life was sharply distinguished between the affairs of the *polis* and those of the *oikos* (or household). Within the oikos, man attended to his private affairs and domestic pleasures; here relationships – that of the father over his children, a husband over his wife, and a master over his servants and slaves – were hierarchical. On the other hand, life within the polis – provided it was a democracy – was lived amongst equals; everyone took equal turns in governing and being governed. For the modern philosopher, Hannah Arendt, even though the polis presupposed the oikos – in the sense that the freedom to pursue political activities depended on the efficient management of the household (*oikonomia*) – political life was considered a far superior form of existence. To engage in politics was to appear, as an equal amongst equals, in bright daylight of public affairs. Domestic life, by contrast, was life lived in the shadows. It was this distinction, moreover, that had been lost in modern capitalist societies, where *homo laborans* devotes himself to work, economic survival and meaningless consumption, and in which the *vita activa* (the active life of politics) was no longer regarded as a virtue.[2] In a similar vein, Benjamin Constant in the nineteenth century, distinguished between the 'liberty of the ancients' and the 'liberty of the moderns'. The

former – what we can call republicanism – found freedom in direct participation in the collective affairs of the community. The latter – what we can call liberalism – found freedom in the retreat into private life and individualism.[3]

Of course, there are many ways of thinking about politics and its purpose: solving collective problems; managing disagreements peacefully; expressing the will of the people; protecting the rights of individuals, groups and minorities; educating the citizenry; or promoting social justice and the 'good life'. But I wonder whether the malaise in which politics finds itself in today – where it lurches between apathy and indifference (consumerism) to extreme polarization and antagonism (identity politics) – has something to do with the eclipse of the idea of a genuinely political life as a life lived in common.

pollution

Morten Tønnessen.

Pollution can be defined as the introduction of substances or energy into the environment which endangers human health or harms organisms or ecosystems. It is common to refer e.g. to water pollution, air pollution, soil pollution, and solid waste pollution. In these cases, the pollution typically concerns the relocation of material substances which end up being 'out of place'. Relatedly, a 'pollutant' can be understood as a contaminant that in a certain concentration or amount has adverse effects on the physical, chemical or biological properties of the environment. Radioactive pollution stands out in that it involves a harmful form of radiation. Moreover, reference is also frequently made to sound pollution, light pollution, and thermal pollution, with the latter resulting from discharge of heated water from industrial processes. In these cases, too, human activities disturb or endanger organisms in natural environments. We tend to think of pollution as something we can see and smell, but this is not always the case. For instance, carbon dioxide (CO2), which is a pollutant in the context of anthropogenic climate change since it amplifies the natural greenhouse effect, is colorless, and its sharp and acidic odor is only noticeable in high concentrations (at which point the gas becomes toxic for humans and several other animals). Hydrogen gas, which is often claimed to be an environmentally friendly energy carrier, is also colorless,

and moreover odorless. It is often suggested that the burning of hydrogen only results in water vapor, but this is not accurate, as the combustion of hydrogen gas also results in emission of nitrogen oxides (NOx), a major air pollutant. In addition, leakage of hydrogen into the atmosphere has been found to amplify climate change by increasing the concentrations of methane and ozone. As mentioned initially, what acts as a pollutant must be understood in light of concentrations or amounts of contaminants. At too high concentrations, even inhaling oxygen can result in poisoning, and drinking excessive amounts of water can result in water intoxication. The decisive point is staying with appropriate amounts. This holds for human health as well as for environmental sustainability. Pollution is one of those real-world phenomena which do not go away simply because we stop talking about them or close our eyes. In the context of climate change, and more specifically corporate fantasies about Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), attempts have been made to construe 'clean coal' as something real. However, despite concerted industry efforts, no such thing has materialized in reality. Coal remains polluting. Recently, President Donald J. Trump (USA) has adopted the phrase 'clean coal' on a more general basis, without bothering to justify the characterization of coal as clean. In the executive order 'Reinvigorating America's beautiful clean coal industry and amending executive order 14241', issued April 8th, 2025,[1] neither CCS nor climate change is mentioned. That coal is clean is simply declared. The executive order further falsely designates coal as a mineral. Ah, if only it was that easy to change the world.

populism

David Livingstone

Who you calling a populist?

I find myself pontificating of late, when discussing the current state of politics in the world, something along these lines: "I no longer refer to politicians like Trump (the list is long) and his ilk as Conservatives, but as populists". I then point out the irony that Reagan and Bush Sr. and Jr., who I despised in the past, now seem quite tolerable in comparison with the current scoundrels in charge.

I then usually retreat back into my shell, like a shrinking violet, and mutter something along the lines of Tony Soprano, “What are you going to do?”.

The more I looked into the word, however, the more uncertain I became about its usage. The OED entry for ‘populist’ as a noun mentions four meanings, two of which refer to political parties and one to a French literary circle. The fourth is the relevant one in this case: “A person who seeks to represent or appeal to the interests of ordinary people.” The first attested to usage only dates back to the year 1961.

The use of ‘populist’ as an adjective seems to be more frequent and is defined as follows: “Intended to appeal to or represent the interests of ordinary people”. The examples provided are not only more frequent, but closer to the more or less established use of the word at present, the popularity of which is attested to by the fact that the Cambridge Dictionary selected ‘populism’ as its word of the year in 2017.

Trump is not an isolated phenomenon, of course, as he shares approaches and rhetoric with a number of authoritarian leaders throughout the world. This is also not at all a completely new manifestation as it shares much of the rhetoric of Fascism. The current-day populists all share a tendency, of varying degrees, to blur the line between traditional notions of right and left. They all use the tried and tested strategy of scapegoating immigrants and foreigners as the reason why the country in question is under threat. They all create distrust of traditional media outlets and consequently assume control over newspapers and television in order to bolster their support and narrative.

While writing this I began to wonder what was even the point of writing this? It’s not like Trump is going to take any notice, let alone read this. He actually seems to feed off ridicule. I admit to having enjoyed the various talk show hosts in the USA mocking Trump on a nightly basis during the months prior to the election. But what was the result? His victory, even amazingly winning the ‘popular’ vote.

Trump may not be fond of the word ‘populist’, but he sure does have an interest in being ‘popular’. It might therefore make more sense to refer to Trump as a ‘popularist’, given his childish obsession with popularity, crowd size, constant boasting and thin-skinned need for attention.

prejudice

Masayuki Iwase

As a Japan-born person living in the Pacific Northwest of Canada, I often feel vulnerable to both visible and invisible forms of racial and linguistic prejudice. I have empathy for those who experience prejudice based on skin color, language, gender identity, different forms of knowledge, and other (un)discernible characteristics (e.g., neurodivergence).

On my native Japanese soil, I am constructed as a member of the majority by virtue of my Japanese nationality, fluency in the Japanese language, and mastery of culturally distinct etiquettes, and diets. I supposedly benefit from the marginalization that works to the disadvantage of others in Japan. In such liminal oscillation between the two countries, I constantly reflect on my feelings, thoughts, views, opinions, beliefs, and values, question and challenge marginalization, and embrace the diversity and inclusion of differences.

Derived from the Latin praeiudicium – combining prae- ("before") with iudicium ("judgment") – the word prejudice literally means prior judgment. It is thus characterized as a learned pre-judgment toward or against others. It can also be understood synonymously with stereotyping, meaning the imposition of an unfairly fixed and oversimplified image upon the other. According to Hall (1997), stereotyping refers to representational practices that essentialize, reduce, naturalize, and normalize the other – ultimately excluding them through binary oppositions within a Foucauldian discursive regime of truth.

At issue here is what precedes the judgment that underlies prejudice. Attending to this precondition entails an ontological inquiry into what enables their production and manifestation and how to forestall what they give rise to in subsequent, evinced acts, namely, discrimination.

The prejudice I experience as a minority in a foreign land and as a majority in my native country has been reinforced and perpetuated through family, education, government, and media. These sociopolitical institutions – of which we are all part – historically construct, circulate, and shape our thinking and behavior in accordance with the regime's norms (e.g., patriarchy, heteronormativity, white supremacy, Western centrism, nationalism, neurotypicality). If fake news, misinformation, and disinformation continue to exploit people's minds unchecked in the post-truth

era, especially amid the rapid rise of generative AI, they will further reinforce such dangerous norms and pose a serious threat to society.

Prejudice can be theorized in light of Deleuze's (1990, 1994) account of "good sense" and "common sense," which together constitute doxa or common belief. The latter domesticates difference by reducing every object of thought to a fixed identity recognizable within a sensory-motor harmony of human faculties. Good sense provides the direction through which domestication, reproduction, and homogeneous recognition are distributed and maintained, by rendering the present moment discernible within linear, causal, and foreseeable spatiotemporalities.

What precedes the judgment that underlies prejudice is arguably the recurrently reproduced habitual memory governed as doxa, that is, the learned memory of the past-present-future arranged linearly within the discursive regime. By short-circuiting such sensory-motor habitual memories and disrupting this linear arrangement through the production of new virtual temporal connections, we might potentially intervene in prejudice, and, more importantly, in discrimination as their manifest form – even if only temporarily.

privilege/privileges

Yogi Hendlin

The irony of removing the word privilege is that only those with privilege can remove words. It is a self-eating tautology (but not in a productive ouroboros sort of way). To make it *verboten* to talk about inequality proves inequality. Hence, it is a performative contradiction. You can't actually have superiority unless an inferior is posited. To deny that anyone in our current society has excess privilege, fails the laugh test. Such shenanigans of course, do hinder actual research. How do you submit an NIH grant on the social determinants of health without talking about soft or hard pollution (to make Michel Serres's distinction in *Le Mal Prop*)? Discussing the biggest impediments to health, social cohesion, or sustainable ways of organizing our material and recognitional milieu, let alone broaching corruption, or for whom tariffs actually impact the most (a sort of inverse of John Rawls' political philosophy), become impossible, when elephants in the room become unmentionable. Anthropologically, how we human societies deal with privilege is crucial and unescapable.

The question is, what approach will we take: one that solves the equation or one the deliberate prolongs and exacerbates suffering for all (even and especially those who believe that they are 'winning' by hoarding all the chips)? Ruth Wilson Gilmore calculates that "capitalism requires inequality and racism enshrines it." To not even be able to mention how inequality is the basis of all theft, all political because economic impropriety, is to gag any sense-making or diagnosis of the disease leading to and perpetuating our current metacrisis. As Bertold Brecht wrote, "What is robbing a bank compared with founding a bank?"

A friend once told me that good liberals aim to control people's thoughts with political correctness, while fascists aim to control people's bodies. But this regime aims to control both. The privilege of the *Survival of the Richest* as Douglass Rushkoff calls it, the get-out-of-jail free card that Peter Theil and the other TechnoFeudalists and TESCREALists believe they will be able to play in order to buffer themselves from the futures they are foisting on their fellow earthlings, is the half-baked idea that there will ever exist privilege enough to opt-out of the shared suffering which will be common to all of us as we further down the meta-crisis lobotomy. The genocides and ecocides which reduce our health and freedom for generations to come, is imagined to not touch those who can buffer themselves thoroughly enough with money and power, personal commodity bubbles and blackmail that somehow won't burst. Yet, no matter the imagined stability of such levies, one day soon they will break, and the very architecture that privilege built to the exclusion of all other forms of life on earth, will result in the demise of those zealots that demanded it. Privilege, unable to be assayed or condemned, hoists itself on its own petard. The hostile attribution bias of those with privilege evades others trying to delouse their privilege of blind spots, ends up ascribing endless dominance-substitution fallacies against those constructively pointing out undue, unearned privilege, rather than acknowledging the false equivalency of pathogenic ideologies based on exclusion and scarcity power politics with those who just want to live according to the arts of not being governed.

pro-abortion

Orit Halpern

June 24, 2022 the Supreme Court of the United States overturned three decades of federal protection for the right to an abortion. For many observers, the decision signaled a critical elimination of constitutional right to privacy, and the protections of the 13th and 14th Amendments, for women (and others). These two amendments were central to the abolition of slavery and are critical under American law for legally protecting individuals' rights to their own bodies and decisions.

It is not incidental that the abolition of slavery and the recognition of those gendered female (but also as result of the decision those gendered queer or trans) as having sovereign rights over their bodies and decisions are linked. Sex and race have never been separable, and both are fundamentally linked to the act of reproduction. For this reason, racism has always been linked with neo-Malthusian dictums supporting the reproduction of some groups of people and denying the validity of other lives; ergo the focus on immigration, crime, and sexual policing.

For many commentators and analysts, the Supreme Court decision is also part of a broader movement on the radical right to question any law defending either gender or race. The Supreme Court Judge Clarance Thomas wrote a concurring decision that while peripheral to other judges and in negation to the narrow discussion only of abortion, openly declared that laws defending rights to privacy in the bedroom, decriminalizing homosexuality, and others would all be implicated in this decision. It is perhaps no surprise that the attack on birthright citizenship, also linked to the emancipation of Black slaves, is now being launched. These legal actions suggest a clear effort to deny and destroy the system of law in place at least since the mid-20th century, and replace it with a white authoritarian order that subscribes to protocols (perhaps those of AI and computers) but not to protections of civil rights.

This decision, therefore, cannot be understood in isolation. The Dobbs decision is part of a decades long battle by Republicans to erode civil rights in the United States and to redefine the terms of freedom, choice, and democracy in a manner that denies the validity and political representation of racialized subjects, queers, people with differential capacities, and immigrants (among many others). The apex of this movement

has been the decades long inability to even say one is pro-abortion, and only insist on 'choice', the relegation of a right over one's sovereignty to the seeming banality of a consumer decision. Civil Rights have become tax breaks.

It is somewhat surprising how little attention or care the left (if it exists) or Democrats have paid to this topic. Similarly, trans right have been marginalized as some sort of concern of a radical small group, rather than the center piece to an argument legitimating the extermination of an entire class of people. Or perhaps it demonstrates that contemporary politics has essentially agreed on a new order centered on reactionary ideologies. Economy people argue is why people vote. But nothing could be further from the truth (or perhaps closer). There are economies of sex and race too. People vote on affect, morality, religion, sex and violence too. Maybe even more so.

Sex and sexuality have largely been treated as sideline issues for excessively 'woke' publics, rather than central topics that are at the core of the reactionary platform and the very infrastructure for their electoral success. The reactionary right posits a world in apocalyptic crisis – moral, economic, and political – that is to be survived and ultimately abandoned by an economically and eugenically select few who would protect "the light of consciousness" (Musk, 2020) and presumably rule over the rest (or the select entitled to reproduce). This vision's perhaps first and most important success came over sexual repression and the denigration of gendered rights to freedom, and humanity. The first move in what is now a clear-cut pattern to destroy the foundations of liberal democracy and build an authoritarian society grounded in eugenic survivalism, elitism, and ultimately the relegation of many if not to slavery to something akin to the fate of illegal immigrants in America who are forced to labor with no hope of being entitled to the rights of citizen. Which is another way of never being entitled to treated like a human before the law.

The only response must be not to look away. And to struggle to create an alternative narrative, one that is pro-abortion.

pronoun/pronouns

Martin Charvát & Michaela Fikejzová

Alice requests funding from the committee to support Alice's groundbreaking project on sustainable stapler innovation. Alice assures the committee that Alice will allocate Alice's budget responsibly, and Alice emphasizes Alice's past record of fiscal prudence. The committee, impressed by Alice's dedication, asks Alice how Alice plans to disseminate Alice's results, to which Alice replies that Alice will publish Alice's findings in Alice's favorite journal, *Journal of Sustainable Office Supplies*.

Although academic texts can sound somewhat stilted, this anecdote is likely to raise doubts about the authors' ability to construct coherent sentences, even among readers who are accustomed to reading academic texts. Perhaps it could also be a poorly generated AI text that the authors did not want to rewrite. However, the reason is different – the above paragraph does not contain any pronouns. Although there are languages that do not have pronouns or omit or circumvent their use in certain ways, removing pronouns from languages that have them in their basic lexicon is difficult and can easily sound very absurd. The reason for this is simple – pronouns function as placeholders for other expressions, typically as abbreviations for persons or objects, especially when they are used repeatedly within several sentences, as in the case of Alice, where after the first mention of her name, only personal or possessive pronouns could follow. Pronouns, which in the philosophy of language fall under the term indexicals, are contextually dependent, i.e., they depend on the discourse in which they are used and the linguistic, situational, historical, social, or cultural context to which they are linked (see e.g. Recanati 2012; Perry 2017; Evans 1980). If not all speakers are familiar with the context, communication confusion or additional questions may arise.

"He told me to do it that way?" "Who?" "Well, the one over there." "I have no idea who you're talking about."

Just as it is quite absurd to speak English without pronouns, it is also absurd to use pronouns without sufficiently specifying who or what they refer to, for example, by using a deictic gesture, i.e., pointing with your hand or finger at the person or object in question. There are also a number of languages, such as French and Czech, where different pronouns are associated with varying degrees of politeness and respect, leading

to further levels of metalinguistic negotiation about the appropriate pronoun to use. In other words, although it may seem that the increasingly common practice of using preferred pronouns in email signatures or at the beginning of conversations with new people is completely innovative and "unnecessary," in many languages, such negotiations have been taking place for many years. After all, if you have ever communicated in a language with someone with whom you were initially in very formal contact and used the French "vous" at first, and then after some time switched to the less formal and friendlier "tu," you surely know that few things teach you to avoid pronouns as much as the first conversation in which you have to use "tu."

protest

Oscar Guardiola-Rivera

People say protest makes you see the city for the first time. But protesting is more than seeing. You become what you see, pass into the image. Isn't this what happened to William Burroughs when he returned from South America? He was staying with Allen Ginsberg on NYC's East Seven Street. Looking out the window onto street gatherings, "Burroughs suddenly saw those amazing 'composite cities' he had seen when taking yagé".[1] That vision, like all totalizing experiences, is corporeal as much as otherworldly. It's "also the cut-up method," which regarding the Composite City, "is 'where the unknown past and the emergent future meet in a vibrating… hum'…. or where 'the true picture of the past flits by'."[2]

These images are truthful but temporal and fragile. They help us hold out hope for justice, "caused by the true picture of the past that 'can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and… never seen again.' It is the body which will anchor the fleeting image" so that the temporary act -like a protest- becomes indelible. This sort of corporeal/performance art technique belongs to "the concept of the image-body sphere as what was missing but necessary" for protest and revolutionary politics.[3]

It's related to the experience of re-claiming times and streets, gardens and squares – as one does occupying, locking up arms, shouting, or simply walking through the city- to make visible what was once absent. A concept reconfigured when "geared to [the so-called] colportage, meaning a

synthesis of filmic montage, walking the city and getting lost in it… with a loopy perception thanks to hashish, mescaline and opium. Colportage turns out to be the same operating principle of the Composite City", similar to what Burroughs experienced when he looked out the window "[and]… connected… New York with the forests of Colombia";[4] the flip side of what we experienced and were told in fieldwork by #protestwordsmiths like Don Misael as the city of dancing spirits, the vengeful dead and disappeared.[5]

The indigenous Kuna of the Caribbean would draw you a city colportage. They call it Kalu. You might call it "surreal" but compresses and draws out an "old law" from a plethora of fantastic perceptions overwhelming the senses. A law we might learn something from, given our own hyper-aesthetic, social-media-enhanced existence. Together with locking arms, walking, dancing, and singing chants, these images resonate with those produced by protest/counter-investigative outfits focusing on today's hyper-aesthetic society like Plano Negativo (Colombia) or Forensic Architecture (UK). You can enter these images to investigate, solve and dissolve the state terror and violence that's all around us nowadays. If "A protest is not… a sacrifice made for some alternative" vision of a just future, but "an inconsequential redemption of the present", this is how we learn "to live time and again with the adjective inconsequential."[6]

