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APA STUDIES ON

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A. MINH NGUYEN, EDITOR

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FROM THE EDITORS

An "Old" Solution to a "New" Problem: Induction in Eastern and Western Philosophies

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Human beings are creatures with limited cognitive and intellectual capacities. We come to have the knowledge and powers that we do have on the basis of learning and experience. Yet our experience, itself limited, often leads us astray, even in what may seem the simplest of matters. So it is that the philosophical problems of induction get a grip on us. This special issue on "Induction in Eastern and Western Philosophies" includes five articles dealing with challenges to induction and responses to those challenges by philosophers working across Indian and Euro-American philosophies. Three of these articles—by Kisor K. Chakrabarti, Gordon Haist, and Ethan Mills—originated in a session presented at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association Pacific Division in San Francisco. Titled "The Problem of Induction: East and West," the session was organized by Chakrabarti, chaired by Haist, and arranged under the auspices of the APA Committee on Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies. The remaining two articles—by Edward Johnson and Franco Manni—were written specifically for this issue.

The articles share a number of touchstones. The first is Cārvāka's rejection of induction and certain knowledge of causes in the sixth century BCE, influential not only for the classical Indian traditions but also for skeptical Hellenistic philosophy and, through that, modern European philosophy. The second is David Hume's "old" problem of induction, which, in Hume's formulation, is not, of course, nearly as old as Cārvāka. The third is Nelson Goodman's "new" riddle of induction. The fourth is the great thirteenth-century Navya Nyaya philosopher Gangesa's response to Cārvākan doubt. Together, the articles sketch out a geography of problems of induction and responses to the problems using these four touchstones as points of reference.

These points of reference should not be taken to be fixed points, for the reason that context matters and context differs. So how we read and situate these points also matters. Just to take one instance, as Mills points out, the Sanskrit word translated as "inference" (*anumana*) does not mean or denote reasoning in general, but rather a specific inferential form that was prized as the highest form of inference—"the gold standard of argumentation in classical South Asia," as Mills puts it.

In the first article, "The Anti-Generalization Move: The Standard Cārvāka Critique of Inference and Hume's Problem of Induction," Mills raises a number of important metaphilosophical questions in comparative philosophy, drawing on the Cārvāka schools and Hume's "old" problem of induction. Mills argues that there are a number of significant differences between the structure of Cārvāka's argument against induction and that of Hume's. Yet, Mills contends, both arguments rely (albeit to different degrees and in different ways) on what he calls "the Anti-Generalization Move": the claim that it is not rational to infer to the truth of general claims from a limited number of instances, though it may be unavoidable, practically necessary—even, in some sense, justifiable—to do so in ordinary life. Even noting this commonality at the level of generality he does, Mills suggests in closing, may obscure some of the crucial differences between the Cārvākas and Hume. And this raises some important issues for doing comparative philosophical work.

Chakrabarti argues in "The 'New' Riddle of Induction: Gangesa and Goodman" that the Grue Paradox, usually credited to Goodman, was anticipated by Gangesa, who lived in the thirteenth century in northeastern India. Chakrabarti explains Gangesa's solution to the paradox and contends that his solution is more satisfactory than some other attempted solutions offered by some recent leading philosophers.

Haist's article "Entrenchment, Postulation, and Phenomenal Evidence" provides an insightful comparison between Husserl's phenomenological approach and Gangesa's theory of "universal-based extraordinary sensory connection" (UBESC). Haist argues that both Gangesa and Husserl attempt to establish the priority of reason to perception by locating the former in the latter. Husserl succumbs, however, to transcendentalism and the felt need

to systematize philosophy. But, for Haist, Gangesa's UBESC sees the universal (the extraordinary) *in* the particular *as an aid* to perception and not as an attempt to transcend it. Haist suggests this is a more promising approach.

In his contribution to this issue, "So Far, So Good: Learning From Experience," Johnson situates the various problems of induction in relation to the more general human problem of learning from experience. This kind of learning occurs both in the sciences and in the everyday lives of individuals. In both, Johnson suggests, drawing on a variety of thinkers from Nelson Goodman and Karl Popper to Nancy Cartwright and Rom Harré, perhaps, in the end, we do what we do and make the best of it. More specifically, perhaps "making the best of it" means something like: In doing what we do, we learn—from the inside—how to do it better, without embarking on what John Dewey aptly calls "the quest for certainty" that involves looking for external standards of "betterness."[1]

In the fifth and final article, "The Various Theoretical and Non-Theoretical Functions of Induction," Manni situates the philosophical problems of induction dealt with in analytical detail in the earlier articles in historical context, specifically in relation to human practices outside the hard sciences narrowly conceived: big data analytics, historiography, and psychoanalysis. In these fields, the general principle of the consistency of Nature criticized so forcefully by Hume and the Cārvākas is not what is at stake—at least, not obviously. Instead, for Manni, the reliance on induction in these areas is better understood by turning to Popper's psychological critique of induction as a "myth" or an "ideology." Manni suggests, by reference to Benedetto Croce and Sigmund Freud, that historiography and psychoanalysis reveal the possibility of being psychologically liberated from this myth or ideology. We need not rely on the consistency of Nature, we can read Manni as saying. Instead, recognizing that its centrality to our lives (the need for predictability) is the result of larger historical and cultural forces, we can come to the transformative possibility of other ways of thinking and being.

It may be useful for the reader, after this brief summary of the articles in this issue, to revisit the Nyaya solution to the problem of induction as originally conceived, which plays an important role in the positive responses to the various problems of induction discussed in the issue. The theory of universal-based extraordinary sensory connection (UBESC) and the theory of counterfactual reasoning (CR) are the two most important parts of the Nyaya response to the skeptical challenge to the rationality of induction.

First, the theory of UBESC. This theory seeks to provide phenomenological evidence for empirical inductions like "all smoky things are fiery," which, the skeptic alleges, make unjustified claims about unobserved things based on observation of a limited sample of observed cases. The Nyaya school responds to this allegation by drawing a distinction between ordinary sensory connection and extraordinary sensory connection. The Nyaya holds that, in an empirical induction, all things about which claims are made are observed, though not by means of ordinary sensory connection, but by means of extraordinary sensory connection. This raises an obvious question: Why should extraordinary sensory connection be admitted? An argument for it is presented below.

After centuries of mutual criticism and comprehensive deliberation presented, preserved, and available in hundreds of Sanskrit philosophical works of exemplary originality, depth, and vigor (most of which are not discussed or reported by recent or contemporary specialists in Indian or comparative philosophy), the Nyaya articulates and defends the position that there are exactly four sources of knowing. These, in the order of epistemic priority (roughly translated), are perception (*pratyaksha*), inference (*anumana*), analogy (*upamana*), and testimony (*sabda*). Now, in an empirical induction such as "all smoky things are fiery," in some sense, one has awareness of all particular smokes and all particular fires. Which of the above four kinds of knowing should such awareness be subsumed under? Could it be inferential? No. A necessary condition of inference is the awareness that what is intended as the pervaded is pervaded by what is intended as the pervader. (For example, in "all smoky things are fiery," smoke is intended as the pervaded and fire is intended as the pervader.) Another necessary condition of inference is the awareness that what is intended as the pervaded belongs to what is intended as the inferential subject (*paksa*). (For example, in "the hill is smoky," when fire is sought to be inferred in the hill, the hill is intended as the inferential subject.) These conditions are not fulfilled in the present case.

Could the said awareness that all smoky things are fiery be analogical? No. For awareness of comparison based on similarity or dissimilarity, which is a necessary condition, is not fulfilled. Could the said awareness be from testimony? No. For awareness of an authoritative source, which is a necessary condition, is missing. The only remaining alternative is that such awareness is perceptual. But smokes and fires in distant times and spaces are included in "all smoky things are fiery." These cannot be perceived through ordinary sensory connection. Hence, the hypothesis of UBESC is introduced. In the Nyaya view, universals are common properties ontologically different from and inherent in the particulars of a natural kind.[2]

Since the universal is present in all particular instances of a natural kind, it is possible for one to be directly aware of all these particulars insofar as they are instances of a given universal. It is also claimed that such knowledge is phenomenologically presented as direct (*saksatkara*) and not as indirect (*parokasa*) and that only perceptual knowledge is direct. Hence, too, it is claimed, the hypothesis of UBESC makes sense.[3]

It may be noted that UBESC is not needed for awareness of the universals themselves. In the Nyaya view, universals are present then and there in all the particulars of a natural kind. Hence, universals can be known by ordinary sensory connection.

We now move on to the other important part of the Nyaya response to the skeptic's challenge to induction, viz., counterfactual reasoning (CR). Cārvāka, like Hume, argues

that empirical induction *(vyaptigraha*) is irrational because it involves circularity (*parasparasrya*). The Nyaya agrees that the charge of circularity is serious and must be addressed. The Nyaya also agrees that the doubt that an empirical induction may be false (*vyabhicara-samka*) is reasonable. For an induction confirmed in hundreds of instances may still be falsified by a single counterexample and the possibility of an as-yet-unobserved counterexample cannot be ruled out. Both concerns are sought to be addressed by CR. An empirical induction does need the support of favorable observation of positive instances (*sapaksa*) where both the intended pervaded (*vyapya*) and the intended pervader (*vyapaka*) are observed to be co-present. Induction may also need the support of favorable observation of negative instances (*vipaksa*) where both the intended pervader and the intended pervaded are co-absent. For example, the induction that "all smoky things are fiery" may be supported by observation of positive instances such as a kitchen where both smoke and fire are present. And it may also be supported by observation of negative instances such as a watery lake where both smoke and fire are absent.

It may be noted, however, that in some cases only positive instances are possible and the possibility of favorable observation of negative instances is ruled out. Again, in some other cases only negative instances are possible and the possibility of favorable observation of positive instances is ruled out.[4] However, additionally and importantly, the support of CR showing that denying the induction leads to an undesirable consequence is needed.

A specimen of CR providing epistemic favor and support (*anugraha*) for the induction that all smoky things are fiery is discussed in the second article in this issue. Another version of the argument developed by Bhavananda (sixteenth century) is presented below.[5] Bhavananda points out that, in an induction like "all smoky things are fiery," something (such as smoke) is intended to be the pervaded (*vyapya*). The intended pervaded (*vyapya*) is that the extension of which is not greater than (*anatirika-desa-vrtti*) the extension of the intended pervader (*vyapaka*), whereas the intended pervader is that the extension of which is not smaller than (*anyuna-desa-vrtti*) the extension of the intended pervaded. Now, suppose that the pervaded is not pervaded by the pervader. This supposition leads to an undesirable consequence—of inconsistency with one's own position, both Cārvāka and Hume being empiricists—which we shall describe as follows.

If the pervaded had been preceded neither by an aggregate including the pervader nor by an aggregate excluding the pervader, the pervaded would not have come into being. But the pervaded is observed to come into being, e.g., smoke is observed to come out of a lit cigar. So the consequent of the above conditional is false and it also follows that the antecedent is false. Accordingly, it follows that either (a) the pervaded is preceded by an aggregate including the pervader or (b) the pervaded is preceded by an aggregate excluding the pervader. Now, according to the foundational empiricist principle of observational credibility (OC), of two empirical hypotheses making factual claims, the one with observational support is preferable to the one without such support. Accordingly, (a), the hypothesis that the pervaded is preceded by an aggregate including the pervader, is accepted and not (b), the hypothesis that the pervaded is preceded by an aggregate excluding the pervader. What about the possibility that the pervaded may exist without the pervader in a distant time and space? To address this question, the induction that the pervaded is pervaded by the pervader may be modified as follows: The pervaded not separated from the preceding aggregate is pervaded by the pervader.

It may be noted that the above argument makes no use of induction in any step. Hence, the charge of circularity is ruled out. It also shows how logical truths can be combined with observation and the foundational empiricist principle of OC to counter the skeptical challenge to induction. The point is the following: If the skeptic engages in a dialectic that includes appealing to mere possibilities without observational support, it is appropriate, says Bhavananda, to offer a dialectical argument as a rejoinder. Furthermore, if the skeptic were doubtful about the need to speak or write, for example, to communicate, why would he unwaveringly have recourse to speaking or writing to communicate? Such conflict between what is said and what is practiced (*svakriya-vyaghata*), too, shows the illegitimacy of doubt.

In conclusion, while philosophical debates are hard to resolve, the Nyaya solution to the problem of induction may be defensible and a deeper study may yield rich dividends.

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NOTES

1. John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1929).
2. See Kisor Chakrabarti, "The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Theory of Universals," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 3, nos. 3–4 (1975): 363–82.
3. For further discussion, see *The* Tattvacintamani *of Gangesa Upadhyaya*, Volume 2, ed. Kamakhyanath Tarkavagisa (Delhi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, 1990), Part 1, especially the chapter on Samanya Lakshana. See also Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction: The Nyaya Viewpoint* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), chap. 5.
4. See *The* Tattvacintamani *of Gangesa Upadhyaya*, the chapter on Kevalanvayi and the chapter on Kevala-vyatireki. See also Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*, chap. 3.
5. See Bhavananda, *Tattva-Cintamani-Didhiti-Prakasa*, Volume 2, ed. Kalipada Tarkacharya (Kolkata: The Asiatic Society, 1963), the chapter on *tarka*. See also Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*, chap. 3.

ARTICLES

The Anti-Generalization Move: The Standard Cārvāka Critique of Inference and Hume's Problem of Induction

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ABSTRACT
I maintain there are at least three Cārvāka subschools (mainly differentiated by their approach to the means of knowledge), but all three types of Cārvākas utilize what I call the "Anti-Generalization Move" in their arguments against the classical South Asian argumentative form known as *anumāna* (inference). I focus on the Anti-Generalization Move in the Cārvāka argument that appears in the *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha* and compare it to David Hume's problem of induction. This comparison raises intriguing philosophical issues about the human propensity to generalize from a small sample of experience; this comparison also raises metaphilosophical questions: Are the Cārvākas and Hume really discussing the *same* idea? Is "skepticism" the right label for the Cārvākas? Are there larger methodological questions about comparative philosophy looming in the background of such comparisons? I hope this article will encourage readers to further consider these questions for themselves.

Philosophers of the irreligious Cārvāka school in classical South Asia gave various critiques of inference (*anumāna*). I have argued elsewhere that there were three kinds of Cārvākas in the classical South Asian philosophical tradition: (1) Standard, (2) More Educated/Purandaran, and (3) Jayarāśian.[1] These branches can be understood with regard to their respective stances on the means of knowledge (*pramāṇas*). First, the Standard Cārvākas (as standardly understood by opponents in texts such as Mādhava's *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha*, c. 1300 CE, and Udayana's *Nyāyakusumāñjali*, c. 1000 CE) hold the view that there is a single means of knowledge, perception;[2] Standard Cārvākas support this view with a critique of the reliability and coherence of inference (*anumāna*) as a means of knowledge. Second, the More Educated/Purandaran Cārvākas endorse a form of inference limited to empirical matters. Third, radical skeptical Cārvākas, whom I call Jayarāśian Cārvākas (after their main—and perhaps only—proponent), attempt to undermine all definitions of the means of knowledge (even perception), thus enjoying a life free from philosophical and religious speculation.

Despite these differences, however, each kind of Cārvāka utilizes what I call the "Anti-Generalization Move" in their arguments against the classical South Asian argumentative form known as *anumāna* (inference). In this article, I focus on the Anti-Generalization Move in the Standard Cārvāka argument as it appears in the *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha* and compare it to Hume's (in)famous problem of induction. Aside from being an intriguing philosophical issue in its own right, a few metaphilosophical questions arise in making this comparison. Are the Cārvākas and Hume really discussing the *same* idea? Is "skepticism" the right label for the Cārvākas? How do these questions impact our understanding of responses to the Anti-Generalization Move in both South Asian and European contexts? Does this topic raise larger methodological questions about comparative philosophy? While I won't provide many answers, I hope this article will encourage readers to consider these questions for themselves.

STANDARD CĀRVĀKA CRITIQUE OF INFERENCE

Before delving into the topic at hand, it is vital to note that in the context of classical South Asian philosophy, the word "inference" (*anumāna*) does not mean reasoning in general. Therefore, it should not be understood that the Cārvākas are arguing against arguments or anything quite like the inconsistency objection frequently raised against Pyrrhonian and Academic skeptics in the ancient Greek and Roman traditions.

Rather, in classical South Asian philosophy more generally and especially in the Brahmanical Nyāya ("Logic") tradition, inference (*anumāna*) refers to a specific inferential form. It does not refer to everything that would go by "inference" in English. Much of what is called "inference" in English would be called *tarka*, which could be translated as "speculative reasoning."[3] Nonetheless, *anumāna* became the gold standard of argumentation in classical South Asia; arguments that could be non-fallaciously put into the *anumāna* form were prized—and criticized—to the highest degree.[4]

Here's a stock example of an *anumāna*:[5]

1. There is fire on that mountain.
2. Because it has smoke.
3. (Wherever there is smoke, there is fire), as in a kitchen.
4. There is smoke on that mountain.
5. Therefore, there is fire on that mountain.

Here it is with appropriate labels:

1. [Thesis/*Pratijñā*]: (There is fire) = [property to be proved/*sādhya*] (on that mountain.) = [place/subject/*pakṣa*]
2. [Reason/*Hetu*]: Because it has smoke.
3. [Example/*Udāharaṇa*] (Wherever there is smoke, there is fire) = [pervasion/*vyāpti*], as in a kitchen.
4. [Application/*Upanaya*]: There is smoke on that mountain.
5. [Conclusion/*Nigamana*]: Therefore, there is fire on that mountain.

The Standard Cārvāka challenge is this: How can the pervasion (*vyāpti*) in step three above be known? How does one know that wherever there is smoke, there is always and everywhere fire? Or, more technically, how does one know that smokiness (the *hetu*) is pervaded by fieriness (the *sādhya*)?

While a similar argument is presented in the *Nyāyakusumāñjali* (*Handful of Flowers of Nyāya*) by the Nyāya philosopher Udayana (c. 1000 CE),[6] here I'll concentrate on the argument presented on behalf of the Cārvākas in the *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha* (*Collection of All Philosophies*, hereafter SDS) by the Advaita Vedānta philosopher Mādhava (c. 1300 CE). Mādhava represents the Standard Cārvāka argument as considering several options, each of which is denied.[7]

1. The pervasion can't be perceived by the external senses since one cannot perceive the future and the past, e.g., all past and future instances of smoke and fire.

2. If the pervasion were a matter of a relation between universals, you wouldn't know from that that the specific individuals in question are related.

3. The pervasion can't be known by *internal* (i.e., mental) perception since internal perception is dependent on external perception.[8]

4. Neither can the pervasion be known by inference since this would constitute an infinite regress (*anavasthā*).

5. Testimony *(śabda)* creates an infinite regress if testimony is a kind of inference. And testimony can be doubted (e.g., Cārvākas doubt testimony of religious figures), and there would be no inference for oneself.

6. Comparison (*upamāna*) won't work because that reveals a relation between a name and a thing.

7. A special cause or extraneous condition (*upādhi*) creates a problem, e.g., wet fuel as a cause of smoke rather than merely fire. Fire using dry fuel or fire in a red-hot iron ball does not produce smoke. A pervasion (*vyāpti*) consists of a necessary connection (*avinābhāva*), which requires ruling out *upādhis*. Cognizing an *upādhi* would require cognizing the pervasion and cognizing the pervasion would require cognizing the *upādhi*. Hence, there is the fallacy of mutual dependence (*parasparāśraya*).

After the critique is complete, the Cārvāka is represented as saying, "Activity with regard to a cognition of fire and so forth immediately following a cognition of 'smoky' (*dhūmra*), etc., is made possible (*yujyate*) by error or by being based on perception."[9] The Standard Cārvāka idea is that one really doesn't know anything as lofty as a pervasion that guarantees an inference (*anumāna*), but that knowing in such a deep sense was never required to act in the first place—we act on the basis of perception of smoke without knowing for sure that wherever there is smoke, there is fire.[10]

THE ANTI-GENERALIZATION MOVE: STANDARD CĀRVĀKAS AND HUME

Several scholars have noted similarities between the Cārvāka critique of inference and David Hume's problem of induction.[11] Indeed, I imagine many readers have already been comparing the above argument to Hume's argument! It's worth stepping back, however, to consider what such comparisons can accomplish. Assuming that one is interested in more than mere comparison for comparison's sake, a comparison like this can help us do two things. First, it can clarify whether and to what extent the Cārvāka arguments can be considered to be tokens of the type of skepticism that philosophers working in Western traditions have called skepticism about induction, with Hume as the paradigm example. Whether Hume is the first Western philosopher to consider this type of skepticism depends in part on how the problem is defined; as Ruth Weintraub points out, Sextus Empiricus raised a similar problem about 1,500 years before Hume.[12] Nonetheless, if the Cārvāka critique predates Hume, the South Asian tradition would have temporal bragging rights for raising the problem earlier than Hume. Second, if there are major differences between the Cārvāka and Western versions, this could encourage scholars to expand their conception of what skepticism about induction is; it might also constitute a different kind of skepticism that remains relatively unexplored in contemporary scholarship.

Hume scholars in recent decades have demonstrated that the details of Hume's argument are more difficult to ascertain than most contemporary philosophers think,[13] so I tread as lightly as possible here. Nonetheless, here's my reconstruction of the argument in Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*:[14]

1. Knowledge of matters of fact is based on the relation of cause and effect.

2. Knowledge of the relation of cause and effect is not based on *a priori* reasoning or relations of ideas; it is based on experience.

3. Knowledge from experience is based on "the supposition that the future will be conformable to the past" or the principle of induction.

4. Knowledge of the principle of induction is not based on relations of ideas (because we can imagine the opposite being true); nor is it based on experience or probability (because there is no direct experience of it and appeals to probability are question-begging).

5. Therefore, knowledge of cause and effect, as well as knowledge of the principle of induction, is not rationally justified.

There are several things I notice when comparing Hume's argument with the Cārvāka argument. First, the arguments occur in different contexts: the Cārvākas present their argument as a critique of pervasion within a specific argumentative form (*anumāna*), while Hume intends to discover a general explanation for reasoning about matters of fact. The Cārvāka problem has, of course, larger implications concerning the limits of knowledge and whether humans can have knowledge of unseen (*adṛṣṭa*) realities of *karma* and the divine. Hume conversely begins with a wide focus on reasoning about matters of fact and narrows it to the idea of induction. Thus, the Cārvākas go from specific to general, while Hume goes from general to specific.[15]

Second, the deepest similarity between the two arguments is a challenge to the idea that it is rational to infer the truth of general claims from a limited number of instances–indeed, doing so may be impossible given the temporal and spatial limitations of our evidence. I call this the Anti-Generalization Move. This can be seen as I've presented the arguments in options one, four, and five of the SDS argument above as well as in premise four of Hume's argument. The Anti-Generalization Move is a central part of both arguments, although it's less crucial in the SDS argument, which also relies on other types of arguments in the various options considered and then rejected.

Third, they appeal to different fallacies. Hume brings up the fallacy of begging the question, while the Cārvāka argument involves infinite regress. Both fallacies were well known in Hume's European tradition and in the Cārvākas' classical South Asian tradition. Hume could have appealed to infinite regress, and the Cārvākas could have claimed their opponents were begging the question. Perhaps one reason for this difference is that, in the South Asian tradition, knowledge was thought of as episodic, so the specific instances of inferential knowledge could form an infinite regress. For Hume, knowledge was a more static phenomenon. Perhaps a deeper reason is that Hume claims that we *assume* induction is legitimate—we by nature beg the question. The Cārvākas' point is less about our quotidian assumptions and more about the idea that we don't require anything as philosophically elaborate as their opponents' concept of *anumāna*.

Fourth, according to both Hume and the Standard Cārvākas, human life proceeds smoothly without philosophically established generalization—by custom or habit for Hume and by perception or expectation for the Standard Cārvākas. Perhaps this is an example of Hume's Pyrrhonian tendencies: we get along just fine by following appearances and the guidance of nature. Somewhat similarly, the Standard Cārvākas may be continuous with radical skeptical Jayarāśian Cārvākas: both types of Cārvākas deny that philosophically established inference is needed in the pursuit of regular human life.

When it comes to the Anti-Generalization Move, Cārvākas can claim temporal bragging rights over Hume, although perhaps Sextus Empiricus (second century CE) is the true winner as it is unclear whether arguments relying on the Anti-Generalization Move were used in South Asia before the seventh or eighth century CE.[16] While the Cārvākas and Hume differ in context, form, and motivation, they both make the Anti-Generalization Move, which is a deep philosophical challenge for any concept that relies on universal generalization (e.g., pervasion, induction, inference, and causation).

THE *SAME* IDEA? SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Are we justified, given these cross-cultural comparisons, in taking the Anti-Generalization Move as the general philosophical issue of which Hume's problem of induction and the Cārvāka critique of inference are two historical examples? I have previously said yes, thinking a larger general category was an effective way to avoid the culturally and temporally problematic act of subsuming the Cārvākas under a general Humean category, a comparative move that takes Western categories as the standard, natural, and "universal" categories into which the ideas of all other traditions must be sorted.[17]

While I still have some sympathy for my previous claim, I have begun to rethink comparative methodologies. In this specific case, there is, in fact, a great deal more going on in the SDS argument than in Hume's; there are several prongs beyond the two of "Hume's Fork," not to mention the specific differences noted above with regard to context and details. The reason that most contemporary scholars—including, of course, myself—focus on specific parts of the SDS argument is precisely because they remind us of most of Hume. So, is the comparison leading the analysis in this case rather than the analysis leading the comparison? What would the SDS argument look like if we *didn't* consistently compare it to Hume?[18]

Is the Anti-Generalization Move the *same* in both cases? And what if the Cārvākas are *not* the same as Hume? Are they perhaps engaging in a different kind of skepticism or something else equally worth exploring? Are the Cārvākas philosophically interesting *whether or not* they're like Hume? After all, do we need Hume to authenticate the Cārvākas as sufficiently philosophically interesting to be worthy of our attention? What gets smuggled into these comparisons from contemporary Western understandings of philosophical skepticism? What are the effects of framing philosophical topics in terms of Western categories with particular histories of their own?[19]

My deeper methodological question is this: What if the Cārvākas or other non-Western texts and figures simply do not fit neatly into categories of modern Western philosophy? While I admit there's a great deal of philosophical fun to be had in comparing the Cārvākas to Hume, I leave readers with two questions to consider for themselves: What if we engaged with the Cārvāka arguments—as well as their numerous responses within South Asian traditions—in their own terms without the intermediary of Hume or contemporary Western epistemology? What philosophical adventures might await us once we stop pretending that the cartographers of the Western tradition have already mapped out all the philosophical terrain there is to explore?

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I thank Kisor Chakrabarti and A. Minh Nguyen for inviting me to the APA session on which this article is based and for inviting me to contribute to this issue. While I have been questioning my own impulses toward comparative philosophy as of late, nothing I've written here should be taken to impugn the valuable comparative work of these eminent scholars! In particular, readers interested in the vast and sophisticated answers to the Cārvāka Anti-Generalization Move are strongly encouraged to seek out the work of Kisor Chakrabarti I've cited here.

NOTES

1. Mills, "Three Skepticisms in Cārvāka Epistemology."
2. The Standard Cārvākas are also the standard understanding of the Cārvāka tradition as a whole by many scholars of classical South Asian philosophy still today; however, some scholars who delve into the Cārvākas more thoroughly disagree with this assessment. For arguments that the true Cārvāka position was closer to what I call the More Educated/Purandaran variety, see, for instance, Bhattacharya, "Cārvāka Fragments" and "Development of Materialism in India."
3. *Tarka* is sometimes compared to *reductio ad absurdum* in Western philosophy. See Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*, ch. 4.
4. For introductions to *anumāna* and South Asian logic more generally, see Matilal, *The Character of Logic in India*; Ganeri, *Indian Logic*; Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*; and Dasti and Phillips, *The Nyāya-Sūtra*, ch. 1.
5. This is the stock example found in most contemporary sources, e.g., Matilal, *The Character of Logic in India*, 4; Mohanty, *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought*, 104; and Potter, *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*, 60. The parts of an *anumāna* are laid out in *Nyāya Sūtra* 1.1.32. Major commentaries by Vātsyāyana and Uddyotakara tend to use the thesis, "Sound is non-eternal," in their examples.
6. For an overview of this version of the argument, see Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*, 2–7.
7. Mādhava, *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha*, 3–4.
8. In Nyāya philosophy, internal perception is dependent upon external perception for matters pertaining to external objects, while internal perception is not dependent on external perception for matters pertaining to internal states (e.g., pleasure and pain).
9. Mādhava, *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha*, 4.
10. There were, of course, numerous responses to arguments of this kind in the classical South Asian tradition. The Brahmanical Mīmāṃsā philosopher Prabhakara claims that the pervasion can be known via a single co-presence of the *sādhya* and the *hetu* (Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*, 9-10), the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti proposed a theory of natural relation (*svabhāvapratibandha*), according to which the *sādhya* and the *hetu* in a pervasion are related either causally or as an identity (Dunne, *Foundations of Dharmakīrti's Philosophy*, ch. 3 and Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*, 11–12), Jain philosophers like Prabhacandra argued that the pervasion is known by hypothetical reasoning (*tarka*) (Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*, 10–11), and Brahmanical Nyāya philosophers appealed to parasitism objections, according to which human practices require a default acceptance of *pramāṇas* including inference (Dasti, "Parasitism and Disjunctivism in Nyāya Epistemology" and Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*). For a helpful overview of these and other responses, see Perrett, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 91–100.
11. See, for instance, Gupta, "Skepticism"; Gokhale, *Lokāyata/Cārvāka*; Perrett, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 88–90; Perrett, "The Problem of Induction in Indian Philosophy"; and Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*, "Nyāya's Response to Skepticism," and "The Problem of Induction."
12. Weintraub thinks Hume simply adds the idea that induction ought to be justified differently than deduction, whereas Sextus presents the issue as a version of the problem of the criterion, applying as much to deduction as induction. See Weintraub, "What Was Hume's Contribution to the Problem of Induction?"
13. See, for instance, Weintraub, "What Was Hume's Contribution to the Problem of Induction?"; Hetherington, "Not Actually Hume's Problem"; Read and Richman, *The New Hume Debate*; Baier, *A Progress of Sentiments*; and Fogelin, *Hume's Skepticism in the* Treatise of Human Nature.
14. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, sec. 4, pt. 2.
15. Chakrabarti points out that the Cārvākas do not accept memory as a means of knowledge, and Hume is unaware of the issue of *upādhis* (Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*, 15).
16. In "Development of Materialism in India," Bhattacharya claims that Cārvāka was not a school before the eighth century CE, which relies on taking Purandara and "more educated" Cārvākas as the single type of Cārvākas. My preferred three subschool model might allow for more flexibility. However, it is unclear whether the Anti-Generalization Move was present earlier than Jayarāśi (c. 770–830 CE), although Gokhale claims this type of argument can be found in the seventh or eighth century (Gokhale, *Lokāyata/Cārvāka*, 65 n31).
17. Mills, "Three Skepticisms in Cārvāka Epistemology."
18. For that matter, what would Hume's eighteenth-century argument look like if we didn't filter it through the concerns of contemporary analytic epistemology and philosophy of science?
19. For instance, in the Western tradition, there has been a long association between skepticism and social conservatism, although Hume was not religiously conservative like Sextus and Montaigne. Does this historical association lead us to suppose that the Cārvākas were similarly socially conservative even as they criticized their religious counterparts? Do we assume the Cārvākas' antipathy toward religion motivates them in the same way as Hume's own antipathy toward what he calls "religious enthusiasm"? Furthermore, do comparisons with Hume encourage us to think the Cārvākas were skeptical about reason in general, even though they focused on specific categories of South Asian intellectual history like *anumāna*?

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The "New" Riddle of Induction: Gangesa and Goodman

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ABSTRACT

I try to show that both the "classical" problem of induction and the "new" riddle of induction were anticipated and discussed in depth in classical Sanskrit philosophy. I criticize the solutions to both problems by some recent leading philosophers and discuss the solutions to both problems offered by Gangesa (thirteenth century), a great Navya Nyaya philosopher. One main point of Gangesa is that inductions like "all smoky things are fiery" are acceptable or reliable because they have the support of observation of positive instances or observation of negative instances and nonobservation of any counterexample as well as the support of counterfactual reasoning that shows that the denial of these inductions leads to undesirable consequences. However, inductions incorporating fabricated predicates like "grue" are not equally confirmed and are not reliable, because they lack the support of counterfactual reasoning.