R

race

Obed Frausto

Race does not exist. It is a socially constructed category, meaning that social and historical contexts shape the concept of race.[1] It can be understood on various levels: biological, social, historical, and political. Regarding the biological aspect, science has largely refrained from elaborating due to the historical errors of nineteenth-century racial classifications, which were rooted in racism and white supremacy and justified by flawed scientific theories such as phrenology that sustains that the size and form of human skulls explain the level of intelligence of different races.[2] The only acceptable perspective offered by the natural sciences is genetic, showing that races are comprised of varying skin pigmentation resulting from the synthesis of vitamin D in the skin, aided by melanin, and influenced by sun exposure. More melanin helps prevent illnesses, while less melanin facilitates the absorption of vitamin D in areas with limited sunlight.[3] Socially and historically, race is expressed through a political and economic organization that can be traced back to European expansion into other regions and continents during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. With conquest and colonization, a social structure based on skin color emerged, as Europeans, characterized by lighter skin, controlled and dominated regions in other continents populated by individuals with darker skin tones. From this social structure, racial capitalism emerged.[4] One of the most important examples is the notion of slave, which etymologically derives from the word *Slavs*, referring to European or Russian white people who were once enslaved in the earlier Middle Ages.[5] The racial connection to slavery and blackness developed alongside the Atlantic trade routes in the sixteenth century. Some arguments suggest that capitalism, which may have emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, led to the elimination of racial classification and an emphasis on social class.[6] However, others argue that racial issues still operate within the logic of capitalism. This is why it undergoes the

processes of racialization, racial biases, and racial discrimination in our contemporary society.[7] Another dimension in which race can be observed is the political one. The political concept of race acknowledges that addressing social inequalities and structural racism necessitates politicizing the issue. To balance and reduce the gap in racial disparities, the realm of politics must recognize that racial justice needs to be prioritized in the public sphere, advocating more openly for better redistribution and even racial reparations.[8] However, one of the dangers of addressing racial issues in the political dimension is that white people may feel threatened by it, potentially prompting them to respond with more policies favoring their interests. This phenomenon is known as white supremacy, which we are witnessing in the USA today under the administration of Donald Trump.[9] Although some suggest a transracial society where race is erased, I believe the best way to address this is to recognize the ongoing suffering caused by injustice against marginalized groups. To effectively combat racism, it is more effective to adopt an anti-racist mindset.[10]

racial diversity

Kuti Ezebiro

Donald Idi Trump Amin:
A Prismatic View of a Trans-racial Doppelgänger

Tell it not under the White Dome
Nor on the haunted streets of cyberdom
Strive not for truth let alone objective candor
For brilliant words do not hold a spark of glamour
Not with the self-bested narcissistic speech bandit
Tell it not before men of incandescent intellect
Nor women of luminous mental rigorousity
Pray, tell and quench the thirst of this enquiry
How did this self-besotted clown snatch the crown
How did he and his wayfarers the voice of reason drown
Put it not past him that six months to the end of his tenure
It would be far from farfetched that this conflict entrepreneur
Might start a dubious war in order to rivet his feet
To the floor of the Oval Stage in a sly twist

Of the Constitution that forbids elections while the State is at War
For equity and racial inclusion in the mind of the blond incubus
Is the exclusion of all non-white races behind the ICE Wall
Thus, going by the psychoanalysis of his speech banditry
A Freudian precipitate of his id as Idi Amin's moral doppelganger
It is telling that in the house of exiled Christ set high on Calvinist opioids
It shall be told neither on screens nor in the white nationalist tabloids
That time was in Africa when a burly black Donald Trump ruled Uganda
When international prejudice profiled king-size mediocrity as negroid
But Mediocrity, a decrepit submental, would not be confined to Uganda
Hence it sought racial diversification by summoning its doppelganger
So that a white blond Idi-Amin rose and became the king of America
Thus enter Jekyll and Hyde into the echo chambers of silly buzz words
Chanting the mantra of isms that fail to patch up expansive schisms
Ricochets of hollow words bouncing off the concave walls of tired ears
Racial diversity, exclusionism, seclusionism and white nationalism
Contradictions that pitch-forked Rationality to the flaming fools' stake
Cavorting to hateful soundbites like the death-grip of a venomous snake
Now that reason stands on its head and good conscience fed to dogs
Let's rationalize bombing for peace and preserving hymens through rape
Let's diversify White supremacist inbreeding on the ICE side of the Wall
Ponder a world bemused and vexed by a tale of two village idiots
An Ebony and Ivory narrative of a queer persona and its doppelgänger
Whose con on history and the ill-presence of a dubious present
Is a stream of falsities in which the truth and the lie flow in one course
But however hard the blond incubus tries to renegotiate tapes and prints
Those digital ghosts so-called soft copies are cast in memory steel
They preserve his inglorious speech banditry howbeit painfully hilarious
Hence, we laugh because we do not want to succumb to the urge to cry
But in this tragic parody, the dry mirth in our guffaws do not vitiate
The pain of a sickening and frightened amusement.

racial identity

Christian Lammert

To ban the term "racial identity" is to try to erase the mirror in which America sees itself. Racial identity is not just an academic concept; it's the

lived reality of millions. It's the way a Black child learns to navigate the world, the pride in a grandmother's stories, the ache of being "othered," the joy of finding community. When the Trump Administration sought to ban words like "racial identity" from federal documents, it wasn't just an act of bureaucratic tidying-it was a deliberate attempt to make conversations about race, power, and justice impossible.

Racial identity is how we understand who we are in relation to the world and how the world understands us. It's shaped by history, by family, by the neighborhoods we grow up in, by the stories we're told and the ones we tell ourselves. It's not just about skin color or ancestry; it's about culture, belonging, exclusion, and resistance. For many, claiming a racial identity is an act of survival and pride, a way to push back against a society that has too often tried to define us by stereotypes, by statistics, or by silence.

The push to ban "racial identity" from government language is part of a larger effort to pretend that if we don't talk about race, racism will disappear. But silence is not neutrality. When we refuse to name racial identity, we refuse to see the ways race shapes opportunity, justice, and belonging in America. We ignore the health disparities that mean Black women are more likely to die in childbirth, the wealth gap that leaves Indigenous families with a fraction of the resources of their white neighbors, the violence that targets Asian Americans, the policing that criminalizes Black and brown bodies. To erase the language is to erase the evidence.

But language is also a tool of resistance. Naming "racial identity" is a way of refusing erasure. It's how we build coalitions, how we find solidarity, how we demand change. It's how we teach our children to be proud of who they are, and how we hold systems accountable for the ways they fail us. When the government tells us not to say "racial identity," it is telling us not to see, not to question, not to fight back.

The *CONTRADICTionary* is a collective refusal of that silence. By insisting on these banned words, we insist on our right to exist, to resist, to reimagine what America could be. We write these entries not just as scholars or activists, but as people whose lives are shaped by the realities these words describe. We know that banning a word does not ban the truth it names.

Racial identity matters because people matter. Our stories, our struggles, our dreams-they cannot be legislated out of existence. We will keep

saying the words, telling the stories, and fighting for a future where everyone's identity is seen and valued.

racial inequality

Eduardo Alberto León

Racial inequality refers to the systemic disparities in access to resources, opportunities, and power based on race. Embedded in historical practices such as slavery, segregation, and colonial exploitation, it persists in modern societies through institutional structures and policies. This essay explores the term's meanings and its critical role in contemporary political struggles, emphasizing its relevance in challenging dominant discourses and fostering emancipatory possibilities.

Racial inequality is not merely a collection of individual disparities but a structural phenomenon. Bonilla-Silva (2017) describes how "color-blind racism" perpetuates inequalities by framing them as outcomes of personal or cultural shortcomings rather than systemic issues. For example, in the United States, Black Americans face a median household income of $48,700 compared to $71,300 for White Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). This gap reflects historical policies like redlining, which limited Black families' access to housing and wealth-building opportunities. Such disparities underscore how racial inequality is woven into economic and social systems, often obscured by neoliberal narratives of meritocracy.

In political discourse, racial inequality is contested terrain. Dominant narratives may downplay its systemic nature, while movements like Black Lives Matter reframe it as a demand for structural change. Omi and Winant (2014) argue that race and its inequalities are products of "racial formation," where social and political struggles shape their meanings. The term thus functions as both an analytical lens and a mobilizing force, exposing power imbalances and galvanizing resistance against injustice.

Recent U.S. efforts to suppress discussions of systemic racism, as seen in restrictions on "woke" terminology, highlight language as a tool of domination. Alexander (2010) illustrates how policies like mass incarceration disproportionately harm racial minorities, perpetuating inequality under the guise of neutrality. The *CONTRADICTionary* project resists such erasure by reclaiming terms like racial inequality, inviting critical engagement to expand political horizons.

Racial inequality, as a concept, bridges past injustices and present struggles. Its significance lies in its ability to reveal systemic inequities and inspire transformative action, challenging neoliberal constraints on language and imagination.

racial justice

Andreas Horchler

He relentlessly repeated the words, over and over and over again: “Don´t give up, don´t give in. Keep your eyes on the prize!”

The man crossed the Edmund Pettus bridge at least three times. Once in 1965 in peaceful protest, almost beaten to death be Alabama State Troopers, once commemorating the event fifty years later at the side of President Barack Obama, once in a casket in 2020, when America mourned the passing of the SNCC-president, youngest and maybe most fiery speaker at the March on Washington in August 1963, Civil Rights icon and Congressman John Lewis. When I had the honor to meet Lewis in Washington, DC in 2016, a year after Michael Brown was shot in Ferguson, Missouri, at the dawn of Black Lives Matter, I was immediately struck by his integrity, his faith, his conviction. Asked if his nonviolent protest was worth the beatings, incarceration, the mobbing and discrimination against him, the never-ending racial injustice, he answered with maybe his most famous phrase: “Sometimes, we need to get into good trouble, necessary trouble.”

Well, yes, we´re obviously in a lot of necessarily and hopefully good trouble now.

And we have a problem: John Lewis is gone.

Yes, there have been, there still are protests against Donald Trump´s policies. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders draw massive crowds wherever they show up with their Fighting the Oligarchy-tour. As in the 1960s, grassroots activists black and white, youth-led organizations, and legacy civil rights groups join hands to organize.

But the core, the heart of the protest is yet to be found in order to become a movement.

One: The second Trump administration started a blizzard of executive orders on day one after taking office, leaving friend and foe dizzy from

the sheer amount of measures taken. Firing government employees, immigration enforcement, restrictions on voting acts, rolling back diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) did in some cases not directly target African Americans, but hit communities of color disproportionately. In a nutshell: Trump threatens – everybody who is not 100% MAGA, Ivy League, Justices, the FED, foreign leaders. In April 2025, GOP-Senator Lisa Murkowski said the fear of Trump´s retaliation is real. "We are all afraid!" In that sense, racial justice becomes one of several grave matters, and activism becomes intersectional, not always exclusively focused on race but also on gender, sexuality, immigration status, and class.

Two: The federal government increasingly frames demonstrators as lawless and unpatriotic. Legal actions, surveillance, and targeted crackdowns on protesters intensify, while a judiciary, that, due to Trump's appointments, has grown more conservative, makes it even harder for civil rights advocates to achieve policy victories at the courts. Many cases have been dismissed.

Three: A lack of both leadership and organizational power invalidates current efforts. There is no Rosa Parks, not Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King jr., no John Lewis in sight, who were able to forget about their grievances on the foundation of non-violent protest and a shared spiritual conviction. Protest today is, for the most part, decentralized, organized in social media, often leaderless.

There is no question: "Good trouble, necessary trouble" will stick around, maybe more spontaneous, maybe more resilient, because action is less attached to names. For now, the fight for racial justice appears robust, but embattled. The motto of the summit for Civil Rights 2025 in New Jersey: "Reclaiming populism – We are the one´s we´ve been waiting for"

repetition

Jun Fujita Hirose

In the mid-1950s, Gilles Deleuze wrote a text titled "Causes and Reasons of Desert Islands" for *Nouveau Fémina*, a short-lived French women's magazine. In that text, which ended up remaining unpublished then (for reasons we ignore), the young philosopher argues: "[T]he formation of the world has [...] two stages, birth and re-birth [...]. It is not enough that everything

begins; everything must be repeated, once the cycle of possible combinations has come to completion. [...] In the ideal of beginning again, there is something that precedes the beginning itself, that takes it up to deepen it and to push it back in time." These lines surprise us, not only because the future author of *Difference and Repetition* (1968) already sets out his unique conception of "repetition" in them, but also because, written a few years before the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, they predict with accuracy that the revolutionary struggles which take place worldwide through the twentieth century under the impact of the Russian Revolution of 1917 will repeat themselves in the twenty-first century.

Deleuze concludes his text by stating that "the beginning started from God and from a couple, but not the beginning again, which starts from an egg; mythological maternity is often a parthenogenesis," as if he called on his expected female readers to take on the leading roles in the coming re-birth of the revolutionary twentieth century. But isn't it exactly such woman-led "beginning again" that we're witnessing in most of the contemporary revolutionary masse struggles, especially in the global South?

Since the mid-2010s, the indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in Latin America have been relaunching their decolonial struggles and fighting for defending their territories against neo-extractivism; they're doing so, no longer in the last century's male-dominated manner, but by clearly placing women at their vanguard and by sharing among them a common slogan: "There can be no decolonialization without depatriarchalization." As for the Kurdish people, they adopted a new slogan in the mid-2000s to renew their national liberation struggle waged since 1978: "*Jin, Jiyan, Aazadî* [Woman, Life, Freedom]." And it's by embracing this very slogan of the Kurdish minority that the Iranian people reactivated in September 2022 their revolutionary process of 1979, which had been brutally interrupted and repressively suspended for forty years by the Islamic regime. In October 2019, the Chilean people also began reviving their revolutionary process, interrupted on September 11, 1973, and suspended for fifty years by the US-backed civic-military dictatorship and under the subsequent so-called "democratic transition"; they elected a Mapuche woman to the chair of their constituent assembly. The Palestinian struggle against the Israeli state-driven settler colonialism can also no longer sideline the Palestinian women who claim: "There is no free homeland without free women." Even in the United States, it's by women and queer

people that the twentieth-century's civil rights movement was revitalized in 2013 with a new slogan: "Black Lives Matter."

This is how our century repeats the revolutionary twentieth century "to deepen it and to push it back in time."

respect

Silvia Kargodorian

Respect stands today as a floating signifier in socio-political space, whose apparent semantic transparency conceals a profound constitutive contradiction. In the age of digital and late hypercapitalism, respect has undergone a paradoxical metamorphosis that deserves to be deconstructed.

From a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective, contemporary respect operates as a semblance that veils the emptiness inherent in intersubjective relations. What Žižek would call a 'false universality': everyone demands respect while evacuating its fundamental ethical dimension.

Respect has become a signifier-amo which, emptied of content, serves both to demand recognition and to silence the other.

The invocation of respect in today's political discourse often functions as what Rancière would call a policing device, which, under the guise of democratic cordiality, closes off precisely the properly political dimension of dissent. *'Respect me'* is often tantamount to "do not question my position of jouissance", thus revealing a defensive instrumentalization.

This tension manifests itself in what we could call the 'paradox of digital respect': while social networks promote policies of respect and against hate speech, they simultaneously constitute spaces where the spectacularization of contempt generates symbolic and economic capital. The algorithm rewards the controlled transgression of respect, turning indignation into a commodity.

Following Butler, contemporary respect is caught in a contradictory performativity: it demands universal recognition while reproducing differential frames of the respectable.

Certain bodies and subjectivities remain outside the perimeter of what is worthy of respect, even when hegemonic discourse proclaims their universality.

Foucault would allow us to see in contemporary politics of respect a biopolitical device that, under the guise of protecting dignity, enables

new forms of surveillance and normalization. Institutionalized respect thus becomes a technology of subjective control.

We elaborate a conceptual scaffolding for the terms 'respect-encounter' (in the Badiouan sense) as a disruption of this logic. True political respect would not consist in the liberal tolerance that keeps the other at a safe distance, but in the radical encounter with otherness that destabilizes our own identity coordinates.

Authentic respect would then imply not the reassuring recognition of the equal, but the ethical openness to what Lévinas would call 'the face of the other' as irreducible infinitude. A respect that, far from pacifying the social field, keeps it open to its own constitutive contingency.

In conclusion, rethinking respect from this contradictory perspective implies recovering its disruptive potential: not as a code of civility that lubricates social relations, but as an ethical disposition that assumes the impossibility of definitively closing antagonisms. A respect that, by crossing its own contradiction, becomes an emancipatory praxis capable of subverting the normative regimes that determine who ultimately deserve to be respected.

revolution

Am Johal

So what is revolution today, but the radical potential of a political impulse that refuses to be absorbed into the bloody dead-ends and the fatigued horizons of present day political foreclosure. The decayed remnants of neo-liberalism have come apart at the seams and what remains is a naked world of impunity at stake. The great machine is no longer humming; it stutters, it forgets its lines, its ecological limit points. Its zombie logic falters. The scaffolding of the pantomime of democracy, once glinting with performative gravity, now creaks and leans into parody. The stage collapses, and from the rubble – smoke, song, trembling bodies – the joy and possibility of something of the real arises.

The idea of insurrection reappears with radical potency. Revolution upends the exhaustion of a political sequence onto a new terrain of possibility.

Revolution is a trembling on the skin of the world – a latent, fugitive pulse – kindling for the fire to come. It is the impossible whisper in the

ruins, the breath of something that cannot be summoned on demand. It is a cry to once and for all overcome the sapping weariness of a world stuck in a catatonic trance. It is a method to break time.

The aggrieved body, humiliated and made redundant by the contemporary social technologies, reignites its torsion point where it must at some point recoil with rage and force. In a time when even the subconscious is colonized and surveillance seeps and penetrates into all aspects of everyday life, the refusal of the world is a blunt and rational malady.

Revolution is not only the act of seizing power, it is the scattering of seeds to overcome the impossible. It is the refusal of the world as it is – it chooses the life drive over the death drive.

A quivering site of memory and mischief, revolution appears as a kind of sacred glitch that returns life into something worth living. Not a singular event. Not a bloodied flag on a balcony. But a belief in an idea that gives life its orientation to fight for a proper freedom for all.

Revolution is ultimately the desire to initiate a new sequence where political agency regains the horizon of possibilities by any means necessary. It is the suspicion that there might be more to say, even when language has run dry. It is the slow and sacred work of masking up in disguise in solidarity to become unrecognizable to the projects of empire that have taken off their masks.

Revolution is the militant practice of a politics of love and the capacity to resist – one that ultimately changes who you are. It is an act that deforms us, stretches us, and drags us back into the thick, moist, possibility of the world. A love that reminds us that interruption can ignite a freedom for all.

We learn to love the outlaw and the guerilla. We travel by foot and on the backs of donkeys. We dream of robbing the techno-capitalists and the energy fascists giving them something of their own medicine. We refuse to give up on our dreams. We reject the world they have shaped against us.

To believe in revolution is to not give up on your desire. Revolution is learning how to love and speak again.

S

segregation

Timothy Appleton

"Everything that exists, and brotherhood first and foremost, is founded on segregation", said the psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan in his 17th Seminar.[1] This may be bad news for those who consider social separation to be an undesirable contingency. However, what if such separation, rather than being contingent, is in fact necessary? In other words, what if we move from the normative level to the level of (ontological) description? The paradigmatic way of framing this issue today is that of the (partially Lacanian) populist theorist Ernesto Laclau. Laclau considers social antagonism to be a synonym of politics itself. He will add that far from being a mere accidental circumstance, politics in this sense should be considered to be something like the 'beginning of freedom'.[2] Is it possible to combine both positions: the ontological recognition of antagonism and the condemnation of social repression? Let's see.