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The "new" riddle of induction should be distinguished from the "classical" problem of induction that is often credited to David Hume (eighteenth century), though the same problem was introduced long before Hume in classical Sanskrit philosophy by a legendary figure named Carvaka (sixth century BCE?).[1] Carvaka and Hume tried to show that past and present observed confirmation of a hypothesis does not provide any rational grounds for upholding the hypothesis in the future. To uphold the hypothesis, one must presuppose the conclusions of other inductive arguments, such as that nature is uniform, and, hence, induction is invariably circular. According to both Carvaka and Hume, only individuals exist. Universals or common features are nothing more than concepts or names corresponding to which there is nothing ontologically real.[2] This viewpoint, whether in the conceptualist version or in the nominalist version, is rejected by Nyaya philosophers. In the Nyaya view, identifying an individual as a human being presupposes awareness of universals such as humanity and being.[3]

Since such awareness is part of common experience (*anubhava*), like any other common experience, it cannot be dismissed as false without compelling counterevidence (*badhaka*), and there is no compelling counterevidence. Further, something offered as counterevidence may presuppose some common experience. If so, rejecting one common experience while accepting another common experience without compelling evidence could invite charges of arbitrariness and favoritism. One may try to avoid the charges of arbitrariness and favoritism by appealing to something other than common experience. But such attempts could lead either to a vicious infinite regress (*anavastha*) or, to stop the regress, to claiming something to be self-evident (*svatahpramana*) that could revive the charges of arbitrariness and favoritism.[4]

The underlying issues here are complex and require much discussion.

Due to space limitations, after these brief remarks, we move on to the "new" riddle. The "new" riddle, often credited to Goodman, highlights the problematic nature of the relation between observed evidence and future prediction in a different way. Suppose that all emeralds observed are green. This seems to confirm that all emeralds are green and to permit the prediction that the next observed emerald will be green. But now consider the concocted predicate "grue." Something is grue if it has been seen as green whenever it has been observed so far or it has not yet been observed, and it will be next observed as blue. Clearly, the observed evidence that seems to confirm that all emeralds are green also seems to confirm that all emeralds are grue. But then we seem to have two conflicting predictions equally confirmed by the same inductive evidence. If all emeralds are green, the next one should be green, but if all emeralds are grue, the next one should be blue. It can easily be seen that we can fabricate an indefinite number of grue-like predicates and that the same difficulty will arise in each case. That is, if we want to, we can always come up with new fabricated predicates incorporated into empirical hypotheses that will lead to predictions conflicting with those based on commonly accepted empirical hypotheses while both sets of hypotheses seem to be equally consistent with the observed data. Clearly, induction cannot be rational if it leads to contradictory results.[5] Thus, briefly stated, while according to the "classical" problem,

induction is irrational because it is circular, according to the "new" riddle, induction is irrational because it leads to contradictory results.

Goodman's own solution is that the riddle does not invalidate induction or the generalization formula as such but presses home the need for criteria to separate projectable predicates like green from cooked-up, nonprojectable predicates like grue. The projectable predicates are essentially the well-entrenched ones. What makes a predicate better entrenched? Essentially, it has a longer history. In Goodman's own words: "[W]e must consult the record of past projections. . . . Plainly, 'green', as a veteran of earlier and many more projections than 'grue', has the more impressive biography. The predicate 'green', we may say, is much better *entrenched* than the predicate 'grue'."[6]

Some critics have complained that such an account of entrenchment leaves the progress of science to luck. Is it merely a stroke of luck that "green" has a longer and more impressive history and biography than "grue"? If so, there is the danger that the growth of science may be stultified by excluding hypotheses with unfamiliar or new predicates. Goodman has responded to the criticism by arguing that entrenchment and familiarity are different concepts. An unfamiliar predicate may turn out to be well entrenched if the coextensive or parent or comparable predicates are already in frequent and wide circulation.[7]

Although Goodman's theory is more elaborate than our sketch suggests, the criticism has a point. First, Goodman does not show how the danger of excluding new predicates that are not coextensive with or derived from or comparable to other predicates that are already in circulation can be avoided. Second, projectability and entrenchment are, because of the emphasis on history, overly dependent on past projection. But, for Carvaka and Hume, past regularity alone fails to provide rational grounds for future regularity.

W. V. Quine has offered to explain the distinction between projectable and nonprojectable predicates by saying that while the former are true of things of a kind, the latter are not.[8] Being of a kind depends on similarity. The more similar things are, the more reason that they are of the same kind. Accordingly, a kind is a set of objects that are more similar to a paradigmatic member of the set than they are to something else (called a foil) that is not a member of the set and is too dissimilar to the paradigm.

The difficulty with this view centers around the basis of choosing the paradigm. Is the paradigm chosen because it has certain features or not? If the first, objects should become members of a set by virtue of having all or most of those features, which then are the family of common features that account for membership of the set. Projectability then depends on sharing some common features. But objects in a nonprojectable set, too, may be said to share some common features such as (at least trivially) that they are grue. So, unless we have some reasonable criteria to separate the "right" kind of common features from the "wrong" ones (and none are provided by Quine), the division between projectable and nonprojectable predicates would collapse. If the second, someone may have chosen the paradigm for no reason and others may have followed suit merely for personal reasons. Projectability then may not have any rational foundation and even inductions with projectable predicates may be irrational. So, once again, it needs to be shown that, although the paradigm is chosen not because it has certain features, the set still has a rational foundation. But Quine has not done that and it is unclear that a rational basis can be provided. Without any doubt, a skeptic like Carvaka or Hume would like to utilize the situation to press home the irrationality of induction.

The new riddle of induction has generated considerable debate in recent decades and many other solutions and their criticisms have been offered. It would take too much space to discuss the merits of these solutions. We instead look briefly at a similar development in Sanskrit logic in the hope of casting some light on this recent controversy.

Take the stock inference of fire on a hill from smoke. The hill is the inferential subject (*paksa*) where, in a typical case, smoke is observed and fire is not. That there is fire on the hill is open to doubt; the doubt is removed by the inference of fire on the hill. The inference is based in part on the general premise or pervasion (*vyapti*) that all smoky things are fiery. The general premise is supported by observation of instances where smoke is found with fire and/or observation of instances where absence of fire is found with absence of smoke. Here, smoke is the pervaded (*vyapya*: something the extension of which is not greater than that of the pervader, *anatirikta-desavrtti*) and fire is the pervader (*vyapaka:* something the extension of which is not smaller than that of the pervaded, *anyuna-desavrtti*). Speaking generally, the pervasion is supported by observation of instances where the pervaded is found with the pervader and/or observation of instances where absence of the pervader is found with absence of the pervaded. The former are positive instances (*sapaksa*) and the latter are negative instances (*vipaksa*).

The inferential subject is neither a positive instance nor a negative instance. In the case of a positive instance, *presence* of the probandum is already reliably known before the inference. In the case of a negative instance, *absence* of the probandum is already reliably known before the inference. But in a typical case of inference, neither presence nor absence of the probandum is reliably known in the inferential subject before the inference. (In atypical cases, however, presence or absence of the probandum may be reliably known in the inferential subject before the inference).

Now take the cooked-up property of "not being either the inferential subject or a negative instance" (*paksa-vipaksa-anyatara-anyah*) cited by the great Navya Nyaya philosopher Gangesa.[9] This property is true of any positive instance: a positive instance (being where presence of the probandum is reliably known) is not either the inferential subject (where neither presence nor absence of the probandum is reliably known) or a negative instance (where absence of the probandum is reliably known). In the above stock example, a case of this property is not being either the hill or a lake: the latter is true of a fiery kitchen hearth that

is neither the hill nor a lake. It should be clear that, by definition, in typical cases, the property of not being either the inferential subject or a negative instance is present wherever the probandum is reliably known to be present before the inference.[10]

It seems to follow that there is a warrant for the generalization that wherever there is the probandum, there is this property; or, put differently, that the property pervades the probandum. In the above stock example, then, there seems to be a warrant for the generalization that no fiery things are either the inferential subject or a negative instance.

At the same time, the property of not being either the inferential subject or a negative instance cannot be true of the inferential subject. If the said property pervades the probandum, absence of the probandum in the inferential subject then follows from absence of that property. But we also reliably know from the same observed evidence that the probans belongs to the inferential subject (in the stock example: the hill is smoky) and that wherever there is the probans, there is the probandum (in the same example: all smoky things are fiery). Thus, the above set of facts seems to warrant inference of both presence and absence of the probandum in the same thing at the same time—a contradiction.

The problem is mainly due to the fact that the same generalization formula that permits the induction that wherever there is the probans, there is the probandum also permits the induction that wherever there is the probandum, there is the said property. It is in this respect that this problem is similar to the new riddle of induction. In Goodman's example, the observed facts seem to support both that all emeralds are green and that all emeralds are grue. If all emeralds are green, the next emerald should be green. But if all emeralds are grue, the next emerald should be blue. This is a contradiction pointing to some possible gap in the generalization formula. In Gangesa's example, the same observed facts seem to support, in a typical case, both that all smoky things are fiery and that no fiery things are either the inferential subject or a negative instance. If all smoky things are fiery, then (since the hill is observed to be smoky) the hill is fiery. But if no fiery things are either the inferential subject or a negative instance, then (since it is true of the hill that it is either the inferential subject or a negative instance), the hill is not fiery. Here, too, is a contradiction pointing to some gap in the generalization formula.

The following is a solution (among others) mentioned in Gangesa's *Tattvacintāmaṇi*:[11] Induction does need the support of observation of positive instances or observation of negative instances. Further, there should be nonobservation of any counterexample. Thus, the generalization formula so far comprises observation of positive instances or observation of negative instances and nonobservation of any counterexample. The assumption that this is the whole story, however, leads to the problem. To solve the problem, it needs to be added that a reliable induction must also have the support of additional reasoning to counter the doubt that the induction may be false. The doubt that an induction may be false is reasonable; an induction includes a claim about countless future cases based on favorable observation of a limited number of past or present cases. But sometimes an induction confirmed in a large number of cases is found later to have a counterexample. So it is reasonable to suppose that a counterexample may be found in other cases where none has been found so far. Such doubt should be countered by additional reasoning that explores the consequences of supposing that an induction is false and shows that an undesirable consequence results from that. Such additional reasoning is called *tarka*, which, for the lack of anything better, we translate as *counterfactual reasoning*. It includes a counterfactual conditional, the antecedent and the consequent of which are false. The following reasoning has been offered in support of the idea that all smoky things are fiery: "If smoke were preceded neither by an aggregate that includes fire nor by an aggregate that excludes fire, smoke would not have come into being."[12]

We reformulate the argument as follows: Gangesa has offered a counterfactual conditional to back up the induction that all smoky things are fiery. The conditional is: if smoke were preceded neither by an aggregate that includes fire nor by an aggregate that excludes fire, smoke would not have come into being. But we observe, it is implied, that smoke does come into being (as when one lights up a cigarette). So the consequent is false. It follows (by applying the implied law of *modus tollendo tollens*) that the antecedent is false. So we derive (by applying the implied De Morgan Law) that smoke is preceded either by an aggregate that includes fire or by an aggregate that excludes fire. Now we have two opposed factual claims, viz., (1) that smoke is preceded by an aggregate that excludes fire and (2) that smoke is preceded by an aggregate that includes fire. It is again implied in Nyaya empiricism (and empiricism in general) that of two factual claims, the one that has observational support is preferable to the one that does not. This may be called the Principle of Observational Credibility (OC). Given OC, it is then accepted that smoke is preceded by an aggregate that includes fire. But to say that smoke is preceded by an aggregate that includes fire is to say that smoke and fire are together.

The skeptical opponent may point out that although smoke and fire are together when smoke originates, they may not be together later and that this leaves open the possibility of smoke existing without fire. To counter this, Nyaya philosophers have modified the induction that all smoky things are fiery to the induction that all smoky things not separated from the preceding aggregate (*avicchinna-mula-dhuma*) are fiery.[13] The argument thus bestows favor (*anugraha*) to the induction that wherever there is smoke, there is fire. This falls short of absolute certitude. But absolute certitude is out of place for factual claims in the Nyaya view and most empiricists' views in any case.

The above argument implicitly utilizes logical laws like *modus tollendo tollens* as well as OC. While even logical laws are not above challenge, they are as safe as it gets; proponents of inductive skepticism like Carvaka and Hume accept them as well. Accordingly, it is not necessary to argue for them here. As far as OC is concerned, critics

of induction like Carvaka and Hume should not reject it. Although Carvaka rejects an inductive leap into the future as unreasonable, he holds that particular observations may be reliable (*pramanika*) and are the only sources of knowing.[14] Similarly, Hume labels induction as irrational but holds impressions or observations of particulars as the ultimate epistemic foundations.[15] Neither Carvaka's nor Hume's positions can be sustained without OC. The said counterfactual reasoning does not involve induction in any step; hence, the charge of circularity, if raised, would be unfounded.

It may be noted that, in the above counterfactual reasoning, "smoke" and "fire" are quasi-variables that may be replaced by any observable putative pervaded (the extension of which is not greater than that of the intended pervader) and pervader (the extension of which is not smaller than that of the intended pervaded), respectively. Hence, the argument is relevant for empirical inductions in general.

The main point of the solution, then, is that a reliable induction should have the support of observation of positive instances or negative instances and nonobservation of any counterexample and also have the support of counterfactual reasoning showing that the denial of the induction could lead to an undesirable consequence. The undesirable consequence may be a contradiction in action (such as if I speak aloud in so many words, then I am dumb), a belief-behavior conflict (such as is involved in one unwaveringly and invariably avoiding jumping off a tall building while claiming that no uniformities in nature are knowable), a conflict with something reliably accepted, or an acceptance of something that is uneconomical (*guru*).[16]

Now let us look at the grue case. As far as the support from observation of at least one positive instance and nonobservation of any counterexample is concerned, both that all emeralds are green and that all emeralds are grue appear to have that support. But there is a difference when it comes to the support from counterfactual reasoning. Suppose that "all emeralds are green" is false and that the next emerald to be seen is not green. Then that emerald will not complement red, for only green complements red. But the next emerald may be observed to complement red and that would conflict with the supposition that it is not green. Thus, the assumed denial of the induction that all emeralds are green has the undesirable consequence that it invites the risk of conflict with what may be observed in the next case. Now suppose that "all emeralds are grue" is false and that the next emerald to be seen is not blue. No undesirable consequence follows. Even if the next emerald is observed to complement red, there is no incongruence: something not blue may complement red. Hence, "all emeralds are grue" fails to qualify as a reliable induction.

Further, compared to grue, green is simpler with respect to constitution (*sarira*), i.e., grue contains more concepts than green. Compared to grue, there is also greater economy in the cognitive order (*upasthiti*) as far as ordinary discourse is concerned: in ordinary discourse, awareness of grue cannot take place without awareness of green, but awareness of green can take place without awareness of grue. So green is preferable to grue in terms of some principles of economy (*laghava*) as well.

Unlike Quine's position, the Nyaya solution does not hinge on deciding which predicate represents a kind and which predicate does not—a task that appears to be fraught with difficulties to say the least. Again, unlike Goodman's position, this solution is not pinned down to checking the history of how often a particular predicate has been projected and does not leave the choice between two predicates to counting which predicate (along with coextensive or parent or comparable predicates) has been projected more often in the past. So the test that an induction is not reliable unless its assumed denial leads to an undesirable consequence does not leave the progress of science to luck and does not forbid the introduction of new predicates. Needless to say, the undesirable consequences may result equally from future developments. An induction that passes the test now may fail it in the future. There are no guarantees in nature. Since Gangesa is a fallibilist, he also does not try to find one.

It is remarkable that both Gangesa and Goodman (though centuries apart and belonging to quite different philosophical traditions) have cited fabricated disjunctive predicates to press home the "new" riddle of induction. One may ask if disjunctive predicates are essential for this riddle and, if so, whether disjunctivity plays a critical role in providing a solution to the riddle. Indeed, a claim along these lines has been made by Wolfgang Freitag.[17] Freitag has argued that the grue hypothesis (as distinguished from the green hypothesis) is not projectable because the grue-evidence epistemically depends on the evidence for a defeated hypothesis.

Freitag has offered a different strategy for the "independence" approach to the grue paradox, different versions of which seem to have been advocated by T. E. Wilkerson, John Moreland, Frank Jackson, and others.[18] A key problem with the independence approach lies in precisely characterizing "independence" so that multifarious grue-like predicates could be shown to be unprojectable; there seem to be difficulties in different recent accounts.[19] Instead of trying to recharacterize "independence," Freitag has introduced the theory of doxastic dependence relations that are counterfactual relations holding between our different beliefs.

Despite many subtleties in Freitag's theory that we skip due to space limitations, Freitag's theory may be vulnerable because of overemphasis on disjunctivity while searching for a solution. Indeed, it goes to the credit of Gangesa that he has shown that nondisjunctive predicates, too, may lead to the same problem. For example, take the nondisjunctive predicate "not being the inferential subject" (*paksetara*).[20] Since the probandum, by definition, is present in every positive instance that again, by definition, is not the inferential subject (where neither presence nor absence of the probandum is known, in typical cases, before the inference), it follows that "not being the inferential subject" may seem to pervade the probandum. But "not being the inferential subject" cannot be true of the inferential subject. Thus, absence of the probandum in the inferential subject

follows from absence of "not being the inferential subject," the pervader. But it is also known from the same inductive evidence in the stock inference of fire on the hill cited above that smoke that is reliably known to be pervaded by fire is present on the hill. Thus, it follows both that fire is absent in the inferential subject (because of the absence of the pervader) and that fire is present in the inferential subject (because of the presence of the pervaded) and, once again, we have a contradiction.

Gangesa discusses the issue at length. Due to space limitations, we mention the main point of a suggested solution. Since it is possible that fire is present in the inferential subject where "not being the inferential subject" is necessarily absent, there remains the lurking doubt that "not being the inferential subject" may not pervade the probandum. Unless the doubt is obstructed by counterfactual reasoning (and none are available), that "not being the inferential subject" pervades the probandum is open to doubt and not reliable. Accordingly, the same observed evidence that permits (with the support of counterfactual reasoning) the induction that smoke is pervaded by fire does not permit the induction that the probandum is pervaded by "not being the inferential subject" (because of the lack of support from counterfactual reasoning). Thus, the contradiction is resolved.

It should be noted that Gangesa has introduced other nondisjunctive predicates as well and shown that they are equally problematic.[21] Thus, it is possible that both multifarious disjunctive and nondisjunctive predicates may lead to the grue-like problem.

If the above makes sense, Freitag's account, because of over-emphasis on disjunctivity, may not provide a sound solution. Gangesa's solution with reference to counterfactual reasoning may have more promise. Again, one main point is the following: Given the old generalization formula, the same inductive evidence that permits the induction that smoke is pervaded by fire also permits the induction that the probandum is pervaded by the property of not being the inferential subject (and other problematic properties). Accordingly, the same inductive evidence seems to lead to the contradiction that the probandum is both present and absent in the inferential subject at the same time. Gangesa's solution, as said, involves reformulating the generalization formula by adding the condition that an acceptable induction must also have the support of counterfactual reasoning. While some recent philosophers have restricted the discussion to only disjunctive properties (as mentioned above), Gangesa has gone deeper and dealt with both disjunctive and nondisjunctive properties and provided a solution that may work for all such problematic properties.

In the *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, Gangesa comprehensively discusses a wide range of logical, metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical topics—such as meaning, reference, truth, knowledge, perceptual error, fallacies, analogy, pervasion, induction, deduction, definition, universals, negative entities, the atomic theory, the self, God, materialism, hedonism, consequentialism, and deontological ethics—with exemplary depth, originality, and rigor. Gangesa has deeply influenced the Navya Nyaya school that has produced a large number of philosophical works of exceptional technical clarity and precision and is alive today. Without any doubt, a serious, devoted, and patient reading of the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* (that is a massive work written in a thoughtfully organized but extremely condensed style) will show that he is a great philosopher whose work is beneficially relevant for contemporary philosophy. The above brief discussion of a part of the chapter on *upadhi* or pervasion defeaters is a pointer in that direction.

NOTES

1. P. T. Raju, *Structural Depths of Indian Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), chap. 3; and Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction: The Nyaya Viewpoint* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), chap. 1.
2. Kisor Chakrabarti, "The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Theory of Universals," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 3, nos. 3-4 (1975): 363-82.
3. Chakrabarti, "The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Theory of Universals."
4. Chakrabarti, "The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Theory of Universals."
5. Nelson Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), chap. 3.
6. Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*.
7. Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*.
8. W. V. Quine, "Natural Kinds," in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 114–38; reprinted in *Grue!: The New Riddle of Induction*, ed. Douglas Stalker (Chicago: Open Court, 1994), 41–56.
9. *The* Tattvacintamani *of Gangesa Upadhyaya*, Volume 2, ed. Kamakhyanath Tarkavagisa (Delhi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, 1990), 403–04.
10. The said property is also not true of any negative instance: it is not true of any negative instance that it is neither the inferential subject nor a negative instance, for it is a negative instance, and if something is a negative instance, it is also either the inferential subject or a negative instance (i.e., an inclusive disjunction is true if and only if either disjunct is true). Thus, by definition, in typical cases, wherever there is absence of the said property, there is absence of the probandum.
11. *Tatra anukula-tarka-abhavena sadhya-vyapakatva-aniscayat sahacara-darsanadeh tena vina samsayakatvat*: due to the lack of supportive counterfactual reasoning, pervasion of the probandum (by the said property) is uncertain; without that (the counterfactual reasoning) observation of co-presence and so on is subject to doubt (i.e., is not a reliable or acceptable base for the inductive claim). See *The* Tattvacintamani *of Gangesa Upadhyaya*, 355.
12. *Dhumo yadi vahni-asamavahita-ajanyatve sati vahni-samavahita-ajanyah syat, notpannah syat*. See *The* Tattvacintamani *of Gangesa Upadhyaya*, 219.
13. Panchana Shastri, *Samgraha on the Siddhanta Muktavali of Visvanatha*, 3rd ed. (Kolkata: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1972), 119.
14. Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*, chap. 1.
15. Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction*, chap. 1.
16. Shastri, *Samgraha on the Siddhanta Muktavali of Visvanatha*, 204.
17. Wolfgang Freitag, "The Disjunctive Riddle and the Grue-Paradox," *Dialectica* 70, no. 2 (2016): 185–200; and "I Bet You'll Solve Goodman's Riddle," *Philosophical Quarterly* 65, no. 259 (2015): 254–67.
18. T. E. Wilkerson, "A Gruesome Note," *Mind* 82, no. 326 (1973): 276–77; Frank Jackson, "Grue," *Journal of Philosophy* 72, no. 5 (1975): 113–31; John Moreland, "On Projecting Grue," *Philosophy of Science* 43, no. 3 (1976): 363–77; and Jared Warren, "The Independence Solution to Grue," *Philosophical Studies* 180, no. 4 (2023): 1305–26.
19. Wilkerson, "A Gruesome Note"; Jackson, "Grue"; Moreland, "On Projecting Grue"; and Warren, "The Independence Solution to Grue."

20. *The* Tattvacintamani *of Gangesa Upadhyaya*, 301.
21. *The* Tattvacintamani *of Gangesa Upadhyaya*, chapter on *upadhi* or pervasion defeaters.

Entrenchment, Postulation, and Phenomenal Evidence

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ABSTRACT

Attempts to describe properties of induction since Goodman's "new riddle of induction" show an interesting variety. Goodman based lawlike generalizations on the projectability of "entrenched" predicates. Quine, following that, suggested predicates were entrenched in natural kinds. According to Norton's material theory of induction, however, all induction is local, based on facts and not on universal schemas. Facts become material postulates. Gangesa's fourteenth-century response to the centuries-old skeptical challenge initiated by Cārvāka presented a theory of direct perceptual knowledge based on universal-based extraordinary perception and strengthened by counterfactual reasoning. Gangesa's approach suggests a way to read entrenchment as perceptual, not habitual as with both Goodman and Hume, and to read material postulates as *gestalt*-like facts. If supportable, this might provide a phenomenal and even phenomenological reading of inductive evidence. Thus, the paper concludes with a comparison of Gangesa's extraordinary perception and the concept of evidence in Husserl's phenomenology.

THE SKEPTICAL CHALLENGE

The effort to reason what lies beyond or even ahead of us has been fraught with doubt for millennia. In India's recorded history, the doubt was formed long ago in Cārvāka's sixth century BCE materialist philosophy. Cārvāka's rejection of inference as a knowledge source became the challenge to address for subsequent Hindu, Buddhist, and even Jain philosophers in India. Their combined exchanges over the problem of doubt anticipated the rich discourses of the Hellenistic period and paved the way, ultimately, for induction's "old riddle" (Hume) and "new riddle" (Goodman) views.

In the third century BCE, the philosopher Pyrrho traveled with Alexander to India. There he was exposed to Cārvāka's materialist orientation, which evidently accorded with Pyrrho's own Democritean, atoms-based philosophical orientation. Pyrrho then returned to Greece and reputedly lived an inference-free lifestyle, liberating his beliefs from all dogma and maintaining, Diogenes Laertius tells us, that "nothing is honourable or base, or just or unjust, and that likewise in all cases nothing exists in truth; and that convention and habit are the basis of everything that men do; for each thing is no more this than this."[1] Pyrrho relied on his perceptions as his only guide and would relativize dogma in a skeptical way by countering it with possible alternatives to the contrary. This model of how to live well, that is, free of absolutes and devoted only to the pleasures produced by the senses, provided Sextus Empiricus the inspiration for shaping Pyrrhonian skepticism into a prominent philosophy in third century CE Hellenistic thought.

Two millennia later, it turns out that Cārvāka also anticipated in surprising detail the skeptical philosophy of David Hume. Cārvāka distinguished between external perception, which occurs in the present, and internal perception, which is dependent on external perception.[2] Attacking syllogistic reasoning which sought to guarantee certainty, Cārvāka argued that neither external nor internal perception unconditionally reveals an invariant connection that could unite the subject-term and the object-term of an inference, an invariance necessary for deriving a propositional truth. From seeing smoke on the hill to knowing the hill is on fire requires knowing that where there is smoke, there is fire, a universal causal connection unsupported by the perception of smoke alone. Unlike the eye, which causes perception mechanically, what the mind infers from what the eye sees cannot be established as causal. For apart from the present seeing, the "universal proposition which was to embrace the invariant connection [for all past and future seeings] . . . becomes impossible to be known."[3] For Cārvāka, the mind knows only what the senses deliver, and the senses do not deliver—or support—causal knowledge. To claim they could would result in an infinite regress, starting with the question, "What causes this cause?" (since, in the present, none is perceived).

Hume, in his time, also defined causation as a two-fold relation, as both a natural relation and a philosophical relation. We relate naturally the ideas we draw by association from perception. For the philosophical relation, "precedency and contiguity" between cause and effect must be established, and these "can never be an object of reason" but only a matter of custom.[4] Experience produces conjunctions of objects, and custom or habit leads to their future expectation. But imagination, not reason, is the foundation of all memory, sense, and understanding.[5] Thus, we allow ourselves to assume the continued existence of objects and reason causally, even though cause and constancy are the product of our own convictions, of our fancy, and not perceived through our senses.[6]

Both Cārvāka and Hume claim that the invariance or constancy of nature could not be known. For Hume, however, our beliefs have to align with what our senses tell us of the modern world. Charles Hendel comments:

> The remarkable thing about both [of Hume's] definitions is that they do not represent to us what causation is in itself. Causation is *relative* both to the character of physical objects and to the nature of the human mind. It is this conclusion which entitles Hume to liken his study of the world of knowledge to Newton's study of the world of matter and motion.[7]

In the twentieth century, Hume became the bedrock for logical positivism. To account for causation, A.J. Ayer

contended that Hume did not seek to deny it but to define it.[8] Hume actually held that causation's necessary connection between objects "exists in the mind, not in objects."[9] His theory of human nature was based entirely on the impressions we receive from the world: impressions of the understanding (which give us our beliefs), impressions of reflection (our passions), and impressions of our sentiments (from which spring our morals). From these impressions we shape our understanding and the desires and the will to direct our behavior. In place of a definition, what Hume provides is a clearing of the philosophical air: all impressions result from perception and the gap remains, as it did with Cārvāka, between what we claim to know and what we actually perceive.

Positivism, however, focuses on the logical structure of causation. Causal inferences are inevitably circular if they are based on relations between distinct perceptions judged to be, but not seen as, causally connected, which was Hume's point. To judge a connection that cannot be seen is to impute to the world a superstition drawn from the mind. For this reason, Ayer changed the topic.

He shifted away from the psychological question, how our knowledge originates, to the logical question, how knowledge is certified.[10] Certifying knowledge meant verifying it, which seemingly avoided the problem of induction and its unprovable thesis of nature's uniformity. Ayer did not mince words. He called this problem of presumed uniformity fictitious.[11] No reasoning based on it could be known to be true. Propositions relying on it would be meaningless instead. Verification dispensed with it and served as the criterion for determining whether any proposition is cognitively meaningful.

To be cognitively meaningful, a proposition must be factually significant, that is, capable of being proved through observations. This notion of verification evoked a rebuke from Russell that one cannot "without incurring an endless regress, seek the significance of a proposition in its consequences, which must be other propositions."[12] But the path was now open from the old riddle of predicting the future to the new riddle of testing statements and "verifying" their projectable predicates and lawlike behavior.

My purpose in engaging this history is to provide a perspective on the logic of induction as it developed over the centuries. Innovative formalisms were introduced in the early part of the century, raising important questions about logical structure. This had a negligible effect on the ongoing use of induction in the dramatically innovative twentieth century, but that in itself is significant. Inductive reasoning does not lend itself to formalism, but it does operate in the same world that formalism attempts to frame. That is the world in which Russell held that "the present king of France is bald" has meaning even though the statement fails to denote, and the world that Wittgenstein framed as facts in logical space.[13] In the view that we shall be examining presently, "the present king of France is bald" would have a logical structure of material implication with content that cannot be true due to an out-of-place adjunct or failed denotation. In the world of facts in logical space, the facts depend on the logic of noncontradiction in order for propositions to determine places in this space.[14] The point is that there is a connection between logical structure and the content of inductive inferences. Was Cārvāka's problem simply that he failed to appreciate the logical structure of induction? This brings me to John D. Norton's theory of material induction. Norton holds that all induction is local, drawn from facts without the formalism of universal schemas.

MATERIAL INDUCTION

Hendel's illuminating comment, quoted above, drew a comparison between the world of knowledge Hume wrote about and Newton's world of matter and motion. If you recall, Hendel said that Hume did not define causation itself but treated it as *relative* both to the character of physical objects and to the nature of the human mind. Hume's experimentalism in moral philosophy suggests the benefit of comparing impressions and matter, respectively, to thoughts and planetary movement. The spin of the one implies or coincides with the spin of the other, so to speak. The comparison also deformalizes the world of knowledge to explore its dynamics, meaning the "forces" of association between sense impressions and ideas which are, for the alert Humean observer, more telling than the causal claims made of them. To go further along this route would be to deformalize induction entirely and to study the pull of knowledge into a coherent world of facts.

That is what John D. Norton proposes to do.[15] He holds that all induction is local. As a scientist, Norton maintains that his method is to minimize inductive risk by relying on material postulates, i.e., facts that license local inductions,[16] amassing as much evidence as possible, and expanding inductive inference strategies that provide resources for accurate predictions.[17] His point is that it is possible to convert inductive risk to "presumptive risk," that is, the risk associated with assessing facts as material postulates.[18] "Crudely, the more we know [of facts in a domain], the better we can infer inductively. . . . The mere fact of learning more will augment their inductive powers automatically."[19] Facts, we might say, speak for themselves.