If we indeed consider antagonism to be the condition of social freedom (i.e., that any social order may be challenged) then segregation could be thought of as a *perversion* of such antagonism. This requires a move from Laclau's theory to that of Alain Badiou. According to Badiou, if a social void, or lack (to use the Lacanian term) becomes visible – in other words if the imperfections or contradictions of a social order are glimpsed by those who experience them – and an antagonism – which Badiou temporalizes, calling it an Event – is constructed that monumentalizes this experience (two steps which are by no means inevitable) then there is the possibility that this antagonism becomes a mere *simulacrum* (Badiou's term). How so?

The process is fairly straightforward: instead of maintaining the void of the social order as its vanishing point, a simulacrum adheres to the *plenitude* of the social order. One interesting aspect of this process is that it is necessarily chronological. In other words, a simulacrum copies a previously-established Event in order to shut the latter down.

This – theoretically speaking – is the case with far-right movements, which contain a trace of the original revolutionary impulse but pervert it and direct it towards a (radical) shoring up of the status quo. This chronological aspect is easy to observe. The classical example is the Nazis following the Bolsheviks, although we have seen many recent examples in the West: Vox following Podemos in Spain, Golden Dawn following Syriza in Greece, Donald Trump following Bernie Sanders in the U.S. etc.

If the term segregation is to be reserved for this last kind of situation, then there would appear to be no problem with using it pejoratively. Once again, however, it is extremely important that one does not confuse a perversion of antagonism with antagonism itself. Otherwise, one risks abolishing politics as such, which – as we have already pointed out – is probably human societies' only possibility of salvation.

sense of belonging

Ondřej Váša

"Belongingness is the human emotional need to be an accepted member of a group", says auntie Wiki. "Belonging is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group. It is when an individual can bring their authentic self to work", says Cornell University's website.

Needless to say, this shouldn't exactly be put on trial. Not in 2025 A.D.

But this is a contra-entry (see https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/social-sciences-and-humanities/belongingness-sense-belonging). One that refuses to become a "case".

In the 1980s, I saw a fairy tale on Czechoslovak television that culminated in a game of words. An evil sorcerer would rob his challengers of their words, leaving them, after their linguistic bankruptcy, with only a single term – a brand of their sin. Like when he punished someone for his unfeeling "no's" by cursing him into a loop of desperate "yes". The sorcerer had a taste for irony. I no longer remember the rules of the game, in fact, I don't even recall what the fairy tale was about. But the word that ultimately broke the wizard's power was "love". As if the mischievous censor, even at the cost of his own life, had saved the best for last. I told you: he had a sense of irony. Had the brave young defier lost, the sorcerer

would surely have left him with that word and no other – to degrade it into a meaningless stamp of bureaucratic approval.

Just a few years ago – or perhaps only months – I might have used this story in a friendly debate with my comrades. I would have criticized how, in their noble effort to purify language, they overloaded its sewer system; and how, in their zeal to de-militarize speech, they tended to overlook the victims of friendly fire. Like a "laughing beast", I would have chuckled at the phrase "bring your authentic self to work", which to my Bohemian ear sounds far too much like a sneaker ad slogan. And as a child of socialism, I would have harbored suspicion that behind the "sense of acceptance" lurks a domineering condescension, or a puritanical intolerance toward those who are "spoiling it for the rest of us".

But now we're playing a completely different game. A rigged defense. A defense that is impossible, because the key witness stands in the dock. There is no neutral ground for "sense of belonging", "civilization", "humanism", or "solidarity" – also on the list. There's only the Outside, dreaming of a hollow space. Speaking in tongues whose lingua franca is bullshit.

Captain Kirk knows something about it: Jesus here and Jesus there, but boy, he just "couldn't stand empathy". I already feel somewhat awkward bringing that up. It's always embarrassing to point out the obvious. Like "wash your hands after you take a dump". "Racism is bad". Or, like in this case, "read the damn Book" – which is *my* Book to, by the way – "before you swear on it". Because it's all about empathy and sense of belonging.

At least there's a twist that is worth repeating, if only for its gentleness: that it is not the "stubborn" and "grumbling" people of "hardened stone hearts" who concern themselves with the "sense of belonging," but Christ himself, who rather fruitlessly tries to press into "the midst of us" (Matthew 18:20) with his empathetic "heart of flesh", hoping to "bring his authentic self to work".

It is a simple message that stands against all simple answers. *Love your neighbor. Love*. Only a bullshit master can turn it into a militarized slogan. As Richie says in David Cronenberg's *History of Violence*: "How do you fuck that up? HOW DO YOU FUCK THAT UP?"

sex

Jairo Gallo Acosta

The quickest definition of sex is that it is something biological and natural. The problem is that precisely what sex is all about in humans is that there is nothing natural about it. Therefore, finding its natural normality is an issue that has not only sparked debate but also attempts at regulation and control. The point is that, thanks to the work of Foucault, Butler, and psychoanalysis since Freud during the 20th and 21st centuries, sex can no longer be used to normalize in the name of a supposed biological ontology, much less resort to a divine naturalness: "God created man and woman."

Although discussions about sex continue, and in recent times, thanks to a return to neoconservatism, the idea of the naturalness of sex has been brought into the public arena, attempting to reduce sex to the fact of having a penis and a vagina, in order to place men and women in fixed positions and assign them a procreative role in sex: "Reproduce!". What is interesting here is to suggest that sex has been a field of dispute, especially in the last century. At the beginning of the 20th century, Freud came to tell us that there is something about sex that does not correspond to biology, or what is considered natural. When it comes to sex, there is no normality; sex can take many forms and paths, as many as there are individuals.

Sex and its morality is a matter of each era, of the ideas that govern each historical moment, thus imposing ideas of sex as natural, normal, or moral. For example, Freudian approaches were rejected in their time; the idea of infantile sexuality or that humans are sexual from birth was unthinkable for the prevailing ideas of early 20th-century Victorian Europe. Sex continues to be a subject of dispute, as it remains a principle of social order, as Foucault pointed out in many of his texts. It should be clarified that the repression of sex was not directed at sex itself but at what it allowed to be ordered; its prohibition was a form of order, as was its unrestrained nature in the second half of the 20th century. All sex or no sex are two sides of the same coin that allow each society to establish orders, identities, roles, places, etc. In other words, sex as a moral issue, as Foucault also emphasized, is the important issue.

Sex in its social order, control, and morality works because it allows us to veil what is not there or what is not: its naturalness. So the idea of sex itself is already permeated by a series of ideas that often prevent us from seeing that there is nothing written about sex in humans, and that the fate of sex is unpredictable, which is why it is important to discuss it.

sexual preferences

Bryan Reynolds

In the absurdist world of Trump, there are no sexual preferences, or rather there are only preferences all of which invoke Trump's notorious sexuality, but these are nevertheless predetermined and marshalled by God. But they also are not. God has nothing to do with it. What is important is that one's desire, what one does, if not overtly sanctioned within the officialized system, one denies. Trump's mentor, Roy Cohen, epitomized this. Heteronormativity reigns, and anything else, especially homosexuality, which is deemed inferior, submits, and ultimately pays a price, in this world or the next. Judgement is passed and passed over. Only those in power go unnoticed, until they are identified as a problem. Cohen was a problem only when his infection with AIDs became public. By association, he implicated the rest. And no matter of wealth or networking could save him. His name went down with him. Shame all the way. It is hard to imagine sexual preference under the auspices of grotesque Trumpism independent from explicit demonstrations of sexual violence against women. When Rudy Giuliani lusted after the character Tutar in the Borat movie, allegedly Borat's 15-year-old daughter, his association with Trump was untarnished. Trump was accused of sexual assault by dozens of women, found guilty in a civil suit (was ordered to pay over $80 million in damages), and is a convicted felon for unlawfully trying to cover up a similar infraction. So many members of his cabinet and team have been sued for sexual assault, including Matt Gaetz and Pete Hegseth, it almost seems that such sexual preferences – dehumanizing sexual exploitation and abuse of women – are perquisites for belonging. One could argue that any preference, such as a sexual preference, is a matter of becomingsx. One becomes their preference through performances, and with each iteration, the identity laminates and further convinces. What is Trump then? He declared, "You know I'm automatically attracted to beautiful – I

just start kissing them. It's like a magnet. Just kiss. I don't even wait. And when you're a star they let you do it. You can do anything. Grab them by the pussy. You can do anything." Sexual preference, thus for Trump, is privilege and power, however uncontrollable once unleashed. About an encounter he had with a reporter, he exclaimed, "I did try and fuck her… I moved on her like a bitch…" For Trump, even if it means assuming the role of a female dog in heat, sexual preference coincides with a state of exception: the more power one has, the more liberties. Human rights are not inalienable, but mongered.

sexuality

Francesca R. Recchia Luciani

Sexual experience is a crucial fact of human existence. And it is so not only because everyone originates from an act of intercourse or because of its occasional outcome – procreation – but above all for what it entails in terms of relationship, that is, for the kind of connection it establishes between the human beings who engage in it.

The French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy is one of the very few thinkers who has addressed the question of sex from the standpoint of its existential value – that is, the disruptive impact it has on human life – distancing himself from assessing its social or political significance, as happens, for instance, within the framework of biopower described genealogically by Michel Foucault.

In a 2000 essay, *L'"il y a" du rapport sexuel*, by reversing into a positive assertion Jacques Lacan's negative statement that "there is no sexual relationship," Nancy makes the very *being-there* of the relation assume ontological weight – not because of an equivalence between the relation itself and its "being" or "becoming," but in correspondence with what it implies for the lives of those who engage in a sexual relationship or share an erotic practice.

The sphere of sexual activity is a space of inter- and intrasubjective relational interconnection, a reflective mirror of human vulnerability to the alterity of others, to the ignition of mutual desire that the other awakens, giving rise to an encounter between differences that co-implicate and complicate one another – both when intimacy and affectivity are involved and when the scene is that of mercantile exchange.

If, for Zygmunt Bauman, mass pornography makes erotic and amorous relations "liquid," and for Byung-Chul Han the present announces the "death of eros," Nancy's philosophical inquiry in *Sexistence* is ontological-existential, as it investigates the indissoluble bond that, in the case of human beings, is established between the animal and the divine, between intimacy and exteriority.

The notion of "sexistence" articulates an ontology of desire that animates the sexed nature of human existence as a coexistence among heterogeneous beings, linked by relational experiences between distinct and different bodies that undergo the event of active contiguity.

But before Nancy, it was feminism that radically questioned sexuality – particularly by revealing the existence, for millennia culpably repressed, of female pleasure. First, Anne Koedt, between 1968 and 1970, debunked the Freudian "myth of vaginal orgasm," which defined female sexuality as entirely dependent on the male, even identifying frigidity as its pathological form. Then, Italian feminist Carla Lonzi, in her *Clitoral Woman and Vaginal Woman* (1974), dismantled the centrality imposed for millennia by the sovereign order of male pleasure, identifying the repression of female sexuality and its specific libido with a kind of symbolic excision of the clitoris.

The denial of this organ – which in female anatomy is exclusively dedicated to pleasure, unlike the phallus, which fulfils both procreative and hedonistic functions – made women's supposed "vaginality" coincide with male pleasure and procreation, while at the same time reinforcing an unmovable heterosexual binarism.

The Black lesbian feminist Audre Lorde, with her *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power* (1978), would go on to trace a revolutionary line of continuity and female empowerment between women's reappropriation of their intrinsic "erotic power" – both individually and collectively – and the affirmation of sex as a relational field of action and as a transformative force.

social justice

Marcy Goldberg

One of the more discouraging signs of our times is the emergence of the term "social justice warrior" or "SJW" as an insult. Especially in online

culture, the SJW is presented as a figure of mockery. At best, the SJW is smug and a scold; at worst, a caricature of an activist who is emotionally unhinged and physically unattractive. As with other favorite labels used by those on the conservative to far-right spectrum to mock and smear progressives, such as "politically correct" or "woke," the "social justice warrior" was originally a term progressives used to call themselves and was meant positively, or perhaps with a touch of gentle self-irony. But in a political landscape increasingly dominated by right-wing troll culture (see for example Amanda Marcotte's 2018 *Troll Nation*), it is apparently bad to want to do good.

Or rather: to want to do good *for everyone*, not just for the benefit of the subject's own in-group or the happy few. For social justice is predicated on the notion of equality or, better yet, equity, giving everyone a fair chance and access to necessary resources. Social justice is built on a foundation of universal human rights, even as it embraces diversity among individuals or groups.

The notions of equity and equality seem to be deeply offensive or downright threatening to two main groups of people who comprise the Trump base. On the one hand: racists, white supremacists, homophobes and other sorts of bigots whose own notion of self-worth depends on keeping others down by restricting their rights and opportunities. On the other hand: free-market fetishists and libertarians who fear that any interference in the supposedly natural order of economy and society will curtail their own reckless freedom, disrupt the system which offers them unfair advantages, or both.

Both of these positions are not only fundamentally unjust in a moral or legal sense, they are also foolhardy on a practical level. For all their rejections of the importance of the social fabric, or their denials that such a fabric exists at all – most infamously, Margaret Thatcher's claim that "there is no such thing as society, only individuals," or Friedrich Hayek's shrugging off the concept of social justice as "a mirage" – the truth is that our lives on this earth are interdependent, whether we like it or not. Extreme inequality will inevitably lead to disharmony and strife. Just as individual health comes under threat in unhealthy surroundings, social injustice will always be a destabilizing force. Where there is no justice, there can be no peace.

This is why Trump's promise to "Make America Great Again" was never anything but a chimera: because it is based on an appeal to a semi-mythical past age in which life was "great" for some at the expense of very many others. The more advantages Trump allocates to his cronies, the 1% at home, or his oligarch and dictator friends around the world, the more inequality is increased, the worse things will get for the vast majority of people, and for the social and natural environment. And the blowback will be inevitable.

socioeconomic

Jens Schröter

At first glance, it is difficult to understand why the term "socioeconomic" is on the US government's bizarre list of banned words. What is objectionable about it? Well, the addition of "socio" to "economic" is, like everything social or even socialist, suspect to the ultra-right Trump administration. This is in line with its ultra-market-radical program, at least as it is presented. In this view, an economy can only be a market economy – a market economy is per se the most socially just system there is. A free market is optimal per se. Seen in this light, the addition of "socio" can only lead to distortion, where performance is no longer properly rewarded and slackers and shirkers are given disproportionate weight.

Moreover, the rejection of "socio" is consistent with the naturalistic and naturalizing ideology of the American right. In that framework, for example, there can only be two – supposedly natural – genders. Similarly, also "economics" can only appear as a natural process. The eternal competition, the egoism of homo economicus, the compulsion toward ecologically highly problematic growth, and ultimately the war for resources are for the rightwing ideologues not specific to a particular historical epoch (capitalism or, more simply, the market economy), but rather the eternal and irreducible form of the economic in general. The addition of "socio" brings social embeddedness and thus culture and history back into economics and can thus lead to the idea that other economies have existed and could also be possible in the future. Such a thought, although climate change makes it necessary, is taboo in the US and is immediately labeled with the deadliest of all terms there: "communism"! The naturalization of the market corresponds precisely to the ideology of the dominant economic

science, sometimes somewhat inaccurately summarized as 'neo-classical'. At least in its more extreme variants, it misunderstands itself as a natural science that liberates the pure nature of economics from the obscuring distortions of historical, social, and cultural contingency and is capable of representing the eternal core of economic nature by mathematical means (similar to physics). Today, however, resistance to pure economics, which is considered anti-social and ahistorical, is growing at many universities. The telling demand for a "post-autistic economics" emerged as early as the beginning of the 2000s. Later, a "pluralistic economics" was discussed as an alternative – an idea, which should actually be self-evident in a society that compulsively presents itself as "free" and "pluralistic". The term "socioeconomics" stands for opposition to the prevailing and totalitarian view of the natural market, which is always right. Such opposition must not be allowed to exist. Therefore, the word "socioeconomic" is banned. But: another world is possible.

sociopolitical suffering

Miriam Debieux Rosa

Sociopolitical suffering emerges from the interaction between psychoanalysis and politics established through the contributions of S. Freud and J. Lacan, along with authors from the social sciences. It is produced and sustained by discourses operating within regimes of domination, exclusion, and inequality through structuring social ties and the political, economic, symbolic, and libidinal economy. It is not merely a side effect of civilization, insofar as it derives from the interaction between subjectivity and historically situated modes of social organization, especially those marked by colonialism, racism, capitalism, and patriarchy.

In psychoanalysis, social bonds are grounded in the language that inaugurates humankind's entry into culture and refers to the constitutive condition of humankind and civilization. These bonds insert the subject simultaneously into the relational, affective, libidinal, and political interplay, guiding the construction of each individual's history, embedded within the discursive field of their time. These social bonds materialize in discourses that indicate the possible modes of belonging for each subject, assigning them values, places, and positions within the bond.

Sociopolitical suffering is produced when language – a prerequisite for entry into social bonds – is captured by social discourses that present themselves as hegemonic and structurally produce exclusion. Such discourses assert their power by equating themselves with the symbolic realm of culture and language, avoiding giving visibility to the social and political conflicts underlying them. They present themselves as emissaries of ahistorical and apolitical truth and value. However, they are imbued with political and economic interests, guided by the maintenance of a specific social order. These discourses, delivered by social institutions and authorities, deny recognition, belonging, and protection to certain social groups marked by social class, gender, ethnicity, culture, and religion. This denial is not only material but also symbolic: the representation of the subject is captured by images, expectations, and values that dehumanize, monster, and/or render them invisible. Sociopolitical suffering is, therefore, the effect of an articulation between the unconscious and social discourses, between the singularity of the subject and the historical forms of oppression that capture them.

These discourses aim to submit the subject to the machinery of enjoyment of a given historical time. They become entirely blamed for their pluri-determined social condition. Here, the invisibility of the conflicts generated in and by the social bond falls upon the subject, individualizing and naturalizing their impasses, pathologizing or criminalizing their solutions. Their suffering is recorded through a discursive lens that strips them of their message and has repercussions on narcissism, identifications, grief, and affects such as love, hate, ignorance, shame, and/or guilt. The subject is dislodged from their personal, sociocultural, and political history, which drives them out of their discursive place, the place from which they speak. Such social bonds cast the subject, entangled in this un-polysemic utterance, into discursive helplessness/powerlessness, the result of the silencing that involves the experience of exclusion and powerlessness produced.

Psychoanalytic praxis, in this scenario, involves operating in the discursive field to separate the subject from the effects of the social discourse that alienates them. This means turning social markers (imposed identities) into marks of the subject (signifiers capable of symbolic elaboration), thereby fostering both the traversal of the social phantasm and the listening to the unknown that structures their history.

solidarity

Mia Neuhaus

In the face of ongoing multiple global crises, we have been witnessing powerful solidarity movements over the past decades – such as the refugee, women's and queer movements, Black Lives Matter, Fridays for Future, and the new anti-authoritarian and anti-militarization movements. These movements are globally interconnected. They share an empathetic and ethically grounded impulse of resistance to all forms of injustice and exclusion – an impulse rooted in everyday human practice.

Solidarity persists – even, or especially, in the darkest places. It cannot be entirely eliminated, yet it faces reactionary appropriation: nationalist border closures are falsely framed as "acts of solidarity"; and Central European states call for "solidarity" and joint action at their external borders, persecuting refugees seeking freedom and safety with military force. These and other, less obvious attacks hollow out the concept of solidarity, simultaneously attempting both to delegitimize its core and to appropriate it for exclusionary purposes. In doing so, they aim to destroy social bonds and deepen societal divisions.