But facts do not always speak for themselves. Alchemy, totemism, and Arrow's Impossibility Theorem (which holds that collective decision-making based on a fair ranked-voting system of three or more choices fails to rank individual preferences successfully) are evidence to the contrary. Sets of facts cohere upon occasion, comprising a collection from which the form of inferences can be drawn. The history of medicine, the study of evolution, and even the social choice theory that led to Arrow's Impossibility Theorem are cases where factual coherence has led to progress. As I read the relation between types of risk, inductive risk reduces to presumptive risk as facts cohere and give rise to the greater likelihood that an inference drawn from them will be supportable or provable. The model here is not a linear unfolding but appears to be more the figure of a *gestalt* whole which becomes greater than the sum of its parts. The trials of solving COVID-19, the inductive risk evolution predicts of species vulnerability through global warming, and Amartya Sen's use of social choice postulates to inform the theory of justice are, in my view, *gestalt*-like accomplishments.[20]

The central issue in material induction is between the general and the specific. The general involves contentless logical structures such as Bayes's Theorem and probability theory. The specific refers to facts in a given domain. Because the logical structures are contentless, they appear as formulae or universal prescriptions for use when objectives are clear. The problem of drawing too sharp a distinction between these levels is touched on in a footnote on brute facts, where Norton acknowledges that universal knowledge is presupposed of "ball" and "red" in the singular fact "the ball is red."[21] Hence, on one level as the other, the general or the specific, logic and ontology appear to get mixed up; the semantics is tangled. We might think of "ball" and "red" as types that serve as tokens when instantiated in the singular statement "the ball is red." That brings to mind another acerbic comment by Russell: "Seeing that nearly all the words to be found in the dictionary stand for universals, it is strange that hardly anybody except students of philosophy ever realizes that there are such entities as universals."[22]

In quite different contexts, the interfusion of particulars and universals is what Husserlian phenomenology sought to clarify through its use of transcendental reductions—with limited success, if one takes Derrida's critique seriously that the method was rich on expression but thin on indication or reference. One can also detect Wittgenstein's later embrace of language-game analyses in place of the rich logical structure of the *Tractatus* as a movement in the same direction. Norton's material induction appears to work through the same problem but with an important refinement. It seeks to unite the two levels into a workable whole, treating facts in a given domain as interrogation points or material postulates and using logical schemas as purely localized means of directed inquiry. But there is a sense of transcendence unspoken here. We seem to be moving from tokens to types, from logical terms to ontological commitments. What, then, is a fact? And *is* there a fact, beyond words that predicate a quality of a subject, that is not embedded with other facts and capable of being typecast with them? In Nelson Goodman's study of counterfactuals, the flow goes in reverse, from statements of ontology to linguistic comparisons between statements. As a scientist, Norton seeks to make facts speak; as a theorist, Goodman strives to shape the language we use to reason about facts.[23] Space prevents me from pursuing this further. But if headway is to be made here, the value of logical structure should not be underestimated in inquiry.

THE NEED FOR LOGICAL STRUCTURE

The type/token distinction and Russell's dictionary comment are examples of the interpenetration of universals and particulars in routine perceptual encounters. Charles Sanders Peirce's observation that logic is semiotics, "the quasi-necessary, or formal, doctrine of signs,"[24] proposes an important structural link between inductive reasoning and connections made in experience. More to the point, however, is that, long before Peirce's theory of "abstractive observation," the logical structure of perception was seriously studied by Gangesa and others as an effective response to the skeptic. Modern phenomenology, responding in its own way to the skeptic, also treated rigorously the logical structure of perception. Its founder, Edmund Husserl, introduced the concept of an eidetic perception, not to be confused with ordinary sense perception but a perception made by thought. "Experiencing, or *intuition of something individual* can become transmuted into *eidetic seeing* (*ideation*)," he writes.[25] Jitendranath Mohanty clarifies this insight to show its move from fact to essence: awareness of essence is based on a prior perception of an individual fact, while empirical perception "is not so founded, it being the absolute first!"[26] I shall return to this later, but for now, let us turn to Gangesa's use of logical structure.

GANGESA'S JUSTIFICATION OF INDUCTION

Gangesa worked out a method for interfusing logical structure with content. Calling it "the deductive-epistemic justification of induction," Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti credits Gangesa for recognizing that logical truths (for example, "all *S* is *P* or not-*P*") make it possible to provide an epistemic justification of induction and therefore to resolve Cārvākan-styled doubt. "All smoky things are either fiery or not fiery" instantiates a logical truth; "All smoky things are fiery" expresses a contingent truth or truth-claim. "The genius of Gangesa," Chakrabarti writes, "lies in discovering how certain logical truths (together with the principle OC [Observational Credibility] that is understood) can be utilized in supporting an empirical generalization and thereby countering the skeptical challenge."[27]

Gangesa's method relies on observational credibility throughout its stages. Chakrabarti details its moves as follows. Given two mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive alternatives, if one is observationally more credible and reliable, then it provides a reason to examine the aggregates associated with it to determine what could have produced the effect witnessed. Thus, the smoke on the hill was either produced or it was not. Accepting that it is only credible that it was produced, the aggregate that includes fire (even though it may include other adjuncts, a donkey sighted in the vicinity, for example) is preferable to the aggregate that excludes fire. The aggregate that includes fire "favors accepting that fire is a constant causal condition of smoke and thus that the induction that wherever there is smoke there is fire is reliable,"[28] a conclusion that is warranted if and when other adjuncts can be eliminated through counterfactual reasoning.

Logical truth (*A* or not-*A*) functions in this justification by providing the ontological grounding for the empirical truth induced from it. It clarifies the ontological commitment required for empirical truths. At the very least, any possible ontology must state the way of all things such that contingent statements can have truth value. Thus, climate change deniers make the unjustified claim that global warming is a hoax because they hold that such change can both be and not be, that is, both witnessed and denied. ("Why is it so cold when the globe is supposedly warming?" a US president sarcastically quipped.) Alternatively, inferences based on perception can be true on the condition that they conform to the way things are, to an ontology framed by logical truths (which is why we confidently accept only rational explanations for UFOs and paranormal occurrences).

By incorporating logical truths, Gangesa's justification of induction succeeds where the inductive justification of induction fails. To return for the moment to material induction, if the task is to predict likelihoods based on present evidences, material induction succeeds. For, unlike formal inductions, it does not separate factual content from formal schemes.[29] That, indeed, is its appeal. But it does not escape regress, which for the inductive justification of induction is infinite and its Achilles heel.

> Facts are inductively grounded in other facts; and those yet in other facts; and so on. As we trace back the justifications of justifications of inductions, we are simply engaged in the repeated exercise of displaying the reasons for why we believe this or that fact within our sciences.[30]

This repeated display can only occur with logical truths failing to ground the reasoning. Peirce perhaps said it best when he held that a logical principle "can add nothing to the premises of the argument it governs, although it is relevant; so that it implies no fact except such as is presupposed in all discourse."[31] Logical structure is important but, as we shall see in the case of phenomenology, it is also important to pay heed to how it is being used.

GANGESA'S UNIVERSAL-BASED EXTRAORDINARY PERCEPTION (UBESC)

To defend universals in perception makes observations more than factual. It makes them credible as well. Gangesa does not deny that skepticism may sometimes be warranted. The skeptic who sees no fire in the smoke beyond denies that it is there. His grounds are that either it is there or it is not, and perception defers to the latter position. He judges, in other words, on the basis of ordinary perception. But this judgment should not be reached without examining the greater resources of evidential reasoning. Aristotle held that if some perception is lacking, some understanding is also lacking, for induction depends on particulars, while "demonstration" (deduction) depends on universals. An understanding "can be got neither from universals without induction nor through induction without perception."[32]

What the skeptic's perception lacks, Gangesa says, is the extraordinary perception of universals. The skeptic knows smoke and does not see fire. His understanding lacks the awareness that smoke is produced by fire. By providing the logical structure for an adequate answer and by using counterfactual reasoning to ascertain that no other adjuncts in the aggregation that includes fire could have produced the fire, Gangesa provides an alternative to skepticism by pointing out that the smokeness of the perceived smoke is caused by fire.

Speaking of pots and potness, however, Chakrabarti writes:

> It is true that all pots can be known through UBESC with such a common feature as knowability. But in an awareness of a pot as a knowable, the qualifier is knowability and not potness. This is significantly different from the awareness that that is a pot with potness as the qualifier. It is the latter and not the former that is opposed to the doubt if that is a pot or not. So, the said kind of doubt cannot be ruled out.[33]

So the skeptic is not always wrong. Knowing that an object is a pot is not knowing what potness is, such that even an unusual object can also be accurately qualified as having potness. Whether the appearance (pot, smoke on the hill) is the reality (potness, fiery smoke on the hill) depends on the qualifier sought and the question asked. The skeptic depends on what he recognizes in his perceptions and cannot be refuted except by proving his judgment is contradictory rather than merely contrary. In that case, UBESC does not provide grounds for a causal connection.

Gangesa's strategy, in sum, is to first provide the logical structure for a possible answer, then to ascertain by counterfactual reasoning that the probans does not contain an adjunct which disqualifies the inference considered. If the subject is smoke on a distant hill, where further information is lacking, extraordinary sensory perception is needed in place of ordinary sense perception. UBESC is extraordinary because it is based on the reliability of the perception and the knowability of the universal which allows specific sightings to vary individually. It avoids the nominalism of the skeptical view, a nominalism that insists solely on seeing as believing.

There does remain the possibility that skepticism could be refuted by showing what it means for the universal to be perceived through the particular. As said before, Nyaya thought accepts the universal as perceived, and Gangesa built his theory of extraordinary perception on this view. What actually is extraordinary is not that universals are perceived but that the perceiver acquires knowledge through perception about particulars of a type, including particulars not seen. When combined with counterfactual reasoning to ensure against error, all this provides a justification of induction.

Here it is important to establish how universals are perceived. The pot is the object of an ordinary perception, and its potness inheres in it. Its potness then can be the object of extraordinary perception. Analogous to what Mohanty said in the passage quoted earlier concerning intuition and eidetic seeing in Husserl, ordinary perception comes first, and extraordinary perception is grounded in it. In ordinary perception, the two are copresent in the same act of sensation when the pot is recognized as having potness. The perceived pot is individual and contingent; it is a particular thing. The potness perceived through it, however, is universal. Its universality is necessary for there to be individual variations of other particular pots. Its universality also prepares for subsequent acts of reflection which recognize it across variations. This brings me to an important object lesson concerning conceptual boundaries drawn from Husserlian phenomenology.

HUSSERL AND THE QUEST FOR PHILOSOPHY

The relevance of Western phenomenology to Indian thought should be more obvious than it is, to judge by the literature. Like "philosophy," "phenomenology" is a Western concept, just as "grammarian" represents a long-held tradition of

Indian thought, and names of schools of thought often tend to be treated as borders. Structural linguistics and Derrida's *Of Grammatology* crossed this linguistic border in the last century, and Harold Coward's study of *Derrida and Indian Philosophy* provides a bridge in the philosophy of religion for comparative analyses. Coward notes that Indian philosophy in the previous century anchored its differences to modern Western thought, Kant and Hegel in particular.[34]

There is, however, a natural if not a common ground between Indian and Western thought, which this essay addresses. That concerns the interrogation of phenomenal evidence in ancient skepticism and the grammarian responses to it, as well as the effort to describe phenomena in Western phenomenology. It is at this juncture that Husserl's distinction between essence and fact becomes relevant for our analysis.

Husserl holds that individuals are contingent but, in respect of their essences, they could be otherwise. This contingency or factualness, however, "has the character of *eidetic necessity* and with this a relation to *eidetic universality*."[35] In holding this view, Husserl is committed to a double sense of "evidence" or "truth." Evidence is, he says, a mental seeing of something itself.[36] It is *adequate* when given as itself and *apodictic* when it cannot be doubted. In describing the phenomenology of reason, he describes what could be called intellectual sight:

> What we usually call evidence and *intellectual sight* (or *intellectual seeing*) is a positional, doxic, and *adequately* presentive consciousness which "excludes being otherwise"; the positing is motivated in a quite exceptional manner by the adequate givenness and is, in the highest sense, an "act of reason."[37]

This is, at best, a very dense description, but its dynamic attempts to heighten adequate givenness to the exceptional level of apodicticity, which is only accessible through an act of reason.

Later, in the first *Cartesian Meditation*, this integration no longer appears as seamless. There Husserl will describe apodictically perfect evidence as evidence that can actually be inadequate, even though it is "absolutely unimaginable" that its being could be doubted.[38] Studying this complication, Jua Himanka argues that there are actually two phenomenologies at odds in Husserl's works: a purely descriptive phenomenology based on adequate evidence and a transcendental philosophy based on a Cartesian-inspired apodicticity.[39]

Concerning the latter, modern philosophy in the West began with Descartes's *cogito* argument: I think, therefore I am. The sense of indubitability in this argument convinced Husserl that his descriptive studies of phenomena could become a philosophy only if they proceeded from a similar apodicticity. Otherwise, they would reduce to a psychology which his earlier work, the *Logical Investigations*, had devoted an inordinate amount of time refuting. Yet, in the end, he found no way to replace adequacy with the priority of apodicticity. Himanka explains: Experience is temporal, and "reflection that reaches for primordiality is done before one enters into action. . . . Husserl even writes that timely being cannot even be apodictically known." Hence, Himanka asks, "Which of these two possibilities—experience and adequacy, or reflection and apodicticity—is then primordial?"[40]

The answer is obvious. Even though Husserl continued to hope that phenomenology could be anchored in apodicticity, for Himanka, this was the least interesting of its possibilities. Experiential adequacy is what gives phenomenology its distinctive edge in the pursuit of lived experience. Phenomenology was, and still remains, a source of interest and inspiration through its descriptive studies of experiential adequacy.

CONCLUSION

From Cārvāka to Gangesa to Husserl, the study of evidence can be cast in the broader context of the search for truth. Throughout these traditions, the challenge has been to reconcile the claims of perception to those of reason. Yet this challenge quickly becomes a contest between the irresistible demands of change and the seductress of reason in ordering them. This is the pivot that Himanka describes well in Husserl's thought: "Husserl tried to combine the phenomenological view of experience with the philosophical view of certain foundation. In order to do this, he has to replace the priority of experience (adequacy) with the priority of reflection (apodicticity)."[41]

The difference between Gangesa and Husserl in this respect is that Gangesa does not attempt to systematize his philosophy. Instead, he utilizes it as an aid to perception. Husserl, on the other hand, appears to have undermined his phenomenology in an effort to institute a transcendental philosophy. Phenomenology since then has survived largely by abandoning the temptations of transcendentalism. Learning, with Gangesa, to use reason to address the extraordinary *in* perception seems pragmatically more effective. In the philosophy of induction, this approach suggests that facts treated as material postulates are decidedly more open to variations that give a perceptual hint of the extraordinary than are projectible predicates which have been well-entrenched through previous usage.

NOTES

1. Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Pyrrho* 9.61, as quoted in *The Hellenistic Philosophers, Volume 1: Translations of the Principal Sources, with Philosophical Commentary*, trans. and ed. A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 13.
2. The Nyaya view, discussed later, agrees that internal perception is dependent on external perception for external objects, but not for internal states such as pleasure and pain, which internal perception apprehends directly.
3. Charvaka, *The Spirit of Charvaka Lokayata: From the Sarva-Darsana-Samgraha* (Orlando, FL: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017), 17.
4. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1888), 170.
5. Hume, *Treatise*, 265.
6. Hume, *Treatise*, 266.
7. Charles W. Hendel, *Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1963), 176.

8. A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1946), 54.
9. Hume, *Treatise*, 165.
10. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, 137: "But while it must be recognized that scientific laws are often discovered through a process of intuition, this does not mean that they can be intuitively validated. . . . [I]t is essential to distinguish the psychological question, How does our knowledge originate? from the logical question, How is it certified as knowledge?"
11. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, 50.
12. Bertrand Russell, "Logical Positivism," in *Logic and Knowledge: Essays 1901–1950*, ed. Robert Charles Marsh (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956), 377.
13. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), ¶1.13; 7.
14. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* ¶3.4: "A proposition determines a place in logical space."
15. John D. Norton, "A Material Theory of Induction," *Philosophy of Science* 70, no. 4 (2003): 647–70.
16. Norton, "A Material Theory of Induction," 650.
17. Norton, "A Material Theory of Induction," 664.
18. Norton, "A Material Theory of Induction," 655.
19. Norton, "A Material Theory of Induction," 664.
20. Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 106-111.
21. Norton, "A Material Theory of Induction," 666 n9.
22. Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), 93f.
23. Nelson Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*, 4th edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 35: "By thus moving to the plane of relations between statements, we feel we have exchanged an ontological problem for a linguistic one."
24. Charles Sanders Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), 98.
25. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983), ch. 1 §3; 8.
26. Jitendranath Mohanty, "Individual Fact and Essence in Edmund Husserl's Philosophy," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 20, no. 2 (1959): 222–30, quote on 223.
27. Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction: The Nyaya Viewpoint* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 129.
28. Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 130.
29. Norton, "A Material Theory of Induction," 666.
30. Norton, "A Material Theory of Induction," 668.
31. Charles Sanders Peirce, "What Is a Leading Principle?" in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), 134.
32. Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* 81^{b}9, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Volume One: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 132.
33. Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy*, 167.
34. Harold Coward, *Derrida and Indian Philosophy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 9: "During the past century Indian philosophy has developed its own self-understanding by recasting its traditional systems in terms of the thought of Western thinkers such as Kant and Hegel." Coward notes the towering influence of Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya.
35. Husserl, *Ideas*, §2, 7.
36. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, tr. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), 12.
37. Husserl, *Ideas*, §137, 329.
38. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 16.
39. Juha Himanka, "Husserl's Two Truths: Adequate and Apodictic Evidence," *Phänomenologische Forschungen* (2005): 93–112.
40. Himanka, "Husserl's Two Truths," 110.
41. Himanka, "Husserl's Two Truths," 110.

So Far, So Good: Learning from Experience

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In memoriam Gilbert Harman

"Nature is always too strong for principle."
– David Hume[1]

ABSTRACT
The problem of induction is that learning from experience presupposes that past experience continues to be relevant in new circumstances (a view challenged by David Hume) and that we understand accurately what it is we have experienced (a view challenged by Nelson Goodman). In recent decades, there has been a return to Aristotle and a revival of the concepts of "causal powers" and "natural kinds." Talk of natural kinds has also figured in some evolutionary accounts of naturalized epistemology. This paper examines some strengths and weaknesses of this movement in relation to the problem of induction. Philosophers considered include Rom Harré, Nancy Cartwright, and Brian Ennis, among causal-powers theorists, as well as W. V. Quine and John Norton. There is also discussion of psychological factors in induction and the cross-cultural ideal of self-criticism.

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Insanity has been defined as doing the same thing and expecting a different result, and thus sanity or rationality would involve expecting that the same cause can be counted on to produce the same effect. Learning from experience presupposes that our experience continues to be relevant in new circumstances and that we understand exactly what our experience has been. The philosophical problem of induction casts doubt on these assumptions.

David Hume challenges the first assumption by asking how we can justify our belief in the constancy of nature. It is not a necessary, logical truth, he thinks, since we can imagine change coherently.[2] And it cannot be a contingent, empirical truth learned from experience, because we cannot acquire any of those unless we presuppose such constancy. If those are the only two kinds of knowledge, as Hume assumes, then there would seem to be a problem about the justification of induction.

Nelson Goodman challenges the second assumption by pointing out that all the evidence we have is consistent

with infinitely many incompatible predictions. Have the emeralds we have seen so far been green—or *grue* (green if first examined before now, and blue otherwise)? What justifies us in treating the former predicate as "projectible" but not the latter? Mere *familiarity* ("entrenchment")? Even if we can somehow assume that nature will not change on us, how can we tell which version of nature we have been experiencing? Early responses to Goodman, such as that by Rudolf Carnap, tried to appeal to a distinction between predicates that were "purely qualitative" (green) and those that were not (grue). Goodman and his defenders responded that such a distinction begged the question.[3]

It appears we would have Goodman's riddle even if (as he seems to think) Hume's problem can be evaded.[4] And even if we could somehow be sure what pattern nature has been following, that would provide no guarantee against nature's changing. We might say: *when* induction is reliable is one question, and *why* induction is reliable is another.[5] But the lesson of Goodman's argument is, as Gilbert Harman and Sanjeev Kulkarni put it, that "we cannot allow enumerative induction to treat all possible hypotheses equally," and that "induction requires inductive bias among hypotheses."[6] In the words of Clark Glymour, "we know the probabilities of very few things, and to understand inductive competence we must construct theories that will explain how preferences among hypotheses may be established in the absence of such knowledge."[7] Does the necessity of bias in dealing with the practical problem of induction (the "when" question) affect treatment of the theoretical problem of induction (the "why" question)?

For Bayesians,[8] recognition of the inescapability of bias is expressed in talk of "priors" (that is, judgments of "prior probability"). What Hume lets us see, Colin Howson argues, is that inductive reasoning, to be justified, requires premises that contain "initial assignments of positive probability that cannot themselves be justified in any absolute sense."[9] If we accept these prior probabilities, induction can be made to work; if not, not. "Without our assistance, the evidence cannot tell us that the course of Nature may not change, or for that matter remain the same in the emeralds' continuing grueness. Nothing can. Hume was right."[10]

Attempts to address Hume's problem of induction have often appealed to some notion of *natural necessity*. Kant argues that besides the two kinds of knowledge recognized by Hume (analytic *a priori* and synthetic *a posteriori*), there is also synthetic *a priori* knowledge, and our knowledge of the constancy of nature is of that kind. In the 1970s, the work of Saul Kripke, Hilary Putnam, and others raised hope for the fourth possibility, analytic *a posteriori* knowledge. This would allow, as Rom Harré puts it, "*a posteriori* discoveries of the natures of things,"[11] and so open the door to talking about natural kinds again[12]—as, of course, Aristotelians had never quite stopped doing.[13]

Besides the outright Aristotelians, natural kinds have been entertained in a modified form by recent quasi-Aristotelian[14] metaphysicians of causal powers, and in an evolutionary form by some friends of naturalized epistemology. Because of limitations of space, I will not examine full-blown neo-Aristotelianism in the present paper, but some of the considerations below can be applied to it as well. As representatives of the causal powers approach to natural kinds, I focus on Rom Harré and Nancy Cartwright. The anti-Aristotelian evolutionary approach is exemplified by W. V. Quine.

Harré emphasized the importance of causal powers from the beginning of the 1970s until his death, at the age of ninety-one, just before the emergence of the COVID pandemic at the end of 2019.[15] He believed that such an approach provided the best way of understanding the *practice* of science, as well as providing a response to the challenges posed by Hume and Goodman.

The causal powers approach underwrote, he thought, a notion of natural necessity that exposed the misguided character of Hume's assumptions. While he does not explicitly align himself with Aristotle, he does recognize affinities between his views and those of Thomas Aquinas, as interpreted by Elizabeth Anscombe and Peter Geach.[16] And Harré at one point identifies Saul Kripke as a kindred spirit.[17] In short, he sees Hume's problem as an artifact of Hume's elimination of modalities, which is a failure to see that things are (sometimes) connected by natural necessity.

Goodman's riddle is regarded by Harré as ultimately self-refuting:

> The paradoxical character of Goodman's puzzle in the positivist framework is a *reductio ad absurdum* of that framework. Once we have to hand the distinction between powers, natures and appearances . . . the grue problem illustrates the enormous importance that the concept of a natural-kind plays in real science. Emeralds, as a natural-kind, cannot change spontaneously from blue to green [sic] at some arbitrary moment when someone chooses to examine them. . . . The green/grue puzzle does not constitute a problem for a realist philosophy of science because the theoretical context of any research programme depends on some scheme of interlocking type-hierarchies. Such a scheme is elaborated . . . in terms of theoretically defined stable natures.[18]

This response seems to involve a misunderstanding of Goodman. Harré says, "Whenever an observation of a grue emerald is made we must suppose that it changes from blue to green. Green emeralds do not change when observed."[19] But twenty years earlier, Goodman had explained that "the interpretation of 'grue' . . . does not require that a thing change from green to blue in order to remain grue. . . . 'All emeralds are grue' may be true even though some emeralds are permanently green and the rest permanently blue."[20]

Nancy Cartwright has for four decades questioned the availability and relevance of universal laws of nature, arguing that scientific practice is better understood in terms of a "dappled" world of various limited and loosely connected domains, causal powers ("capacities"), semi-Aristotelian "natures," and models and mechanisms.[21] Like

Harré, she views Hume as having created a problem by illegitimately eliminating the "natural modalities."

Given her emphasis on the study of variegated causal powers operating in diverse domains, Cartwright is unsurprisingly drawn to the "material" theory of induction, which John Norton has been developing in exquisite detail over the past couple of decades.[22] She declares:

> We see analogies among situations, similarities and differences; we learn that these similarities and differences are likely to matter in this kind of situation and not that, though we cannot give a description of 'this kind' and 'that kind' that turns this into a general truth. We rely on . . . a vast array of context-specific 'rough-and-ready principles'. . . . If John Norton is to be believed—as I think he should be—these rough-and-ready principles are at the heart of much of our inductive inference. They guide us in regarding one situation as similar to another with respect to transferring effects from one to the other.[23]

She adds that

> in all of Norton's examples the material facts that support inductive inference turn out to include natural modalities. . . . Hume's argument . . . constructs a Hume world, a world without any of the natural modalities. Then he formulates a problem about reasons that cannot be solved without modalities. . . . But the Hume world is not a good model for ours and there are no good arguments that it is once Hume's doctrines about what impressions are, his copy theory of ideas and his accompanying associationist theory of concept formation are rejected. . . . Our world, even as we experience it, is rife with modalities. One might argue, following Wilfrid Sellars, that if we can know that objects have specific properties, we must already have access to some natural laws. That's because properties . . . come in families with natural behaviors and natural relations to other properties.[24]

Cartwright's "families" resemble Harré's "type-hierarchies," and her "natural behaviors and natural relations" are akin to his "natural necessity" and "natural kinds." Cartwright's "rough-and-ready principles" are much like what Norton calls "material facts," and what others call "background knowledge."[25]

Much of Norton's case for his material theory of induction consists in arguing that supposed formal or quasi-formal approaches end up appealing to background knowledge. For example, he agrees with Elliott Sober: "Appeal to simplicity is a surrogate for stating an empirical background theory."[26] Again, he quotes the judgment of Timothy Day and Harold Kincaid that "appeals to the best explanation are really implicit appeals to substantive empirical assumptions, not to some privileged form of inference. It is the substantive assumptions that do the real work."[27]

Often, the concept in question can be shown to be too vague to carry any weight unless bolstered by context-specific assumptions. Gilbert Harman, for example, in making the case for simplicity as a pragmatic criterion for deciding what hypotheses to take seriously, says, "By simplicity I will mean whatever distinguishes the hypotheses people take seriously from those other hypotheses they (normally) do not take seriously even though the other hypotheses account equally well for the data."[28]

Beyond this, Norton, like Cartwright and Harré, counts on detailed historical studies of the practices of scientists to identify what scientists have found convincing, even though, as Cartwright suggests, it may be difficult or impossible to articulate criteria, let alone to say exactly why they apply, whenever and wherever they have been applied.

All this will seem cold comfort to those who yearn for the days of yore, before Thomas Kuhn's "paradigms" and Michel Foucault's "discourses." Where is the line—*is there a line*—between the history or the sociology of science and the philosophy of science? Decades of handwringing about "demarcation" and "relativism" and "progress" have not settled the matter. If, as philosophical provocateur Paul Feyerabend claimed, "anything goes," whither the concept of inductive competence?[29]

Norton suggests that, with the failure of the quest for a universal, formal theory of induction, the problem of justifying it, in the abstract, disappears.[30] Still, he offers the metaphor of the arch, with its multiple, mutually-supporting components, as a better, nonfoundationalist image for understanding why induction is, after all, reasonable. Cartwright and her colleagues have recently proposed the image of the tangle, in which, as in a bird's nest, the viability of the structure depends on interconnected and interacting parts. They are clear, however, that this does not solve the problem of induction: it does not guarantee that favored methods will be reliable, nor does it explain why they are reliable, when and if they are.[31] But Cartwright thinks there is no reason to expect that any general solution is possible.[32]

Many other philosophers have linked causal powers with natural kinds. Stewart Umphrey notes that "no sooner had they [sc., natural kinds] disappeared from biology than they started to show up in chemistry and atomic physics. Aristotelian bioessentialism may be dead, but the new scientific essentialism is very much alive."[33] Brian Ellis, a defender of "scientific essentialism," states the central point simply: "Essentialists hold that once we know the essential natures of things, we know how they must be disposed to behave whenever or wherever . . . they might exist."[34] Louis Groarke takes a similar position: "The principle Kornblith attributes to Locke—that two things that possess the same real nature must possess the same properties—is in fact the hidden premise in Aristotle's account of inductive reason."[35] Howard Sankey similarly asserts, "It is the natural kind structure of the world that makes induction reliable." And asserts, "The fact that . . . members of a kind possess the same essential properties is what makes induction reliable."[36]

Ellis argues that his essentialism about causal powers and natural kinds declaws Hume's argument and indicates the flaw in Goodman's. He says thus:

> [I]t is metaphysically impossible for things to behave in any of the bizarre ways envisaged by some philosophers. Emeralds cannot all turn blue in the year 2050, for example (as Nelson Goodman . . . envisaged). . . . [For] the essential nature of a thing cannot be dependent on anything that is extrinsic, such as the date or place of its existence, or whether or not, or how often, it has been observed. Consequently, date-dependent properties, such as those postulated by Nelson Goodman in his various examples, cannot be essential properties.[37]

Critics have suggested that attempts to solve the problem of induction by appealing to natural kinds must be question-begging. Howson, for example, argues that if "grue" is disqualified as a natural-kind term because of its temporal characteristics, then "temperature" must be similarly unacceptable since water exists in different states at different temperatures. "The only recourse of the natural kinds defender," he concludes, "is to define them in terms of their use in stable, perduring theory. But then to say that natural kinds are projectible and other kinds are not is empty."[38]

Ellis concedes that questions remain to be answered, though he views these as practical scientific problems rather than "irresolvable sceptical doubts."[39] "How are the natural kinds to be identified, and how are their essential natures to be discovered?"[40] There are difficulties here, however tempting it might be to dismiss them as "epistemic."[41] As Harré and Madden blithely admit: "The real essence of a kind . . . is progressively revealed *a posteriori* by empirical investigation. The real essence is only finally discovered when the analysis is complete. So far as we can tell no analyses of things and substances have yet been completed."[42]

The turn to science can take various forms. W. V. Quine in the late 1960s proposed naturalizing epistemology and offered an evolutionary account of natural kinds as a way of responding to Goodman. Human beings' "sense of comparative similarity," Quine suggested, might be aligned by natural selection with the relevant "regularities of nature." And that naive sense of kinds might subsequently undergo further refinement by science, as part of "a development away from the immediate, subjective, animal sense of similarity to the remoter objectivity of a similarity determined by scientific hypotheses and posits and constructs."[43]

Like all evolutionary arguments, however, this proposal does not get us *at* truth, but only *close enough* to truth for us to survive—and not to survive in general, but only to survive within the limited niche to which we have adapted. In the face of radical recontextualization, all bets are off, and what had hitherto been our best instincts may lead us astray.[44] And even in "normal" times, we find our theorizing is a mixed bag.

"By age 3 or 4 children expect natural kinds to have a richly correlated structure that goes beyond superficial appearances," psychologist Ellen Markman reports. "Even with properties that for adults are blatantly determined by superficial perceptual features . . . some children based their inductions on the category [rather than the appearance]."[45] Why? She hypothesizes that "from an early age children expect categories named by language to be richly correlated and to therefore promote inductive inferences. Only after learning more about various domains would children come to restrict their inferences."[46]

Moreover, as psychologist Andrew Shtulman notes, "our intuitive theories in several domains of knowledge carve up the world into entities and processes that do not actually exist."[47] In principle, science allows us to do better, often by replacing imaginary substances with real processes,[48] and fanciful properties with genuine relations or interactions.[49] But in practice, magical thinking is hard to displace, since intuitive theories "are a permanent fixture of human cognition because they are the handiwork of children, and children are not likely to be affected by changes in the availability or accessibility of scientific information."[50]

We do the best we can, as Otto Neurath famously suggested, to rebuild our ship at sea. Modern culture celebrates the shibboleth of "critical thinking," though there is scant agreement about what that might involve. Philosophers, confident that the subject is their bailiwick, may discover, as I did once when I chaired an academic task force on revising general degree requirements, that all professors, regardless of their disciplines, are convinced that what they teach is already critical thinking.[51]

Karl Popper's "falsificationism" grew out of his conviction that, while Hume had shown the impossibility of justifying induction, science (which was obviously the epitome of rational belief) must proceed by deduction ("conjectures and refutations") rather than induction. Falsificationism fails as a theory of science because, for example, it leaves infinitely many incompatible but so-far-not-falsified contenders standing. It is attractive, however, as a spur to self-criticism and as a caution against the temptation to cherry-pick one's evidence. "The first principle," as renowned physicist Richard P. Feynman said, "is that you must not fool yourself—and you are the easiest person to fool."[52]

Everything can be questioned, but of course not at the same time. We do the best we can. Or maybe we just do what we do and make the best of it. We are like the fellow in the old joke who fell from the top of a thirty-story building, and who said, as he went past each floor, "So far, so good." Or, as the song says, "Falling feels like flying—for a little while."[53]

NOTES

1. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Eric Steinberg (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1993), sec. 12, pt. 2; 110.
2. This may be open to debate. See Walter Ott, *Causation and Laws of Nature in Early Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 248–49; and, more generally, Tamar Szabó Gendler

and John Hawthorne, eds., *Conceivability and Possibility* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

3. For an extensive survey of the literature up to the mid-1990s, see Douglas Stalker, ed., *Grue!: The New Riddle of Induction* (Chicago: Open Court, 1994). My interest in the grue problem was revived by David Johnson, "Induction and Modality," *Philosophical Review* 100, no. 3 (1991): 399–430.

4. Nelson Goodman, *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 62–65. Among works arguing that Goodman's "new riddle" is confused, see Samir Okasha, "What Does Goodman's 'Grue' Problem Really Show?" *Philosophical Papers* 36, no. 3 (2007): 483–502, which draws upon Frank Jackson, "Grue," *Journal of Philosophy* 72, no. 5 (1975): 113–31, and Peter Godfrey-Smith, "Goodman's Problem and Scientific Methodology," *Journal of Philosophy* 100, no. 11 (2003): 573–90.

5. Cf. Gilbert Harman and Sanjeev Kulkarni, *Reliable Reasoning: Induction and Statistical Learning Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 3, and Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 176.

6. Harman and Kulkarni, *Reliable Reasoning*, 67–68.

7. Clark Glymour, "On Testing and Evidence," in *Testing Scientific Theories*, Vol. 10 of Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science, ed. John Earman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 3–26, at 3.

8. Whoever they may be. Richard C. Jeffrey insists that he is a Bayesian, but not in the sense criticized by Glymour, and Roger Rosenkrantz insists that Glymour himself is really a Bayesian, after all. See Jeffrey, "Bayesianism with a Human Face," in *Testing Scientific Theories*, ed. John Earman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 133-56, and Rosenkrantz, "Why Glymour Is a Bayesian," in *Testing Scientific Theories*, ed. John Earman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 69–97.

9. Colin Howson, *Hume's Problem: Induction and the Justification of Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 239.

10. Howson, *Hume's Problem*, 240.

11. R. Harré and E. H. Madden, *Causal Powers: A Theory of Natural Necessity* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), 71: "[T]his necessity ... constitutes the internal warrant of inductive inference because the *a posteriori* discoveries of natural necessities have been 'taken up' into the meaning of empirical concepts."

12. See, e.g., Stephen P. Schwartz, ed., *Naming, Necessity, and Natural Kinds* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977); Hilary Kornblith, *Inductive Inference and Its Natural Ground: An Essay in Naturalistic Epistemology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993); and Joseph Keim Campbell, Michael O'Rourke, and Matthew H. Slater, eds., *Carving Nature at Its Joints: Natural Kinds in Metaphysics and Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).

13. See, e.g., Louis Groarke, *An Aristotelian Account of Induction* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009). For background, see William A. Wallace, *Causality and Scientific Explanation, Vol. 1: Medieval and Early Classical Science* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1972); and William A. Wallace, *Causality and Scientific Explanation, Vol. 2: Classical and Contemporary Science* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1974), both of which were endorsed by Harré and Madden, *Causal Powers*, 117. See also William A. Wallace, *The Modeling of Nature: Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Nature in Synthesis* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996).

14. Walter Ott—in his insightful critique, "The Case against Powers," in *Reconsidering Causal Powers: Historical and Conceptual Perspectives*, ed. Benjamin Hill, Henrik Lagerlund, and Stathis Psillos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 149–67, at 149—declares: "By 'Aristotelian' I mean any view that construes powers as intrinsic properties of the objects that possess them."

15. Key among his many works are Rom Harré, *The Principles of Scientific Thinking* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); R. Harré and E. H. Madden, *Causal Powers: A Theory of Natural Necessity* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975); Rom Harré, *Laws of Nature* (London: Duckworth, 1993); and Jerrold L. Aronson, Rom Harré, and Eileen Cornell Way, *Realism Rescued: How Scientific Progress Is Possible* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995).

16. Harré and Madden, *Causal Powers*, 98–100. For the relevance of Aristotle's distinction between "essence" and "property" to the problem of induction, and comparison with the Nyaya philosophers of India, see Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti, *Definition and Induction: A Historical and Comparative Study* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995). See also his *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction: The Nyaya Viewpoint* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010).

17. Harré and Madden, *Causal Powers*, 146, 159.

18. Harré, *Laws of Nature*, 105–06.

19. Harré, *Laws of Nature*, 103.

20. Nelson Goodman, *Problems and Projects* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1973), 359. This is a common misunderstanding. Even Hilary Putnam, who wrote the foreword to the fourth edition of *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*, makes the same mistake in "Strawson and Skepticism," in *The Philosophy of P. F. Strawson*, ed. Lewis Edwin Hahn (Chicago: Open Court, 1998), 273–87, at 275; he corrects the error when he reprints the essay in his *Philosophy in an Age of Science: Physics, Mathematics, and Skepticism*, ed. Mario De Caro and David Macarthur (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 539.

21. Key among her many works are Nancy Cartwright, *How the Laws of Physics Lie* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Nancy Cartwright, *Nature's Capacities and Their Measurement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Nancy Cartwright, *The Dappled World: A Study of the Boundaries of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Nancy Cartwright, *Nature, the Artful Modeler: Lectures on Laws, Science, How Nature Arranges the World and How We Can Arrange It Better* (Chicago: Open Court, 2019); and Nancy Cartwright, Jeremy Hardie, Eleonora Montuschi, Matthew Soleiman, and Ann C. Thresher, *The Tangle of Science: Reliability Beyond Method, Rigour, and Objectivity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

22. John D. Norton, "A Material Theory of Induction," *Philosophy of Science* 70, no. 4 (2003): 647–70; "A Little Survey of Induction," in *Scientific Evidence: Philosophical Theories and Applications*, ed. Peter Achinstein (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 9–34; "How the Formal Equivalence of Grue and Green Defeats What Is New in the New Riddle of Induction," *Synthese* 150, no. 2 (2006): 185–207; "There Are No Universal Rules for Induction," *Philosophy of Science* 77, no. 5 (2010): 765–77; "A Material Dissolution of the Problem of Induction," *Synthese* 191, no. 4 (2014): 671–90; *The Material Theory of Induction* (Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2021); "A Material Defense of Inductive Inference," in *Living Skepticism. Essays in Epistemology and Beyond*, ed. Stephen Hetherington and David Macarthur (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 54–72; and *The Large-Scale Structure of Inductive Inference* (book manuscript). All of these are available online at Norton's remarkable website: http:/www.pitt.edu/~jdnorton, accessed August 21, 2024.

23. Cartwright, *Nature, the Artful Modeler*, 25.

24. Cartwright, *Nature, the Artful Modeler*, 107–08. Marc Lange—"What Would Reasons for Trusting Science Be?" in Naomi Oreskes, *Why Trust Science?*, with contributions by Ottmar Edenhofer, Jon Krosnick, M. Susan Lindee, Marc Lange, and Martin Kowarsch, ed. Stephen Macedo (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 181–90, at 184–85—puts the Sellarsian point as follows: "[I]f I take myself to be observing something to be the case, then I must believe that I am qualified to make that observation. . . . Without this additional belief about myself, I cannot justly take myself to have genuinely observed that something is so. . . . So in making an observation, we must already allow that we are justified in believing various generalizations about matters that go beyond what we have already observed."

25. Hilary Putnam, *Words and Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 397: "Because the project of symbolic inductive logic appeared to run out of steam after Rudolf Carnap, the thinking among philosophers of science has . . . run in the direction of . . . bootstrapping methods, methods that attribute a great deal to background knowledge." Putnam, *Philosophy in an Age of Science*, 539: If we try to deal with grue by talking of "normal" changes, "we are appealing to a fund of background knowledge, not to some supposed 'canon of induction' by which all that background knowledge was allegedly obtained." Harré and Madden, *Causal Powers*, 124: "[S]omething called 'background knowledge' ('entrenchment', etc.) finds its way into

putative solutions. . . . The effect of introducing material of that kind is precisely to effect among the properties . . . a linking of a non-accidental kind." For discussion of a natural kind theory in the Sanskrit tradition, see Kisor Chakrabarti, "The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Theory of Universals," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 3, nos. 3–4 (1975): 363–82.

26. Norton, *The Material Theory of Induction*, 174.
27. Norton *The Material Theory of Induction*, 249.
28. Gilbert Harman, "Simplicity as a Pragmatic Criterion for Deciding What Hypotheses to Take Seriously," in *Grue!: The New Riddle of Induction*, ed. Douglas Stalker (Chicago: Open Court, 1994), 153–71, at 155.
29. For Paul Feyerabend's final reflections, see his *Conquest of Abundance: A Tale of Abstraction versus the Richness of Being*, ed. Bert Terpstra (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
30. Putnam, *Words and Life*, 464, takes Goodman to have shown that "a purely formal method cannot be hoped for in inductive logic." For Norton's reservations, see "How the Formal Equivalence of Grue and Green Defeats What Is New in the New Riddle of Induction."
31. Cartwright et al., *The Tangle of Science*, 174, 220, 232.
32. Cartwright, *The Dappled World*, 105: "The term 'cause' is highly unspecific. It commits us to nothing about the kind of causality involved nor about how the causes operate. Recognising this should make us more cautious about investing in the quest for universal methods for causal inference."
33. Stewart Umphrey, *The Aristotelian Tradition of Nature Kinds and Its Demise* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), 235. See also Christopher J. Austin, *Essence in the Age of Evolution: A New Theory of Natural Kinds* (New York: Routledge, 2019).
34. Brian Ellis, *The Philosophy of Nature: A Guide to the New Essentialism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 135.
35. Groarke, *An Aristotelian Account of Induction*, 51. Cf. Kornblith, *Inductive Inference and Its Natural Ground*.
36. Howard Sankey, "Induction and Natural Kinds Revisited," in *Reconsidering Causal Powers: Historical and Conceptual Perspectives*, ed. Benjamin Hill, Henrik Lagerlund, and Stathis Psillos (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 284–99, at 297, 292. Cf. Harré and Madden, *Causal Powers*, 145.
37. Ellis, *The Philosophy of Nature*, 137. This is the same misreading of Goodman discussed earlier in connection with Harré; see note 20.
38. Howson, *Hume's Problem*, 32.
39. Ellis, *The Philosophy of Nature*, 136.
40. Ellis, *The Philosophy of Nature*, 135-36. Cf. Harré and Madden, *Causal Powers*, 152: "There is no problem of extrapolation in a thing ontology, though there is a problem of the correct identification of a thing."
41. Ian Hacking, *Representing and Intervening: Introductory Topics in the Philosophy of Natural Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 82: "Kripke holds that when one succeeds in naming a natural kind of thing, a thing of that kind must, as part of its very essence, be that kind. This harks back to a philosophy due to Aristotle, called essentialism. . . . Of course for all we know, it might be something else, but that is an epistemic matter."
42. Harré and Madden, *Causal Powers*, 102.
43. W. V. Quine, "Natural Kinds," in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 114–38, at 134; reprinted in *Grue!: The New Riddle of Induction*, ed. Douglas Stalker (Chicago: Open Court, 1994), 41–56, at 52.
44. See Laurence Gonzales, *Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004). Cf. Harré and Madden, *Causal Powers*, 75: "If such a 'breakdown' of old particulars occurred we would try to understand the new happenings in the light of the newly discovered natures of the new particulars. If the change had not been total we would find such connections. . . . If we failed to find them we would no longer have to worry about the problem of induction, or any other."
45. Ellen M. Markman, *Categorization and Naming in Children: Problems of Induction* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 106.
46. Markman, *Categorization and Naming in Children*, 226.
47. Andrew Shtulman, *Scienceblind: Why Our Intuitive Theories about the World Are so Often Wrong* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 5.
48. Shtulman, *Scienceblind*, 7.
49. Shtulman, *Scienceblind*, 11.
50. Shtulman, *Scienceblind*, 7. Freud might thus have been right that we are permanently marked by the explanations we construct for ourselves in childhood, even if he erred by focusing too exclusively on sexual theories. Shtulman focuses on examples from the physical and biological domains but acknowledges baleful influence in relation to social categories or stereotypes as well (161–62). See also Craig McGarty, Vincent Y. Yzerbyt, and Russell Spears, eds., *Stereotypes as Explanations: The Formation of Meaningful Beliefs about Social Groups* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Michael L. Perlin, *The Hidden Prejudice: Mental Disability on Trial* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2000).
51. And that is an issue in the literature on critical thinking. See, e.g., John E. McPeck, *Critical Thinking and Education* (London: Routledge, 1981).
52. Richard P. Feynman, "Cargo Culture Science," in *"Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!": Adventures of a Curious Character* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1985), 338–46, at 343. The cross-cultural ideal of self-criticism is well stated in Bryan W. Van Norden, "What Should Western Philosophy Learn from Chinese Philosophy?" in *Chinese Language, Thought, and Culture: Nivison and His Critics*, ed. Philip J. Ivanhoe (Chicago: Open Court, 1996), 224–49, at 239: "There is nothing wrong with . . . biases so long as we . . . strive to provide evidence and arguments for our beliefs, and remain open to changing our minds through ongoing discussion."
53. The song, "Fallin' and Flyin'" by Stephen Bruton and Gary Nicholson, is sung by Jeff Bridges in the 2009 film *Crazy Heart*.

The Various Theoretical and Non-Theoretical Functions of Induction

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ABSTRACT
Bertrand Russell argued in 1912 that induction, although not provable as a reliable method of knowledge at the logical level, is the basis of our psychological expectations and actions in daily life. Unlike Russell, from the 1930s onward, neo-empiricists such as Rudolf Carnap, Alfred Jules Ayer, and Stephen Barker continued to argue that induction is also logically valid as a cognitive method of truth. But Karl R. Popper, after arguing in 1934 that induction is not logically valid, argued in 1963—more radically—that it is not even a psychological tendency of the human mind, nor is it used in the actions of everyday life. What is induction then? According to Popper, it is only a "myth," that is, a commonplace ideology, or a "demon" that haunts society and constitutes a mental cramp widespread among all human beings—a distorted ideology that hinders the flourishing and strengthening of thought and thus hinders the growth of knowledge. In this study, I would like to show how this "myth" hinders an industrial practice, so-called "big data analytics," and two humanistic disciplines: historiography and psychoanalysis.

INTRODUCTION

In *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle described what induction is and differentiated it from deduction. Philosophers have been talking about the true importance and usefulness of induction for the pursuit of knowledge for millennia, differentiating between those who support it and those who criticize it: Francis Bacon, Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mills, and the logical positivists of the Vienna Circle such as Rudolf Carnap support it; Sextus Empiricus, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Bertrand Russell, and Karl R. Popper criticize it.

In *Conjectures and Refutations*, his main book on the theory of knowledge written during his second period—i.e., after the Second World War, when, as Ludwig Wittgenstein had done over the preceding decade and a half, he abandoned formal logico-philosophical language as a means of dealing with epistemology—Popper writes forcefully: "Induction, i.e. inference based on many observations, is a myth. It is neither a psychological fact, nor a fact of ordinary life, nor one of scientific procedure."[1] While Popper's position has been defended by a number of scholars such as Paul Feyerabend and Imre Lakatos, it has been attacked by Alfred Jules Ayer, Anthony O'Hear, Stephen Barker, Nelson Goodman, Friederich Rapp, Herbert Feigl, Carl Gustav Hempel, Jaakko Hintikka, Francesco Barone, Dario Antiseri, Marcello Pera, and countless other empiricist philosophers, so much so that one scholar, Maurilio Lovatti, rightly spoke of "a neo-empiricist crusade against Popper."[2]

In this essay, I first follow Popper's "outline" and examine (1) whether induction is a scientific procedure; (2) whether it is a natural tendency of our mind, i.e., an innate and universal psychological act for all human beings; (3) whether it is a frequent experience in everyday life; and, finally, (4) whether it is only a "myth," i.e., a more or less negative or more or less functional ideology that serves as an oppressive social superego, or as a tranquilizer in the routines of life.

Secondly, I raise the particular examples of two twentieth-century philosophical theories—Benedetto Croce's historicism and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis—that display an anti-inductivist spirit.

Thirdly, I present a hypothetical historical explanation of how and why the camps of the inductivists and anti-inductivists were formed.

IS INDUCTION A "SCIENTIFIC" PROCEDURE?

As has been noted, the twentieth century especially drew inspiration from Hume's critique of induction, for example, Bertrand Russell who "holds that all empirically based opinions about the future are based on the inductive principle which experience can neither confirm nor confute."[3] Here, by "empirically based opinions," Russell means only judgements based on past experience and not those based on logic: e.g., the judgement that "the sun always rises in the morning" but not the judgement that "the sum of the interior angles of a triangle is always 180°." This is a point that fully involves science:

> The general principles of science, such as the belief in the reign of law, and the belief that every event must have a cause, are as completely dependent upon the inductive principle as are the beliefs of daily life. All such general principles are believed because mankind have found innumerable instances of their truth and no instances of their falsehood. But this affords no evidence for their truth in the future, unless the inductive principle is assumed.[4]

All particular examples or individual cases that are included in an inductive generalization are more certain than the generalization itself.[5] In fact, the inductive principle itself is based on induction in a circular relationship:

> The inductive principle, however, is equally incapable of being proved by an appeal to experience. Experience might conceivably confirm the inductive principle as regards the cases that have been already examined; but as regards unexamined cases, it is the inductive principle alone that can justify any inference from what has been examined to what has not been examined. All arguments which, on the basis of experience, argue as to the future or the unexperienced parts of the past or present, assume the inductive principle; hence we can never use experience to prove the inductive principle without begging the question.[6]

Nor is the observation logical that, if multiple explanatory hypotheses still remain after an eliminative test, induction can be used to narrow their number by choosing those that can explain a greater number of past phenomena. Indeed, even such a selection criterion cannot be justified except by basing it—again—on induction. It could be said—instead—that the decision to validate the inductive principle, if not its adherence to logic, is based on a tendency or willingness to equate the future with the past, as if they were homogeneous "periods or segments" of time, conceiving them only according to J. M. E. McTaggart's B-series but not according to his A-series.[7]

It does not seem to be an effective defense of induction. It seems to be one of those that concede that the future cannot replicate the past because otherwise the former would render the latter useless, but that even if the *details* of future events being something new cannot be predicted by inductively relying on past events, the probability of general events, i.e., without details, can nevertheless be thought of as an "average science" (the so-called "average science" that sixteenth-century theologians attributed to God so as not to cancel out human free will). This does not seem effective because at least in general the future would replicate the past and the probability of this repetition would still be taken from the repetition of events in the past, i.e., by induction.

Russell's doubts about the logic of induction posed Popper with the problem of what then to support the "scientificity of science." Popper famously replied that it rests on *a priori* conjectures (hypotheses), which use experience not as a

source of truth, but, instead, as a test of conjecture, i.e., as a challenge to falsification: "it is a theory of experience that assigns to our observations the equally modest and almost equally important role of tests which may help us in the discovery of our mistakes."[8] This talk of "falsification" for Popper should not discourage the researcher by making him fall into skepticism, for the growth of knowledge exists and "science can progress just because we can learn from our mistakes."[9]

IS INDUCTION A PSYCHOLOGICAL FACT?

Russell had already distinguished the epistemological from the psychological point of view: "We have therefore to distinguish the fact that past uniformities cause expectations as to the future, from the question whether there is any reasonable ground for giving weight to such expectations after the question of their validity has been raised."[10] Popper says that induction, besides not being a scientific procedure, is not even a psychological tendency. We would have to see what he means by "tendency," whether, in the manner of Francis Bacon's *idola tribus*, he means prejudices inherent in the human species and therefore innate and universal but deforming, i.e., producing bad interpretations of reality, or like the "projective identification" of which Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein speak, a psychological mechanism that is also innate and universal for the species but does not in itself produce bad interpretations of reality, but, on the contrary, for Freud and Klein, such mechanisms are necessary to understand the emotional realities of other people. Given his criticism of induction as a scientific procedure, I think he indeed means a universal "psychological tendency," but a tendency that is wrong, along Baconian lines.

Russell specifically notes that if we left the inductive method in our reasoning, according to his epistemological critique, a change in psychological tendency would occur and we would have to "forgo all justification of our expectations about the future."[11] This would happen if we assume that there is a widespread human psychological tendency to wish we could give "justification" for our expectations.

Why, however, "all" expectations about the future? For instance, if we no longer had faith in induction, does it not seem that we would also have to abandon our expectation of mathematical truths (even in the future 2 + 2 = 4), and also our expectation of truths of faith (even though God has often given me pain and trouble in the past, in the future He will give me joy and good)? Let us remember that it was precisely on faith (belief) that Hume insisted. In addition, there could be a third category of expectations for the future that should not be abandoned if we leave the inductive method, namely, those mentioned by Benedetto Croce in his ethics: actions, i.e., the decisions of the will (independently of the "happening," i.e., the external success of the action, which depends on a thousand events independent of the agent's will) that, by taking effect, modifies the person. For example, if I decide not to lie in a future conversation, even if this will not be believed by others, it has already modified me, and will lead me towards a stronger tendency towards sincerity in the future, which I can expect even if this never happened in the past (absence of induction).[12] A fourth category of expectation that we will not abandon by not using induction is our expectation of truths about future facts that are not certain but at least possible, i.e., whose contrary does not imply contradiction: it concerns the tenacious hopes of the poor and humble who, even if no repeated fact in the past makes the object of their hope probable, can nevertheless expect that, sooner or later, God or karma or history and the time of goodwill will do justice and grant them those goods of which they were unjustly deprived before.

I conclude on this psychological point by disagreeing here at least in part with Popper and saying that induction is not the only psychological tendency concerning expectations about the future. But I do not claim that induction is one psychological tendency among others. This last psychological tendency could perhaps be described as the "self-soothing function of the psyche." In fact, if tranquility, i.e., the lack of disturbances, derives from the idea that the future will be similar to the past, there will be no "disturbances," i.e., changes neither in the events around us nor in our habits of dealing with them.

IS INDUCTION A FACT OF ORDINARY LIFE?

What Popper says, I believe, means that induction is not a common fact (so much as to call it "a fact of everyday life"), i.e., widespread in society and frequent over time. Diffusion and frequency are quantitative categories. This is what Russell also seemed to be talking about when he made this list of acts of prediction that we do each and every day on an inductive basis:

> If the [inductive] principle is unsound, we have no reason to expect the sun to rise tomorrow, to expect bread to be more nourishing than a stone, or to expect that if we throw ourselves off the roof we shall fall. When we see what looks like our best friend approaching us, we shall have no reason to suppose that his body is not inhabited by the mind of our worst enemy or of some total stranger.[13]

However, diffusion and frequency do not imply truth. In fact, Russell states, "Thus our instincts certainly cause us to believe the sun will rise tomorrow, but we may be in no better a position than the chicken which unexpectedly has its neck wrung."[14]

Induction is a fundamental practice in everyday life with regard to what we expect in myriad situations in the future from the composition of things and people. However, there is also another experience in everyday life: making assumptions and propositions of new actions in order to obtain new experiences and results. For example, (1) in a situation of crisis and pain due to an illness for which chemical medicine has not cured a serious physical symptom, I can try a psychotherapy never tried by me before, psychoanalysis; (2) out of curiosity and desire for historical understanding, if historians expected that, in the communications between politicians and diplomats, there was an escalation of aggression shortly before the war started, but they do not find such a correlation in documents, then they can change the theory and decide to research whether it is true that, precisely when there is no escalation of aggression in the communications between

politicians and diplomats, it is more likely that war will break out shortly afterwards, because the two sides show that they are not afraid and do not take precautions. Perhaps historians could refine the explanatory theory and say that this happens but not always, i.e., not in all types of war, but only in wars where there is strong ideological hatred such as religious wars, but not, for example, in dynastic and economic wars.

This example can be accused of concerning only a few specialist scholars and not the everyday life of the majority. I then propose another example. In the past, I have seen many times that my friend John would only accept my invitations to dinner if he was at my house, and then I expected him to be stingy with money. One time, however, I saw him donate a lot of money to a charity, and so I changed my hypothesis (which, if verified as true, would lead me to change my expectations for the future): John does not want to invite me to dinner at his house not because he is stingy but because at his house there is an elderly and demented father whom John thinks might disturb me as his guest. If this were true, I could then decide to talk to John and convince him that I would not be disturbed. On the contrary, I would be happy to help him with his father, and then I would not expect further refusals from John or, in other situations, miserly behavior.

From this perspective, then, we can say that "everyday life" is largely about building on events that have occurred in the past and expecting them in the future as well, but there is not only this: there is also a tendency towards discovery and innovation.

TWO PHILOSOPHIES THAT CRITICIZE INDUCTIVISM: HISTORICISM AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

The founder of historicism, Benedetto Croce (1866–1952), denied that one can predict the future. The future is the realm of the will, and therefore I can only know what I want to do, but not what will happen, as events are produced by myriad known and unknown causes of which my will is one. What, then, is knowledge of the past for? To know what one can do and what one cannot do while acting. For example, since the events of the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815), we have realized that one cannot wish to establish a lasting absolutist political regime in an industrialized and schooled society in order to maintain law and order against revolutions, civil wars, and anarchy. We cannot foresee the future. For instance, it is true that, even if we establish a liberal state for ourselves, it may be that other neighboring absolutist states may conquer us and put an end to liberalism. However, at least, we know that if I want one thing (a lasting state in an industrialized and schooled society), I cannot want this thing and, at the same time, want to establish an absolute state.

When he was young, the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud (1866–1939), won a scholarship to Paris where he visited the asylum of a famous French neurologist, Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893), who had succeeded, at least in part, in curing hysteria. This mental illness was then explained by the secretion of hormones by the uterus and was therefore thought to have existed only in women. But Charcot had found a couple of cases of hysterical men. So many women led to the inductive theory concerning the uterus, and not the very few men. But Charcot thought he would try to explain these exceptions, instead of building his psychiatric theory on the "rule," and invented a theory whereby the uterus was not a cause of hysteria, but certain sexual fixations (and repressions) that in the society of the time were much more common among women, and, thanks to the new theory (which later inspired Freud's psychoanalysis), he was able to explain both how some men could also be hysterical, and how the many hysterical women began to heal not through a hysterectomy but through verbal communication with a psychiatrist concerning such sexual fixations (and repressions).

THE SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE METHOD OF THEIR CONTROL

In his critique of induction, which seeks the source of knowledge from outside, Popper looks for that source in an internal act of the mind, conjecture. He writes: "The actual procedure of science is to operate with conjectures: to jump to conclusions—often after one single observation (as noticed for example by Hume and Born). Repeated observations and experiments function in science as *tests* of our conjectures or hypotheses, i.e., as attempted refutations."[15] I would add the name of Kant who first powerfully stated that the source of knowledge is *a priori*, i.e., prior to external experience.

According to this philosophy, the sources of ideas are internal, in the human intellect, while external experience plays the precious and irreplaceable role of testing—confirming or refuting—the hypotheses or conjectures, i.e., the ideas that come from within, from our mind.

But from our mind can come "anything": single episodes of life, psychological tendencies, metaphysical and religious beliefs, political preferences, dreams, and games. For Popper—as then for Feyerabend—conjectures can have any origin, and all of them can be useful. This is why Popper, from the tragic experiences of his life as a Jew fleeing Nazism and as a liberal thinker opposing the Communism of the Cold War, conceived a daring analogy between political theory and epistemology, because idealizing (overestimating) the problem of the sources of knowledge is an authoritarian attitude similar to idealizing the importance of the sources of power, as was done by Plato, for whom a state was good or bad depending on who (one, a few, many, poor, rich, warriors, philosophers, demagogues, etc.) had sovereign power, without having to take into account the fact that the state was not sovereign, but that it was a state that was good or bad according to who (one, a few, many, poor, rich, warriors, philosophers, demagogues, etc.) had sovereign power. He did not realize that the real problem in politics is not in the search for the "good" source of power, but in how one can replace the old rulers with others without too much tragedy. Similarly, it is misleading to give too much weight to the sources of knowledge, as any one of them can go right as well as wrong: idealism, criticism, historicism, even inductivism. Ideas come from any source, but the problem is how to

put them to the test, to see without too much trauma in the scientific community, whether they can be refuted, i.e., found false and, therefore, replaced with others:

> The traditional systems of epistemology may be said to result from yes-answers or no-answers to questions about the sources of knowledge. *They never challenge these questions, or dispute their legitimacy*; the questions are taken as perfectly natural, and nobody seems to see any harm in them.
>
> This is quite interesting, for these questions are clearly authoritarian in spirit. They can be compared with that traditional question of political theory, 'Who should rule?', which begs for an authoritarian answer such as 'the best', or 'the wisest', or 'the people', or 'the majority'. (It suggests, incidentally, such silly alternatives as 'Whom do you want as rulers: the capitalists or the workers?', analogous to 'What is the ultimate source of knowledge: the intellect or the senses?') This political question is wrongly put and the answers which it elicits are paradoxical (as I have tried to show in chapter 7 of my *Open Society*). It should be replaced by a completely different question such as '*How can we organize our political institutions so that bad or incompetent rulers* (whom we should try not to get, but whom we so easily might get all the same) *cannot do too much damage?*' I believe that only by changing our question in this way can we hope to proceed towards a reasonable theory of political institutions.
>
> The question about the sources of our knowledge can be replaced in a similar way. It has always been asked in the spirit of: 'What are the best sources of our knowledge—the most reliable ones, those which will not lead us into error, and those to which we can and must turn, in case of doubt, as the last court of appeal?' I propose to assume, instead, that no such ideal sources exist—no more than ideal rulers—and that *all* 'sources' are liable to lead us into error at times. And I propose to replace, therefore, the question of the sources of our knowledge by the entirely different question: '*How can we hope to detect and eliminate error?*'
>
> The question of the sources of our knowledge, like so many authoritarian questions, is a genetic one. It asks for the origin of our knowledge, in the belief that knowledge may legitimize itself by its pedigree. The nobility of the racially pure knowledge, the untainted knowledge, the knowledge which derives from the highest authority, if possible from God: these are the (often unconscious) metaphysical ideas behind the question. My modified question, 'How can we hope to detect error?'[16]

In this very interesting passage, the words (regarding the search for the most "reliable" sources of knowledge, those that will never lead us to "error" and may constitute, when we have a "doubt," the "last court of appeal") strongly allude to Descartes in his reasoning that leads from the "dubito" to the "cogito" and the indubitable sources of knowledge (the *cogito* and God). Descartes was not an empiricist and thus was not explicitly an inductivist; on the contrary, he questioned the most common sensible experiences. However, just like the later empiricists, he idealized, i.e., overemphasized, the subject of the "sources of knowledge."

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE AND ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The title of this section may seem strange, because usually topics such as "intellect and will," "God and the universe," "good and evil," and, indeed, "past and future" are considered philosophical problems outside of time, with no historical development. I, on the other hand, following the historicism of Hegel and Croce for whom "everything is nothing but history," believe that philosophical problems also have a historical development, both in the way the questions are formulated and in the answers given to them.

As seen in the previous section, the problem of what weight to give to the "sources of knowledge" in the search for truth versus the weight to give to our method of testing them, whatever they may be, can be usefully linked to a more general attitude in our social life. In this section, I would first like to return to the "epistemological" problem itself, i.e., that concerning our search for truth, and then link one of its important aspects (the "sources") to a historical profile of our Western society.[17]

I therefore begin with the epistemological problem. One of the main points of criticism of the inductive method is that it equates past and future: as if, by collecting more documents about a fact from past history, we could have greater certainty about the truth of that fact, and so, by accumulating more experiences now in the present and in the past (but the present is past), we could have greater certainty about the future.