Rooted in 18th-century revolutionary struggles, solidarity – like its "siblings" freedom and equality – has always been contested. The tacit replacement of "brotherhood" with "solidarity" reflects these struggles and at the same time emphasizes the universalist claim already inherent in the idea of future fraternization among all people.

Solidarity aims to overcome class divisions and segregation, demanding a good life for all. It acknowledges shared oppression while recognizing difference – and defending the right to that difference, resisting uniformity. Solidarity emerges from the everyday struggles for dignity waged by those positioned at the margins of the system – struggles that confront the very logic of capitalist exclusion and authoritarian oppression.

Instead of silence or complicity, solidarity demands curiosity, interest, and responsiveness – capacities innate to every human. The call for solidarity stands against the fractures produced by violent systems of oppression, segregation, and exploitation, which threaten the very possibility of meaningful and conflictual, yet vital social bonds.

When solidarity is the call to unite and reliably and reciprocally stand up for one another for a better future, it cannot, at the same time, be

denied to those who do not share a common struggle without losing its universalist core. Their rights must not be contingent upon conforming to a particular set of beliefs or behaviors. This brings us to the challenges inherent within existing forms of solidarity themselves.

Concrete acts of solidarity with one position are often accompanied by a lack of solidarity with another, becoming trapped in divisive discourses. Identitarian closures – solidarity only with one's own kind – selective solidarity, or so-called "unconditional" solidarity that lacks critical engagement, the ability to disagree, tend to confuse solidarity with loyalty, comradeship, or even charity. This misses the distinctive nature of solidarity itself.

For solidarity refers to a shared commonality (the ethical demand for dignity for all) and simultaneously calls for its realization. It calls for the fulfillment of the unfulfilled promises of revolution. At its core, solidarity is an opening toward the New and the Other (also within ourselves) – the non-identical, the not-yet, the oppressed and excluded. It attunes to those at risk of being wronged or denied dignity – even when uncomfortable – without speaking *for* them, but instead keeping a space open for the excluded and oppressed to enter the political scene.

sovereignty

Oscar Ariel Cabezas

The concept of sovereignty is essential in the lexicon of political philosophy, but its importance transcends the specificity of the discipline. Its analysis has been widely undertaken by authors such as Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Juan Donoso Cortés and Ernest H. Kantorowicz, among others. In theoretical terms, the concept will reach its maximum point of relevance in the definition given to it by the German jurist Carl Schmitt. For this controversial thinker of the relationship between law and the state, sovereignty is a concept that is determined in the decisional structure of power. In his book *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (1922), Schmitt affirms that "sovereign is he who decides on the exception" (5). Schmitt develops this definition of sovereignty in the context of late modernity, and it will impact the problematization of the state as an institutional body with the right to decide the suspension of the laws that produce and

maintain a given social, legal, and political order. Schmitt's definition has permeated all theoretical work on sovereignty to the point that it can be considered one of the essential concepts for thinking the 21st century.

The theoretical implications of sovereignty have revolved around the debates produced by the exhaustion of the State and its institutions in regulating the life-worlds sheltered in the formation of national identities. In the 1980s, the effects of the radicalization of liberalism – opposed by Schmitt's thought, and its extreme logic –, and recognizable in what would come to be called neoliberalism, would profoundly weaken the so-called Welfare States that emerged from the restructuring and realignment of geopolitical powers after the Second World War. The Keynesian state was not exactly a state that had eradicated war, but rather, once war between nations was over, it placed it in the imminent position of an enemy of peace and well-being, more internal than external. The hypothesis that the State must actively decide on market intervention and the commitment to full employment linked the problem of sovereignty to the decision-making structure of State policy. However, the rise of the neoliberal right and the destruction of social welfare reached their peak during the period of Margaret Thatcher and her support for the dictatorships of the Southern Cone. Thus, neoliberalism would become one of the most prolonged and efficient hegemonies. In a similar vein to Carl Schmitt, the Spanish philosopher José Luis Villacañas conceptualized neoliberal hegemony as a political theology. In his book *Neoliberalism as Political Theology. Habermas, Foucault, Dardot, Laval and the History of Contemporary Capitalism* (2020), Villacañas offers one of the most exhaustive interpretations of neoliberal hegemony and a clear corroboration of what we can define as the sovereign crisis of the nation-state and its axis in Keynesian forms of governance: "[T]he essence of neoliberalism," Villacañas argues, "is political, not economic; behind the frame and the environment lies power. It is therefore not an automatic evolution of the capitalist mode of production" (207, my translation). This precision in Villacañas's definition insists that the thematization of sovereignty has not managed to escape its relationship with the decisional structure. That is to say, the fact that neoliberalism is essentially political and not an evolution of capitalism allows us to define sovereignty as that which is politically in crisis due to the tensions between the power of globalized markets and the weakening sovereignty of nation states. Sovereignty is

not only the decision-making structure of power, but also the structure that is politically and legally contested. Therefore, the concept of sovereignty is, by definition, determined by internal forces (the composition of the state and civil society) and external forces (the opening of the national to globalization and its geopolitical disputes).

standardization

José Félix Angulo Rasco

Standardization and standardization processes have been and still are a key element in our social and cultural everyday life, since, at least, modern times and especially since the industrial revolution. (Legh Star & Lampland, 2009; Brøgger & Staunæs, 2016). Urban settings and modern industry have grown on and with standardization pillars, which have become their most precious cement. But standardization due to its own structural and political characteristics has turned (Brøgger, 2019) into a key *device* (Agamben, 2011) of education neoliberal policies (Angulo & Redon, 2012), through the standardization of the school curriculum and the teacher's work (Hursh, 2008, Smith & Kovacs, 2011), through the processes of education assurance (Verger et al. 2019) and through the spreading of national and international standardized tests (Popkewitz, 2013; Pettersson, et al., 2016). Standardization is upheld and promoted as something necessary and precious (Legh Star & Lampland, 2009). Standards may be measured, tested, examined and revisited: they do not only have an enormous quantitative function, but they do also act as rules under which we should or have to live (Busch, 2011: 10). The *British Standards Institution* affirms: "A standard is an agreed way of doing something. It could be about making a product, managing a process, delivering a service or supplying materials – standards can cover a huge range of activities undertaken by organizations and used by their customers". We build objective reality through them, i.e. we objectify the world, ensure their stability and permanence: as Busch (2011) states, they are recipes that by the mere act of repetition "of following the récipe (whether faithfully or not), creates a reality that is ordered, regular, and stable". Standards are not only applied to goods but also to people, what's more, there is an enormous symmetry between the standards designed for people and for goods, as they are essentially alike and they also function to keep

the world of goods and the world of people together and interwoven. Standards are then elements for the performativity of subjects and institutions, by providing scripts, 'manuals', booklets which guide our practice, but which go unnoticed once they become something natural (Busch, 2011). This is where an intimate connection between standards and power can be placed, in the same way as rules to be followed are established, or categories to be the basis for decision making, for comparisons and for the selection of courses of action (Busch, 2011). Thus, standardization is a kind of governance, standardizing policies or products, and at the same time standardizing those who are administered or those who consume them, especially in the social and educational world (Brøgger & Staunæs, 2016). we are not aware of two key issues: on the one hand, beyond its daily presence, standards have colonized, paraphrasing Habermas (1984, 1987), the life-world affecting our subjectivity (Brown,2015); on the other hand, standards as political devices (Cort, 2010), have infected politics itself and educational thinking, regarded as devices of the neoliberal economic policies. "Standardization is a form 'steering and governing' ensuring that things can be done." (Brøgger & Staunæs, 2016: 226).

state building and state dismantling

Francisco Vergara Muñoz

To understand what it means to talk about both State-building and State-dismantling, it is necessary to clarify how we define the State. To delve into this, we must go back to Hegel (1991), who provides the logic key to apprehend reality, avoiding essentialisms and mechanisms that could lead to trivial political readings. Hegel inaugurates an ontological logic that makes it possible to apprehend reality as the historical unfolding of humanity itself in its movement. From this, the first central axis emerges: the State is a social relation (Lechner, 2012).

Understanding the State as a social relation enable us to reject instrumentalist interpretations, which lead to flawed political conclusions, such as viewing the State as an apparatus independent of the configurations of the social forces; an apparatus that could be built and dismantled as a mere object, without accounting for the social forces that permeate it.

The State IS the totality in motion. García Linera (2015), following Poulantzas (2000), condenses this in three axes: (1) the State as a specific

correlation of forces and social conflict; (2) the State as an institutional framework that transforms the correlation of forces into a material legal structure; (3) and the State as the monopolization of world representations existing at a given time. It is this last axis that allows García Linera (2023) to assert that the State can ultimately be understood as the fetishized form of the common, from which its legitimacy derives.

Jessop's (2007) work provides the articulation of the previous coordinates. He posits that the State is a relational terrain, constantly contested, in which what is at stake is both a specific accumulation strategy and a hegemonic project. From these premises we can assert that the State is never a neutral ground, it always involves the category of totality, but this is the outcome of certain subjects victory over others.

Therefore, when we analyze processes like State construction or dismantling, we must recognize that the dispute concerns not an object ('something'), but rather a certain social order of the totality, in which there are winners and losers.

When ultra-neoliberal positions (such as Milei's) advocate for 'dismantling the State', we must have the conceptual clarity to recognize the subtext: it is nothing but the construction of a specifically different social order in which a certain process of capital valorization occurs at the expense of the positions of victory that subalterns have managed to achieve through their historical struggles.

To discuss State building or dismantling, we must always first ask: which social forces benefit from this process, and which are being marginalized?

stereotype/stereotypes

Bassey Ekpenyong Bassey

Contextually, stereotyping is applicable when people are portrayed and possibly assessed in ways that validate and support unequal social relationships. This could be strengthened by impressions that suggest that these representations are static and unalterable, and they also stand in contrast to the identities of individuals who participate in and uphold them. Pickering (2016) defines stereotyping as "a way of representing and judging other people in fixed, unyielding terms". He explains that "these revolve around an alleged characteristic of the category to which they are assigned. They are reduced to the stereotype that results from this,

rather than being viewed as individuals with their own personal features and qualities" (pg. 1).

Notably, Trump rarely employs the lexicographical term 'stereotype', rather, his rhetoric relies on the construction and application of generalized, typically negative, and essentializing descriptions of outgroups. A quick overview of Trumps concept and implicit use of stereotype offers a 3-wing classification: The creation of the political 'Other' (the 'Swamp' and global elites); The essentialization of immigrant and foreign groups on the basis of race and nationality; And the meta-rhetorical role of anti-Political Correctness (PC) as a defence mechanism to justify generalizations. Consistently, Trump attacks the amorphous 'deep State' or 'establishment', which is encapsulated in the phrase 'The Swamp.' Here, the stereotyping dehumanizes political opponents and group them as a corrupt, monolithic entity. Consequently, the use transforms policy debates into moral crusades in which the political' Other' is presented as not only wrong but also mentally weak and fundamentally evil. Trump's discourses on foreign relations and immigration exemplify classical stereotyping by attributing negative and immutable traits to vast populations based on their origins. Serving as a salient example is how Trump categorizes entire communities of asylum seekers and migrants as criminals. Another instance could be established on how Trump regularly employ economic stereotypes in his handling of foreign policy, particularly with regards trade and China. This generalized economic badge serves as a justification for trade wars and tariffs.

Trump's use of generalized stereotypes can also be hinged on his meta rhetorical layer of anti-political correctness. He describes political correctness as being an elite imposed system of language control which is designed to suppress hard truth and stifle common sense. By assuming the position of one who is prepared to say what needs to be said, he seemingly, validate his generalization and seemingly inoculate himself from charges of stereotyping.

Trump's successful definition of a stereotype is argued to be a flexible, political tool for ingroup mobilization and the establishment of political boundaries rather than a fixed sociological concept. He positions his generalizations as 'truthful common sense' in opposition to the alleged lies of the 'establishment.' Implicitly, Trump's use of stereotypes lowers the social status of the people they target by reducing them to a certain trait

or personality that either denigrates them or limits their success to being associated with this trait or personality. As a distancing strategy, this drastically separates the people who are stereotyped from the people who spread and repeat the clichés.

system/systemic

Boris Podoroga

In contemporary American conservative jargon, especially in the discourse of Donald Trump, *systemic* is a word that appears less as an analytical category than as a target. Its most visible context is the phrase *systemic racism*, popularized in mainstream Democratic rhetoric during the Black Lives Matter protests after the killing of George Floyd. Here, "systemic" designates the structural and institutional reproduction of racism, embedded in policing, law, and society.

Trump's response was blunt: there is *no* systemic racism. Again and again, in interviews and campaign speeches, he insisted that racism was not structural but individual. In one CNN interview he conceded, half-heartedly, that "there is probably some" systemic racism, but immediately minimized the scale: not substantial, not what it used to be, and certainly not institutional. For him, racism is the fault of "bad apples," concrete persons acting badly, never a system that produces and sustains patterns of inequality.

The denial of systemic racism points to a deeper contradiction in Trump's rhetoric. While he dismisses systemic injustice when Democrats invoke it, he constantly invokes *the system* when it serves his own populist message. His call to "drain the swamp" was precisely a declaration of war on "the system" – by which he meant bureaucrats and the democratic political establishment. Systemic injustice is denied, but systemic bureaucracy is vilified. Where Democrats tend to use words "system" or "systemic" to point to structural oppression (or traces thereof), Trump uses these as references to a conspiratorial battery of enemies: globalists, "deep state", migrants, leftists, communists, anyone accused of undermining the sovereignty of America. The implied contradiction seems structural; the words "system" and "systemic" become free-floating signifiers that can be easily picked up as markers of things that Trump and his entourage don't take kindly to.

The biggest beef that they have with all things “systemic” is that these have supposedly weakened the nation and should be revoked in the name of returning to an America that is “real” or “great.” In practical terms, this means restricting immigration, dismantling welfare institutions, reducing US global involvement, and undermining all kinds of initiatives that have a strategic component to them. Aside from vague promises of better trade deals, tariffs, or even territorial expansion, there is very little substantive, long lasting policy that Trump is ready to endorse.

In this volatile arena, “systemic” itself is stripped of meaning and wielded as a weapon: flexible, opportunistic, and always aimed at the enemy of the moment – whether these are bureaucrats, migrants, or imagined conspirators. The term no longer marks structures of injustice but becomes a placeholder for whatever must be destroyed, a linguistic cudgel for political theater. This contra-dictionary use aligns Trump with authoritarian leaders like Putin and Orbán, who likewise treat language as a pure instrument, denying words any claims of coherence in order to convert them into tools of advantage and weapons of constant mobilization.

T

time

Friederike Beier

Time is a social and political construct that shapes and reflects relations of power while appearing as an objective measure of duration. The contemporary obsession with spending and saving time demonstrates how time is embedded in capitalist relations. The doctrines of efficiency, acceleration, and scarcity of time in neoliberal societies form the basis of exhaustion, alienation, and the impoverishment of social relations.

As Karl Marx and scholars after him demonstrated, time has an essential function in capitalist societies for disciplining laborers and extracting their time. Social inequalities need to be measured not only by the distribution of economic wealth but by the inequalities of time. While the wealthy can purchase the time of others, most people are deprived of self-determined time or condemned to 'empty time' spent waiting or commuting. Such time inequalities are structured by intersectional power relations along gender, sexuality, race, class, ability and more.

Feminist analyses demonstrate how the capitalist economy neglects and marginalizes the time for care and social reproduction. The temporality of care differs from the linear, monochronic temporalities of most 'productive' work. Care cannot be further accelerated without compromising its essence. The global crisis of care is also a crisis of time: caregivers, primarily women, are chronically depleted, while dependents, children, the elderly and chronically ill, suffer from neglect. While the acceleration of time creates stress and exhaustion, the time of refugees, migrants and the unemployed is devalued as empty time. The dominant pace of society also structurally neglects disabled people, while crip time refers to temporalities beyond the dogma of productivity and speed. Chrononormativity describes how dominant hetero-chrononorms exclude queer lifestyles and their temporal order. Social justice thus requires intersectional time justice, redistributing and reclaiming time.

The dogma of acceleration also reshapes the political sphere. Speeding up economic and political processes diminishes the capacity for deliberation, empathy, and democratic participation. Authoritarian and neo-fascist movements exploit this condition: They 'flood the zone with shit' to create chaos and exhaustion and mobilize nostalgia for a mystified patriarchal Fordist past. Authoritarian accelerationist politics of time seek to reimpose patriarchal gender norms, expand white supremacy and present patriarchal control as a remedy to the multiplicity of crises.

Neoliberal and authoritarian forms of governing also feed on environmental short-term destruction. Fossil fuels from millions of years ago sustain a few decades of accelerated mobility. The temporal imbalance between ecological and industrial time manifests as climate crisis, species extinction, and environmental degradation. Climate justice is inseparable from time justice: it demands the synchronization of human activity with planetary rhythms.