Russell had precisely focused on the point: "All our conduct is based upon associations which have worked in the past, and which we therefore regard as likely to work in the future; and this likelihood is dependent for its validity upon the inductive principle."[18] For it is not accumulated factual data that affirm the predictability of the future, but a theory, namely, the inductivist principle itself: "The beliefs of daily life . . . are believed because mankind have found innumerable instances of their truth and no instances of their falsehood. But this affords no evidence for their truth in the future, unless the inductive principle is assumed."[19]

And herein lies the difficulty:

> Thus all knowledge which, on a basis of experience tells us something about what is not experienced, is based upon a belief which experience can neither confirm nor confute, yet which, at least in its more concrete applications, appears to be as firmly rooted in us as many of the facts of experience. The existence and justification of such

> beliefs . . . raises some of the most difficult and most debated problems of philosophy.[20]

However, Popper undertook a liberating move away from this difficulty and he accepted that conjectures came from diverse and heterogeneous sources: refusal of a previous theory, attempt to explain new phenomena, justification of metaphysical and religious views, love of the aesthetic elegance of a theory, inspiration from an important life experience, visualizations in a dream. As already mentioned, Popper is, on the one hand, liberal and tolerant with regard to the sources of conjecture, and, on the other hand, convinced that the problem of sources has been overestimated and today we need to scale it down. Now, among the sources of the conjectures (theoretical hypotheses) I listed just above, Popper also puts induction from particular cases repeated in the past. And this is the liberating (or at least partly liberating) move from the epistemological difficulty pointed out by Russell: if we follow Popper, we do not have to worry if a possible, and perhaps frequent, source of our scientific hypotheses, which aim to describe and explain reality, comes from induction. We do not have to worry because whether the hypothesis comes from induction or comes from, say, the desire to refute a rival scientist's scientific theory, the main point for its "scientificity" is not the origin, the source, but the next step, that is, whether this theory stands up to the experiments that produce those experiences that it is supposed to allow or forbid. The main point about the "scientificity" of a scientific theory is its potential "falsifiability" by real experiences, and the main point about its "usefulness" is the fact that, for a certain period, this theory is not falsified by the crucial experiments that could have falsified it, but, for now, it has been "corroborated" (not falsified) and therefore still usable to explain aspects of reality.

If we take a historical look at when induction was taken "authoritatively" (I follow Popper's interesting analogy between sources of sovereign power and sources of knowledge), we can see that it was questioned by Enlightenment philosophers such as Hume and Kant. Later on, it was upheld by positivist philosophers such as Herbert Spencer in the last decades of the nineteenth century, during the peak of imperialist colonial expansion. Afterwards, it was again questioned during the crisis between the two world wars by liberal philosophers such as Russell and Popper. Then, it was again upheld by neo-positivist and analytical empiricists (as Maurilio Lovatti has well shown in his study devoted to this topic[21]) after the Second World War and with the great technological, industrial, and economic growth that took place in the Western world in those years.

A literary icon of this period most recently mentioned, a renowned symbol of inductivism in a fictional work of literature, is the concept of "psychohistory" invented by Isaac Asimov in his *Foundation Trilogy* (which later expanded into the *Foundation Series*), where massive amounts of data about the past of peoples and civilizations, processed by powerful computers, enable the prediction of the future for millennia to come.

A more recent social and technological phenomenon, on the other hand—in our years of strong globalization of the Western model, but also of strong criticism of certain aspects of this globalization and of this model[22]—is that of the "big data analysis," which presents the problem of induction in a controversial manner. On the one hand, the Western model seems to exalt induction by justifying induction's existence and character on the massive collection of data, i.e., documents of past events. On the other hand, the presence of a theory independent of induction seems necessary to avoid oddities and irrelevancies. The big data analysis does not include any explicated or systematic theory that gives a sense of research throughout the mass of data or a set of evaluation criteria for interpreting them. Without such a well-thought-out theory to base one's own interpretive work on, the data themselves very often can be both irrelevant and contradictory. Is it possible to deal with big data without an interpretive theory and just rely on a mechanical induction? Gary Smith explains "The Paradox of Big Data" as follows:

> Theory before data: classical statistical tests begin with a falsifiable theory, followed by the collection of data for a statistical test of the theory. For example, it is known that heart attacks and strokes can be triggered by blood clots, and that aspirin inhibits blood clotting. A research hypothesis is whether regular doses of aspirin will reduce the chances of heart attacks and strokes. This conjecture was tested in the 1980s by a five-year, double-blind randomized control trial involving 22,000 doctors, with half taking an aspirin tablet every other day, and half taking a placebo. The doctors taking placebos had more than three times as many fatal heart attacks and nearly twice as many nonfatal heart attacks as the treatment group.
>
> Data mining: data mining goes in the other direction, putting data before theory, indeed viewing the use of *a priori* knowledge as an unwelcome constraint that limits the possibilities for knowledge discovery. In the heart attack example, a data miner might compile a database of 1,000 personal characteristics of 10,000 people who suffered heart attacks and 10,000 people who did not, and then use a data mining algorithm to identify distinguishing characteristics. It might turn out that the heart attack victims were more likely to have a fondness for apples, work for city government, live in a small town, have green eyes, and use the word *great!* on Facebook.[23]

I have made these connections between the broader political, social, and cultural history with the ups and downs of the inductive method, because supporting the inductive method or criticizing it is not a culturally or politically neutral choice. I believe there can be a correlation between inductivism and authoritarianism, and a correlation between criticism of inductivism and criticism of authority.

CONCLUSIONS

I would like to be balanced and recall both the pros and cons of induction, and so, returning to the first point mentioned in the introductory section, I do not agree with Popper who calls induction only a "myth." I recall the pros: (1) it calms, because it makes us think that the future will be similar to the past; (2) it gives effectiveness in action through the use of knowledge and skills already seen and learned; and (3) it stimulates the accuracy of observation and data collection of experiences. I recall the cons: (1) it closes our eyes to possible different and new experiences, because it does not facilitate the invention of new theories (points of view) that could make them observable; (2) it overestimates the sources of knowledge and makes us focus on the sources instead of testing them; and (3) it tends to dull our perception of the difference between past and future.

Secondly, I brought the examples of two intellectual disciplines, historicism and psychoanalysis, which do not rely on induction.

Thirdly, I suggested seeing how confidence in the inductive method, or skepticism towards it, varies according to the changing broader historical context within which intellectuals operate.

In conclusion, I would therefore state that induction serves not only theoretical purposes, i.e., continuous improvement of knowledge and understanding, but also practical purposes of various kinds.

NOTES

1. Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1963), 53.
2. Maurilio Lovatti, "La crociata neo-empirista contro Popper," *Per la filosofia* 13, no. 36 (1996): 99–109.
3. Kisor Kumar Chakrabarti, *Classical Indian Philosophy of Induction: The Nyaya Viewpoint* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 16.
4. Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 66.
5. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 80, 112.
6. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 68.
7. J. M. E. McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," *Mind* 17, no. 68 (1908): 457–74.
8. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, vii.
9. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, vii.
10. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 63.
11. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 68.
12. Benedetto Croce, *Filosofia della pratica: Economia ed etica* (Bari: Laterza, 1923), 46-49.
13. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 69.
14. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 63.
15. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, 53.
16. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, 25.
17. As for the Eastern one, I do not have sufficient expertise and must leave the task to others, if they ever want to undertake it.
18. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 69.
19. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 69.
20. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, 69.
21. Lovatti, "La crociata neo-empirista contro Popper."
22. Very briefly and for the purpose of this paper, I define "the Western model" as that pattern of civilization that is built upon three main pillars: 1) Greek philosophy and science, 2) Roman law, and 3) Christian religion.
23. Gary Smith, "The Paradox of Big Data," *SN Applied Sciences* 2, art. no. 1041 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s42452-020-2862-5.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

GOAL OF *APA STUDIES ON ASIAN AND ASIAN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHERS AND PHILOSOPHIES*

APA Studies on Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies is sponsored by the APA Committee on Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies to report on the philosophical work of Asian and Asian American philosophy, to report on new work in Asian philosophy, and to provide a forum for the discussion of topics of importance to Asian and Asian American philosophers and those engaged with Asian and Asian American philosophy. We encourage a diversity of views and topics within this broad rubric. None of the varied philosophical views provided by authors of *APA Studies* articles necessarily represents the views of any or all the members of the Committee on Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies, including the editor(s) of *APA Studies*. The committee and the journal are committed to advancing Asian and Asian American philosophical scholarships and bringing this work and this community to the attention of the larger philosophical community; we do not endorse any particular approach to Asian or Asian American philosophy.

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i) Please submit essays electronically to the editor(s). Articles submitted to *APA Studies* should be limited to ten double-spaced pages and must follow the APA submission guidelines.

ii) All manuscripts should be prepared for anonymous review. Each submission shall be sent to two referees. Reports will be shared with authors. References should follow *The Chicago Manual Style*.

iii) If the paper is accepted, each author is required to sign a copyright transfer form, available on the APA website, prior to publication.

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5) **Guest editorship:** It is possible that one or more members of the Committee on Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies could act as guest editors for one of the issues of *APA Studies* depending on their expertise in the field. To produce a high-quality journal, one of the co-editors could even come from outside the members of the committee depending on his/her area of research interest.

APA STUDIES ON

Feminism and Philosophy

BARRETT EMERICK AND AMI HARBIN, CO-EDITORS

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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Imogen M. Sullivan
ARCADIA UNIVERSITY

Rowan Bell
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Note: This special issue on the futures of trans philosophy is guest edited by Imogen Sullivan and Rowan Bell. It includes five peer-reviewed papers and an introduction from Sullivan and Bell. We extend our deep thanks and appreciation to the authors, referees, and especially to Sullivan and Bell for all their work in creating this timely and important issue.

– Barrett Emerick and Ami Harbin
Co-editors, *APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy*

In this special issue, "Futures of Trans Philosophy," we present five new works of trans philosophy that, when read together, address the compound question: What is trans philosophy, and where can trans philosophy go from here? Trans philosophy is young by any measure, but especially within the long history of philosophy. By most accounts, we are either just approaching or just passing the inaugural decade of professional trans philosophy as an academic discipline. The arc of the articles presented here is meant to be understood within this historical context. The first clears the discursive ground, while the last speculates on two specific future directions. Those in between engage a variety of pressing philosophical issues in trans circles: how to live in one's body, how to live outside the binary, and how to decolonize transness.

A guiding motivation for us as editors has been the production of a fully t4t issue of a peer-reviewed philosophy journal. By *t4t philosophy*, we mean *trans-for-trans philosophy*: projects by and for trans people, written with an ethos of care, trust, solidarity, and love. This is contrasted with those projects that are written about us, often from a place of fear, loathing, infantilization, or dehumanizing curiosity, and for the sake of a non-trans audience. We take t4t philosophy to require a variety of tones and modes of engagement. For example, since trans theory and trans experience do not restrict themselves to the boundaries of formal academic journals, some of the pieces included here will engage with sources outside of those boundaries. Moreover, trans-antagonism is virulent and vicious; it does not play by the rules of charitable and professional philosophical engagement. In particular, the intellectual trans-antagonism existing in professional philosophy and academia more broadly is not limited to peer-reviewed publications, though it unfortunately makes its way through peer review quite often. As such, we believe a t4t special issue in philosophy should not have to create the intellectual and cultural space for trans existence and flourishing with one hand tied behind its back. Just as trans people's experience of trans-antagonism in philosophy occurs in a variety of forms, the work included in this special issue will engage and critique trans-antagonism in a variety of forms, including peer-reviewed publications as well as public comments by philosophers in other spaces.

Similarly, some professionally published anti-trans ideology seems to have such a pernicious staying power and seems to begin from *prima facie* desirable premises (though they become overstretched and misapplied to an extreme). Some authors in this special issue will engage and therefore "platform" so-called gender critical positions. The purpose here is not to suggest that these are positions worth treating as intellectual achievements, because generally they are not. Rather, in keeping with our t4t framework, these engagements serve as a sort of inoculation against such poison for trans readers. Our decision is motivated by the payoff of replacing the seemingly plausible starting premises with a robust and compelling alternative that serves trans existence and flourishing without sacrificing any of the earlier power of its predecessor. There is value in showing trans-antagonistic arguments to be flawed by their own lights.

Some work included here is polemical in nature, whether flagged as such or not. In all cases, we have decided that varieties of tone do not undermine or detract from the underlying argumentation and philosophical point. More importantly, as editors of a t4t publication, we have embraced work that might appear to others as confrontational, cynical, or sarcastic. As trans philosophers and trans people, we find that this approach sometimes makes trans life livable in the interregnum as authoritative figures in our field (and most major societies across the globe) actively and dispassionately entertain open debates about the liveability and desirability of our lives without meaningfully or responsibly engaging our stories, our philosophies, or us.

In "The Circulation of Trans Philosophy: A Philosophical Polemic," Amy Marvin chronicles the variety of ways in which trans philosophy gets "circulated" within the profession and the world. "Circulation" here denotes not just the circulation of ideas, but also of emotions. The paper tracks the affective, social, and political dimensions of "trans" and

"trans philosophy" as they move among trans and non-trans philosophers alike—often in ways that benefit the latter at the expense of the former. Marvin argues that the trajectory tends towards the elimination of trans philosophy from the discipline at large, and as such, that an attention to these circulations is crucial for considering trans philosophy's future.

In "Sovereign: A Defense of the Modified Body," Ray Briggs challenges feminist arguments against body modification, instead arguing that trans experiences of body modification enable a livable life. While Briggs holds that there is wisdom in the feminist critique of any body modification that serves oppressive norms, it is a mistake to conflate body modification with capitulation to oppressive norms. Briggs contends that, for trans people, body modification may make one's body *one's own*. Briggs thus articulates what they call the *Principle of the Hospitable Body*, according to which one deserves to live in a body that feels like home, even if the home is a reno.

In "Becoming Unrecognizable: A Deleuzian Reading of Non-binary Gender Expressions," Capucine Mercier seeks to clarify the meaning of the term "non-binary" for gendered existence. Mercier distinguishes two approaches to understanding identity and desire. The first draws from Judith Butler's early work on gender performativity and its focus on recognition; the second builds from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's notion of becoming and the molecular/molar distinction. Mercier argues that non-binary gender expression is best understood as a rejection of the desire for gendered recognition.

In "Decolonial Trans Futurity: A Trans of Color Critique of Normative Assimilation," Sanjula Rajat and Billie Waller draw from María Lugones's work on the colonial/modern gender system and Jasbir Puar's articulation of trans(homo)nationalism to develop a trans of color analytical framework. Utilizing this framework to analyze contemporary transnormativity, Rajat and Waller then connect the medicalization of transness with the whiteness of coloniality and offer in place of these normative regimes an articulation of decolonial trans futurity.

And finally, in "Trans Philosophy: A Tale of Two Futures," Perry Zurn considers where trans philosophy might go from here. He draws attention to what trans philosophy might lose as it gains prominence within philosophy, and critiques what he describes as a move away from trans interconnectivity in the real world, towards the solitary trans thinker or the academic trans text. Zurn argues that trans philosophy must be grounded in trans sociality; only then, he argues, can it do justice to the work we need it to do.

ABOUT *APA STUDIES ON FEMINISM AND PHILOSOPHY*

APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy is sponsored by the APA Committee on the Status of Women and Gender. The newsletter is designed to provide an introduction to recent philosophical work that addresses issues of gender. None of the varied philosophical views presented by authors of *APA Studies* articles necessarily reflect the views of any or all of the members of the Committee on the Status of Women and Gender, including the editor(s) of the newsletter, nor does the committee advocate any particular type of feminist philosophy. We advocate only that serious philosophical attention be given to issues of gender and that claims of gender bias in philosophy receive full and fair consideration.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

1. Purpose: The purpose of *APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy* is to publish information about the status of women in philosophy and to make the resources of feminist philosophy more widely available. *APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy* contains discussions of recent developments in feminist philosophy and related work in other disciplines, suggestions for eliminating gender bias in the traditional philosophy curriculum, and reflections on feminist pedagogy. It also informs the profession about the work of the APA Committee on the Status of Women and Gender. Articles submitted to the newsletter should be around ten double-spaced pages and must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language. Please submit essays electronically to the editor. All manuscripts should be prepared for anonymous review. References should follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

2. Where to Send Things: Please send all articles, comments, suggestions, books, and other communications to the editors: Ami Harbin, Oakland University, at aharbin@oakland.edu, and Barrett Emerick, St. Mary's College, at bmemerick@smcm.edu.

3. Submission Deadlines: Submissions for spring issues are due by the preceding November 1; submissions for fall issues are due by the preceding February 1.

ARTICLES

The Circulation of Trans Philosophy: A Philosophical Polemic

Amy Marvin
LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

> "I can keep digging. I could pull us down to the center of the earth." – *Celeste*

1. FOREWARNED TO A CENSORED ESSAY

I began writing this in 2019 while editing my essay "A Brief History of Trans Philosophy," during which I removed all comments that could be dismissed as overly negative

and placed them into a separate document. I tend to limit myself by strategically navigating the association between trans women and meanness, negativity, narcissism, delusion, vanity, dishonesty, brittleness, jealousy, anger, contagion, divisiveness, pettiness, resentment, wantonness, oversensitivity, melancholy, deceptiveness, unprofessionalism, and destructive irrational bad feelings, so my document became the garbage bin behind my outward professional self-presentation. I repeatedly returned to this document, filling it with my discarded, edited out, and self-censored comments, while my disposed-of negativity took on a life of its own. Most of this refuse was given shape when I thought I had been permanently discarded from academic philosophy and trans cultural-professional scenes before becoming academically undead in 2021. Though I am lucky to now be employed with a living wage, excellent colleagues, and a vibrant local arts scene, I still remain contingent. Part of this contingency is a choice, since I am pursuing a tenure-track job that balances access to friendship and community, access to basic ongoing trans medical care, the likelihood of local bans on such care, and affordability of housing.

This longstanding position of estrangement and negativity has given me an opportunity to think about the practice of philosophy beyond stories of passionate or dispassionate legends, conceptual and argumentative innovations, an incremental set of literatures, and a merit-based sequence of publications and hires. Instead, in this essay I focus on philosophy and academic studies more broadly as a set of complicated circulations.

I understand circulation alongside multiple senses. First, I am considering the work of librarians. Working in-person at a small public library during the initial years of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was primarily stationed on the basement level where books were sent after they had finished their life as New Books on the main floor. Although some were still checked out, a significant amount accumulated dust on the shelves, waiting out their time until a circulation check would lead to their final resting place (usually a dumpster). I found kinship with the afterlife of books as I sat in a basement, removed from circulation on the academic job market, transferring from minimum wage job to minimum wage job and wondering if I'd ever get checked out again. This perspective additionally evokes circulation of the breath, as someone who inhaled COVID-19 early on and recovered from its longer-term effects on the job, gradually learning how to breathe and think again during the following two months.

Considering philosophical literatures from the perspective of library circulation highlights how philosophy spreads. First, the life of philosophical work is not only related to the content of ideas and arguments but also the material vessels, various forms of labor, and social contacts through which these ideas circulate. Some texts live a rich life beyond their authors, getting checked out and remaining in circulation as part of the longer-term life of the discipline. Other texts lose their momentum and fall forgotten, while still others never reach much circulation at all. While circulation may increase or decrease with luck, a significant factor will be the influence that an author is able to leverage to make their work likely to be read. The story of circulation is a story of social position and academic prestige. While merit may be a significant factor in this process, a meritorious argument will remain unread if there is not an initial impetus to pick it up off the physical or electronic shelf and spend the necessary time working with its contents. For this reason, philosophers utilize contemporary tools such as keywords for search engine optimization and algorithms to further enhance the likelihood that their work will receive attention within a vast pool of knowledge and cultural production. Hence, philosophy and specific emerging fields such as trans philosophy are part of a political economics and ecology that differentially circulates various works over time.

A second sense of circulation that motivates my analysis appears in the work of Sara Ahmed. Ahmed is primarily interested in what emotions do: how emotions "circulate between bodies" and how emotions such as hate or disgust "stick" to specific bodies and objects.[1] For Ahmed, the social circulation of emotions generates the affective value of bodies and objects, with increased circulation leading to an increased affective valence.[2] For example, the circulation of speeches in the UK that deploy words such as "flood" or "swamped" becomes the circulation of fear and anxiety as attached to the bodies of potential asylum seekers.[3]

Ahmed primarily works through "the emotionality of texts," through which "texts name or perform different emotions."[4] However, Ahmed also briefly suggests that collections of texts such as archives can have their own affective life through contact with an author such as herself. Ahmed writes,

> An archive is an effect of multiple forms of contact, including institutional forms of contact (with libraries, books, web sites), as well as everyday forms of contact (with friends, families, others). Some forms of contact are presented and authorised through writing (and listed in the references), whilst other forms of contact will be missing, will be erased, even though they may leave their trace. Some everyday forms of contact do appear in my writing: stories which might seem personal, and even about 'my feelings'. As a 'contact writing', or a writing about contact, I do not simply interweave the personal and the public, the individual and the social, but show the ways in which they take shape through each other, or even how they shape each other. So it is not that 'my feelings' are in the writing, even though my writing is littered with stories of how I am shaped by my contact with others.[5]

Ahmed thus indicates that texts and archives, through contact, can become part of the complex life of emotions in circulation. In this essay I consider trans philosophy to be shaped by such a circulation of affect, contact, and political meaning.

Before discussing the circulation of trans philosophy in the profession, it will be helpful to indicate how the above

discussion of circulation can help us better analyze the material and emotional life of texts. We can begin this by considering a comment on the CFP for this very issue of *APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy*. While this may seem like an unusual place to start for an academic, peer-reviewed essay, it indicates the informal life of the discipline and how trans-centered framings of trans philosophy are frequently encountered by non-trans practitioners as a path of faulty inquiry, a problem to be solved, or an approach that should be mocked for daring to take up space in a scholarly venue. The mundane and sensationalized repetition of such framings contributes to the social experience of doing trans philosophy. Additionally, this comment was shared on the official APA News and Announcements page, and hence the comment is conveniently linked directly with a verified APA account. Joseph L. Lombardi writes,

> Usually, philosophers have an interest in presenting both sides of an issue (perhaps, even a professional duty to do so); with the best arguments they can find for each. The title used for the topic that might be doing this makes it hard to believe that this is going to be done: "Trans resistance in times of anti-trans backlash." There are those who may hold that each adult man or woman (if I may use those terms for those with and without a y-chromosome) has a right to decide what happens in and to "his"/"her" body (my pronouns), but may not think it a good idea for anyone to undergo the hormonal and surgical procedures that are involved; that perhaps other approaches, including the possibility of psychotherapy, might be less invasive. Will any of these possibilities be explored in these papers? I didn't think that "colonoscopy" would be involved (the "colonality of cisgender").[6]

First, Lombardi came into contact with the CFP through its material circulation, most likely reaching him through an electronic means. Second, the way that Lombardi has come into contact with the topic of trans people and their relation to philosophy leads him to think not only that there are two distinct sides, but also that "both sides" must always be hosted ("perhaps") for the sake of "professional duty." Lombardi understands the title "Futures of Trans Philosophy" to be contrary to such a framework, and it is his contact with this title that moved him to comment based on his conflicting sense of the topic. Lombardi proceeds to make a vague gesture towards "psychotherapy," which Lombardi takes to be both "less invasive" and mutually exclusive compared to "hormonal and surgical procedures," indicating further ways that Lombardi has come into contact with ideas of trans life and trans medicine. By engaging with the CFP, Lombardi is attempting to recirculate its aim of collecting works on trans philosophy through his vision of how this should professionally proceed.

Most intriguingly, Lombardi misspells "coloniality" as "colonality" to conclude his supposedly professional intervention with a poop joke. While he performs academic neutrality through cumbersome caveats and asides, Lombardi's "colonality" joke helpfully signals a deep affective register to his response. As a scholar of humor, it strikes me that he may be indulging in mirth, attempting to recirculate the CFP by means of humor and ridicule. Such a reading potentially recasts his entire comment as parody, passive aggression, resentment, or some combination thereof. Additionally, Lombardi's emphasis on colons, colonoscopy, and poop may be an attempt to recirculate the CFP in relation to disgust through scatological references or cultural disgust over associations between queer and trans people and anal sex. While I am unable to pin down exactly where Lombardi tried to aim his comments, they do involve an attempted recirculation of the CFP at both a material and affective register.

In what follows, I will use the first section to draw out the contradictory circulations of trans philosophy found in recent writing by Martha Nussbaum, and then expand upon four specific circulations of trans philosophy in the second section. It is only through an attention to these complex circulations that we can grapple with the future of trans philosophy. By analyzing this piece, first, I will explain what I take to be Nussbaum's main claims about "the new trans scholarship." I then draw out contradicting circulations of trans scholarship from Nussbaum's musings on the field by focusing on the depth of the transition memoir, the situation of trans freedom, and the legacy of trans tolerance. I conclude with the modest claim that trans scholarship in philosophy seems to circulate in contradictory ways. Identifying this differential circulation will allow me to expand upon four different circulations with more detail.

2. THE PROFESSOR OF PARITY AND THE NEW TRANS SCHOLARSHIP

The initial place I will focus on to draw out the differential circulation of trans philosophy is a recent series of essays in which philosopher Martha Nussbaum discusses trans scholarship with the comparably prestigious trans economist Deirdre McCloskey. Because it involves a published mutual correspondence rather than a distanced pseudo-engagement such as Peter Singer's curated lectures and journal of controversial ideas (i.e., transgender persons), Nussbaum's engagement stands out as an unparalleled meditation on the state of trans philosophy as a field by one of philosophy's living legends. It is also, as I will point out, a site of deep contradiction.

2.1 NUSSBAUM TO NEW TRANS SCHOLARSHIP

In her short essay "Identity, Equality, Freedom: McCloskey's *Crossing* and the New Trans Scholarship," Martha Nussbaum weighed in on the field of trans philosophy as part of a celebration of trans economist Deirdre McCloskey's new edition of the 1999 transition memoir, *Crossing*. In so doing, Nussbaum provided some reflections on the big questions of trans philosophy, critiqued the illiberalism of the new trans scholars, and brought trans philosophy into conversation with the meaning of the trans memoir. Though Nussbaum's essay is both brief and published as a celebratory correspondence, I will rudely jump into the conversation—after all, there is good precedent for barging in after Kathleen Stock herself jumped into *TSQ* meta-commentary a few years ago.[7]

To begin her laudatory essay, Nussbaum stresses that McCloskey's now-updated memoir is the standard to which

contemporary feminist and transgender scholarship should aspire when considering the nature of gender, womanhood, and trans womanhood or manhood specifically. Nussbaum emphasizes that through its "subtlety and its multifaceted wrestling with the self," McCloskey's memoir comparatively makes articles in journals "look flat," since they lack the depth of soul projected through the memoir form.[8] Nussbaum then considers work on trans existential identity by Talia Bettcher, "one of the most influential and interesting trans scholars," as having a comparative (but understandable) lack of subtlety in describing the particulars of an existential urgency to question and change one's identity in the context of transition.[9] Nussbaum concludes that the memoir style rather than the writings of a trans philosopher gets to the heart of explaining the trans self.

Despite the initial edge that Nussbaum gives to McCloskey's account of her gender journey, she continues to point out that both trans scholars and scholar-memoirists (again understandably) lack a compelling attempt to theorize the mysterious urging etiology of transition. Where "the new trans scholarship" may do a better job, with reference to Robin Dembroff and Catherine Saint-Croix's discussion of agential identity, is in depicting transness in the context of "some sort of commitment to make [one's] self-identification externally available to others."[10] Relating Bettcher's focus on existential identity to this theme, there seems to be a more satisfying alignment between the new trans scholarship and McCloskey's memoir.

Unfortunately, the problem of identity-with-others brings the new trans scholarship to what Nussbaum casts as its egregious problem, most apparent in the response to Rebecca Tuvel's *Hypatia* essay "In Defense of Transracialism." Referring to this as "one of the ugliest and most illiberal examples of 'cancel culture,'" "a true disgrace to philosophy," and "pc craziness," Nussbaum diagnoses a big picture failure of the new trans scholarship to foster a wider tolerance for border crossings.[11] This failure of tolerance highlights McCloskey's outstanding legacy. According to Nussbaum, McCloskey is "a genuine defender of liberal freedom of speech," who "doesn't want to cancel anyone; she wants to think through the mysteries of life, and she favors listening, not canceling."[12] Again, the score is in favor of the memoirist-economist and not the philosophers.

This purported failure of tolerance extends to a larger gap in the "particularly central and interesting" literature of new trans scholarship in contrast to McCloskey's late '90s memoir, involving a failure to think about freedom. Nussbaum emphasizes that what McCloskey has achieved through her journey of *Crossing* is freedom "in the classical liberal sense" and in the sense of existential liberation as "the freedom to be oneself in the world." In contrast to the illiberalism of the new trans scholarship, McCloskey stands out by centering personal freedom to change without punishment or scorn.[13]

Nussbaum ends her toast to McCloskey and the old ways of trans narrative by focusing on the limits of McCloskey's decades-old memoir. Specifically, Nussbaum critiques the silence about power differentials between men and women in *Crossings*, asserting, "[Deirdre] has joined the community of women, so she needs to be in solidarity with them and fight injustice."[14] Nussbaum concludes the essay with optimism that McCloskey's work is helpful for these goals even if not explicit about them, pointing towards a future area for McCloskey to consider and perhaps even for the new trans scholarship as it corrects its past wrongs. Hopefully, one day trans thinkers will read feminism and invest in proper liberalism so that trans scholarship will truly take off!

2.2 NEW TRANS SCHOLARSHIP TO NUSSBAUM

The first dynamic of contradictory circulation that I will point to in Nussbaum's account is the power of the transition memoir to unfold the existential complexities of trans identity. As mentioned earlier, Nussbaum appeals to McCloskey's autobiographical style as a more compelling device for describing the composition of a trans life than Bettcher's peer-reviewed prose.[15] In this context, it is useful to consider how a trans memoir from the late 1990s is intended to circulate compared with a trans philosophy essay. An entire life is more than one can fit in a single book, let alone within a readable one, so a memoir consists of a narrative that can be marketed and distributed. The narrative device of a trans memoir is thus potentially skewed even as it professes to reveal, and frequently truncated to tell a particularly palatable story to a mostly non-trans audience. For this reason, the phenomenon of enticing yet consumable trans subtlety through the memoir form became a significant object of critique for certain schools of mid-2010s trans literary criticism. They argued that older trans memoirs were filtered through a desire to satiate a non-trans public's interest in transition at the expense of a deeper engagement with trans experience and collective meaning.[16]

Initially, it may seem unfair to hastily dismiss older styles through reference to newer styles, much like it would probably be unfair to hastily dismiss a newer body of scholarship through an appeal to older scholarship without significant argumentation. However, it is worth comparing how Janet Mock's *Redefining Realness* from 2014 provides a narrative shift compared to McCloskey's 1999 memoir. Mock narrates her experience as a young trans woman finding herself in the context of Hawaiian identity, economic precarity, and developing her freedom through interactions with other trans and gender diverse people.[17] In comparison, McCloskey's account is mainly focused on the process of her transition, the resulting fallout, and her integration into society with some caveats. Generally, this includes isolation from other trans people.[18] These are all understandable potential limits of a late 1990s trans memoir and for the trajectory of McCloskey's life within a 1990s US social/political situation, but it calls our attention to the fact that this experience is particular and historical rather than universal. The classic liberal freedom offered in McCloskey's new Afterword to *Crossing* and praised by Nussbaum, that of the freedom to independently change your appearance, change your life, keep your upscale professional job, and maintain an expensive loft in downtown Chicago, may not seem like precisely the kind of freedom towards which many in trans scholarship and

beyond are aiming. For example, if I were to theorize trans freedom, I would not be solely interested in a freedom of individual crossings. Instead, I think trans freedom must center the capability to have a collective life in public space, which is precisely what makes trans freedom so difficult because the entrenched ideological and institutional arrangement has insisted that we are a threat to public and professional spaces. Furthermore, this interaction in public space must include the capability to interact with other trans people rather than the imposed deep stealth of past gender clinics.[19]

This contrast draws out an element of Bettcher's work that Nussbaum glosses over. Bettcher's analysis of how trans people negotiate existential identity is grounded in observations of trans people expressing identity among other trans people within particular trans communities. Bettcher is philosophically interested in how trans people among other trans people claim and enact their identity with each other, rather than constricting herself to a universalized situation of identity that is filtered for people unfamiliar with trans experience who endeavor to understand trans others.[20] In contrast, such a meditation on the meaning of identity in the context of interactions with particular trans people over a long period of time is lacking from *Crossing* or its new Afterword. Considered further, the value of depth as attributed to McCloskey in contrast to Bettcher seems to not be so straightforward or value neutral, and we may even hesitate when Nussbaum favors the trans memoir over all other approaches in trans scholarship, each weighed according to her interest. McCloskey herself suggests that Nussbaum's interpretation is skewed by focusing too much on McCloskey's relationship with women's clothes.[21]

Nussbaum's evaluation hinges upon a circulation of McCloskey's text as capable of a depth unattainable by the new trans scholarship. And yet, McCloskey's style of memoir simultaneously circulates as lacking in depth because of its historical situation as a consumable tell-all that courts the attention of non-trans audiences. In this context, it is useful to consider Nussbaum's fascination with the mystery of trans etiology, since this seems to motivate her deployment of the text in relation to the new trans scholarship.[22] As a contrast, much of 2010s trans literary criticism sought a more grounded and collective account of trans experience that is not tethered to such non-trans fascination. In this context, Bettcher's emphasis on a grounded and connected practice of trans thinking circulates as the deeper account rather than as austerely inattentive to etiology. Such a dynamic reveals the complicated and often contradicting ways of circulating a trans text or body of scholarship.

Second, it is worthwhile to consider Nussbaum's insistence that McCloskey has never been associated with the kind of "canceling" engaged in by the new trans scholarship. Granting McCloskey a pedestal over "a larger portion of the trans scholarly community," Nussbaum emphasizes that she tolerates differences and refuses to shut down or silence positions and persons that she disagrees with.[23] Compare this with a characterization of McCloskey's actions by Alice Dreger from 2008 in *Archives of Sexual Behavior*:

> But all of the noise of the accusations did what I suspect Conway, James, and McCloskey hoped: It distracted attention from the book's message—that Blanchard's theory of MTF transsexualism was right—by apparently killing the messenger. Indeed, much as Bailey would prefer not to admit it, in their leadership of the backlash against *TMWWBQ*, Lynn Conway, Andrea James, and Deirdre McCloskey came remarkably close to effectively destroying J. Michael Bailey's reputation and life.[24]

To add some context for those who are not familiar with a topic of central interest in 2000s public trans discourse *du jour*: Dreger was objecting to efforts by McCloskey, engineer and computer scientist Lynn Conway, and others to criticize and seek consequences for J. Michael Bailey's book *The Man Who Would be Queen*. In a letter written to Northwestern University in 2003, McCloskey and Conway made a formal complaint that the book was the result of unethical research practices designed to cook up a pseudo-scientific classificatory system that would be used to defame gender-variant people.[25] This also marks a key context in which McCloskey worked in concert with other trans people. In response, Dreger characterized McCloskey's actions as an illiberal attempt to censor Bailey and ruin his life.

Through Nussbaum and Dreger we receive two different circulations of McCloskey's reputation, both as someone who would never cancel anyone and as an inexcusable killer of theories and destroyer of researchers' lives. McCloskey is not directly associated with a vague phenomenon called "cancel culture" in the way of the new trans scholarship, but this would have been impossible because the phrase "cancel culture" had not yet been recirculated from its earlier social justice activist context into a phrase of media and state frenzy.[26]

Though the challenges presented by McCloskey et al. against the Bailey book are different from those presented against the *Hypatia* essay, it is worthwhile to consider McCloskey's own understanding about the relationship between freedom of speech and complaints. McCloskey wrote,

> "The big issue" for you is free speech. In what way have I or anyone else in this debate abridged anyone's free speech? We aren't the government. It's just confused to identify published complaints by private citizens about someone—justified in this case, but let's for the moment set the issue of the merits aside—with censorship or some other governmental act in violation of "free speech." . . . In what does our great power lie? Professor Bailey, like us, is a senior, tenured professor. We objected to his work and to his behavior, through our writings and through channels. What exactly is the exercise of "great power" there? Isn't this power called "the power of the pen," and isn't that exactly the "free speech" you believe you are so courageously defending?[27]

Here we have several different circulations of tolerance, cancel culture, vulnerable and destroyed lives, the power to oppress, and freedom of speech, in relation to the same person. In one account, McCloskey is the tolerant listener and measured critic who never cancels because she is not associated with the new trans scholarship and its *Hypatia* letter, critiques, and cacophony. In another account, McCloskey is the intolerant, close-minded complainer who offers incendiary and unjustified threats because she is associated with the Bailey letter, critiques, and cacophony. And in yet another account, McCloskey's letter, critiques, and cacophony comprises exactly that free speech which she is accused of threatening, all located in the sphere of free and open discussion without government intervention.

Vis-à-vis McCloskey, trans liberalism and trans illiberalism circulate differently in different contexts. Again, this makes referring to McCloskey's work as a standard by which to judge "the new trans scholarship" vexing without further precision. It also raises questions about the means through which the illiberalism of "the new trans scholarship" itself has circulated. Does all trans scholarship in philosophy and beyond risk such illiberalism, or is it only particular projects, or simply a specific blunder? Referencing a vague quantity of participants makes it unclear who was at fault and why, what precisely constituted an excess, and what the comparative balances of freedom and capability were like in the various trans scholarship controversies of the past and beyond. Diagnosing the "new trans scholarship" in such a fashion is perhaps a dismissive smear, though I would hesitate to call it defamation (I'm not very litigious).

Additionally, Nussbaum's characterization of this amalgamated "new trans scholarship" seems to be arrested on one moment from four years before she published the essay that does not include the many ways that trans philosophy has expanded its circulation throughout the profession beyond the *Hypatia* situation. For example, definitions of new trans scholarship in 2024 potentially include Kathleen Stock, Holly Lawford-Smith, Tomas Bogardus, and Alex Byrne, with Stock standing above the rest as a bona-fide Orderly public intellectual in the UK. This new trans scholarship is certainly interested in questions of transness and freedom, as well as the meaning of gender and trans manhood and womanhood. Would Nussbaum consider them to be fulfilling the mission of freedom, not fulfilling it, or something else? Is this emerging set of characters a justified response to the illiberal PC crowd of the new yesterday? Stock and McCloskey are even directly connected, having both taught and debated at the University of Austin Summer School.[28] Although Nussbaum's silence on the newest of the new trans scholarship could be circulated as yet another slight against them, it stands out to me that it also could be a hesitancy or a lack of spotlight that permits the freedom to pass by unconsidered. Each of these interpretations may circulate differently according to one's limited understanding of Nussbaum as scholar and person.

Nussbaum's confusing characterization of trans philosophy illustrates that trans philosophy is circulated differently in different contexts. In the second section, I will track four specific ways through which this circulation occurs, concluding with a future-bound fifth suggestion.

3. FOUR CIRCULATIONS OF "TRANS PHILOSOPHY"

To better understand trans philosophy in its circulations, it is helpful to begin by consulting influential essays in the field. In "What is Trans Philosophy?" Talia Bettcher describes a practice of philosophy that emerges from everyday trans experience as it is "shot through with perplexity [and] shot through with WTF questions."[29] In this context, trans philosophy stands out as a distinct process through which trans people philosophize without the formal institutional channels and hazing rituals of academic philosophy. Already rooted in this place of WTF, Bettcher sees the potential contributions of philosophy as "primarily constructive, positive, illuminating, and orienting," providing a means to clarify the tumultuous everyday experiences of living a transed life.[30] Drawing from the resources of this "ground-bound" social location, Bettcher asks, "What else does one have to draw on that could provide the worldly perception necessary for life-affirming, rather than suicidal, philosophical illuminations?"[31] How do you theorize about your life and the life of a community without killing it in the process?

For Bettcher, a trans philosophy proceeds from an awareness of "pretheoretical sociality among trans people," and an "embeddedness in trans subcultures" that includes intimate familiarity with "trans discursive and nondiscursive practices."[32] Trans philosophy frequently centers questions about violence and responses to violence, but is not fully trapped within this necropolitical loop[33] because it is also concerned with the collective life of trans thinking. In Bettcher's view, the meaning of trans philosophy and any practice of philosophy that focuses on the meaning of trans phenomena, which I will further distinguish below, is shaped by the work that it does. This includes the questions that philosophy asks, the cultural understandings that philosophy includes or brackets out, and the ends that philosophy serves.[34] Considering the historical and political situation of such thinking is not simply a political distraction from the real meat and potatoes of philosophy, but instead part of reaching a deeper understanding of how philosophy is and ought to be practiced.

Alongside her ground-bound conception of trans philosophy, Bettcher acknowledges that philosophers have often been tempted to refer to trans experience as a resource for other philosophical endeavors, through a mistaken approach she calls "pristine philosophy"; this results in "philosophizing trans" rather than trans philosophy.[35] Such a perspective mines trans experience from afar, masks intuitions borrowed from dominant culture as necessary universal intuitions, and brackets out life and death matters of importance to trans people.[36] Bettcher thus emphasizes that trans experience is taken up in different ways within the discipline of philosophy. In what follows, I will build on Bettcher's account to explain four of the ways through which trans philosophy circulates.

3.1 TRANS PHILOSOPHY AS CREATING TRANS SPACE

The circulation of "trans philosophy" has shifted with the politics of the past few years, nurtured by the politics of trans life and the practice of philosophy from decades prior. Building on Bettcher's description of a ground-bound practice of philosophy in connection with other trans people that can clear a distinct space for inquiry,[37] I think of my participation starting in 2015 and beyond with trans philosophy conferences and publications. These were the moments when many of us moved from isolated scholarship to a more collective sense of our work in this profession. In the mid to late 2010s, I found that these conferences and journal issues created a space where trans scholars and non-trans scholars interested in doing scholarship *with* trans people as welcomed colleagues could share their ideas and meet each other in physical or virtual space. Creating these rare interpersonal spaces of discussion also forges social architectures to support trans philosophy, trans philosophers, and trans thought more broadly. Such a practice goes against the grain of most philosophy departments that will likely never hire any kind of trans professor, let alone to do the work of trans philosophy.

In this context, the circulation of trans philosophy, as indicated by Bettcher, is a space of collective, but not uncritical or coddling, care and community building. It also centers a production of writing and thought that is frequently more attuned to the minute and complex details of everyday trans life than other spaces can afford. ***The first circulation of trans philosophy is the circulation of a space where trans philosophers as colleagues participating in philosophical deliberation can have their lives and ideas centered, or at the very least respectfully taken into account, supporting the development of a robust ground-bound philosophy***. I attribute to this definition some flexibility, as the tools, methods, and topics of this trans philosophy have yet to be established, especially as there are so few tenured trans philosophers who can receive job security and a living wage for their research. The precarious condition of academia and its job market, the comparatively low number of trans people seeking professional philosophy degrees and appointments, and the even lower number of trans people who can sustain themselves long-term in professional philosophy highly impacts this area of study and its future, if there is to be one.

3.2 THE TRANS QUESTION

The circulation of trans philosophy in a second sense extends long before the moment of the 2016 trans philosophy conference, and is likely to continue into the following decade, surviving the ongoing crumbling of academic institutions and their adaptations into austerity or direct tools of anti-trans statecraft. I first encountered this style of trans philosophy in person during an undergraduate course on the history of philosophy in 2008. I had come out as trans as a teenager but was generally not open with my classmates about being trans during college, so I was known by many of my peers and professors as a non-trans woman. In academic philosophy this was itself an ordeal that was fortunately mitigated by an explicitly feminist undergraduate philosophy department. The class centered on the ship of Theseus puzzle, considering the questions of (1) does replacing rotting planks in Theseus's famous ship eventually make it a fundamentally different ship, and (2) if so, when did it become a different ship? Another undergraduate student, extending his curiosity from the ancients to more contemporary questions of personal identity and technology, asked if a man who undergoes a sex change to become a woman should now be considered a fundamentally different person. The professor handled the resulting discussion about as well as any professor given an unexpected question outside their area of expertise by a brainstorming student could be expected to do. It struck me while sitting in the classroom that I was suddenly reconfigured by my peers as some distant object of curiosity, displaced as both student and puzzle.

Due to the relatively few opportunities to actually meet trans people and learn about us in the profession, this practice continues to be the main circulation of trans philosophy in our area of work, its media coverage, its professional chatter system, and its formal networks. That is, when the words "trans" and "philosophy" are collected together in the profession of philosophy, it tends to be the focus on trans people as an object of curiosity, fascination, conjecture, study, debate, and analysis—which Bettcher emphasizes is a political situation rather than philosophy simply running its neutral course. Here, I take up the phrasing of "the trans question" both to connect this circulation with the insights of Viviane Namaste on research ethics[38] and to highlight the increasing circulation of a phrase[39] that frames a group of people as a problem to be solved, subjugated, or eliminated. ***The second circulation of trans philosophy is the continued entrenchment of a space where non-trans philosophers can have their questions, concerns, and curiosity centered and elevated over trans people, who are primarily a questionable object of debate and should not interfere with this debate due to inherent bias. Trans people may be allowed to engage but only on the terms set by non-trans people, well-intentioned or otherwise.***

This circulation of trans philosophy has largely been handed off to the self-identified gender-critical philosophers and other professionals jumping on deck to correct the leakage of trans into mainstream philosophy. In this context, we can consider the rise of *The Journal of Controversial Ideas*, which has benefited from the magnification of the trans debacle and typically devotes several essays to its version of trans philosophy in every issue. Excluding editorials, about 34 percent of the journal's essays discuss the topic as of this writing. Where once there was a history of debate between trans and trans-exclusionary scholars that led to the development of trans studies as a field and a reconciliation with feminist philosophy, now there is an ahistorical version of Bonnie Mann who never updated her views about trans-exclusionary separatism, along with a pristine landscape largely devoid of Sandy Stones, Susan Strykers, and Emi Koyamas.[40] Likewise, discussions about the supposedly baffling attractiveness of trans people can avoid researching how medical transition usually works by framing it as purely external or exogenous rather than as interactive with an endogenous human endocrine system.[41]

Even when this is acknowledged, critics can make grandiose claims that exogenous hormones are qualitatively different if they do not achieve comparable results in merely one year, which is an even weaker appeal when considering that hormones are typically slowly raised to full dosage over that time period.[42] The continued magnification of gender-critical and transgender-curious scholars through appeals to being silenced and their cancellation in the form of a demand for subscription has largely overshadowed the first circulation of trans philosophy. Compared to media and academic coverage of the *Hypatia* controversy, or the institutionally sanctioned giant neon sign of the "erased" gender-critical philosophers, the development of trans philosophy centering trans people has received comparatively little interest—with interest meaning not just attention but also money.

Mainstream philosophy has largely ignored the subject of trans people or placed us into footnotes until the mid-2010s, but now that it has become of professional interest it must be defended as a subject area for non-trans philosophers (meaning *real* philosophers) to define. Prestige and propriety still count as first philosophy, so perhaps one or two trans people will be able to enter the conversation if they have a position at, say, Yale. Earlier demands that trans philosophers create a literature to establish that trans perspectives are properly philosophical later become demands that trans philosophers stop oppressing non-trans philosophers by expecting them to engage with it. Even responses and criticisms focused on gender-critical philosophers, though well-meaning and appreciated, tend to be tethered to this second circulation of trans philosophy, further entrenching the silence around the supposedly totalitarian approach of trans-centered philosophy. In this context, the WTF questions of trans philosophy are gutted of their innards and removed from their living context to be displayed like preserved beetles in a museum. Trans identity, anti-trans violence, trans community, trans rights, trans participation in public life, and trans history now become perpetually novel defendants in the courtroom of philosophical inquiry, to the benefit of Mediums, Quillettes, and Elseviers alike.

3.3 THE GENDER WARS

The tension between these two meanings of trans philosophy has led to a third understanding of trans philosophy as primarily a continuous source of drama, unruliness, strife, and breakdown. ***We arrive at the third circulation of trans philosophy as a heated and uncomfortable philosophical calamity.*** When the second circulation of trans philosophy displaces the first circulation of trans philosophy, the third circulation of trans philosophy is often chosen by uncertain, wary, or unfamiliar participants in the profession who do not want to explicitly weigh in on what is now framed through the contradictory metaphors of "the trans debate" and "the gender wars." This framework may also refer to the stress and turmoil faced by gender-critical philosophers and trans philosophers, with the former increasingly arranged under the heading of threatened academic freedom, and the latter increasingly lumped together as manipulative appeals to emotion, bias of standpoint, and a threat to academic freedom. The third meaning of trans philosophy can motivate engagement or disengagement, including responses such as trying to intervene in the tone of the discussion through a vague open letter from afar, lamenting the civility or tone among peers online and offline, staying "neutral" in public while justifying this to affected colleagues in private through reference to the heated lack of agreement, or more indirectly ghosting colleagues and students who are inconveniently tarnished by their proximity to the firepit. Conflict, regardless of the context, comes to be read as abuse or as authoritarianism.[43] From a vantage point far away, trans philosophy can be framed as a total meltdown situation to be avoided or stoked for professional convenience. Engage or disengage at your leisure.

3.4 THE TRANS CULT

The re-eclipsing of trans-centered philosophy by non-trans trans philosophy, with the production of the third circulation of trans philosophy as calamity, has an unbalanced impact on the continued political economics of trans philosophy. Trans philosophy is not an apolitical subfield, although the second circulation of trans philosophy depends on a one-sided framework of depoliticization to shield itself. Instead, trans philosophy takes on intensified political forms as it is elevated into a publishable academic enterprise at the same time that academic austerity dips the scholar's processional robes further into the paper shredder. Ceaseless controversy, chaotic and inflamed by the continued tendency of professionalized philosophers sticking their heads under the earth of the φροντιστήριον at the first sign of trouble, is displaced onto the body of the trans person and hence the trans scholar as the source of unwanted turmoil.[44] ***This feeds into a fourth circulation of trans philosophy as an irrational, inflamed, and potentially dangerous ideology beckoned by trans people, perhaps even in the form of a conspiracy, lobby, or cult.*** Objecting to getting characterized as a dangerously insane threat to society that should be removed from public spaces is now a vexatious complaint by a mob fueled by powerful interests, while objecting to getting called a bigot is now a courageous grassroots defense of protected beliefs from ideologically captured and hostile work environments. Trans people in general can now be dismissed as "*those people*."[45] An anonymous comment on a posted excerpt from Alex Byrne's *Trouble with Gender* on *Quillette* reads,

> Personally I'm tired of the whole trans thing—it leaves me, well, tired out, disinterested. "Disinterested" in the sense that whatever slight interest I might once have had—along with compassion—has kind of been pounded out of existence by the repetitious (ceaseless?) drumming on this topic. I wish it would just go away, and I feel like I wish these folks would just go away.[46]

These folks are the perpetually unexamined ones who have never been brought to account and who ultimately aim to dismantle Galileo's telescope and salt over the common ground of public understanding. The trans cultists are inherently unruly, biased, subjective, and emotional, uniquely resilient to the light of nature and the correspondence between statements about the world

and its clear and distinct truth. They are also dangerous in shared spaces and should be avoided when possible. Did you hear they occasionally write inflammatory and unprofessional polemics?

How does the profession proceed when trans philosophy is suddenly in demand but trans philosophers embody the unruliness of heated conflict? The inertia for the discipline, which is already unable to sustain any of its practitioners, is simple: let the trans philosophers wither away. Ignore the prevalence of transphobia in the institutions that materially produce the life of the academy; better yet, conjure a dichotomy between any mention of transphobia and freedom of inquiry; even better, promote open discussion by bracketing out considerations of transphobia in philosophy as "cruel and abusive."[47] Elevate the silenced non-trans philosophers of trans philosophy through the chatter network of blogs, give them prestigious lectures and publications in places that would never touch the work of trans scholars, and give them secure jobs and promotions and titles. Above all, never stop describing them as silenced or scrutinize what "silenced" or "canceled" means. When a gender-critical scholar leaves the academy it is world-historical, and when a trans scholar leaves it is unremarkable.

Align the work of non-trans philosophers in philosophy with the metaphors of repairing or sobering the controversy, clipping the unruly dandelions. Tether all discussions of open inquiry to an abstract "right" to hold any academic debate without acknowledging that trans scholars are not and have not historically been sustained by the academy, and without questioning to what extent the abstract right to hold any academic debate is rendered meaningless by such conditions. Deploy vague and unfalsifiable accusations of "identity politics," "virtue-signaling," "moral grandstanding," and unreflective or insincere "wokeness" gone too far to obscure the material insecurity of the voices you are overriding. Never question scholars you agree with on these grounds. Hold inconsistent views about swearing, mocking, and their relationship to abuse and so-called "professionalism." Above all, do not examine yourself—examination is for others!—do not interrogate your stakes, do not seek consistency, and do not investigate the representations of trans people that may have influenced your view of us prior to the mid-2000s or 2010s. Allow the discussion of trans people to continuously refresh itself on your terms, the trans person hoisted up as a forever emerging figure of outsider tension approaching the rational professional philosopher who has no history with transphobic institutions or culture. When trans philosophers ask why you do not engage with their work to the same extent you might with other philosophers, stand the meaning of "gatekeepers" upside down while comfortably seated inside your academic office. Repeat this with the phrase "safe space."

There is a smaller scope to the multiplication of trans philosophy that could get us caught in the illusion that transphobia in philosophy lies on a horizontal field, as if another open letter or another outraged blog post blasting outraged "wokescolds" will roll the stone of discourse to a desired incline. Such back-and-forth reactive participation is understandable when focused on exposing bigotry and its sophistry, but continues to eclipse trans philosophy in the first sense without materially supporting its continued work. We thus risk playing into the constant reset that trans philosophy is institutionally subjected to under its conditions of precarity and the ways this discipline can coast on an easy one-sided process of examination.

4. FOREWORD TO MORE TRANS PHILOSOPHY

In this polemic I have focused on circulation as a means of evaluating the complexity within which trans philosophy is currently situated. Building on some co-written meditations with Cassius Adair and Cameron Awkward-Rich that we undertook in the context of trans studies,[48] I take trans philosophy to be a field that has yet to clearly form as it continues to twist and multiply according to affect, professional dynamics, political intrigue, who gets thrown away, and who is granted the space, time, energy, and money to write and publish. By continuing to sort through these nebulous dynamics, I hope to better understand how to navigate trans philosophy in its circulation as what Talia Bettcher calls ground-bound philosophy, a means within which trans people can create at least one space where we are listened to, respected, and permitted relationality as connected with deep thinking. This is the future and the sense of freedom that I seek even if it turns out that philosophy as an institutionalized profession or the academy is not the best location for such work.

Retiring from the polemic style, I am drawn again to Bettcher's emphasis on ground-bound philosophy, which is where I think the most exciting kernels of trans thinking happen. The best response to uneven circulations of trans philosophy in the profession is our own circulation of care and support on the ground, in the spaces where love of wisdom and love of mutual aid intersect. We are at our best when we don't let this discipline make us too defensive, when we're having good conversations with friends over coffee, and when we don't get too hung up on establishing this thing we're doing as "real philosophy" (which is a losing game). In this context ***I propose a continued fifth circulation of trans philosophy, which is trans and non-trans philosophers doing what we can to support trans thought within and beyond the academy, taking action for trans people to be better housed and fed, less constrained by violence and threats from the state, less disposable, and welcomed to conversation.***

NOTES

1. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*, 4 and 14.
2. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*, 45.
3. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*, 46.
4. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*, 13.
5. Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*, 14.
6. Lombardi, August 25, 2023.
7. Stock, *Material Girls*, 9.
8. Nussbaum, "Identity, Equality, Freedom," 271.
9. Nussbaum, "Identity, Equality, Freedom," 277.
10. Nussbaum, "Identity, Equality, Freedom," 278.
11. Nussbaum, "Identity, Equality, Freedom," 278–79.

12. Nussbaum, "Identity, Equality, Freedom," 279.
13. Nussbaum, "Identity, Equality, Freedom," 279–80.
14. Nussbaum, "Identity, Equality, Freedom," 281.
15. Nussbaum, "Identity, Equality, Freedom," 277.
16. See Cross, "Know & Tell" ; Plett, "Rise of the Gender Novel"; Fleischmann and Peters, "T Clutch Fleischmann and Torrey Peters on Trans Essays."
17. Mock, *Redefining Realness*.
18. McCloskey, *Crossing*.
19. Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back."
20. Bettcher, "Trans Women and the Meaning of 'Woman,'" 235.
21. McCloskey, "On Agreeing with Martha Nussbaum," 3.
22. Nussbaum, "Identity, Equality, Freedom," 277.
23. Nussbaum, "Identity, Equality, Freedom," 279.
24. Dreger, "The Controversy Surrounding the Man Who Would Be Queen," 412.
25. McCloskey and Conway, "Deirdre McCloskey and Lynn Conway File Formal Complaint with the Vice-President of Research of Northwestern University regarding the research conduct of J. Michael Bailey."
26. See brown, "we will not cancel us."
27. McCloskey, "McCloskey's Back-and-Forth with Seth Roberts on the Bailey Controversy." I am thankful to Jackie Ess for first introducing me to this quote.
28. University of Austin, "Stock & McCloskey Debate Issues of Sex, Gender, & Identity."
29. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 651
30. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 651–52.
31. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 656.
32. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 656.
33. See Snorton and Haritaworn, "Trans Necropolitics."
34. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 660.
35. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 652.
36. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 656–57 and 659.
37. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 660.
38. Namaste, "Undoing Theory."
39. See Butler, "Labour Must Clarify Its Policy on Transgender Issues to Win the Next Election."
40. Phelan and Lawford-Smith, "Feminist Separatism Revisited"; Mann, "For a *Critical* Radical Feminism"; Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back"; Stryker, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix"; Koyama, "Whose Feminism Is It Anyway?"
41. Halwani, "Sex and Sexual Orientation, Gender and Sexual Preference," 3.
42. Stock, *Material Girls*, 74.
43. Schulman, *Conflict Is Not Abuse*; DuFord, *Solidarity in Conflict*.
44. For more on philosophers and the φροντιστήριον / *phrontistḗrion* consult *Clouds* by Aristophanes. Aristophanes, *Aristophanes 1*.
45. Joyce, "Wine with Women," 4:12–5:58.
46. Anonymous, January 2024.
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Sovereign: A Defense of the Modified Body

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Feminists have rightly critiqued social pressures to modify one's body, particularly as they confront cis women. However, an anti-body-modification stance is ultimately inadequate for the liberatory ends to which feminism aspires. Body modification plays a crucial role in making trans lives liveable, and an ethics of body modification must grapple with this fact.

I begin by examining an anti-body-modification principle called the Principle of the Unmodified Body, drawn from Clare Chambers's 2022 book, *Intact*. This principle has intuitive appeal, and successfully explains what is wrong in some cases of sexist oppression, but fails badly when called upon to address trans people's realities. I diagnose why and how the principle fails, and I propose an alternative Principle of the Hospitable Body, which enables us to critique transphobic oppression, as well as the cases of sexist oppression that the Principle of the Unmodified Body was originally designed to explain.

Moreover, the Principle of the Hospitable Body is an improvement even within the domain that the Principle of the Unmodified Body was originally designed to explain. Unlike the Principle of the Unmodified Body, it can provide an adequate account of birth control, which is crucially important to cis women, as well as many trans men and nonbinary people.

1. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE UNMODIFIED BODY

Oppressive pressures to modify one's body are ubiquitous. Racist and sexist beauty standards call on women to straighten their hair,[1] lighten their skin,[2] and even change their facial features through cosmetic surgery.[3] Intersex infants are subjected to damaging genital surgeries for cosmetic ends,[4] and non-intersex children in many places are routinely subjected to genital cutting.[5] Fat people face discrimination along multiple axes[6] and are often advised to lose weight as a solution to their problems (sometimes in lieu of receiving medical attention).[7] Fatphobic micro-aggressions create constant pressure on even thin people to monitor their weight.[8]

All of this deserves our censure and our pushback. Why are our bodies not fine as they are? It is tempting to respond by thinking that there is something objectionable or suboptimal about body modification in general. Of course, such opposition to body modification should avoid falling into any of three overly simplistic errors. It should avoid naturalizing assumptions, by acknowledging that the concept of a modified body is inherently socially constructed. It should avoid overly individualistic analysis, by critiquing social systems rather than blaming individuals for responding rationally to their incentives. And it should avoid universal and sweeping condemnation, by acknowledging that some forms of body modification are, all things considered, valuable.

I will argue that even a sophisticated anti-body-modification stance is inadequate, both for transfeminist ends, and in the cis feminist context that initially made the idea seem tempting. I will do this by arguing against the principle that Clare Chambers articulates in her book *Intact*:

> **The Principle of the Unmodified Body**: "*your body is good enough just as it is* because your body is *you*, and your body is *yours*, and *you* have an inalienable value that all others must recognize and respect."[9]

This principle avoids all three of the simplistic mistakes that I have decried. Chambers explicitly notes that what counts as a modification, or what counts as a natural, healthy, normal, or whole body is essentially political and contested. Throughout the book, she reminds us that the purpose of the principle is not to denigrate individuals who modify their bodies, but to oppose social pressures to modify one's body for the convenience, comfort, or aesthetic pleasure of others. And she offers specific examples of valuable modification: post-mastectomy tattoos that help women reclaim their bodies after breast cancer, artists' use of tattoos and plastic surgery as a form of self-expression, C-sections in situations that call for them (for example, when they make the birth safer for babies and birthing parents), and treatments like chemotherapy, heart surgery, and resuscitation.

In addition to being sophisticated, the Principle of the Unmodified Body is useful and generative in many cases. It provides ammunition for critiquing many of the injustices linked to pressure to modify one's body. Chambers applies it to prejudices against natural Black hair,[10] routine infant

circumcision,[11] pressures to beautify oneself with cosmetic surgery,[12] the "shametainence" demands of a culture that expects women not only to do the work of managing menstruation or wearing makeup, but to conceal this work from others,[13] and a variety of other questionable social structures.

Thus, the Principle of the Unmodified Body presents the anti-body-modification view at its best. Nonetheless, the Principle of the Unmodified Body is completely inadequate for making sense of trans experience, as Chambers's own attempts to apply it show. The problem is not simply that Chambers has misapplied the principle by borrowing extraneous transphobic assumptions from the wider culture without criticizing them (although many of her auxiliary premises do deserve serious scrutiny). Rather, the principle itself is fundamentally inadequate.

2. CHAMBERS ON TRANS BODIES

Pressure to modify is the main lens through which Chambers interprets trans experience. She mentions transgender people as a group that faces disproportionate pressure to modify their bodies, along with "[w]omen and girls . . . adolescents, sexual minority groups, and people with larger or heavier bodies."[14] Her brief discussion of chest binding among transmasculine people treats it as a costly way of escaping oppressive models of femininity, fraught with physical risks and inconveniences, which would not be necessary if femininity were not so heavily punished.[15] But her most detailed discussion of trans bodies occurs in Chapter 8, where she discusses trans adults, and Chapter 9, where she discusses trans adolescents.

2.1 TRANS ADULTS

Chambers uses the Principle of the Unmodified body to argue for unsettlingly conservative conclusions: at an individual level, we should exercise caution about seeking or providing transition-related care, to the extent that insurance should not cover these procedures. And at the societal level, we should "work together to reject the idea that body modification is necessary to fit in."[16]

This is because a view that sees body modification as invariably an imposition from the outside, one that compromises individual integrity and autonomy, cannot adequately explain why it is so valuable for alleviating dysphoria. After rejecting the "born in the wrong body" model, which attributes dysphoria to the presence of an authentic inner self that does not match one's outward physical shape, Chambers concludes that dysphoria must be caused by the social pressures of a society that makes unjustified demands on all of our bodies. So far, so good; Chambers is following a tradition of trans scholarship that includes Kate Bornstein and Pat Califia, whom she cites, as well as authors like Sandy Stone, Dean Spade, and Miquel Missé, whom she does not.[17] How do we get from here to declining insurance coverage for medical transition?

The problem is the Principle of the Unmodified Body. If dysphoria is the result of growing up in a society that fails to accept "the logic of the unmodified body," then the solution is to collectively embrace that logic: "Your real self is whoever you actually are, right now, including what your body is like. You do not need to do any work to be truly you. You are already you, and you always will be."[18] To medically transition is to give in to social pressure, while to refuse medical transition is to resist.

But this simple picture of capitulation and resistance fails to address the realities of many trans people. Self-declared gender outlaw Kate Bornstein has been open about seeking body modifications to relieve dysphoria—a fact that Chambers has to dismiss as inconsistent, claiming that Bornstein rejects dominant gender norms in political terms but feels compelled to submit to them in personal terms.[19] But once we have rejected the idea of an authentic inner self, it is not clear why we should see the choice to modify as capitulation. Trans people are subject to a variety of contradictory pressures, including strong pressures against modification, and doing nothing is often the path of least resistance.