An emancipatory politics of time needs to reclaim, redistribute and decelerate time. Feminists and socialists propose redistributing time between production, care, education, and political participation. Radical reductions in paid working hours, equal valuation of care, and the recognition of diverse temporalities are crucial for creating time justice and the possibility of a liveable future.

trans

Martin Charvát & Michaela Fikejzová

The term trans is generally used for identities that do not fit within the male/female binary or whose self-identification does not match their gender or sex at birth. It acts as an umbrella term that can include both those who explicitly identify as transgender and various identities across the non-binary spectrum. The list of identities falling under this label is neither complete nor fixed, which is also the purpose of such a term. It may also be written as trans*, with the asterisk indicating the term's openness and incompleteness, as noted, for example, by Halberstam (2018). This designation deliberately does not include the words gender or sex (e.g., transgender, transsexual, etc.), thereby distancing itself from the complicated history and oppressive use of such labels, while also avoiding specific modes of medicalization of these identities. The

designation “trans” does not necessarily imply meeting the psychiatric criteria for gender dysphoria, undergoing hormone or surgical treatment, or formally changing one’s gender in official documents. At the same time, it does not commit to meeting the criteria of performativity of one gender or another. In Butler’s words, the label “trans” exploits loopholes in cis-heteropatriarchal discourse, thereby subverting it. Such subversion can lie in something seemingly simple – joy. Trans identities are discursively associated primarily with negative aspects and emotions such as being trapped in the wrong body, defining their criteria through deficiencies or incongruencies, and overall feelings of misery, as Shuster and Westbrook (2024) write. It can be happiness from the community to which they belong or finding self-confidence and peace (Shuster & Westbrook 2024). Such happiness does not necessarily lie at the end of a thorny path; even in popular culture, there are already trans characters who, while facing a number of obstacles that may differ from those encountered by cis people, also experience happiness. One of the multidimensional characters who is repeatedly portrayed as happy or content is Jules from the series Euphoria, played by trans actress Hunter Schafer, or Cal from the series Sex Education. Furthermore, popular culture currently features works that highlight the humorous side of trans identity, such as Torrey Peters’ book *Detransition, Baby* (2021), which explores trans desires for family, parenthood, and intimacy. Just as the first trans characters in popular culture were revolutionary, so too are the works that chart trans joy. The designation “trans” as a specific terminological shift brings with it further linguistic changes, particularly in the area of naming identities that fall under this umbrella concept, as well as in the area of gender-neutral labelling. In Czech, within specific circles that pay attention to gender neutrality within the limits of a highly gendered language, the term “kittens” has become established as a collective noun. This is a neuter gender, and therefore gender neutral, and there are few things in the world that inspire more joy than kittens.

transgender

Martin Charvát & Michaela Fikejzová

In May 2014, Time magazine featured Laverne Cox, an openly transgender actress best known for her role as Sophia Burset in the series Orange is

the New Black, on the cover with the caption "The Transgender Tipping Point. America's next civil rights frontier." The term "transgender tipping point" refers to a revolution in the representation of transgender people in popular culture, which can also be seen in series such as *Sense8* or *Pose*. As Wibke Straube (2020, 59) states, such series "have changed what has been seen as impossible until recently, namely the casting of great trans and non-binary actors in trans roles as well as the casting of great trans and non-binary actors in cis roles." The term cis here refers to people who identify as a certain gender in accordance with the gender assigned to them at birth. There is a clear shift here from the rhetoric associated with transsexuality, where the dividing line was the concept of sex. In the period of the "transgender tipping point," the difference between gender and sex has become a fairly stable part of popular discourse, with the term transgender repeatedly appearing in place of transsexual, along with a change in related terminology associated with the medicalization of such identities. The roots of this discursive shift can be traced back to the third wave of feminism, according to Susan Stryker (2008), who studies transgender history and theorization and activism related to it. In addition to the theoretical and activist separation of the concepts of sex and gender and the subsequent specific approach to the difference between transsexual and transgender persons, there is also a theoretical shift in the concept of sex as biologically determined. In this regard, it is difficult to ignore Judith Butler's (1999) approach, which conceptualizes both sex and gender as socially constructed categories that overlap in their characteristics and are, as a result, quite complicated to separate. Butler (1999) proposes an approach to gender performativity, in which both gender and sex are a kind of repeated act, the (non) fulfilment of which is related to the social recognition of the act as (un)successful. This approach, which is certainly not without controversy, appears in a context where there is also a shift towards the medicalization and psychiatrization of transgender identity, which is closely linked to the concept of gender dysphoria, i.e., a deeply felt incongruity between a person's physical characteristics and society's recognition of their gender and their own perception of their gender (Davy & Toze 2018). In other words, even in this era, the trope of "being trapped in the wrong body" is closely associated with trans identities. However, this view is disputed not only in theoretical circles. For example, from the perspective of strong social

constructivism, Butler (1999) argues that at most one social category is trapped in another, while Talia Mae Bettcher (2014) argues that it is much more a case of being trapped in the wrong theory, which complicates the liberation of trans people. This view is also contested in popular and activist discourses, as is evident, for example, in the rise of trans creators on YouTube, such as the very popular ContraPoints channel.

transsexual

Martin Charvát & Michaela Fikejzová

This is not my body, Professor. Please take it away," says the character of Lili Elbe, formerly Einar Wegener, portrayed by Eddie Redmayne in the 2015 film *The Danish Girl*. The main character, Lili, is based on the life of the Danish artist of the same name, who was one of the first to undergo a series of operations in 1930 and 1931 that were previously called sex reassignment surgeries. Marta V. Vicente (2021, 2) describes the events leading up to this decision as follows: "Einar, however, had become physically restless, unable to comprehend his intense desire to be a woman. This longing had begun years before when Gerda [Einar's wife] had asked Einar to pose as a female model for her paintings." In the film *The Danish Girl*, this desire is primarily depicted through Einar's increasing tendency to wear women's clothing, which, in the interwar period, was still significantly different from men's clothing, to imitate female gestures, and to be fascinated by female ballet. Einar/Lili can be considered one of the first people to fit the definition of a transsexual, which is based primarily on physical, especially sexual, surgical transformation. Transsexuality is, in this sense, highly medicalized, which has been the case since the early twentieth century (Vicente 2021). Historically, endocrinology has played a role in the medicalization of transsexuality, in terms of chromosomal sex and the availability of synthetic hormones enabling transition (Slagstad 2021).

"Billy is not a real transsexual, but he thinks he is. He tries to be. He's tried to be a lot of things, I expect [...] There are three major centers for transsexual surgery: Johns Hopkins, the University of Minnesota, and Columbus Medical Center. I wouldn't be surprised if Billy had applied for sex reassignment at one or all of them and been rejected at one or all of them, and been rejected [...] Billy hates his own identity, you see,

and he thinks that makes him transsexual. But his pathology is a thousand times more savage and more terrifying," diagnoses Hannibal Lecter, Billy, who makes a suit out of the bodies of his female victims, in the cult film *The Silence of the Lambs*. This film aptly combines the deep medicalization of transsexuality with the voyeuristic (pop-)cultural fascination with bodies that challenge or transcend the boundaries of the concept of natural physical gender. A similar trend can now be observed in internet meme culture, where masculine female athletes are ridiculed and their sex is questioned with jokes and in all seriousness. However, this is not new either. Interwar athletes Mark Weston from Great Britain and Zdeněk Koubek from Czechoslovakia were figures of pop culture fascination in the interwar press, as they originally competed in women's categories, which at that time represented a specific sporting breakthrough in themselves (Tebbutt 2015). Although the athletes did not compete after undergoing sex reassignment surgery, they were the subject of press debates about sports scandals, and their achievements were retroactively erased – in Koubek's case, his world record was revoked (Tebbutt 2015; Fikejzová 2025).

trauma

Petr Kouba

Today, trauma research and treatment are mainly associated with the names of Peter Levine, Bessel van der Kolk, and Gabor Maté, who brought them to widespread attention. However, the phenomenon of trauma entered the scientific arena already during World War I, when it became necessary to revise existing psychological, neurological, and medical concepts in light of the suffering endured by soldiers on all sides of the conflict. Sigmund Freud's description of war neurosis led him to discover the death instinct, whose basic structure is repetition. While the pleasure principle leads us to discover new possibilities, the death principle compels us to repeat the same. It is not just an obsessive compulsion, but a completely different temporal structure of experience that consists of repetition. It can be said that one of the basic features of trauma is precisely the tendency to constantly repeat a situation that has proven to be unmanageable, overwhelming, shocking, and destructive in the past. Instead of living in the present and planning their future from there,

traumatized individuals are prisoners of their past, which they repeat cyclically.

We find another understanding of trauma in the work of Kurt Goldstein, which was also shaped by World War I. Goldstein was one of the first doctors to systematically work with soldiers who had survived severe brain injuries. Goldstein's description of the mechanisms that enable people to cope with such an extreme situation as cortical lesions led him to the concept of a "catastrophic situation," which threatens not only the individual's relationships with their environment, but also their very personal integrity. A catastrophic situation is incompatible with life in the long term, and therefore the organism chooses any means to overcome it. This can be disconnection from the surrounding environment, derealization, disconnection from oneself, depersonalization, or simply loss of consciousness. The important thing, however, is that these are not the consequences of some functional deficit, but rather manifestations of adaptation. A catastrophic situation provokes a catastrophic reaction, which is adaptive behavior even when certain possibilities for behavior and experience are closed off. Self-restraint is a manifestation of the need to survive. However, according to Goldstein, the key distinction between adaptive mechanisms lies in the difference between the tendency toward self-preservation and the tendency toward self-actualization. Catastrophic situations occur to some extent in every human life because they result from adverse living conditions. The difference between a traumatized and a non-traumatized individual is that the traumatized person, in the context of the need for self-preservation, resorts to long-term limitation of their possibilities and constant repetition of the same behavior, while the non-traumatized individual can afford to discover new possibilities of behavior, even if they risk going through catastrophic situations. It is the difference between conservative and progressive life tendencies.

Another concept that describes adaptation mechanisms in the context of trauma is offered by Malabou in her phenomenology of brain plasticity. In the context of trauma processing, Malabou distinguishes between destructive plasticity, which represents maladaptation to trauma, and constructive plasticity, which is a model of successful adaptation. While destructive plasticity manifests itself in being stuck in the traumatic moment and its permanent repetition, constructive plasticity is characterized by overcoming the traumatic moment, discovering new

possibilities of relating to the world, oneself, and other people. The concept of destructive plasticity also allows us to take into account the self-destructive tendencies (suicide, alcoholism or drug abuse) that are characteristic of PTSD.

traumatic

Petr Kouba

We label as "traumatic" anything that causes trauma. The question, however, is how to understand a traumatic moment. In her article "Post-Trauma: Towards a New Definition?", Malabou distinguishes between two possible ways of looking at trauma. According to her, the first approach is represented by psychoanalysis, from Freud to Lacan to Žižek. The second approach is represented by contemporary cognitive science and neurobiological approaches to trauma, to which she herself subscribes. While the psychoanalytic approach focuses on the experience of trauma with its internal immanent determination, the second approach views trauma as an event that comes from outside without any prior connection to the structure of subjective experience. The traumatic moment can therefore be understood either as *Erlebnis* or as *Ereignis*. If, in the first case, the internal structure of experience plays a major role, this means that every trauma is experienced on the basis of past traumatic moments. In this sense, trauma always already happened, and this "always-already" can refer back to the *Urtrauma*, such as suffocation during passage through the birth canal. A traumatic moment understood as an event, on the other hand, means that it is a singular event that brings radical discontinuity into human life, disrupts the personal integrity of individuals, and prevents them from remaining themselves to such an extent that they cannot relate meaningfully to their past. The post-traumatic subject here is not the same as the pre-traumatic subject. A traumatic moment is, by definition, something that cannot be anticipated or appropriated on the basis of previous experience. It is a shocking, disruptive event that transcends the possibilities of any internalization. It makes no sense to ask about its subjective meaning, because from the point of view of subjective experience it is profoundly meaningless.

If Malabou supports the possibility of understanding the traumatic moment as an event, the question remains whether such a perspective

can also be applied to long-term traumas. In connection with traumatic situations that place a long-term burden on adolescents and young people, Bessel van der Kolk speaks of "developmental trauma." This can occur not only as a result of dysfunctional families, alcoholism, and drug abuse in the family environment, or long-term sexual abuse, but also as a result of extreme poverty, parental unemployment, or homelessness. In all these cases, it is necessary to consider the devastating impact on the psyche and personality of adolescents, which subsequently has a negative impact on society as a whole in the form of increased criminality and a higher number of mental disorders.

It seems rather difficult to apply the category of "event" used by Malabou who follows the example of cognitive science and neurobiology, when describing developmental trauma. An event always suggests the impression of a sudden, unexpected moment, whereas developmental trauma involves long-term effects over many months or years. It is a long-term negative experience, often in the form of psychological deprivation and unfulfilled developmental needs. Such traumatic effects also pathologically shape human experience, whether it be basic trust in the world, the ability to enjoy life, to have plans and visions for the future, or to cherish warm memories of the past. It is therefore clear that research into traumatic moments is still an open question.

U

underrepresentation

Ingrid Hoofd

The root 'representation' refers according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) to "an image, likeness, or reproduction… The fact of being represented in a legislative or deliberative assembly." This definition reveals the double meaning of the term 'representation' which can point simultaneously to *political* representation (the socio-material definition, German *vertreten*) and *media* representation (or the aesthetic definition, German *darstellen*). The distinction in German between the two forms is from Karl Marx, who considered the material-economic realm the root cause of class oppression and exploitation, and largely ignored the aesthetic-cultural realm. It is noteworthy here that the term 'underrepresentation' according to the OED entered the English language in the 1890s, as this signals the moment when western nation-states increasingly started to engage in democratic processes via the media (such as newspapers and later radio and television). Underrepresentation then may refer to either a lack of imagery or depictions of certain groups of people or communities in the media, or to the dearth of representatives from certain marginalized groups or communities in democratic and legislative institutions. Especially anti-racist, feminist, anti-classist and queer communities have since the late 1900s fought incessantly – and with some success – for sufficient representation in politics and the media in order to ensure that their voices and perspectives are seen and heard. In this logic, to ensure sufficient and equal representation in the media is conceptualized as facilitating the political representation of certain groups under democracy. Underrepresentation of a certain group or community in the media and in politics, in this schema, is then always seen as undesirable.

This quest for sufficient or equal representation, however crucial for minority groups, nonetheless runs into a couple of issues. The first issue is the assumed relationship between media representation and the goal of inclusive and fair democratic procedures. Especially with the advent of

social media in which a plethora of marginalized and even fringe groups can express their voices and concerns, it becomes exceedingly clear that there is no direct causal line from media to political representation. Moreover, the quest for visibility betrays the ocular-centrism at heart of western culture. The second issue is whether the actual representation of minority groups really leads to a proper diversity of (potentially clashing) opinions and perspectives. Political as well as media representatives may appear to 'speak for' their constituency while in fact they may be privileged individuals who largely agree with or speak 'with the tongue of' the ruling classes or dominant groups. In other words, the underlying problem is one of a simplistic identity politics, which assumes individuals who belong to the same group have the same essential attributes or interests. This problem returns today especially in the many 'diversity, equality and inclusion' (DEI) efforts in government as well as the corporate sector. DEI efforts under a neoliberal regime, as black feminists like bell hooks have argued, often result in a superficial acknowledgement of differences while actually depoliticizing and homogenizing the available perspectives in an organization. In this equation, lessening the underrepresentation of a group unfortunately may do little to actually alleviate persistent structures of exclusion and marginalization.

underrepresented

Małgorzata Mączko

Systemic power imbalance leads to the underrepresentation of 'social minorities' in many areas of life: from politics, academia and media to the medical field. **Underrepresented** groups continue to fight for the right to self-determine and to represent their own interests and identities in the public sphere. Affirmative action, DEI initiatives, and legal frameworks – first established in the 1960s – sought to reduce social inequalities, and to increase minority access and visibility in education, culture, business and government, among others. Such measures should be accompanied by a systematic reform that would challenge and overhaul the widespread social and cultural bias which leads to underrepresentation in the first place.

Much of the current conversation about representation is concerned with minorities' portrayal in the media – or rather, the lack thereof. The

study of cultural representation of marginalized groups stems from post-colonial and cultural studies. The discursive construction of social difference means that representation itself is a form of power: those who control the tools of media production can also shape our shared imaginary. Media discourse determines whose histories are remembered, but also holds the power to silence dissenting voices. The dominant media narrative has always privileged the majority and shunned any signs of perceived "otherness". This power imbalance led to the obvious disenfranchisement of a large segment of society, but throughout the years different institutions have attempted to challenge the unjust status quo. American art, literature, and cinema have become increasingly diverse, showcasing minority talent and perspectives. Television, popular music, and digital platforms have also expanded opportunities for historically excluded voices, though such gains are subject to cycles of inclusion and erasure.

Currently, these efforts to broaden the scope of minority representation in various areas of public life are met with increasingly drastic counternarratives. The U.S. and its current administration lead the way in dismantling initiatives that challenge various forms of underrepresentation. Changes in policy target media and culture, sites of collective memory, and scholarship that interrogates the very foundations of minorities' underrepresentation. Historical narratives that recognize their achievements and struggles are branded as "corrosive ideology" and face political backlash. Federal websites and museum displays were recently purged of DEI content, erasing the histories of racial and ethnic minorities, as well as queer and transgender communities. These orchestrated efforts seek to reshape American collective memory. They also embolden other countries and leaders to follow suit, resulting in a world-wide political and cultural shift.

Instead of challenging underrepresentation and giving underrepresented communities a platform to discuss and depict their own identities, histories, issues and hopes for the future, the current tendency is to step back from such measures. Attempts to limit the visibility of social minorities in the U.S. cultural and political discourse raise the questions of how history is told, whose identities are validated, and what forms of belonging define the nation.

underserved

Dorotka Papoušek

UNDERSERVED – adj. (of an area or group of people) inadequately provided with help, products or services

You wake up one day with a layer of plexiglass between you and the world. You go brush your teeth, but the toothpaste can't get through. You go to work and your boss remarks that something is different with you, is there something wrong? You say you don't feel too well, but you don't know how to put it into words,

no, my teeth don't hurt

no, it's not a headache

no, no, no. (How do you even say out loud that you have a layer of plexiglass around you?)

Your boss watches you work for an hour, then sends you home, telling you to go see a doctor. The plexiglass is sturdy, heavy, uncomfortable, yet floats airily around your body, wherever you go. It's exhausting, getting through doors, ignoring people's stares, the sun warms the inside of the plexiglass a little bit too much.

The doctor's office is full, you sit down in slight gloom and reluctantly wait. You wonder whether you ate something foul, whether you slept well, whether you did something wrong.

Two grueling hours go by.

When they finally call you in, the nurse tries to take your blood. She yells at you for not having a hole in the plexiglass for the needle of her syringe. She's mad she can't measure your blood pressure, so she just hurries you on into the doctor's office.

The doctor stares you up and down, eyebrows raised, asking you why you have come this late? Were there no signs before? When was your last routine check-up?

You're tired and teary-eyed.

You don't know.

You woke up like this.

They schedule you for an operation. Your plexiglass needs to be removed. Fast.

Can't they just shatter it, you ask.

No, plexiglass doesn't work that way.

…

You wake up hooked to an infusion in your hospital bed. The doctor is leaning in with eyes full of pity. They couldn't remove the entire thing. Too risky, too costly. It's part of your body now. But they made some holes in the plexiglass, so you can eat and breathe more properly, isn't that nice? So you'll live, and that's always swell.

…

Friends say it's ok, that they understand. But it's annoying to find a restaurant or a bar to meet up at with you, it's not usual for these spaces to provide room for you. Your boss also understands. But your constant check-ups and health complications do not make you a worker who is productive enough. Your partner understands. But they've grown distant and don't want to touch you anymore. Everybody understands that you're underserved. Everybody understands.

…

According to Public Law 106–402, 114 Stat. 1688 from October 30th, 2000[1], underserved individuals and populations include any minority who might be disadvantaged due to race, ethnicity, and/or disability, and whose status prevents them from regularly participating and contributing to community life.

V

victims

Babson Ajibade

Not too long ago, the meaning of "victim" was a thing or person that suffers some loss or harm resulting from a helpless circumstance, act, or other persons' actions. In that sense, there was a direct causative link between the impacted person(s) (victimhood) and the actions of the impinging phenomena or individual. Framed this way, *impact* used to be what identified who *the* victim is, in any situation – rather than being determined by the fascistic whims of anyone's imagination. But that was in a realer world, when the free world's democracy had its ideals sacred, without the glib replacement of functional reasoning, with uncritical herd mentalities.

No voice else, perhaps, exudes rhetoric that upturn the values of the free world democracy, than that of the 47th occupier of the White House. His words reach back in times and spaces – resonating with the unideal that the Civil Rights Act was believed to have pacified and put on the paths of social change. Signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on July 2, 1964, the Act prohibited public space discrimination, provided for schools' and public facilities' integration, and illegalized employment discriminations[1]. While Thomas Jefferson wrote that "all men are created equal" 188 years prior, the civil rights movement achieved greater equality, rather than complete equality – bringing African American lived realities closer to better[2]. After 60 years of the Civil Rights Act[3], people in America and the world generally came to accept that tremendous equalities have been entrenched and racism with its outright glorifications has become unacceptable aberrations in society. Or, so it was assumed. But the 45th/47th person in the Oval Office pealed-off layers of pretended inhibitions that masked deep-rooted racism and white supremacist practices in society – using overtly racist rhetoric. The 2016 and 2024 presidential campaigns, and his first and second tenures in the White House attempt to turn back time by dismantling efforts to address racial

injustice, xenophobia, and systemic racism against Black, Middle Eastern, South Asian, Latino, and other immigrants of color, and to justify exclusionary immigration policies[4]. We need make no mistakes; in using this unabashed rhetoric, Trump knows not just his audience and their uncritical nature, but also that there is a racial coloration that communizes their ways of seeing. The results have been the unleashing of previously shy demons of exclusionary racism in the US. However, so easily unleashed, these demons of civil liberties may be much too difficult to call back, not least because of the upturning of "victimhood", in Trumpian thought. For, in the Trumpian upturned narrative, "victims" are not the excluded racial others in America – who are unemployed, underemployed, underpaid and racially profiled for systemic victimization. Rather, "victims" refers to white Americans that are on the good side of the systemic victimization, but "victimized" by the powerlessness of racial others. Welcome to the Trumpian America.

vulnerability

Julian Reid

In recent decades, vulnerability has become a central term in political, academic, and cultural discourse. Where the 20th century emphasized security (national, economic, personal) the 21st century increasingly foregrounds our shared fragility. Climate crisis, economic instability, and political collapse have reshaped how we understand ourselves: not as secure subjects, but as inherently vulnerable ones.