Interviews with ordinary trans people also raise trouble for the view that modification is capitulation. Many are critical of both the "born in the wrong body" narrative and dominant gender norms, and in fact see them as closely linked. As MacDonald et al. write in a study of transmasculine people's experiences of pregnancy and lactation, "Proponents of [the "born in the wrong body"] narrative give the impression that transgender people want to change all aspects of themselves to conform absolutely to the opposite traditional gender role and physical sex from what they were assigned at birth, an assumption that would logically exclude transmasculine bodies from the realm of pregnancy and lactation."[20] Study participants did not share this view. They saw their medical providers' attachment to the "born in the wrong body" model and its associated binary gender norms as a challenge to be navigated around. One participant, Kai, reported that after surgery, his doctor "was just like, 'Oh yeah, you're the guy trapped in a girl's body, and now your body matches how you feel inside.' And I was like, 'Uh, yeah, sure, thanks, I'll take my new chest now and go.'"[21]

The Principle of the Unmodified Body may not judge or blame anyone for seeking trans healthcare, but it does not provide us with the resources to explain why trans healthcare is valuable, why barriers to access constitute a type of injustice, or why we should fight back against those barriers.

2.2 TRANS ADOLESCENTS

In Chapter 9, Chambers applies the Principle of the Unmodified Body to the question of trans healthcare for minors (in the context of discussing body modification for children). She considers the case of Luna Younger, a seven-year-old trans girl in Texas whose custody battle made national news when her parents disagreed over whether to let her socially transition.[22] Chambers asks: Should Luna (once she is old enough for it to matter) take puberty blockers?

She considers three principles we might use to answer the question—a principle of autonomy, which says we should let people make autonomous decisions about their bodies; a principle of the open future, which says we should avoid

making irreversible changes; and a principle which says we should choose interventions that serve children's best interests—and argues that none of them straightforwardly applies. Having no other principle to guide us, she says, we should fall back on the Principle of the Unmodified Body. "In hard cases such as these," she writes, "bodily integrity means ruling in favor of non-modification."[23]

It is not at all obvious to me that these principles fall silent,[24] but even granting that they do, the Principle of the Unmodified Body is not an adequate tie-breaker. The Principle of the Unmodified Body fails to capture a crucial moral consideration, and one that we in fact have access to: Luna's point of view.[25] Of course, it would be wrong to put Luna through an estrogen-dominant puberty because an outsider interpreted her behavior as feminine, but it would be equally wrong to withhold puberty blockers based on the assumption that a modified trans body is a terrible thing. A young adolescent is capable of expressing feelings and opinions about her own body; any adequate principle should be responsive to what those feelings and opinions *are*.

3. WHAT'S MISSING?

The Principle of the Unmodified Body is an attempt to address social forces that drive political and social inequality. It responds to the fact that many people (especially cis women and girls) are often pressured to modify their bodies as a form of social control.

And it is true that trans people are sometimes pressured into body modification. Ambiguous bodies are singled out for ridicule and violence. Genital surgery and hormone treatments are sometimes required as a precondition for changing one's gender on legal documents,[26] or for competing in women's sports.[27] Many trans people struggle with, and internalize, an ideology that assumes that all medical transition aims at cis standards of passing and beauty.[28]

But if we focus exclusively on pressures to modify, we will overlook the intense pressure on trans people *not* to modify, typically on the grounds that modification makes cis people uncomfortable. I now turn to an overview of those pressures.

3.1 THE PRESSURE NOT TO MODIFY

As I write this, anti-trans political forces are mobilizing throughout the Anglophone world. Conservatives in the US embrace openly eliminationist rhetoric,[29] but their ideas have been taken up elsewhere—for instance, by a vocal anti-trans lobby in the UK that portrays trans women as dangerous predators, while claiming to be concerned with "free speech."[30] The prevalence of anti-trans hate speech in UK media has raised concern from international commentators.[31]

Anti-trans tactics are numerous and varied. They include bathroom bills,[32] drag bans and anti-drag protests,[33] "don't say gay" laws,[34] attempts to bar trans athletes from sporting competitions,[35] and legal obstacles to changing identity documents.[36] But most notably for this paper, they include efforts to block trans people's access to body modifications known as "gender-affirming care": puberty blockers, hormone therapy, and gender-affirming surgery. Many of the procedures withheld from trans people are considered medical necessities for cis people, including puberty blockers, hormone replacement, reduction mammoplasty, testicular implants, and hair removal.[37]

As of September 5, 2023, the Human Rights Campaign reported that twenty-one of the fifty US states had banned gender-affirming care for people under eighteen, and that these bans directly affect a third of the country's trans youth.[38] Right-wing legislators in the US have expanded their efforts with the intent of banning gender-affirming care for trans adults,[39] and some conservatives openly affirm that their long-term goal is to eliminate all transition-related care.[40] In the UK, after the National Health Service (NHS) announced the closure of its single, overburdened gender care clinic for minors,[41] it released a set of proposed guidelines that would block young people from obtaining puberty blockers and hormones through private insurance, and that advised against social transition (changing names, pronouns, and clothing, without drugs or surgery) except "where the approach is necessary for the alleviation of, or prevention of, clinically significant distress or significant impairment of social functioning."[42] Following a report commissioned in 2020 and published in 2024, which claimed that there was "a lack of high-quality evidence" concerning the efficacy of hormones and puberty blockers,[43] the NHS no longer routinely administers puberty blockers and has promised to take seriously "the risks of enabling a premature social transition."[44]

Barriers to trans healthcare access are often accompanied by rhetoric about the dangers of body modification. Conversion practices, sometimes misleadingly referred to as "conversion therapy," are attempts to brainwash trans people out of their desires for body modification and social transition. Conversion practices persist in many places,[45] despite being psychologically harmful,[46] contrary to the ideals of equality and justice,[47] and widely condemned by professional organizations.[48]

Anti-trans social rhetoric also invokes the paternalistic idea that "we" (a presumed cisgender audience) must protect trans people from the alleged dangers and harms of body modification. The concept of "rapid-onset gender dysphoria" portrays young transmasculine people as naïve adolescent girls seduced by a dangerous fad.[49] This rhetoric draws on ableism, conflating transness with abnormality and ill health and insinuating, on that basis, that trans adolescents are unfit to make decisions for themselves. It also draws on white supremacy and heterosexism, insisting that transmasculine people (overwhelmingly assumed in this rhetoric to be white) should occupy the role of white women and give birth to offspring in nuclear families.

This paternalistic rhetoric also draws heavily on disgust for trans bodies. Consider Abigail Shrier's descriptions of transmasculine people in her book *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters*: "surely the girl [sic] on puberty blockers will be acutely aware of her [sic] strangeness";[50] "even with a man's voice, body hair, squarer jaw, and rounder nose, she [sic] doesn't look

exactly like a man";[51] "Less attractive outcomes abound, usually resulting in a saggy boy chest."[52]

Transphobic rhetoric that targets trans women is typically overtly violent rather than paternalistic, treating trans women's bodies as symbolically threatening to the purity of cis women.[53] But it too is laden with bodily disgust, as many authors have noted. For instance, Susan Stryker poetically reclaims transphobic portrayals of trans women as physically monstrous.[54] Julia Serano details how both "deceiver" and "pathetic" archetypes of trans women in the media treat their bodies as objects of disgust and ridicule.[55] Serano cites two popular movies—*The Crying Game* and *Ace Ventura, Pet Detective*—in which a trans woman's genitals are exposed, revealing the "deceit" behind her female features, and cis male observers respond by vomiting in disgust.

Disgust toward modified trans bodies is inherently bound up with societal oppression of trans people. Any adequate ethical theory of trans body modification must take this larger political context into account. And any adequate principle must explain not just why it may be morally permissible for trans people to modify our bodies, but why preventing us from doing so constitutes a serious injustice.

3.2 REPRODUCTIVE ACCESS

Although the Principle of the Unmodified Body does useful work for cis women in many contexts, it is not fully adequate to meet cis women's needs either. It cannot explain the value of access to birth control, including permanent sterilization.[56]

Here, as with gender-affirming care, there is coercive pressure to modify one's body. Around the world, involuntary sterilization is deployed against poor women, disabled women, and women of supposedly "undesirable" races. But equally common—and worrisomely on the rise in the United States—is coercively withholding access to modification, in the form of reduced access to birth control, including emergency contraception.[57] Both coercive pressure to modify and coercive lack of access to modifications are grave injustices because they force people into unwanted physical predicaments against their will. And here, as with trans healthcare, advocating for unmodified bodies falls short of addressing the demands of justice.

Contraception modifies the body and sterilization modifies it permanently. Rationales for blocking contraceptive access vary—obscenity, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech feature heavily—but at least one prominent strand of objections to these interventions focuses on their interference with women's "natural" reproductive capacities. For many women and transmasculine people, an unmodified body is a fertile body—a body that can get pregnant whether or not pregnancy is wanted.

The Principle of the Unmodified Body can explain the wrongness of coercive sterilization, but it cannot explain the wrongness of coercively depriving people of the means to modify their own fertility. Once again, the problem is not to avoid blaming individuals, or leave room for the possibility that body modification is sometimes morally permissible, but to explain why access to these technologies is a matter of justice.

4. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE HOSPITABLE BODY

What links the examples of coercive pressures toward body modification is an insensitivity to the safety and comfort of the person whose body is modified. Hair-straightening and skin-lightening are physically uncomfortable and dangerous; surgeries on intersex children are liable to cause pain and medical complications; the restrictive dieting required for weight loss deprives the subject of pleasure and is burdensome to sustain. While advocates of these body modifications can and often do express the belief that it is "for the subject's own good," the vision of "good" on offer is focused not on what the subject wants or imagines for themself, but on a presumed gaze, typically cis, heterosexual, male, and white.[58]

Chambers, from whom I have drawn the Principle of the Unmodified Body, provides a helpful insight here. She distinguishes an external perspective, which concerns mainly how one's body appears to others, from an internal perspective, which concerns how it feels to inhabit one's body.[59] To view someone else from the external perspective, says Chambers, is to objectify them; to view yourself from the external perspective is to objectify yourself. She urges us to attend to the internal perspective: "[w]hether you feel normal, in the internal sense, has little to do with whether you are normal, in the external sense."[60] This concept of objectification is a better resource than the Principle of the Unmodified Body, as formulated in the quote I draw on, for analyzing the full range of examples at hand.[61]

But the internal perspective should not lead us to endorse the Principle of the Unmodified Body. Instead, we can formulate a better and more general alternative principle, which explicitly centers the perspective of the person whose body might or might not be modified.

> **The Principle of the Hospitable Body**: *you deserve to feel at home in your body*, because your body is *yours*, it is the locus of *your* unique perspective, and *you* have an inalienable value that all others must recognize and respect.

The Principle of the Hospitable Body differs from The Principle of the Unmodified Body in two ways. First, I have replaced the claim that "your body is good enough just as it is" with the claim that "you deserve to feel at home in your body." And second, I have replaced the claim that your body "is you" with the claim that it "is the locus of your unique perspective." I defend each of these changes, and go on to explain why the Principle of the Hospitable Body is more general than the Principle of the Unmodified Body.

4.1 IS YOUR BODY GOOD ENOUGH JUST AS IT IS?

There is an important truth in the vicinity of the claim that "your body is good enough as it is": no one's body needs to be changed just to cater to other people's needs, wants, or aesthetic whims. But sometimes, our bodies are not good enough as they are, in the sense that they are not hospitable places to live.[62] The inhabitant of a body also

has needs, wants, and aesthetic whims, and sometimes these are best served by modifications.

It is uncontroversial that some body modifications are valuable: think of chemotherapy, asthma medications, or treatments for psoriasis. A quick retort on behalf of the opponent of body modifications is that these treatments are exceptions because they are for the sake of health. However, closer scrutiny reveals that appeals to health fail to capture the full range of evaluative considerations at play. People can reasonably reject attempts to cure or treat their health conditions through body modification; consider Harriet McBryde Johnson's refusal to wear an uncomfortable back brace for her scoliosis.[63] And in the other direction, dysphoria and unwanted fertility are both bad for the person who endures them, but describing them as types of ill health is awkward and ill-fitting.

While it is logically possible to shoehorn all of these examples into the mold of health, there is no good reason to insist on doing so. As Elizabeth Barnes points out, health and well-being may be closely intertwined, but they can and often do come apart.[64] What justifies the provision of body modifications is not that they are *health*-improving changes that restore bodily normalcy, but that they are *life*-improving changes that make bodies liveable for their inhabitants.

Gender dysphoria makes one's body less liveable, less like a home. In qualitative studies, participants with gender dysphoria consistently report painful feelings of disconnection and alienation from their bodies.[65] Surgical and hormonal treatments have been reliably shown to improve psychological well-being among trans people.[66] While studies do not typically probe the specific mechanism by which they help, a reasonable explanation is that they relieve dysphoria; studies designed to check this explanation support it.[67]

Here are what some trans study participants had to say about the pain of dysphoria, and about the relief brought by transition:

> I saw that my body would never become as I wanted, at least not by itself. My life, as it was before, was not worth living. I did not live well in any situation.
>
> – an Italian trans woman describing an unwanted endogenous puberty[68]

> It [chest masculinization surgery] was the thing that made it possible for me to get pregnant . . . and I'd never been so depressed in that time that I tried to get pregnant without top surgery. . . . I literally had nightmares of cutting my chest off with scissors.
>
> – Felix, a transmasculine person discussing his experience of pregnancy and lactation[69]

> I feel much more happy and myself when I'm presenting as female than when I'm presenting as male. I've come to realize that the male has been a mask for me for my whole life, and so I'm enjoying removing the mask now and then, and feeling kind of home.
>
> – Nina, a 62-year-old trans woman[70]

We all deserve bodies that we feel connected to, not alienated from. A body that causes its inhabitant intolerable physical or psychological pain is *not* good enough as it is—not when we have readily available technologies to relieve this pain. Sometimes, the best technologies are social: the best way to make fat bodies hospitable is to stop needlessly shaming fat people, and one of the most important ways to make disabled bodies hospitable is to build shared environments that disabled people can freely navigate. But sometimes, the best technologies are medical: topical steroids are valuable tools for calming psoriasis flare-ups, IUDs for controlling unwanted fertility, and hormone therapies for reducing dysphoria.

4.2 IS YOUR BODY YOU?

If you find yourself in circumstances that make it psychologically painful for you to inhabit your own body, you have three basic options: you can change your body, change your psychology, or live with the dissonance as best you can.[71] According to the Principle of the Unmodified Body, changing your body is second best, because it amounts to changing who you are, while changing your psychology amounts to acceptance. But why assume that anatomical traits are more central to the self than psychological, emotional, or behavioral ones?

Consider the following characteristics: *being left-handed*, *being gay*, and *being a communist*. Although these characteristics differ wildly from each other, they have some illuminating commonalities. These are not physical traits in the sense of having obvious anatomical markers;[72] rather, they are psychological traits in the sense of being connected to someone's preferences, beliefs, and self-conception. All three have been targets of coercive pressure to suppress associated behaviors, and perhaps the trait itself: left-handed children forced to write with their right hands; gay people pressured into heteronormative relationship structures; and communists subject to persecution for their political activities. And in all three cases, these coercive pressures are wrong partly because they urge people to suppress, renounce, or abandon important parts of themselves.

Being trans (in the sense of *feeling trans*, rather than in the sense of *having an observably trans body*) belongs with the three examples in the previous paragraphs. It too is a psychological trait, rather than a gross anatomical one. And it too is an important component of the self, such that coercing or pressuring people to abandon it is wrong.

All of this suggests that your body—understood as an assemblage of gross anatomical structures—is not you. There is more to you than your body in this sense; your thoughts, feelings, and self-conception are parts of you

too. Changing these psychological parts of you is not inherently better or more authentic than changing your physical parts, and trying to coercively change someone's mind can be as cruel and damaging as trying to coercively change their body.

At this point, an opponent of body modification might object that all I have established is the moral parity of two of the three possible responses to dissonance (changing your body, and changing your mind). Why not claim that the remaining option is best? That is, why not think that the best response is to keep all the parts of you intact, and live with the pain and dissonance of mismatch?

This is tempting, but wrong, because keeping all the parts of yourself intact is not necessary for keeping yourself intact. You are constantly undergoing physical change: you lose or gain weight, get sick, get injured, recover, learn, change your priorities, remember, forget, and inevitably age. While it is wrong to coerce the left-hander, the gay person, or the communist, these people can spontaneously change without any loss of integrity: learning ambidextrous skills, discovering that one's sexuality is more fluid than he supposed, or changing one's mind about politics. Some of these changes may be welcome, and others less so, but the mere fact that they are changes does not, by itself, make them threats.

While the loss or gain of parts is not a threat to survival, it can be harmful or beneficial to the surviving person, depending on how the parts are lost or gained. Change that is beneficial, and happens in response to an individual's autonomous choice, is a good thing, while change that is harmful, and happens in response to outside pressure, is not. Thus, the social pressures that motivated the Principle of the Unmodified Body are bad not because they motivate change, but because they are insensitive to the wants, needs, and emotional well-being of those they affect most directly. They prioritize having a body that caters to the comfort and aesthetic pleasure of others over having a body that is comfortable from within.

4.3 GREATER GENERALITY

The Principle of the Hospitable Body is more general than the Principle of the Unmodified Body. In cases where the Principle of the Unmodified Body performs well, so does the Principle of the Hospitable Body. In cases where the Principle of the Unmodified Body performs poorly, the Principle of the Hospitable Body does better.

Sometimes, an unmodified body is the most hospitable place to live. In these cases, your body is good enough just as it is, and the Principle of the Unmodified Body falls out as a special case. The examples that motivate the Principle of the Unmodified Body involve people (typically cis women) facing societal pressure to engage in practices that, by their own lights, are at odds with their feelings of comfort and safety: hair straightening, makeup, cosmetic surgery. These modifications "normalize" the person being modified for the comfort and pleasure of outside observers. And in these cases, the Principle of the Hospitable Body agrees with the Principle of the Unmodified Body. The external perspective, which fixates on pleasing a white heterosexual male gaze, advocates body modification; the internal perspective, which advocates for the comfort and pleasure of the body's inhabitants, pushes against it.

But sometimes, the white heterosexual male gaze is best pleased by things as they are, while the body's inhabitant wants something different. We have seen this in the case of trans body modifications and birth control, where normalization often means *blocking* access to modification. There are also presumably cases of non-conflict, where the norms advise people to do what is best by their own lights: seeking chemotherapy in response to cancer, or foregoing tattoos they do not want. I focus here on cases of conflict, since those are the cases where some sort of critique is needed.

Returning to the original examples that motivated the Principle of the Unmodified Body, we discover that in some respects, the Principle of the Hospitable Body provides a more complete account even of them. It is right to decry racist beauty standards that demand that Black women straighten their hair using chemical relaxers. But Longoria points to cases of Black women being singled out for discipline or dismissal at work for wearing blonde highlights.[73] The Principle of the Hospitable Body encourages us to decry both types of pressure as forms of injustice, since both endanger Black women's freedom to inhabit their bodies safely and comfortably. The pressures on our bodies are frequently equivocal, pushing in multiple contradictory directions, so that it is not so easy to tell whether a given modification is "conforming to" or "rebelling against" social norms.[74]

The Principle of the Hospitable Body helps us name what is wrong with pressures toward body modification, but it does not stop there. It helps us name the cisnormative and objectifying demand that trans people remain indistinguishable from cis people of their assigned genders, the misogynistic demand that cis women remain in a "natural" state of fertility, and the femmephobic demand that women not adorn themselves in ways that appear too "unnaturally" feminine.

5. MODIFYING THE QUESTION

Social coercion—whether it pushes us to modify our bodies or to neglect them—can be insidious, and can push in multiple contradictory directions at once. How can we differentiate between a social problem and a reasonable response to the dissonance between body and mind? I think that we can make progress by focusing on the right questions.

Attempts to diagnose the cause of the dissonance are not always helpful. Even if the causes of dysphoria are partly social, knowing this tells us nothing about whether a given body modification is "good" or "bad," appropriately read as "conforming" or "rebellious."[75] Consider an analogy: adverse health effects like diabetes are caused partly by living in a racist society;[76] it does not follow that taking insulin is a way of capitulating to racist pressures or that health insurance should not cover insulin.

Instead, it is helpful to focus on what we can do about the dissonance, given that it exists. Are there social changes that can address the problem without forcing people to make costly changes? In the examples that motivated the Principle of the Unmodified Body, the answer is typically yes: workplaces can stop punishing Black women for wearing natural hairstyles, doctors can stop encouraging parents to cut their infants' genitals, and everyone can dial down their fat-shaming.[77] In the additional examples that support the Principle of the Hospitable Body, the answer is also yes: we can make gender-affirming care and birth control widely available, pass laws against discrimination based on gender modality or pregnancy status, create media depictions of a wide range of trans people, design public spaces in trans-inclusive ways, and offer social supports that make childcare less burdensome.

It is also helpful to consider social changes that would prevent dissonance between our bodies and our minds in the future, while weighing their costs and benefits. Eliminating narrow and cissexist ideas about gender and bodies would benefit everyone, cis and trans alike. Providing better social support for birthing parents would benefit many people besides parents, including children. Such interventions would be unlikely to eliminate all demand for gender-affirming care, or for birth control, but *preventing body modification* makes little sense as a success condition anyway. A better goal is *making room for a variety of bodies to thrive*.

When contemplating these wider changes to society, it might be tempting to judge particular body modifications by asking, "Would anyone still want that in a world without misogyny, heterosexism, and transphobia?" But that, once again, is the wrong question. The answer is unknowable, because none of us has ever seen a society free of misogyny, heterosexism, and transphobia. But for many forms of gender-affirming care, sexist and heterosexist pressures close in from multiple directions so that there is no safe place to stand. This makes it much harder to know what would happen if the pressures were removed.

Even if we knew that no one would want an intervention in a just world, this would not settle what to do in the here-and-now. As critics of ideal theory point out, what happens in the imaginary societies of the future is often a poor guide to what should happen in the here-and-now to bring us closer to justice.[78] Francesca Cesarano, drawing on Serene Khader's work, points out that even if women pursue body modifications in order to comply with unjust and sexist pressures, we do further harm by restricting access to those modifications.[79] Removing options pushes the costs of social change onto the most vulnerable among us, and there are better ways of pushing back against oppressive norms: we can reduce the cost of noncompliance, or push back against the social norms that make the modifications necessary in the first place.

6. CONCLUSION

Some oppressive social norms urge us to seek body modifications that make our bodies more painful, inconvenient, and alienating places to live. Others urge us to neglect our bodies, depriving us of wanted changes that would make our lives more liveable. When it comes to these latter social norms, turning a critical eye toward body modification misses the point. What we need instead is a society that accommodates a greater range of bodies—modified or unmodified—so that everyone has a hospitable place to live.

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NOTES

1. Thompson, "Black Women, Beauty, and Hair as a Matter of Being."
2. Sommerlad, "Skin Lightening."
3. Menon, "Reconstructing Race and Gender in American Cosmetic Surgery."
4. Bauer et al., "Intersex Human Rights."
5. Svoboda, "Promoting Genital Autonomy by Exploring Commonalities between Male, Female, Intersex, and Cosmetic Female Genital Cutting."
6. Wang, "Weight Discrimination."
7. Paine, "'Fat Broken Arm Syndrome.'"
8. Reiheld, "Microaggressions as Disciplinary Technique for Fat and Potentially Fat Bodies."
9. Chambers, *Intact*, 11.
10. Chambers, *Intact*, 76–83.
11. Chambers, *Intact*, 180–83, 304–05, 307–08, and 312.
12. Chambers, *Intact*, 223–32.
13. Chambers, *Intact*, 70–75 and 89–90.
14. Chambers, *Intact*, 8.
15. Chambers, *Intact*, 153–54.
16. Chambers, *Intact*, 285.
17. Bornstein, Gender Outlaw; Califa, *Sex Changes*; Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back"; Spade, "Resisting Medicine/Remodeling Gender"; Missé, *The Myth of the Wrong Body*.
18. Chambers, *Intact*, 277.
19. Chambers, *Intact*, 278–79.
20. MacDonald et al., "Transmasculine Individuals' Experiences with Lactation, Chestfeeding, and Gender Identity," 5.
21. MacDonald et al., "Transmasculine Individuals' Experiences with Lactation, Chestfeeding, and Gender Identity," 5.
22. See Burns, "The Battle over Luna Younger, a 7-Year-Old Trans Girl in Texas, Explained."
23. Chambers, *Intact*, 316.
24. Regarding the principle of autonomy, adolescents are capable of autonomous control over their own bodies and many of their own decisions. Re: the principle of the open future, the only truly reversible approach is to put everybody on puberty blockers (see George and Wenner, "Puberty-Blocking Treatment and the Rights of Bad Candidates"). Regarding the principle that says we should choose children's best interests, the fact that there is disagreement about Luna's best interests does not show that all parties are reasonable, or that such disagreement is impossible to resolve.
25. Luna is unique among the children discussed in the chapter in her ability to form and express opinions. All of the others are infants at the time of the proposed modification, except for one whose severe cognitive impairments prevent her from forming and communicating opinions about what type of body she wants.

26. Maier, "Altering Gender Markers on Government Identity Documents."
27. Yurcaba, "USA Boxing Updates Rulebook to Include Strict Transgender Athlete Policy."
28. Missé, *The Myth of the Wrong Body*.
29. Hawkinson, "Michael Knowles Says Transgenderism Must Be 'Eradicated' at CPAC."
30. McLean, "The Growth of the Anti-Transgender Movement in the United Kingdom."
31. Council of Europe Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, "Combating Rising Hate against LGBTI People in Europe"; United Nations, "United Nations Independent Expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity."
32. Murib, "Administering Biology."
33. Squirrell and Davey, "A Year of Hate."
34. Rosky, "Don't Say Gay."
35. Barry-Hinton, "Transgender Athlete Ban and the Anatomy of Anti-Transgender Politics."
36. Hines, "Recognising Diversity?"; Parker, "Changes to Gender Recognition Laws Ruled Out"; Brooks, "UK Review of Gender Recognition List Risks 'Trans Travel Ban.'"; Ibrahim et al., "Gender/Sex Markers, Bio/Logics, and U.S. Identity Documents."
37. Schall and Moses, "Gender-Affirming Care for Cisgender People."
38. Human Rights Campaign, "Attacks on Gender Affirming Care by State Map."
39. Javaid, "New State Bills Restrict Transgender Health Care—for Adults."
40. Astor, "G.O.P. State Lawmakers Push a Growing Wave of Anti-Transgender Bills."
41. Andersson and Rhoden-Paul, "APA Resolution on Gender Identity Change Efforts." The NHS has announced the opening of two new regional centers as of April 2, 2024 (NHS Foundation Trust, "New Specialist Gender Service Starts").
42. Rigby, "NHS Drafts Stricter Oversight of Trans Youth Care"; NHS, "Interim Service Specification for Specialist Gender Dysphoria Services for Children and Young People." Note that it is common and unremarkable for cis adolescents to adopt new nicknames and modes of dress even when doing so is not necessary for the alleviation of, or prevention of, clinically significant impairment of social functioning.
43. Cass, "Independent Review of Gender Identity Services for Children and Young People."
44. NHS England, "Implementing Advice from the Cass Review."
45. Rivera and Pardo, "Gender Identity Change Efforts."
46. Campbell and Rodgers, "Conversion Therapy, Suicidality, and Running Away"; Tillewein and Kruse-Diehr, "The Impact of Sexual Orientation Conversion Therapies on Transgender Individuals"; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, "Ending Conversion Therapy."
47. Ashley, "Transporting the Burden of Justification."
48. See, for example, American Psychological Association, "APA Resolution on Gender Identity Change Efforts," American Medical Association, "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts (So-Called 'Conversion Therapy')," and American Bar Association, "Resolution 112." Some criticisms focus on the ineffectiveness of conversion practices. While it is true that we have little evidence of their efficacy, it is beside the point; even if it were possible to brainwash people into being cisgender and heterosexual, it would be wrong.
49. Hsu, "Irreducible Damage"; Randall "Irreversible Damage."
50. Shrier, *Irreversible Damage*, 165.
51. Shrier, *Irreversible Damage*, 171.
52. Shrier, *Irreversible Damage*, 175.
53. Bettcher, "Evil Deceivers and Make-Believers"; Lenning et al., "The Trifecta of Violence"; Brightman et al., "Anti-Transgender Ideology, Laws, and Homicide."
54. Stryker, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix."
55. Serano, *Whipping Girl*, 36–40.
56. Reproductive health is, of course, not exclusively a cis women's issue. Transmasculine people are subject to the same types of reproductive coercion as cis women. Cis men may be denied vasectomies, and people of a variety of gender modalities may be forcibly sterilized. I focus my discussion here on cis women to illustrate how my intervention, though motivated from a trans standpoint, can provide insight about the very group that the Principle of the Unmodified body is meant to help. But nothing I say is intended to downplay the importance of reproductive freedom for these other groups.
57. Much of the anti-reproductive-freedom movement focuses specifically on abortion, which is less closely analogous to trans body modifications, since the interests of the fetus are at issue in abortion debates. The importance of bodily integrity and autonomy also figures heavily in these debates (see Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"). While there are important political connections between anti-trans movements and anti-abortion movements, the philosophical parallels with trans healthcare are more significant for contraceptive access than for abortion access. So my discussion here focuses on contraception (including sterilization), while setting abortion aside.
58. See, for example, Clune-Taylor, "Securing Cisgendered Futures," and Jordan, "Fitness, Fatness, and Aesthetic Judgments of the Female Body."
59. Chambers, *Intact*, 235–38.
60. Chambers, *Intact*, 237.
61. The concept of objectification has many other strands, helpfully pulled apart by Nussbaum in her famous 1995 article. Focus on the external perspective captures the idea of *instrumentality*, the first of Nussbaum's seven strands, in which "The objectifier treats the object as a tool of his or her own purposes"—in the case at hand, the objectifiers aesthetic and symbolic purposes are particularly relevant—and *denial of subjectivity*, the last of Nussbaum's seven strands in which "The objectifier treats the object as something whose experience and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account" (Nussbaum, "Objectification," 257).
62. We should not always equate the unmodified body with the status quo; many of us already live in modified bodies. My body is surgically and hormonally modified; if it is good enough as it is, then The Principle of the Unmodified Body says that there is no reason to lament my past surgeries or change my stable hormonal regimen. But an adequate principle needs to do more than explain why we no one should coercively *unmodify* trans people who have had the good fortune to access medical interventions already; it needs to explain why it is unjust to continue withholding medical interventions from those who have not yet been able to access them.
63. "When, in childhood, my muscles got too weak to hold up my spine, I tried a brace for a while, but fortunately a skittish anesthesiologist said no to fusion, plates and pins—all the apparatus that might have kept me straight. At 15, I threw away the back brace and let my spine reshape itself into a deep twisty S-curve" (Johnson, "Unspeakable Conversations").
64. Barnes, *Health Problems*, Chapter 2.
65. Graziano, "Meta-Ethnography on Chest Dysphoria and Liberating Solutions for Transmasculine Individuals"; Cooper et al., "The Phenomenology of Gender Dysphoria in Adults."
66. Carroll, "Outcomes of Treatment for Gender Dysphoria"; Wylie et al., "Gender Dysphoria."
67. Ruppin and Pfäfflin, "Long-Term Follow-Up of Adults with Gender Identity Disorder"; Costa and Colizzi, "The Effect of Cross-Sex Hormonal Treatment on Gender Dysphoria Individual's Mental Health"; Park et al., "Long-Term Outcomes After Gender-Affirming Surgery"; van Leerdam et al., "The Effect of Gender-Affirming Hormones on Gender Dysphoria, Quality of Life, and Psychological Functioning in Transgender Individuals." The question of

whether trans body modifications provide relief from feelings of dissociation and bodily distress is different from the question of whether patients regret these modifications. Rates of regret for gender-affirming surgeries are extremely low; a meta-analysis by Bustos et al. ("Regret After Gender-Affirming Surgery"), which considered mastectomy, phalloplasty, hysterectomy, gonadectomy, and a few less common surgeries, estimates the regret rate at 1 percent or less, for both transmasculine and transfeminine patients. (For an instructive comparison, consider the regret rate of knee replacement surgery, which studies have found to be between 6 percent and 30 percent (Madhi et al., "Patients' Experiences of Discontentment One Year after Total Knee Arthroplasty").)