Progressive movements and theorists often embrace this shift. Thinkers like Judith Butler argue that vulnerability is not a weakness to overcome, but a condition that unites us and fosters empathy, care, and solidarity. Yet this celebration masks a deeper ambiguity. While vulnerability can be a tool for inclusion, it can also function as a mechanism of control.

Authoritarian populists including Donald Trump have seized upon this cultural moment by ridiculing vulnerability and mocking those who express or embody it. His administration went so far as to ban the term in official health documents, alongside others like "diversity" and "transgender." Vulnerability, for Trumpism, is weakness; something to be denied or destroyed. This is not just anti-intellectualism; it's a calculated

rejection of an entire political lexicon associated with care, recognition, and interdependence.

This poses a dilemma for the Left. In rejecting the Right's fetish for strength and dominance, progressives risk idealizing vulnerability as an identity or moral good in itself. But vulnerability is not neutral. It has deep theological roots in Christian thought, where it originally signified spiritual deficiency; a wound, a lack, a need for salvation. Today, those connotations persist. Vulnerable populations are often positioned as needing intervention, protection, or governance, by the state, NGOs, or humanitarian actors.

In this sense, vulnerability is not just a description of suffering. It is a political technology. It shapes how people are classified, governed, and made legible to systems of care and control. As I've argued in my own work, neoliberalism actively cultivates the vulnerable subject: one who sees themselves as exposed and powerless, and who therefore must internalize resilience and responsibility. This depoliticizes suffering and reframes structural injustice as individual fragility.

The social sciences, too, have taken up vulnerability with enthusiasm. In aid work, for example, being labeled "vulnerable" can determine who receives resources. But these labels often reinforce stereotypes and strip people of agency. Vulnerability becomes a static identity rather than a situational condition.

Gender politics adds another layer. Feminist theorists have used vulnerability to challenge patriarchy and demand care. Yet this can entrench binaries (women as vulnerable, men as agents) and elevate suffering as a source of moral authority. Vulnerability becomes performance, and victimhood a form of legitimacy.

We must critically assess how and why we use this concept. Vulnerability can open space for solidarity, but it can also justify paternalism, obscure structural harm, and feed neoliberal logics of self-responsibility. It should not be an endpoint, but a starting point for deeper inquiry into the forces that expose us, not only to harm, but to governance itself.

vulnerable populations

Babson Ajibade

Originating from the Latin word 'wound', vulnerability therefore recognizes obvious corporeality and insecureness of human existence. While it is based on the recognition that everyone is born defenceless and susceptible to feebleness, natural disaster and possible institutional failures[1], in contemporary usage, "vulnerability" is not limited to identifiable harm done to the individual body, but also to collectivities and subcommunities within society. However, while the concepts of vulnerability, equality and non-discrimination are thought to be somewhat controversial, the principles of non-discrimination and equality are explicitly defined in international legal frameworks and also interpreted by case law. Nonetheless, it has been suggested that the reliance on the rights to equality and non-discrimination is preferable to the ambiguous uses of the term, "vulnerability", since it is absent from instruments of international human rights[2]. For more nuanced apprehensions of vulnerabilities and vulnerable groups, the guiding principle of "intersectionality" has been recommended, to enable us apprehend vulnerability not as some socio-demographic groups' characteristic, but as the result of interdependent but differentiated social stratification processes that birth multi-dimensional marginalization[3].

Apprehending the United States' post-Civil Rights Act society within the "intersectionality" frame, enables us to see how privileges can become invisible: on the one hand, people automatically get unearned assets because their whiteness is socially normative and, on the other, the same privileges that gratify whiteness can/do make the impacts of racially profiled marginalization and policing of none whites invisible[4] to the advantaged segments. If anything, Trump's emergence has stretched and redefined the boundaries of "vulnerability", beyond the individual and collective, to include abstract constructs in society. Thus, while the "invisibility" of racially motivated marginalization harms social others, it is at the same time vulnerable to be weaponized by some in the advantaged cohorts. For instance, as soon as right-wing ally, Charlie Kirk, was shot and killed on September 11, 2025, Trump and Republican apologists immediately weaponized the "invisibility" to unfoundedly tell their uncritical followers that the assassination was carried-out by the "radical"

leftist, Democrat camp – even without waiting for investigations to conclude. As can be predicted, such rhetoric precipitated deflective calls for war[5] against the aggression of "radical Democrats" – essentially obfuscating the meaning of "vulnerable", and reinventing Trump's Republican and Maga crowds as the new "vulnerable populations" in the US. Thus, in Trumpian America, "vulnerable populations" will then mean right-wing Americans whose "whiteness" subjects them to the corporeal threat of democrats and colored people.

W

war regimes

Timo Dorsch & Raul Rosenfelder

Suppose they gave a war, and many rush to join. Suddenly, in Europe, war is the new peace, and peace is the new war. We understand this as a war regime. We refuse. Against it, we must establish a new anti-militarism.

The war regime combines the reality of a society without an immediate battlefield with one in which war becomes the all-determining guiding category. Its domain is not only the front line, but also everyday life, our workplaces, our relationships, even if they are thousands of kilometers away from the front. The war regime nestles around us and within us, occupying our thoughts and actions in our living present. States without battlefields and capital without markets come together.

Governments of all stripes – from progressive to proto-fascist – welcome the war regime: in order to enforce internal transformations. The goal is to discipline the population, to prepare it for war. Those who seek to be fit for war reckon with war always, never with peace, which is why Michael Hardt and Sandro Mezzadra (2025) write, 'a continuing or even permanent war regime begins to appear as a necessary component of both the organization of the world market and the conditions of capitalist development.'

The war regime has its own materiality. National economies must be reorganized and social roles redistributed. Industries must be reequipped for war, state tasks must be redefined, military symbols in public spaces must become normalized. Through unlimited rearmament and the expansion of the arms industry, military actors are moving to the center of social design. The welfare state, climate protection, cultural promotion – these and other areas of state activity are marginalized and reduced to reservoirs from which funds are drawn for the logic of war.

The war regime is never the final authority, but it permeates everything. It is *structurally* authoritarian, it needs masculinity, harshness, domination. The fragile social security of the welfare state is being replaced

by military and police security – both internally and externally, always directed against so-called enemies. In the name of war, it is rearranging interests, power and meanings. The consequence is a form of rule where war and economy intertwine, systematically suppressing democracy, social security, and public goods.

For all these reasons, the war regime evokes the urgent need for a counter-movement. Like the regime itself, this counter-movement must not remain confined within national borders, but must be conceived, organized and lived transnationally. One element of this anti-militarist counter-movement is desertion. It requires us to refuse and withdraw from the formation of camps – in a world of authoritarian power blocs, we cannot choose the side of our enemy's enemy. Similarly, as Raul Sánchez Cedillo (2022) demands and from whom the term 'war regime' is borrowed, it must be a constituent social movement, one that generates a new sociality within itself. In this sense, it is not only about refusal, but also about construction; not only about antagonism, but also about becoming popular.

woman

Bernd Herzogenrath

Woman. That word is a battle cry, a living, breathing repudiation of everything the manosphere holds dear. This is not just a word to them; it's a threat, a storm cloud gathering on their misogynistic horizon. They don't want to ban it because it's "unscientific" or "vague." No, they want it gone because it scares the shit out of them – because it speaks of a power the they can neither comprehend nor control.

The political and cultural landscape of the United States has undergone significant transformations. There is an observable trend of a reversion to conventional gender roles. This phenomenon is evidenced by survey results that indicate an increase in the number of individuals who advocate for women to resume traditional roles. A decline in support for equality and LGBTQ rights has been observed among young people. This development is part of a broader reactionary trend that is directed against social progress and is reinforced by events such as the Dobbs ruling on abortion rights and the debate on transgender rights. A prevailing concern is the discernible shift in societal values toward more conservative

inclinations, a phenomenon that carries profound ramifications for cultural and political spheres.

This is the ugly 'common-sense (anti-woke) face' of the 'You can grab em by the pussy with your greasy Chicken McNuggets Fingers'-attitude: Making America Backwards Again… At the same time, Jeff Durbin, Bradley Pierce, and their FAA are pushing monstrous "equal protection" bills that would label people who end pregnancies as murderers and drag them to the gallows… this is barbaric legal violence dressed up as policy. Durbin's open call for women who end pregnancies to "forfeit your right to live" is a brazen, genocidal-level cruelty that should shame anyone with a conscience. This coordinated assault (prosecuting miscarriages, denying life-saving care, and attacking birth control and abortion) is a vicious war on women's bodies and basic human rights that must be exposed and stopped.

For centuries, the word "woman" has been co-opted, twisted, and weaponized by those who'd rather see women erased than empowered. But this word has teeth, and it bites back. "Woman" encompasses not just cis women, but trans women, nonbinary individuals, and everyone who claims it as part of their identity. And that infuriates the insecure mediocrities who built their empires on the backs of those they tried to silence.

Take Simone de Beauvoir's immortal declaration in *The Second Sex*: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." This single sentence dismantles the entire MAGA ethos: a worldview built on crude binaries and the delusion that power belongs to the longest dick in the room. To the Trump administration, "woman" is dangerous precisely because it embodies what they cannot: complexity, resilience, and a refusal to be defined by the narrow categories imposed by lazy minds.

And let's be clear: banning "woman" isn't about creating clarity or avoiding confusion. It's about control. It's about trying to stuff the genie back into the bottle, to return to a world where women stayed in their place and dared not speak their truths. But their place, as history has shown, is wherever they damn well please – on the streets, in the voting booths, in Congress, and yes, in the White House.

What makes the Trumpian war on "woman" particularly pathetic is how transparent it is. They're not just afraid of the word – they're afraid of what it represents: defiance. This word, simple as it seems, contains centuries of revolution. From Mary Wollstonecraft to bell hooks, "woman" is the

word that has unseated tyrants, overturned empires, and reshaped societies. To strike it from the lexicon is not just censorship – it's cowardice.

But let's not mince words: these clowns will fail. "Woman" is not just a word – it's a force of nature. It's every march, every protest sign, every vote cast against oppression. It's a word that won't go quietly into the good night, no matter how many petty dictators and wannabe authoritarians wag their pudgy fingers at it. We call upon the full, untamed brilliance of women – your wisdom, your creativity, your boundless energy. The world has never needed you more, and the time has never been clearer: women must rise to the highest seats of leadership, to shape, to guide, to transform. Every vision, every breakthrough, every spark of insight is ours to bring. You will not wait on permission. You will not be silent. You will lead, and in leading, you will lift and transform the world.

The future is female, woman, trans, and nonbinary. And no amount of rage-tweeting can stop it.

And you can never take the SISTA out of reSISTAnce!

Afterword

Conceptual Battles in the 21st Century
New Paths Towards Other Modalities of the Political

Nicol A. Barria-Asenjo & Bernd Herzogenrath

The book that has just concluded is traversed by resistance. The journey from A to W is not innocent: we propose an incomplete alphabet, a deliberately unfinished encyclopedia, which is in itself a political and epistemological argument – the language of resistance is never finished, it never can be.

In this project we have sought to defend the thesis that conceptual resignification is a collective and situated task. No concept has an owner. That is why this book has brought together voices from Latin America, Asia, Africa, North America, and Eastern Europe: different geographies, different experiences, but a shared urgency.

There are themes that cluster and converse with one another throughout these pages: the body and gender (*female, trans, transgender, transsexual, sex, sexuality, pronoun, gender-affirming care*), race and exclusion (*BIPOC, race, racial justice, segregation, indigenous, minority*), and threatened democracy (*dictatorship, populism, polarization, civil disobedience, protest*). That multiple authors orbit the same themes from different disciplines is no coincidence – it reveals where the deepest wounds of the present lie, and the importance of careful reflection on the concept itself, on the power that inhabits it, on the battles waged within it. We have built an encyclopedia that does not claim to exhaust knowledge: an almanac – as the subtitle states – that recognizes that knowledge is seasonal, shifting, situated in time and in the body of the one who writes.

Language is a network, a path, the possibility of constructing the impossible. It is the subjective and the global, the individual and the common. Subversive and revolutionary potential is found essentially in language. At the same time, it is in language that we encounter the void and the ontological impossibility of finding a legitimate place or symbolic inclusion; it is in the territories of language that the subject finds defeat in historical, social, and political terms. A battle that must be restarted, rewritten, and resignified again and again – a circuit and a loop. We are

a canvas, we are a script that co-writes the history of the world and the horizon of humanity, and in this we have a task and a responsibility to assume and carry out.

From conceptual renewal, the construction of new concepts, and the necessary resignification of notions that have been repressed, emptied of meaning, or cynically depoliticized for political purposes, we find other existential modalities and other horizons for humanity. We are living in times when agnotology has become an indispensable tool in the face of discursive manipulations that culturally promote ignorance as a political instrument for implementing economic plans and strategies. Hatred and violence have permeated contemporary concepts. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, suspicion, distrust, and proximity became even more commonplace; the other, in their existence, embodiment, and becoming, became an agent of chaos. We are immersed in a race to capitalize on emotions, and in this, language has been chosen as a terrain of conquest.

The alteration and manipulation of present-day narratives, the incorporation of new conceptual meanings, the identification of certain concepts as enemies, and the extreme political measures of prohibiting certain terms in official documents, allow us to see the desperate attempt to impose absolute numbness and inertia on societies. Defending our language, our discourses, our meanings and significations, establishing and sharing our senses, has never been so urgent or so necessary.

In our time there have been systematic attempts to eliminate the political element from language, to produce conceptual mixtures that have left the concepts themselves in an abstraction in which the political attempts to reveal itself and survive. Under the arrival and attempted domination of the concept of "depoliticization," the political has sought to be eradicated from the territory of global politics, profoundly affecting contemporary civilizations. Truth lies at the heart of contemporary politics, which seeks to be conveniently altered and transformed according to capitalist logic and interests. Never before has it been so necessary to undertake the task and assume the responsibility of drawing new conceptual maps and fostering conceptual renewal.

Politics has never abandoned language. Words are not empty. Discourses are sites of struggle and transformation. This is one of the central ideas pursued in this project: to create a counter-dictionary that manages to map out the concepts that must be contested and resignified.

Words are always imbued with senses, symbolism, meanings, and significations that shape the subjective constitution of the individual. In this book we have worked with the concept, with concepts; it is not a dictionary that addresses all essential terms, but rather only those that the authors – in accordance with their particular experiences, their biographical development, their political orientation, their nationality, and their discipline – have identified as urgent, as wounded, as in need of new life. This book is itself a conceptual battle that produces new meanings carved from the search for new modalities of the political.

This book addresses sensitive issues, essential human themes that have remained as traces on the paper of public policies, with ephemeral practical progress, swept essentially under the rug by the passage of history and the priorities that year after year increase and strengthen, always oriented toward the economic, forgetting the human and humanity. It is a structure with political pillars that constitutes an immense range of emancipatory horizons and reinventions of the human – a sustained wager on the possibility that words can transform the world, or at least prepare the ground for those who will.

In times when banning words has become state policy, publishing a book like this is also an act of civil disobedience. Every concept worked through here is a trench. Every author, a custodian of meanings that power would prefer to erase, silence, or hollow out. Against administered silence, we oppose the fertile noise of resignification.

This book does not end here. It ends in the reader, in whoever takes a word and returns it to the world with different weight, different intention, different life. The *CONTRADICTionary* is, ultimately, a threshold: what comes next depends on the hands, the voices, and the struggles of those who continue this task. We are what we name – a writing, a text, a scriptural DNA (Barria-Asenjo, 2026). And in what we refuse to stop naming lies also what we refuse to stop being. The language of resistance, like all true resistance, does not conclude. It reinvents itself. This almanac is, first and foremost, a wager on humanity – imperfect, unfinished, but irreducibly alive in its words.

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Contributors

Jairo Gallo Acosta is a psychologist, holds a Master's degree in Psychoanalysis from the John F. Kennedy University of Argentina and a PhD in Social and Human Sciences from the Pontifical Javeriana University. He spent his postdoctoral fellowship at the Michoacana University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo, Mexico, and is currently Professor at the Cooperative University of Colombia and the National University of Colombia.

Sauvane Agnès holds a PhD in Linguistics from Paris-Sorbonne University. Her doctoral research focused on the morphosyntax of Algonquian languages, an indigenous language family of North America. Her work integrates the study of Indigenous languages with broader reflections on linguistic hegemony and the underlying colonial ideologies underpinning scholarly approaches to language. She situates her research within the field of linguistic diversity, with particular attention to the ways ethnocentrism shapes linguistic descriptions, especially of minoritized languages. She is a member of the Société de Linguistique de Paris and of the Society of Americanists, as well as an associate member of LACITO (Languages and Cultures of Oral Tradition) and CELTIC-BLM (Centre d'Etudes des Langues, Territoires et Identités Culturelles – Bretagne et Langues Minoritaires). Alongside her academic work, she is active in supporting linguistic plurality against the national hegemony of standardized French, serving as secretary of DPLO, an umbrella organization for the defense and promotion of Oïlic languages that bring together associations from France and Belgium. She is currently a teaching and research fellow (ATER) at Université Rennes 2 (France), where she teaches courses in General and French Linguistics.

Julie Agu (she/they) is a PhD student in English Studies at Aix-Marseille Université, France. She was awarded an Institut des Amériques doctoral scholarship for a dissertation on lesbian life writing and metaphors in queer Canadian and American literature from the late 20th century to the present. Their research explores lesbian, queer, and transfeminist

studies, with a focus on contemporary Canadian and American fiction and nonfiction. Julie now lives in Montréal, Québec.

Babson Ajibade is Professor of African Arts and Visual Culture in the Department of Visual Arts and Technology, University of Cross River State. He holds a PhD (Social Anthropology) from the University of Basel, and a PhD (Scene Design) from the University of Calabar. His research has covered popular culture, youth culture and African visual culture. A visual artist scene designer, Babson has consulted for a variety of organisations such as Future Histories, Talawa Theatre Company and the V&A Theatre Collections, London; Family Health International (FHI) and USAID-funded Malaria Action for States (MAPS) in Nigeria, among others. Babson is an inventor and innovator of several machines, including the BMV-6 medical ventilator, which ventilates 6 patients simultaneously.

José Félix Angulo Rasco is Professor of Education at the University of Cádiz. Member of the UNESCO Chair in Democracy, Global Citizenship, and Transformative Education. He has published 5 books, more than 60 book chapters and more than 50 articles in research journals. He has directed research projects in education in Europe and Latin America. He specializes in curriculum, social justice for education, and epistemology. ORCID: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6625-907X

Timothy Appleton studied Political Theory in Essex University with Ernesto Laclau. He is currently a Sociology Lecturer in the Camilo José Cela University in Madrid. He is co-editor of *Lacanemancipa*, the Spanish language Lacanian Left journal and author of *A Lacanian Conception of Populism: Society does not Exist* (Routledge, 2024).

Jesus Ayala-Colqui is Research Professor at Universidad Científica del Sur. He specializes in contemporary French philosophy and has written numerous articles and texts on the subject.

Ruben O. Balotol Jr. is a faculty member of Burauen Community College, Burauen, Leyte, Philippines. His research interests focus on the themes of ideology, violence, politics, Filipino philosophy, and film.

Nicol A. Barria-Asenjo is research director at the Universidad de los Lagos, Chile. She is a Chilean researcher in Social Sciences and Humanities linked to the University of los Lagos in Chile. Author of essays, books and academic articles published in specialized/academic journals and publishers. Editor of special issues of scientific and academic journals in Latin America and Europe. Author of *Global Manifestos for the Twenty-First Century. Rethinking Culture, Common Struggles and Future Change,* edited by Nicol A. Barria-Asenjo, Brian Willems and Slavoj Žižek (Routledge, 2023); *Political Jouissance,* edited by Nicol A. Barria-Asenjo and Slavoj Žižek (Bloomsbury, 2024), and editor of *José Luis Villacañas in Political Theory* (Routledge, 2026).

Bassey Ekpenyong Bassey holds a Ph.D. (in Film and New Media) from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria, and a master's degree in media studies from the University of Calabar, Calabar. She also has a double bachelor's degree, in Accounting and Theatre Arts from the University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria. Bassey is a lecturer with the Department of Performing Arts, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria. Her research interests are in the areas of Film and New Media Studies, Theatre/Dramatic Themes and Values, Digital Communication, Feminism and Research Mechanism.

Friederike Beier is a political scientist and research associate at the Margherita-von-Brentano Centre for Gender Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. Her research interests lie in feminist state theory, theories and politics of time, as well as queer theoretical, decolonial and materialist feminist theories and perspectives.

Jan Bierhanzl is a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences and teaches philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University. His main areas of expertise are the work of Emmanuel Levinas, the relation between phenomenology and Marxism and contemporary political philosophy grounded in phenomenology and critical theory. His most recent book concerns the relationship between aesthetics, ontology and politics (*Estetika ambiguity*, Prague: Karolinum, 2022).

Joff P. N. Bradley, a writer on European philosophy, is Professor of English and Philosophy in the Faculty and Graduate School of Foreign Languages at Teikyo University in Tokyo, and currently a visiting professor at the Czech Academy of Sciences. He has held visiting positions in India, the Philippines, South Korea, the UK, and Argentina, and currently serves as Vice President of the International Association of Japan Studies.

William Brown is Associate Professor of Film, D.Phil. University of Oxford. William joined the University of British Columbia from the University of Roehampton, London, in January 2022, having previously taught at the University of St Andrews, the University of Oxford and New York University Abu Dhabi. He is both a scholar and a maker of films, with work spanning fiction, documentary, the video-essay and hybrids of all three.

Jeremie Brugidou (IDEST/Iméra/MIO) is an interdisciplinary artist-researcher. Currently a post-doctoral fellow at IDEST (Institut Droit des Espaces et des Technologies associées) in Paris-Saclay, he was a senior fellow at the Institut d'Études Avancées Iméra in partnership with the Institut Méditerranéen d'Océanologie. His work falls within the fields of art philosophy, environmental humanities and arts-sciences research-creation. He is currently developing a socio-ecosystemic approach to thinking about the dark ocean, notably through bioluminescence.

Óscar Ariel Cabezas has lectured at various educational institutions around the world (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, University of British Columbia, Indiana University, among others). Currently, he is working on a book linked to the concept of "dual power", typical of political philosophy, where he will address the conflict of Chilean civil society after the social outbreak of 2019 in relation to the aesthetic and sensitive dimension of the phenomena of civil disobedience. Óscar Cabezas is director of publications and is in charge of our journal Aisthesis.

Javier Alejandro Camargo Castillo is a professor at Tecnológico de Monterrey. He holds a Ph.D. in Humanistic Studies from the same institution, where he is a member of the UNESCO Chair in Ethics, Peace Culture, and Human Rights. In Mexico, he is a Level 1 member of the National

Research System. He also collaborates at UNAM as a course lecturer. He serves as the Editor-in-Chief of *En-Claves del Pensamiento* and coordinates the book collection *Lumbral*. ORCID: 0000-0002-8484-8273

Santiago Castro-Gómez is a Colombian philosopher known for his work in the field of decolonial thought and political philosophy. He began his studies in Philosophy at the Santo Tomás University. He continued his studies at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main and at the University of Tübingen. He was a professor at the Javeriana and Santo Tomás universities in Bogotá and a researcher at the Pensa Institute. Santiago Castro-Gómez's work addresses problems related to critical theory, decolonial thought and political philosophy. His early work deals with tracing a genealogy of colonial legacies in Colombia and Latin America. He writes a series of works dedicated to exploring different aspects of political philosophy in authors such as Michel Foucault, Slavoj Zizek and Karl Marx. He has polemized with some currents of Latin American decolonial thought.

Dawn Chan, a writer and cultural critic, is the recipient of a Warhol Arts Writer Grant and a Thoma Foundation Arts Writing Award in Digital Art.

Martin Charvát is an associate professor at the Department of Media Studies and the head of the Centre for Media Culture Studies at Metropolitan University in Prague. He published dozens of articles internationally, and his main academic focus is on contemporary audiovisual culture and arts.

Paula García Cherep has a degree in Philosophy and a PhD in Humanities from the Universidad Nacional del Litoral (UNL) with a thesis on the philosophy of Max Horkheimer. She is a postdoctoral fellow at CONICET and professor at UNL. Her research interests are oriented towards aesthetics and Critical Theory. She published papers on these subjects in academic journals and contributed to collective volumes. She writes essays on cinema in specialized media.

Myles Chilton is professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at Nihon University, Tokyo, Japan. He is the author of *English*

Studies Beyond the 'Center': Teaching Literature and the Future of Global English (Routledge 2016); co-editor and co-author of *Asian English: Histories, Texts, Institutions* (Palgrave Macmillan 2021) and co-author of ten other books. He has a PhD from the University of Chicago.

Claire Colebrook is Cecil Parrish Memorial Chair of English Literature at Monash University, Australi. She has written books and articles on contemporary European philosophy, literary history, gender studies, queer theory, visual culture and feminist philosophy. Her most recent book is *Who Would You Kill to Save the World?* (University of Nebraska Press, 2023)

Antonio de Murcia Conesa is a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Murcia. Professor of Philosophy, History of Aesthetic Thought and Literary Theory at the University of Alicante. He is a member of the University of Alicante's research group Philosophical Narratives: Feminisms, Aesthetics and Politics, and the Complutense University of Madrid research projects on History and Ontology of the Present and Contemporary aesthetics: art, politics and society. He has carried out research stays at the University of Trier and the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin as part of a research project on cultural and political memory in the Spanish-American sphere. He has published works on the relationships between philosophy, hermeneutics, humanism and literature in European, Spanish and Hispanic American thought in specialised journals and collective works such as *The Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies*, *Ideology and the Middle Ages: Approaches from Southwestern Europe*, *Daimon: Revista de Filosofía, Res Publica: Revista de Pensamiento político, Anales de Literatura Española, Pasajes de pensamiento contemporáneo or Argumenta*. He has taught various courses and given lectures at different universities: on 18th-century hermeneutics at the University of Salamanca and the University of Toulouse; on the relationship between aesthetics and education at the Pontifical University of Santiago de Chile; on Baroque literary aesthetics and 20th-century philosophy of culture at the Complutense University of Madrid; and on aesthetic-literary theory at the Polytechnic University of Valencia.

Catherine Dale lives and teaches feminist theory, writing, and performance poetry in Tokyo, Japan. She writes about place and is currently preparing an MS for a book with Cambridge UP, about writer-walkers and emotion on city streets.

Laurence Delpérié is a sociolinguist specializing in language ideologies and minority languages, with a particular focus on the indigenous languages of North America. She holds a PhD in Sociolinguistics (Université Grenoble Alpes) and a PhD in Sociology (University of Ottawa). Currently an ATER (teaching and research fellow) at Université Rennes 2, she is an associate member of the CELTIC-BLM and LIDILEM research centers and serves as secretary of the Centre d'Études Canadiennes de Grenoble. Her research explores the intersections of language and colonialism, with a focus on hegemonic language ideologies and the discourses that assign social, political, and symbolic value to indigenous languages and speakers, particularly in the contexts of tourism and minority language advocacy. She has worked on discourses of language endangerment and revitalization, colonial missionary narratives, and strategies of linguistic valorization in indigenous contexts. Her work highlights the centrality of ideology in analyzing the power relations embedded in linguistic practices and in scholarly, institutional, and activist discourses alike. Beyond her individual research, she has also explored the links between language, ideology, and power throughout her teaching practice, notably in courses on discourse analysis and contemporary political rhetoric, where Donald Trump's discursive strategies have served as a recurrent case study. Her ongoing projects include a comparative study of colonial discourses on indigenous languages in Canada and regional languages in France, to trace the construction and continuities of raciolinguistic hierarchies in the early modern period.

Rick Dolphijn is a writer, educator, and curator, serving as an associate professor at Media and Culture Studies, Humanities, Utrecht University. His latest monograph is entitled *The Philosophy of Matter* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021).

Timo Dorsch is employed by medico international, a Frankfurt-based human rights organisation. In his writing, he mainly focuses on violence, capitalism, internationalism, and resistance.

Kuti Ezebiro is an Architect, Builder, Artist, and Writer. A registered member of the Nigeria Institute of Architects (NIA) and the Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON), he holds a PhD in Architecture from the University of Lagos, Nigeria. He combines design practice in the capacities of Principal Architect and Chief Executive Officer at Space Form Factory Limited with senior roles in scholarly research in architecture/urbanism, human settlements, and housing. He is currently involved in research on affordable and sustainable housing with emphasis on local materials and nearly-forgotten but functional traditional building techniques and methods and their potential applicability in modern housing and other built environments. He is the Founding Editor and Senior Research Fellow at Research Across Disciplines for Development (RADD). An active associate of the Goethe Institute and Heinrich Bohl Stiftung in Lagos, Nigeria, Kuti Ezebiro's research and publications span the fields of housing, design-mediated environmental and social ecology, poverty, and cultural conflicts in postcolonial built environments. He is the author of a stage play titled *The Malady of Venus* which won the Ford Foundation grant through the International Institute of Education (IIE), New York, in 1996. The same book has been listed in the Lagos State Booklist as a school text in literature for Junior Secondary Schools in Lagos, Nigeria. Ezebiro is also a recipient of the Caterina de Medici and Lagos State Black Heritage Festival Award of Excellence in Painting.

Joseph Grim Feinberg is a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences. His publications include *The Paradox of Authenticity* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2018), the co-edited volume *Karel Kosík and the Dialectics of the Concrete* (Brill, 2021), and the novel *A Demonology of Desires* (Sul Books, 2025).

Michaela Fikejzová is an assistant professor at the Department of Media Studies at the Metropolitan University in Prague, and also works at the Institute of Sociology at Czech Academy of Sciences. She published

dozens of articles internationally, and her main academic focus is on the media archaeology, gender studies, and critical feminist studies.

Obed Frausto is an assistant teaching professor in the Honors College at Ball State University. His areas of interest are the political philosophy of science and political philosophy. His latest published book is *The Power of the Metaphysical Artifact*. (Bloomsbury, 2023).

Jun Fujita Hirose is Professor of cinema studies and French civilization at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. Author of *Cine-capital. ¿Cómo las imágenes devienen revolucionarias?* (segunda edición aumentada, 2020, Tinta Limón), *¿Cómo imponer un límite absoluto al capitalismo? Filosofía política de Deleuze y Guattari* (2021, Tinta Limón), *Para acabar con la mirada. Más allá del escopocentrism*o (2022, Instituto de Estética UC).

Leon Gabriel is Associate Professor for Theater Studies at Ruhr University Bochum. His research focuses on performance politics, spatial arts, transnational and post-/decolonial processes in the scenic arts, on dramaturgies, assemblies, landscapes, and artistic working methods. Since 2023, he is principal investigator of the Research Training Group "Dramaturgies in the Afterlife of Violence: Transantional Theatre Between Global South and North" (www.dramaturgies-afterlife.de).

Antonio Rivera Garcia is a Professor of Aesthetics and Theory of the Arts at the Department of Philosophy and Society at the UCM, of which he is currently the director. He is also co-director of the journal *Res publica* since 2010. He currently directs the UCM research group "Contemporary aesthetics: art, politics and society". His research has focused on the history of political concepts and contemporary aesthetics. His latest book is *The Cruelty of Images: Aesthetics and Politics of Cinema* (Guillermo Escolar 2022).

Eva Gerace Gemelli is a Psychoanalyst, PhD in Psychology, professor, and writer, working between Argentina, Colombia and Italy. She is the founder of CPC, CPCM, Spazio Psicoanalitico Culturale a.Verare, and the Obstetric Psychoprophylaxis Service at the M. Pinto Hospital, in collaboration with the Psychè Cartagena de Indias Fndn. and the Psychè Italia Assoc.

Elixabete Ansa Goicoechea is Head and Associate Professor of the Interdisciplinary Institute of Aesthetics, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. Author of *Mayo del 68 vasco: Oteiza y la cultura política de los sesenta* (Pamiela, 2019), she has also published in academic journals such as *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, Aisthesis and Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, among others. Her most recent research project counts on Chilean public funds, Fondecyt Regular 1230292, and studies the following: "La crisis de la fábrica: arte y antropoceno desde 1989" [The Crisis of the Factory: Arte and Anthropocene since 1989].

Marcy Goldberg is a freelance film historian, university lecturer, translator and cultural critic. She holds an M.F.A. from York University (Toronto, Canada) and has been based in Zurich, Switzerland for many years. She moderates panel discussions and author talks on a variety of cultural, social and political topics, and consults for film festivals and cultural institutions in Switzerland and abroad. Together with Simon Spiegel and Andrea Reiter, she co-edited *Utopia and Reality: Documentary, Activism and Imagined Worlds* (University of Wales Press, 2020).

Oscar Guardiola-Rivera is an award-winning author. He is a Professor of Political Philosophy & Human Rights at Birkbeck College, University of London. His most recent book is A Hopeful Political Imagination (Bloomsbury, 2025).

Orit Halpern is a Lighthouse Professor and Chair of Digital Cultures at Technische Universität Dresden. Her work bridges the histories of science, computing, and cybernetics with contemporary studies of infrastructure, design, and urban planning. She is currently working on two projects. The first is a history of automation, intelligence, and freedom; the second project examines extreme infrastructures and the history of experimentation at planetary scales in design, science, and engineering.

Yogi Hale Hendlin is an environmental philosopher and public health scientist. Hendlin is Principal of the Feral Ecologies Lab, Assistant Professor at the Erasmus School of Philosophy, Core Faculty of the Dynamics of Inclusive Prosperity Initiative at Erasmus University Rotterdam, as well as

a Full Member of The Center to End Corporate Harm at the University of California, San Francisco.

Bernd Herzogenrath is a professor of American literature and culture at Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He is the author of *An American Body|Politic: A Deleuzian Approach* (Dartmouth College Press, 2010), and of many academic essays and articles. He is the editor of various edited essay collections including *The Farthest Place: The Music of John Luther Adams, Deleuze|Guattari & Ecology*, and *media|matter: the materiality of media, matter as medium*. His latest publications include the collections *The Films of Bill Morrison. Aesthetics of the Archive* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), *Film as Philosophy* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017), *sonic thinking* (Bloomsbury, 2017), *Practical Aesthetics* (Bloomsbury, 2020), and the multimedia international arts project *(c)ovid's metamorphoses* (meakusma 2023): https://meakusma.bandcamp.com/album/c-ovids-metamorphoses

Andreas Horchler, journalist for 35+years, broadcaster, podcaster, served as foreign correspondent for ARD German Broadcasting from 2013-2017, director of communications at a German Business School and team lead at ZEIT Verlag before founding his own communications and podcast business. www.podcon.de

Masayuki Iwase is originally from Japan and lives in Vancouver, BC, Canada for more than two decades. He received his PhD from the Department of Educational Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, BC, Canada). He holds an MA in Communication from the School of Communication and a BA in Sociology from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, BC, Canada). His latest co-edited book with Joff P. N. Bradley and Silvia Grinberg is entitled *Postmedia and the Pedagogy of Videolanguaging* (Brill, 2025). He has published two book chapters and four journal articles in the past 5 years. He is an associate editor for the *Video Journal of Education and Pedagogy*. He teaches as a term lecturer at several post-secondary institutions in the Greater Vancouver areas. The courses he delivers include the sociology of popular culture, the cultural industries in Canada and the world, digital media techniques,

and video design for social communication. He is also a documentary and experimental filmmaker and sound artist who blends philosophical inquiry with artistic expression, exploring the risks and possibilities of popular commercial culture and their impacts on the phenomenology of human memory and temporality.

Andreas Jacobsson, PhD in film studies, is senior lecturer in child and youth studies, Department of Education, Communication and Learning, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Jacobsson's research interests include interculturality, audiovisuality, philosophy, and global childhoods.

Am Johal is former Director of SFU's Vancity Office of Community Engagement and host of the Below the Radar podcast. He is the author of *Ecological Metapolitics: Badiou and the Anthropocen*e (Atropos Press, 2015), and co-author with Matt Hern of *Global Warming and the Sweetness of Life: A Tar Sands Tale* (MIT, 2018), and *O My Friends, There is No Friend: The Politics of Friendship at the End of Ecology* (Columbia, 2025).

Feroza Jussawalla, is Professor Emerita at the University of New Mexico., where she won the Alumni Teaching Award in 2014. She taught at the University of Texas at El Paso from 1980-2001 and at the University of New Mexico from 2001-2021. She is the author and co-editor of several books, primarily on Postcolonial Literatures: *Family Quarrels: Towards a Criticism of Indian Writing in English* (Peter Lang 1984), *Interviews with Writers of the Postcolonial World* (Mississippi:1997), *Conversations with V.S. Naipaul,* (Mississippi 1999), and *Emerging South Asian Women's Writing,* (Peter Lang, 2017). Her collection of poems is *Chiffon Saris(* 2003). Most recently she has co-edited *Memory, Voice and Identity: Muslim Women's Writing from Across the Middle East* (Routledge, 2020), and *Muslim Women's Writing, from South and South East Asia* (2022) She has thirty plus book chapters and articles, and several poems published separately. Her additional specialization is in D.H. Lawrence.

Silvia Kargodorianis a Licentiate in Psychology. Psychoanalyst, an University lecturer in Psychoanalysis 1 and 2 at UdeMM (University of the Mercantile Marine) and postgraduate lecturer in 'Contemporary Psychoanalytic Practice' at UNDAV (National University of Avellaneda).

Writer and essayist. Author of *Ágalma y el efecto sorpresa en las psicosis* (2021). Vergara ~ Collaborator and co-author of several national and international books. Researcher in social sciences.UBA/UdeMM/UNLa/Sigeva/Conicet.

Nadia Yala Kisukidi is an associate professor in the department of French literature, thought and culture at NYU. She specializes in French and African philosophy. She has published *Bergson ou l'humanité créatrice* (Paris, CNRS, 2013), *Dialogue transatlantique* (Paris, Anacaona, 2021) with the feminist and Brazilian activist Djamila Ribeiro, and a novel, *La Dissociation* (Paris, Le seuil, 2022).

Lutz Koepnick is professor of Cinema and Media Arts and the Max Kade Foundation Chair in German Studies at Vanderbilt University. He has written extensively on film, sound culture, new media, and contemporary art. His book publications include *Resonant Matter: Sound, Art, and the Promise of Hospitality* (2021); *The Long Take: Art Cinema and the Wondrous* (2017); and *On Slowness: Toward an Aesthetic of the Contemporary* (2014). In 2023, Koepnick launched the podcast Art of Interference: Art and Climate Change, which features thought-provoking conversations with artists, scientists, cultural critics, and activists about our climate emergency and the relationship between art, nature, and technology.

Bara Kolenc is a philosopher and artist from Ljubljana. She is Assistant Professor at the Department of Philosophy of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Her works include *Ponavljanje in uprizoritev: Kierkegaard, psihoanaliza, gledališče* (DTP Analecta 2014), *Figura dvojnika: od komedije k psihozi* (University of Ljubljana Press, 2024) and the forthcoming *Repetition and Subjectivity: Kierkegaard, Freud, Lacan* (SUNY, 2026). Currently, she works on her new book *The Age of Instanternity: The Subject of the Internet*.

Petr Kouba is a senior researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences. Besides that, he is teaching at Prague College of Psychosocial Studies. He is an author of 4 monographs and co-editor of 4 collective monographs. Petr's entries were prepared as part of

the project “Social Withdrawal and Mental Disorders in Post-Pandemic Times,” supported by the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

Gregg Lambert completed his Ph.D, in Comparative Literature and Philosophy in 1995 at the University of California, Irvine, under the direction of French philosopher Jacques Derrida. In 1996 he joined the English department at Syracuse University as an Assistant Professor, and became Full Professor and Chair of the Department in 2005. In 2008 he was appointed as the founding director of the Syracuse University Humanities Center and Principal Investigator of the Central New York Humanities Corridor, which he served until 2019. Professor Lambert is internationally renowned for his scholarship in continental philosophy and comparative literature, including baroque and neo-baroque aesthetics, contemporary issues in critical theory and the academic Humanities, and; especially for his many published writings on the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida. His recent writings cover a range of subjects and disciplines, including Continental Political Philosophy and the recent COVID-19 Pandemic. Currently, he is engaged in directing a new phase of the Perpetual Peace Project in response to the war in the Ukraine, and is completing a second volume of *Philosophy After Friendship* (Minnesota, 2017) on the conceptual persona of the partisan philosopher.

Christian Lammert is a political scientist at the John F. Kennedy Institute, Freie Universität Berlin, specializing in North American politics, inequality, and welfare states. He’s known for connecting academic research with public debate and is the President of the German Association for American Studies.

Eduardo Alberto León is a philosopher with a Ph.D. candidacy in Sociology from FLACSO-Ecuador. He holds degrees from Ottawa University and master’s degrees from FLACSO-Ecuador and UIDE. His research focuses on modern philosophy, ontology, and post-structuralism, with publications on thinkers like Deleuze, Guattari, and Žižek.

David Livingstone teaches literature at Palacký University in Olomouc Czechia. Originally from the USA, he emigrated in 1990, during the

Presidency of George Bush Sr., thinking politics could not get any worse. It did.

Andrey Logutov Andrey Logutov is a researcher in literary and media studies, currently employed at the Institut für deutsche Literatur und ihre Didaktik, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt. He received his PhD on Emily Dickinson's poetry at Moscow State University in 2008. As a Fulbright Visiting Researcher at SUNY Buffalo (2006–2007), he worked with Prof. Christanne Miller. Between 2009 and 2022, he held positions from Junior Lecturer to Associate Professor at the Department of Communication and Discourse Studies, Moscow State University, where he developed Russia's first university curricula in sound studies and song lyric analysis, supervised over 250 student papers, and organized several international conferences. Since 2023 he has been based in Frankfurt. His research focuses on sound studies, media theory, discourse analysis and popular culture. andrew.logutov@gmail.com

Ignacio López-Calvo is Presidential Chair in the Humanities and Professor of Literature at the University of California, Merced. He is the author of 32 books, including 9 monographs.

Małgorzata Mączko is a PhD candidate at the Jagiellonian University Doctoral School in the Humanities in Kraków, Poland. Her research focuses on depictions of racism and racial rhetoric in contemporary African American cinema. She works as a film educator.

Florian Maiwald holds a doctorate in philosophy and teaches at the University of Bonn. His expertise lies in the field of left-wing theories in political philosophy. In addition to academic contributions, he also publishes political essays and the podcast Keine Experimente (No Experiments), together with Sebastian Lenze.

Juan Antonio Fernández Manzano is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Society, Faculty of Philosophy of Complutense University of Madrid. His research focuses on liberal egalitarian political philosophy. He codirects the *Journal Las Torres de Lucca*.

Brian Massumi is the author of numerous works across philosophy, political theory, and art theory. His publications include *The Personality of Power: A Theory of Fascism for Anti-Fascist Life* (2025), *99 Theses for the Revaluation of Value: A Postcapitalist Manifesto* (2018), and *Couplets: Travels in Speculative Pragmatism* (2021). With Erin Manning and 3Ecologies Project, he participates in the collective exploration of new ways of bringing philosophical and artistic practices into collaborative interaction.

Francisco Vergara Muñoz is a sociologist specializing in Social Diagnosis from the University of Buenos Aires. His main areas of interest are State Theory and Political Economy, always informed by philosophy and rigorous engagement with the work of Hegel and Marx.

Mia Neuhaus is a Berlin-based sociologist and psychoanalyst. Her work engages with Critical Theory, focusing on subjectivity, conflict, solidarity, belonging, and recognition. She is co-editor of *Solidarität – eine reale Utopie* (2025).

Saul Newman is Professor of Politics at Goldsmiths University of London. He works on anarchist thought, political theology, post-truth and populism, legal theory, and aesthetics. He is the author of numerous books including: *Postanarchism* (Polity 2016); *Political Theology: a Critical Introduction* (Polity 2019); and *The Anarchist Before the Law: Law without Authority* (with Massimo La Torre, EUP 2024).

Doaa Omran teaches in the English department at the University of New Mexico. She co-edited *Memory, Voice, Identity: Muslim Women Writers from Across the Middle East* (Routledge, 2021) and *Muslim Women Writers from South and South East Asia* (Routledge, 2022).

Dorota Papoušek has a master's degree in philology, and works as a librarian and researcher in Vsetín, Czech Republic. She also creates eclectic artworks, and has had them exhibited in Slovakia, Czech Republic and Slovenia. She believes in poetry, exploring remote places, the act of listening and the truth found in cats' eyes.

Ian Parker is a psychoanalyst and Marxist, doing clinical work through the Red Clinic (https://www.redclinic.org/), and political work through Anti-Capitalist Resistance (https://anticapitalistresistance.org/) and academic work through the Discourse Unit (https://discourseunit.com/)

David Pavón-Cuéllar is a Marxist philosopher and critical psychologist. He is Professor at the Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, in Morelia, Mexico.

Massimo Perinelli has served as a migration consultant at the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Berlin since 2016, where he focuses on migration policy and social justice issues. From 2001 to 2015, he was a researcher and lecturer at the University of Cologne, specializing in film history and US history. Massimo is actively involved in remembrance initiatives, working closely with relatives of victims of right-wing and racist violence. In 2017, he initiated the people's tribunal "Dissolve the NSU Complex!" in Cologne, addressing the failures in investigating the National Socialist Underground murders. Since 2020, he has hosted ManyPod, a debate podcast on antiracism and migration. Selected publications: *Solidarität – eine reale Utopie* (Solidarity – A Real Utopia), co-edited with Mia Neuhaus and Lucas Mielke (Verbrecher Verlag, 2025); *Erinnern stören* (Disturbing Memory), co-edited with Lydia Lierke (Verbrecher Verlag. 2020); *Die Macht der Migration* (The Power of Migration), interview volume (Unrast Verlag, 2019).

Andrea Perunović is a Research Fellow at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade. He started his PhD studies in the Philosophy, Art and Critical Thought division of the European Graduate School (Saas-Fee, Switzerland) and obtained his doctoral degree in Philosophy from the University Paris 8 (Saint-Denis, France). His current research focuses on the notions of trust, belief and credit (as well as their opposites), from the standpoint of intersectional spaces that are to be found between continental philosophy, psychoanalytic theory and contemporary francophone theory. Andrea Perunović has published articles in scientific journals such as *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities, Las Torres de Lucca: International Journal of Political Philosophy* and *Bajo palabra: Revista de filosofía* amongst

others, and book chapters in collective volumes edited by Routledge and Bloomsbury. He is currently preparing a monograph for Routledge, provisionally entitled *Reinventing Distrust: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, Social Theory*.

Boris Podoroga is a philosopher specializing in political, social, and anthropological concepts of technology, with a focus on French theories (Leroi-Gourhan, Simondon, Stiegler), psychoanalysis, and the critique of German conservatism. He holds a Doctorate in Philosophy (Kandidat Nauk, RSUH, 2016) with a dissertation on Oswald Spengler's concept of Gestalt. He served as Junior Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy (Russian Academy of Sciences, 2017–2023) and Assistant Professor at the State Academic University for the Humanities (2018–2022), teaching modern and postmodern Western philosophy. His postdoctoral research at the University of Lille (2023–2025, PAUSE-Programme) focused on Bernard Stiegler's political anthropology of technical objects. He has organized and contributed to numerous international conferences, including the ICCEES XI World Congress (2025), and served on the organizing committee of "From Loops to Streams" (Goethe University Frankfurt, 2025). His publications include contributions to *War and Philosophy* (Bloomsbury, forthcoming 2025) and leading Russian journals on philosophy and media theory. Boris' work combines historical-philosophical analysis with contemporary debates on digital technology, attention, and technical individuation. He is fluent in Russian, English, and French, with extensive experience in lecturing, research collaboration, and academic event organization across Russia and Europe.

Simone Atenea Medina Polo is a philosopher and interdisciplinary artist based out of amiskwaciy-wâskahikan (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada). Academically, Atenea has published articles and book chapters in philosophy, psychoanalysis, and Marxism with collaborators and editors such as Nicol A. Barria-Asenjo, Slavoj Žižek, Julie Reshe, Vanessa Sinclair, Todd McGowan, and Duane Rousselle. As an artist, Atenea has put out multiple experimental pop music releases as pseudo-antigone and she works in theatre arts focusing on dramaturgy, acting, and directing.

Barnaby Ralph is a professor in the Graduate School of Humanities and Sociology at the University of Tokyo (https://researchmap.jp/BarnabyRalph?lang=en). His research and teaching work centres on rhetoric, critical theory, comparative aesthetics, and early modern studies.

Francesca R. Recchia Luciani is Full Professor of Contemporary Philosophies and Gender Studies at the University of Bari Aldo Moro (Italy), where she is responsible for gender policies. Coordinator of the national Doctorate in Gender Studies, her research interests span the history and critique of human rights theories, the hermeneutics of totalitarianism, and feminist and queer philosophies. Her most recent publications are a monograph dedicated to Jean-Luc Nancy entitled *Il corpo pensato*, and the book *Filosofe. Dieci donne che hanno ripensato il mondo*.

Silvia Redon Pantoja is Professor of Education at PUCV (Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso). She holds a PhD in Education from the University of Cádiz, Spain. She holds a Master's degree in Education from the Catholic University of Salta, Argentina. Member of the UNESCO Chair in Democracy, Global Citizenship, and Transformative Education. Representative of the Government of Valparaíso for the new public education. Evaluator for the National Research Agency for the Republic of Chile. She has directed research projects in Latin America, Specializes in Democracy, Citizenship, and Education, and Qualitative Research. She is the author and co-editor of the book *Qualitative Research in Education* published in Buenos Aires by Miño y Dávila in 2017. She is also the author and co-editor of the book *Citizenship and Education: Utopia or Reality?* (2024). ORCID: http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4053-6654

Julian Reid is Professor of International Relations at the University of Lapland and Research Fellow at CAPAS, Heidelberg University.

Bryan Reynolds (PhD Harvard University) is Claire Trevor Professor, Distinguished Professor, and Chancellor's Professor at the University of California, Irvine, and the Artistic Director of the Amsterdam-based Transversal Theater Company. He is the author of many books, including, with Mark LeVine, *Art Beyond the Edge: Creativity and Conflict in a World on Fire*; with Guy Zimmerman, *Excess & Joy: Philosophical*

Transversations; *Intermedial Theater: Performance Philosophy, Transversal Poetics, and the Future of Affect*; and *Transversal Subjects: From Montaigne to Deleuze after Derrida*. His plays and musicals have been produced at over 75 venues in 22 countries in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

Miriam Debieux Rosa is Vice Dean of Inclusion and Belonging at the University of São Paulo and a Full Professor at the Institute of Psychology at USP. She coordinates the Psychoanalysis, Society, the Politics Laboratory (PSOPOL/USP) and the Veredas Group: psychoanalysis and immigration (PSOPOL/USP).

Martin E. Rosenberg researches across science, philosophy and the arts, with a special interest in the cultural history of the sciences of "emergence." He currently writes about the cognitive neuroscience of jazz improvisation, and until recently, performed on guitar in the Pittsburgh area.

Raul Rosenfelder studies political theory in Frankfurt am Main, focusing primarily on authoritarianism, militarisation and racist securitization.

Gonzalo Salas is a reader, writer and critic. His intellectual trajectory in the literary and cultural field of the first half of the twentieth century in Chile". He was coordinator Task Force History of Psychology Interamerican Society of Psychology (2017-2021). Peer evaluator of doctoral programs, National Accreditation Commission (CNA), evaluator of panels for Fondecyt (ANID) and evaluator of Becas Chile (ANID). Researcher in History of Psychology. Editor of *History of Psychology in Latin America. A cultural approach* (Springer, 2021), author of *Historia de la Psicología en Chile, 1889-198*1 (Editorial ULS, 2009)*; Historias de la Psicología en América del Sur. Diálogos y perspectivas (Editorial Nueva Mirada 2014); Raíces de la Psicología en Chile* (Editorial Adrus 2015), among other publications.

Jens Schröter, Prof. Dr., is chair of media studies at the University of Bonn since 2015. Director (together with Prof. Dr. Anna Echterhölter; PD Dr. Sudmann and Prof. Dr. Alexander Waibel) of the VW-Main Grant

"How is Artificial Intelligence Changing Science?" (Start: 1.8.2022, 4 Years); PI (together with Felix Hüttemann) of the VW-Research Project "The Computerized Palate" (Start: 1.4.2025); Winter 2021/22: Fellowship, Center of Advanced Internet Studies. Recent publications: *Medien und Ökonomie*, Wiesbaden (Springer 2019); (together with Christoph Ernst); *Media Futures. Theory and Aesthetics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave 2021); (together with Andreas Sudmann et al., ed.); *Beyond Quantity. Research with Subsymbolic AI*,(Bielefeld: Transcript 2023) (together with Christoph Ernst); *UFOs. Mediale Sichtunge* (Stuttgart: Metzler 2025); *3D. Historia, teoría y estética de la imagen técnica transplana* (Buenos Aires 2025) (together with Christoph Ernst, Katerina Krtilova, and Andreas Sudmann, eds.); *Handbuch Medientheorien des 21. Jahrhunderts*, (Springer, ongoing online and in print, 2026); Visit www.medienkulturwissenschaft-bonn.de / www.theorie-der-medien.de / www.fanhsiu-kadesch.de

Cameron Seglias is Assistant Professor of American Studies at the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt. His first monograph, *Settling Debt: Antislavery and Colonial Crisis*, is forthcoming with Cornell University Press in 2026. Other work is forthcoming with or has appeared in *Early American Literature, Journal of Early American History*, and the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography.* His next book project is currently entitled *Fluid* and examines the connections between the history of sexuality, secularism, and the literary imagination in twentieth-century America.

Julita Skotarska is a doctoral student at the Institute of Philosophy and Religious Studies in the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. Her research focuses on the ethical status of nonhuman nature between the traditions of utilitarianism and posthumanism.

Dan Swain is an assistant professor at the Czech University of Life Sciences and researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences. His research concentrates on the theory and practice of social movements, focusing on concepts of prefigurative politics, radical democracy and utopianism. He is the author of three books (most recently *Social Cohesion Contested* (2024, with Petr Urban),

and his work has been published in journals including *Political Studies*, *Contradictions* and *Krisis*.

Morten Tønnessen is professor of philosophy at University of Stavanger, Norway, and Secretary of the Nordic Association for Semiotic Studies (NASS).

Ondřej Váša is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague. He is the author of numerous studies and several books. In 2023, he edited a special issue of the *Philosophical Journal* (published by the Czech Academy of Science) and co-edited a special section of the American journal *Semiotica*.

Marina Vedernikova holds a degree in History from a university in a big Russian city and she had the opportunity to study abroad in Berlin as part of an exchange program. Her academic background includes a thesis on the ideology of the Conservative Revolutionary movement in Germany during the 1920s-1930s and its connection to the ideology of Nazism. Although she has not been formally involved in academia since graduating, she has maintained a strong interest in the ways history is reinterpreted and manipulated for political purposes. In recent years, she's been particularly intrigued by the phenomenon of revolutionary turns to the past – especially the invention and imposition of "historical traditions" by leaders of new conservative movements. This topic has become alarmingly relevant in contemporary discourse. Living in Russia, a country that has inspired many figures behind the global right-wing shift, including Donald Trump himself, has given her a unique perspective on these dynamics.

José Luis Villacañas Berlanga is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy and Society at the Complutense University of Madrid, which he founded and directed from 2009 to 2022. He is also an adjunct professor at the Institute of Philosophy of the Diego Portales University in Santiago, Chile. After his retirement, he was recognized as the founding editor of the journal *Res Publica* and honorary editor of *Anales de Historia de la Filosofía*. For decades, he directed the Research Group on History and Ontology of

the Present at the Complutense University. His most recent publications are *Psychic Sublime and Aesthetic Education* (Santiago, Chile, 2024), *Ortega y Gasset: A Spanish Philosophical Experience* (Madrid, 2025); *Giorgio Agamben: Living Justice* (Madrid, 2024); *Max Weber in Context: Philosophy and Social Science Following in Kant's Footsteps* (Barcelona, 2025), and *Earth or Being: The Fundamental Decision of Contemporary Philosophy* (Madrid, 2026).

Karla Villapudua, holds a PhD in Educational Sciences and a BA in Philosophy. She is a research professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexico.

Brian Willems is professor of literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Split, Croatia, where he is the director of the Studia Mediterranea center. He is most recently author of *Anger and Change in Korean American Literature* (2025) and co-editor, with Nicol Barria-Asenjo and Slavoj Žižek, of *Global Manifestos for the Twenty-First Century* (2023).

Alexey Zhavoronkov is Senior Lecturer at Taylor's University, Malaysia. He has PhDs in Classical Philology and Philosophy. His main interests include Kant, Nietzsche, philosophical anthropology, and the history of conservative thought.

Philosophy/Political control & freedoms/Political activism

CONTRADICTionary: An Almanac of Resistance is a collective intervention into the politics of language at a time when words themselves are being policed, erased, and weaponized. Emerging from the suppression of terms like 'diversity,' 'intersectionality,' and 'climate crisis,' the project reclaims and expands this contested vocabulary through contributions from over 100 scholars, artists, and activists worldwide. Each entry interrogates how language shapes what can be known, said, and done, while offering new, situated meanings rooted in lived experience and critical inquiry. Neither dictionary nor manifesto alone, *CONTRADICTionary* operates as a living archive of dissent, embracing contradiction as method and multiplicity as strength. By transforming banned words into sites of analysis, imagination, and action, it challenges regimes of silence and invites readers to actively participate in redefining the terms that govern collective life.

Bernd Herzogenrath is a professor of American literature and culture at Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He is the author of *An American Body|Politic: A Deleuzian Approach*, and editor of *The Farthest Place: The Music of John Luther Adams; Deleuze|Guattari & Ecology;* and *media|matter: the materiality of media, matter as medium*. His latest publications include the collections, *The Films of Bill Morrison: Aesthetics of the Archive*; *Film as Philosophy*; *sonic thinking*; *Practical Aesthetics*; *Spectral Futures*, and the multimedia international arts project *(c)ovid's metamorphoses.*

Nicol A. Barria-Asenjo is a Chilean researcher in Social Sciences and Humanities linked to the University of los Lagos in Chile. Author of *Global Manifestos for the Twenty-First Century: Rethinking Culture*, and editor of *José Luis Villacañas in Political Theory*; *Common Struggles and Future Change* (with Brian Willems and Slavoj Žižek), and *Political Jouissance* (with Slavoj Žižek).

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