68. Giovanardi et al., "Transition Memories."
69. MacDonald et al., "Transmasculine Individuals' Experiences with Lactation, Chestfeeding, and Gender Identity."
70. Budge et al., "Transgender Emotional and Coping Processes."
71. One can, of course, also challenge the social expectations that led to their feelings of alienation in the first place. But this is not an alternative to the above options; it's compatible with each of them (since endorsing norms is only one part of one's complex psychological being). It's not an answer to the same question; while one is critiquing the norms that led to one's predicament, one must do something with one's body and the parts of one's psychology that clash with it, whether that something is changing them, or leaving them the same.
72. If physicalism is true, then they are all physical traits in *some* sense, but not the sense at issue (see Stoljar, "Physicalism").
73. DeLongoria, "Misogynoir."
74. Sullivan, "Transmogrification."
75. See Sullivan, "Transmogrification."
76. Hill-Briggs and Fitzpatrick, "Overview of Social Determinants of Health in the Development of Diabetes."
77. The social model of disability provides excellent case studies for accomplishing this goal. Instead of treating disabled bodies as inherently limiting, its advocates argue, we can and should design environments that accommodate a wider range of bodies: buildings accessible by ramps and not only by stairs, flexible work schedules, and widely available assistive equipment (Shakespeare, "The Social Model of Disability"). The distinction between the social condition of disability and the physical condition of impairment remains vexed, but the social model's insights about better environmental design don't seem to require any specific stance on this distinction.
78. Sen, "What Do We Want from a Theory of Justice?"; Sen, *What Do We Want from a Theory of Justice?*
79. Cesarano, "Beyond Choice." See also Khader, *Adaptive Preferences*, and Khader, *Decolonizing Universalism*.

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Becoming Unrecognizable: A Deleuzian Reading of Non-Binary Gender Expressions

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Challenging the assumption that sex and gender exist in the form of a binary—or even of any number of fixed and stable categories—is an essential feature of trans philosophy and trans embodiment. In *Trans Liberation*, Leslie Feinberg insists that "the infinite, ever-changing way people express themselves cannot be partitioned into narrow categories."[1] Through her approach to her own identity and to trans liberation, Feinberg asserts that gender expression is ultimately not reducible to a set number of categories; analogous to poetry, gender always transcends existing categorization, which can never fully reflect the variety and particularity of individual expression.

Reading *Trans Liberation* twenty-six years after its publication highlights this dynamic nature of the field of gender expression. While some of the identity categories in use in 1998 have declined, others have emerged. More recently, the term "non-binary" has gained popularity as a form of self-identification, especially among LGBTQ+ youth.[2] This new term raises a particular set of questions and concerns for philosophers of gender. On one hand, its referent appears to include all human beings; insofar as the binarity of gender is a fiction enforced by a heteronormative patriarchal culture, one is tempted to remark that "we are all non-binary" (to paraphrase the title of Kadji Amin's article on the topic). On the other hand, as Amin points out, the term can also, somewhat paradoxically, be criticized for shoring up the binarity of gender. According to this analysis, the term "non-binary" reflects binary thinking in its very attempt to oppose the binarity of gender, with binary and non-binary subjects becoming a new implicit binary.[3] In other words, the term "non-binary" can appear to rely on a new gender binary to make its claim, thus inadvertently reinforcing the structure it seeks to undermine. Things are further complicated by the fact that proponents of the term "non-binary" do not offer a single, clear definition of it, nor do they claim that the term designates a clearly recognizable group of people. Indeed, it is generally accepted that one does not have to present in any particular way to identify as non-binary. This may lead one to conclude, as Amin does, that the term has "no positive social content"; it does not really apply to anyone nor does it describe a lived experience of gender.[4]

In order to clear up some of the confusion around the term, it is helpful to first recognize that "non-binary" is currently used in several ways. In its broadest sense, it indeed seems to constitute a kind of "catch-all" category; for instance, the 2023 Trevor Project report uses "transgender and non-binary" as an umbrella term to include all "non-cisgender" young people.[5] Someone who, like Amin, argues that no subject is in fact unambiguously cisgendered, or, like Feinberg, that gender expression always transcends the binary, can thus correctly argue that "we are all non-binary" in this first sense of the word. But "non-binary" does not only function as an umbrella term or as a way of naming the intrinsic irreducibility of gender to binary categories. It also constitutes a new way of self-identifying and of living one's gender. For certain subjects, being non-binary plays a central role in personal *and* social identity.[6] The fact is that people who primarily identify as non-binary are engaged in a social negotiation of gender, as exemplified by their demand that others use they/them pronouns to refer to them. Furthermore, as the death of Nex Benedict has made painfully clear, adopting a non-binary gender expression does make one more vulnerable to discrimination and violence. Although it is neither possible nor useful to pin down non-binary gender, psychiatrist Guy Millon usefully describes it as "the variety of different ways in which a protest against the gender binary is registered, often through presenting in a way that challenges the idea that

the discrete categories of woman and man are in any way natural or fixed."[7] Thus we can provisionally conclude that, in addition to designating a characteristic of gender in general, non-binary is also a particular form of gender expression embraced by certain subjects who generally choose to use they/them pronouns and to present in ways that do not conform to normative masculinity or femininity.

This article will focus in particular on this latter sense of the term "non-binary," while also keeping as an open question the extent to which "non-binary" characterizes gender in general for all subjects. I propose that by borrowing from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari the concepts of the "molar," the "molecular," and "becoming," we can reach a better understanding of non-binary identity and of the particular way in which non-binary subjects relate to gender categories. Indeed, many of the difficulties raised by the term "non-binary" that I have just laid out stem from an inadequate conceptual approach centered on recognition that prevents us from understanding what is at stake in this form of gender expression. In my view, the term "non-binary" does not simply constitute a new gender category (i.e., a "third" gender) for those subjects who embrace it; rather, it is meant to function as a non-category, or the refusal of gender categories. Deleuze and Guattari's approach allows us to give a more powerful account of non-binary gender expressions as a *refusal of recognition* and as an attempt to bring to the surface the multiplicity and becoming that the illusion of stable identities typically hides from our view.

My argument proceeds by contrasting two conceptual approaches to identity and desire: the first centers recognition and social existence, while the second attempts to foreground multiplicity and becoming through the rejection of recognition and of categorial social existence. I begin by discussing Judith Butler's theory of performative identity in their early work on gender as an example of the dominant understanding of identity through social recognition. I argue that while Butler's work is helpful to understand gender performance in general as the production of identity and rightfully emphasizes the importance of recognition for survival and politics, its focus on recognition ultimately undermines the very challenge to gender norms that is at the heart of non-binary gender expressions. I then present an alternative understanding of identity and desire through Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's work on becoming. In dialogue with Deleuze and Guattari, I offer an interpretation of non-binary experiences of gender as the effort to *become unrecognizable* and consider what is at stake for all subjects in this (non-) performance of identity.

1. DESIRE AND RECOGNITION

Since the 1990s, two frameworks for thinking identity and desire have tensely coexisted in feminist philosophy and informed work in queer theory, critical race theory, philosophy of disability, and, of course, trans philosophy. In "I Would Rather Be a Cyborg than a Goddess," Jasbir Puar describes this tension as "a dialogue between theories that deploy the subject as a primary analytic frame, and those that highlight the forces that make subject formation tenuous, if not impossible or even undesirable."[8] Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality theory and Judith Butler's account of performative identity are examples of theoretical approaches that center the subject in order to give complex, nuanced accounts of identity constitution. By contrast, theorists who draw from Deleuze and Guattari's work, such as Donna Haraway, Elizabeth Grosz, Jasbir Puar, and other new materialist thinkers, question the usefulness of the category of the subject and tend to foreground the flow of becoming and notions of assemblage over the stability of identity. These are different but not ultimately incompatible accounts: each framework is useful and, to an extent, complimentary to the other. Or as Puar puts it, "they need not be oppositional, but rather . . . frictional."[9]

Awareness of this philosophical tension is necessary for understanding what is at stake with non-binary gender and the kind of criticisms it has elicited. Indeed, I argue that as a way of doing (or not doing) one's gender, non-binary is much more aligned with the second framework and is more easily understood in its terms.[10] In order to understand this, let us first consider the role of desire and recognition in Judith Butler's account of performative identity.[11]

Judith Butler's early conception of *performative* and *citational* identity is a dominant way of comprehending gender.[12] Butler approaches the question of gender identity through a nuanced view of subjectivity and the social norms that condition it. By affirming the performative nature of identity, Butler highlights that gender is not a fixed characteristic with which one is endowed once and for all. Rather, it is an effect continuously produced through the performance of acts within sets of norms that allow for one's recognition as a subject. I constitute my gender in relation to others by continuously performing actions (e.g., speaking, walking, dressing, etc.) that cite shared norms of masculinity and femininity and are therefore recognizable as *my* masculinity or femininity. Consequently, one's gender is never a purely original, individual creation. Rather, it constitutes an ongoing, dialectical appropriation of norms; a constant negotiation between a subject's desire to be recognized and exist socially and the norms that determine and structure possibilities of recognition in a given social context. So while subjects individually "do" their gender, this doing is structured and heavily regulated by norms that determine intelligibility and recognition.[13] Butler understands transgender people as subjects whose recognition is uncertain because their bodies and subjectivity do not fall neatly within those sets of norms. Interestingly, they point out that trans subjectivity can act as a challenge to the norms in place and has the potential of transforming and expanding these norms. Butler reads transgender subjects' demand to be recognized as a man or as a woman as a demand to imagine a world where he or she could exist, where his or her reality would be possible. Understood in this way, a transgender subject's demand to exist socially is in itself a deeply ethical and political act: it is a call to transform norms and to imagine another possible world where more modes of life could exist.[14]

By understanding identity as a performative effect, Butler denaturalizes gender in a way that undermines any form of essentialism. Gender is not the expression of an inner identity but the ongoing production of that identity. But

while they recognize the fictional nature of any identity, Butler also posits the necessity for any subject to produce *some form of identity* in order to exist as a subject. Indeed, drawing on Spinoza's concept of *conatus*, Butler understands desire fundamentally as the desire to exist and to persist in one's existence.[15] Furthermore, as a Hegelian, they tend to consider recognition to be the essential condition of (social) existence, so that "the desire to persist in one's own being depends on norms of recognition."[16] Consequently, to desire existence is to desire some form of socially recognizable identity.[17] Thus desire aims in some sense at socially recognized and recognizable categories of identity for Butler, even though that identity is nothing but a performative production. One could say that the desire to exist is precisely what motivates the performance of identity.

This conception helps to clarify transgender experience insofar as it is characterized by the longing for social recognition as a man or as a woman. But it is much less useful in explaining efforts to challenge the gender binary or even to affirm a non-gender through one's self-presentation. If some transgender subjects can be understood as making a subversive or transformative appeal to the norm of binary gender, many non-binary subjects are arguably engaged in a different process. They do not seek recognition; rather, insofar as they perform gender in a deliberately ambiguous manner, they are striving to become *unrecognizable* as either *man* or *woman*. Reading these gender performances as subversive reinscriptions of the norm may not be incorrect, but it risks obscuring their radical intent. In its most radical sense, non-binary gender expression is not a subversive appeal to the norm of gender, but rather an escape from and a rejection of that norm. Paul B. Preciado expresses such a rejection in his memoir *Testo Junkie*, where he chronicles his experimentation with testosterone and "gender hacking": "I do not want the female gender that has been assigned to me at birth. Neither [*sic*] do I want the male gender that transsexual medicine can furnish and that the state will award me if I behave in the right way. *I don't want any of it.*"[18]

Preciado's experimentation with the limits of binary gender may be radical and quite philosophically informed, but he is far from alone in expressing such feelings. Many people who identify as non-binary are centrally preoccupied with escaping an identity which was assigned to them at birth, without necessarily seeking to affirm any alternative identity. Describing one of his patients, psychiatrist Guy Millon writes: "Robin identifies as non-binary, saying that their gender identity is constituted by the wish to get away from masculinity rather than any particular affinity with femininity as such."[19] Musing on the meaning of non-binary gender expressions, Millon suggests that it must be understood as a burning desire for escape from gender identities altogether: "What are these non-binary transitions if not attempts to get away-from-here, to move beyond any 'here' which would constitute a place of gender?"[20] While it is highly useful to account for the production of identity in general, Butler's conceptualization of subjectivity in terms of recognition may thus be ill-suited to non-binary gender expressions. Indeed, as Hannah Stark remarks, such a model fundamentally assumes the desire for recognition. Undeniably, subjects always desire, and even need, some measure of recognition. Yet it is also problematic to frame all desire as desire for recognition. In the case of non-binary subjects, one must acknowledge just the opposite: a desire *not to be* recognized.

2. DESIRE AND ESCAPE

Understanding non-binary gender expressions requires that we recognize them as efforts to imagine selves and relationships outside of fixed gendered identities. This in turn demands that we conceptualize a form of existence that is not fully contained by discursive and social norms, but that overflows these norms and is able to both invest them and withdraw from them. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's ontology is especially helpful in doing this. In what follows, I will lay out two of the key concepts Deleuze and Guattari use to articulate the role of desire in their ontology: the distinction between the molar and the molecular, and the idea of becoming-minoritarian.

2.1 THE MOLAR AND THE MOLECULAR

Deleuze and Guattari conceive reality as an immanent, dynamic force of becoming. Norms and categories function as so many social structures—or molar aggregates—imposed on this plane of immanence in order to render it intelligible, to "organize and socialize it."[21] Intelligibility depends on this imposition of a "transcendent plane" onto immanent becoming. But in opposition to many poststructuralist thinkers, Deleuze and Guattari do not conclude from this fact the futility of attempting to think the plane of immanence in and for itself. To the contrary, they reject transcendence as the secondary, if not superfluous, term. Transcendent, molar structures depend on the productive energy of immanent, molecular reality and cannot fully erase or contain its endless productive becoming, even as they attempt to fix it into discrete, stable identities. The plane of immanence thus remains accessible and perceptible even through its molar organization.

Transcendence and immanence, i.e., restrictive norms and productive realities, thus correspond to two ontological levels: the molar and the molecular. Deleuze and Guattari elaborate on this distinction in the last chapter of their book *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. In this work, they critique psychoanalysis and its conception of desire as lack by arguing that desire is truly a productive force, a flux that allows for the couplings and uncouplings that configure desiring machines into different assemblages. In contrast with "molar aggregates" which exist only at the macro level of sociality, they use the term "molecular" to refer to the level of reality where desire manifests as productive. In this microphysical realm, organized wholes and personalized entities do not exist. Only flux, fragments, and partial objects are to be found; these form the pieces of machines or bodies as they are connected into different configurations or "desiring machines."

As Deleuze and Guattari explain, envisioning the molecular demands that one shed all of one's assumptions about the structural or personal unities of wholes, be they machines or organic bodies. They develop this idea by drawing on a passage from Samuel Butler's book *Erewhon*, where Butler asks us, first, to imagine the different machines that we

use in daily life as extensions of our bodies, and, second, to imagine the organs that compose our bodies as so many small machines. By changing our perspective in this way, one can start seeing the interaction of mechanical and organic parts for themselves, without subordinating these interactions to the assumed functions of wholes.[22] Matter, Deleuze and Guattari suggest, interacts just in this way, through constant coupling and uncoupling, from the macro-level of bodies and machines down to the microphysical level of particles. But only at this molecular level does the energy that fuels these interactions become perceptible as free, productive desire. At the molar level, on the other hand, desire is channeled and invested into social aggregates. Under the Oedipal/capitalist regime, subjects are constituted as personalized, stable, functional wholes; their productivity is channeled in service of the capitalist order and their desire is recast as lack.

2.2 A MOLECULAR FREEDOM: ESCAPING, BECOMING

Much of what Judith Butler understands to be the inevitable conditions of subjectivity and existence—i.e., the necessity to be recognized by others through shared and sometimes oppressive social norms in order to exist—corresponds to Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the molar. And it is indeed at the level of the molar that existence as a subject takes place. As I have argued, this does not, however, exhaust the field of reality for these thinkers. Existence and desire also occur outside of these parameters (or more precisely, at a micro-level that both escapes and founds these parameters), albeit on a non-subjective, impersonal mode. Moreover, while Butler sees the transformation of norms at the molar level as the only avenue for social and political change, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the molecular allows for a different way to free desire.

In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari consider two types of delirium, the paranoiac and the schizophrenic, as paradigmatic of two styles and opposite poles of unconscious social investments. This understanding of delirium as divided between paranoid and schizophrenic aspects originates in the case of Judge Schreber, a German judge who famously recorded his own experience of paranoid schizophrenia. This case, discussed by both Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, is foundational for psychoanalysis' understanding of psychosis. But instead of offering their own clinical analysis of Schreber's psychosis, Deleuze and Guattari use it to read delirium as the "general matrix of every unconscious social investment."[23] They characterize paranoiac delirium as the extreme investment of desire into molar structures, while schizophrenic delirium indicates the withdrawal or disinvestment of desire from these structures along "lines of escape" [*lignes de fuite*]. In the schizophrenic process, desire slips through the net of molar aggregates by following the lines of escape that these representations necessarily include insofar as they are always made up of molecular desiring machines:

> It could be said that by contrast the schizo goes in the other direction, that of microphysics, of molecules insofar as they no longer obey the statistical laws: waves and corpuscles, flows and partial objects that are no longer dependent upon the large numbers; infinitesimal lines of escape, instead of the perspectives of the large aggregates.[24]

Importantly, Schreber's case also played a crucial role in psychoanalysis' understanding of individuals' desire to change sex or gender. Schreber's delirium famously involves a fantasy of experiencing sex as a woman, the feeling that he is or must become a woman, and the "resolution" of this delirium in his becoming God's wife.[25] This led many psychoanalysts to draw a close association between transfemininity and psychosis. For instance, Lacan's analysis of Judge Schreber's case in his *Seminar III* suggests that transsexuality constitutes an untenable identification with *jouissance* symptomatic of certain psychoses.[26] Following this lead, other Lacanian psychoanalysts like Catherine Millot and Geneviève Morel have in turn argued that "transsexuals"' desire to be of the other sex is hopeless and that sex change cannot constitute a solution for what is, according to them, an impossible form of identification.[27]

Deleuze and Guattari are in a sense following this tradition of associating schizophrenia and transfemininity when they theorize "becoming-woman" in their following work, *A Thousand Plateaus*. But while psychoanalytical approaches of trans identification through the prism of schizophrenia are pathologizing, presenting Schreber's conviction that he is a woman (and by extension all trans identification, at least for some authors such as Millot and Morel) as the unlivable result of madness, Deleuze and Guattari's aim is very different. Their concern is political rather than clinical insofar as they emphasize the rebellious and subversive potential of schizophrenia. In Deleuze and Guattari's work, delirium is thus given a much more political bent; they interpret it not primarily as a sign of illness or suffering, but as a political refusal (in the case of schizophrenia) or embrace (in the case of paranoia) of social aggregates.

As I have mentioned, the divestment of molar categories exemplified by schizophrenic delirium is also a process of "becoming," of which "becoming-woman" is a central manifestation.[28] In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari further develop their understanding of this movement of deterritorialization through this new concept. Engaging in processes of becoming (which also include becoming-animal, becoming-molecule, etc.) necessarily means embracing a becoming-minoritarian: "all becomings are becoming-minoritarian. . . . There is no subject of a becoming except as a deterritorialized variable of the majority; there is no medium of the becoming except as deterritorialized variable of the minority."[29] Indeed, becoming-minoritarian means moving away from the ultimate molar structure that represents the "majority" or "standard" [*l'étalon*]. This is why, as Deleuze and Guattari explain, there is no "becoming-man": "man is the molar entity par excellence, whereas becomings are molecular."[30] Every becoming is a "becoming-minoritarian" not because a new (minority) identity is thereby reached, but because through becoming one escapes one's assigned dominant identity. Doing this necessarily means shedding the security and privileges that accompany social recognition and

entering a more perilous form of existence. But it is by taking such risks that desire is freed for Deleuze and Guattari. The ultimate becoming is a becoming-imperceptible; desire, returned to its molecular, sub-perceptible form, is able to escape the net of any structure.

This concept of becoming has been criticized by some thinkers like Alice Jardine, who object that such a process presupposes that one already occupy a dominant position or possess a certain power or privilege. As Stark and Laurie note, "becomings appeal most to those restless within an order that has already allocated them a place."[31] These are important criticisms; they point to the fact that theories of identity that center becoming are importantly complemented by theories that center the subject, especially from a political point of view. Butler's account of identity, as well as intersectionality theory, remain important for thinking ethics and politics. And for those whose status as subjects has never felt secure, recognition remains an ideal to fight for and aspire to. At the same time, the concept of becoming helps us account for the way in which dominant subjects may shed their privileges so as to become truly vulnerable to violence; take, for instance, the case of transwomen who no longer share the privilege of masculinity but instead face an existence at least as violent and precarious as that of ciswomen.

As Deleuze and Guattari emphasize, the molar and the molecular are ultimately identical in nature; they are two faces of one coin, the same reality observed at the macroscopic and microscopic level. Thus the schizophrenic process does not ever fully constitute a full escape from social identity or representation. Rather, it is an escape that necessarily follows the lines traced by representation itself.

> What complicates everything is that there is indeed a necessity for desiring-production to be induced from representation, to be discovered through its lines of escape. . . . The desiring machines take form and train their sights along a tangent of deterritorialization that traverses the representative spheres, and that runs along the body without organs.[32]

Thus non-binary subjects who seek to escape the gender that was assigned to them at birth (like Preciado or Millon's patients) can only do so by moving toward the opposite gender pole; distancing oneself from the masculine can only be done by moving toward the feminine and vice versa, following in each case the lines of escape traced by representation.

Moreover, there is no permanent deterritorialization. The desire that is freed along lines of escape must be reinvested in some new way.[33] From deterritorialized desire, new representations, new assemblages will be formed. It is important to note, however, that Deleuze and Guattari do not consider this to diminish in any way the revolutionary potential of the molecular. Thus the fact that non-binary gender expressions necessarily crystallize, at least temporarily, into forms that can be recognized through the norm of masculinity and femininity does not invalidate their claim to non-binarity. If the molar and the molecular constitute two levels of reality, the struggle is to determine which level will subordinate the other. The constant possibility of deterritorialization and reterritorialization is the power of the molecular: it allows one to escape from "subjugated groups" and to attempt to form "subject groups" where molar aggregates will be subordinated to the productive force of desiring machines.[34] Furthermore, freeing desire from its entrapment in molecular aggregates also allows for a new creativity. As Moira Gatens points out, molar structures do not merely organize the plane of immanence, they also restrict its possibilities of configuration: "any plane of organization selects possibles from the plane of immanence and attempts to pass off these possibles as actual, the only possible actual."[35] By contrast, the plane of immanence is in itself a plane of *experimentation*, one where what is possible is not determined in advance but must always be discovered or created.

3. FROM IDENTITY TO BECOMING

The molar and the molecular thus designate two distinct perspectives on one reality, and one is not fully imaginable without the other. If the desiring machines must necessarily come to form molar aggregates and thus enter into representation, their productive desire is also irreducible to that representation. The molecular is always organized into molar aggregates. But conversely, the molar is always made up of a multiplicity, and identity is always also becoming. From this point of view, it is not surprising that two philosophical frameworks coexist to understand and subvert the social categories that constitute identity. In Deleuze and Guattari's terms, theorists who focus on the constitution of subject's identity through recognition, as Judith Butler does, are working at the level of the molar, while thinkers who attempt to undermine the category of the subject entirely by focusing instead on becoming are appealing to the molecular level of productive desire. Insofar as the molar and the molecular are co-constitutive and necessarily coexist, both approaches are valid. When it comes to understanding non-binary gender expressions, however, the molecular takes priority.

Indeed, I want to suggest that non-binary gender expressions can be understood as the effort to reverse the subordination of the molecular to the molar by making perceptible the multiplicity and becoming that necessarily undergirds identity.[36] In Butler's Hegelian account of recognition, social norms are given priority; recognition is only possible in relation to existing norms, even if it is by contesting or subverting these norms. Deleuze and Guattari's focus on productive, molecular desire and becoming changes the focus and allows one to see how the reverse is also true. The process of recognition itself requires a productive energy that it does not create but merely aims to regulate; norms and identity categories are but so many attempts to freeze into a stable shape a flow of matter and energy that necessarily exceeds any given form. While a Butlerian reading may show that non-binary gender expressions are still dependent on the gender binary (as they indeed are in their contestation or negation of it), it is just as true, as Millon suggests, that "even the straightest, most seemingly normative of gender identities is formed in relation to a non-binary current" and a "silent current

of sexuality that exceeds and even mocks these symbolic positions and images we hold of ourselves."[37]

Non-binary performances (or non-performances) of gender can be interpreted as so many efforts to change society's perspective, to bring to attention the multiplicity and the incessant becoming beneath and beyond the arbitrariness of social identities. There is "everywhere a microscopic transsexuality, resulting in the woman containing as many men as the man, and the man as many women, all capable of entering—men with women, women with men—into relations of production of desire that overturn the statistical order of the sexes."[38] Non-binary subjects may go out of their way to embody a fluidity and incoherence that defies any stable identity, but in doing so they are merely bringing to attention a common human condition. Indeed, becoming is not only the characteristic of politically radical subjects. Rather, it is part of the living condition, and of being in a world at all. In *The Argonauts*, Maggie Nelson showcases this shared condition by contrasting the transformation of her partner's body under testosterone with the metamorphosis of her own body through pregnancy and childbirth. Reflecting on these experiences, she notes how all lives are characterized by the becoming that is growing up and aging: "on the inside, we were two human animals undergoing transformations beside each other, bearing each other loose witness. In other words, we were aging."[39]

There are, of course, many legitimate concerns around the precariousness of trans and non-binary existence; it is at times vital to be socially and politically recognized. As Butler has argued, falling outside of recognition altogether means risking being relegated to the category of the abject. Does it follow, however, that recognition is what fundamentally makes life bearable? And if it does, is that not also necessarily a form of recognition that must compromise with becoming and change? Nelson suggests that love is in part what allows non-binary subjects to exist and persist without the need to affirm a stable identity. And as Stark and Laurie put it, it seems that "love and attachment enable people undergoing changes to produce a sense of consistency while simultaneously being supported to pursue lines of flight."[40] Love, indeed, appears to be a form of recognition that, in contrast with rigid social norms, does not require a fixed identity. Many people have been able to maintain loving relationships with intimate partners through radical bodily and social transformation, including cases of gender transition, across and in spite of such strict categories as "homosexual" and "heterosexual." This is not as surprising as it may seem; even the most common forms of love routinely negotiate becoming. Loving someone always in some sense involves loving a becoming, rather than a fixed identity. What for instance, could be a more dramatic change than the transformation of a newborn into a child and an adult? And yet parents do not need to know exactly who their child is, or will be, to love them and know that they will keep on loving them. Both desire and love may thus be forces which enable subjects to experiment with new possibilities, and to continue existing where recognition is denied, or, as with non-binary subjects, refused.

4. CONCLUSION

Throughout this essay, I have attempted to show how gender identity may be understood both as a normative and often oppressive set of categories imposed on and shaping desire, and also as a form of creativity fueled by desire itself. Thus a trans thinker and activist like Feinberg, who opposed the stifling, reductive effects of gender norms, also considered gender as an open field of genuine expression and creativity where new forms of life will keep emerging. The term "non-binary" must be understood in the spirit of such creative experimentation. Far from being a misguided reproduction of binary thought or a category empty of positive social content, non-binary gender expressions bring to attention the productivity and becoming that characterize identity through their refusal of existing gender categories. *Becoming unrecognizable* is not simply a symbolic refusal of recognition within the terms dictated by the norm; it is a gesture of affirmation. Non-binary subjects affirm desire as a creative force, one that is never limited to what is already a possible, and recognizable form of existence. This is Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of desire as a force more primary than any norms imposed on it. If, for Butler, refusing the norms that structure recognition is not truly a possibility, Deleuze and Guattari offer a way to think desire as fundamentally free and productive; a force that no set of norms can entirely or permanently fix into one recognizable shape. Insofar as they are also experiments in desire, non-binary gender expressions are not simply the subversion or the refusal of a set of norms. Rather, they are attempts to imagine and embody new ways of being, new possibilities for existence. Such experimentation can only be driven by a desire that is not a lack, not a demand for recognition, but a plenitude and an affirmation of its own existence and which in turn creates more desire as it enters into new configurations and new assemblages.

NOTES

1. Feinberg, *Trans Liberation*, 56.
2. Recent statistics do not seem to be available, but in a 2021 Trevor Project study of 35,000 LGBTQ youth ages 13–24 in the USA, 26 percent identified as non-binary. (The Trevor Project, ''National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health 2021.")
3. "Just as homosexuality birthed an idealized heterosexuality and transgender birthed an idealized cisgender, nonbinary has birthed an idealized binary identification as its (ironically, binary) opposite" (Amin, "We Are All Nonbinary," 114).
4. Amin, "We Are All Nonbinary," 116.
5. "This report uses 'transgender and nonbinary' as an umbrella term to encompass non-cisgender young people, which includes young people who identify as transgender and nonbinary as well as other labels outside of the cisgender binary, including genderqueer, agender, genderfluid, gender neutral, bigender, androgynous, and gender non-conforming, among others" (The Trevor Project, "2023 U.S. National Survey of the Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People," 28).
6. Here I am also opposing Amin's claim that non-binary identification is problematic because it overemphasizes the internal, psychic aspect of identification and lacks social content. I understand the affirmation that no particular self-presentation is required to identify as non-binary as a strategic claim that aims to oppose any form of policing of people's gender rather than a description of reality. The confusion may arise, however, from the fact that (per my analysis) non-binary subjects are *not primarily engaged in asking for social recognition*. Thus the claim that no specific self-presentation characterizes non-binary

embodiment may in fact more properly be understood as the refusal to be constrained by any criteria that would ensure social recognizability.

7. Millon, "Metamorphosis, Refuge, and the Gaze," 363.
8. Puar, "I Would Rather Be a Cyborg than a Goddess," 49.
9. Puar, "I Would Rather Be a Cyborg than a Goddess," 50.
10. This said, the term "non-binary" can also function to emphasize intersectionality. Gender is not the only field governed by binary thought; for instance, race and sexuality are also conceived as binaries. Even the distinctions between these different axes of identity and of oppression can be misleadingly binary. As C. Riley Snorton argues in *Black on Both Sides*, the very distinction between gender and race or sexuality and gender tend to hide the way in which gender is involved in race, race in gender, etc. "Non-binary" can concretely function for some subjects as a way to gesture to this entanglement in their self-identification and to bring to the fore the fact that subjects are never as neatly and independently racialized and gendered (for instance) as these categories suggest. What is at stake in embracing the term "non-binary" is thus not the same for all subjects, nor is it limited to "gender" as an isolated category.
11. I chose to focus on Butler's account of identity given its particular importance for philosophy of gender and also because its focus on recognition illuminates an interesting aspect of non-binary experience. As I show, the desire for recognition that powerfully accounts for some aspects of trans experience manifests instead primarily as a desire for non-recognition (or a refusal of recognition) for non-binary subjects.
12. The account of identity I elaborate here is based on Butler's earlier work on gender as developed in *Gender Trouble*, *Bodies that Matter*, and *Undoing Gender*. Butler's thought has been evolving and their recent approach to gender in *Who Is Afraid of Gender?* may be somewhat different from what I explain here. Interestingly, Butler signals in that book that they have adjusted their understanding of gender in part in response to new materialism's critique of their treatment of nature and matter as passive, inert forces.
13. Gender is "a kind of doing … a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint" (Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 1).
14. In Hannah Stark's words, Butler's ethical project is to "expand those 'grids of intelligibility' which designate the recognizably human" with the goal of rendering more lives livable (Stark, "Judith Butler's Post-Hegelian Ethics and The Problem with Recognition," 94).
15. "It was Spinoza who claimed that every human being seeks to persist in his own being, and he made this principle of self-persistence, the conatus, into the basis of his ethics and, indeed, his politics." Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 31.
16. Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 32.
17. Butler does not deny that people can and do exist outside of social recognition, but their point is that such existence is extremely precarious and open to the specter of violence. This is the condition of the "abject," or of social death. The desire to persist in our existence leads us to seek to be recognized, minimally in a way that makes our existence livable.
18. Preciado, *Testo Junkie*, 138.
19. Millon, "Metamorphosis, Refuge, and the Gaze," 365.
20. Millon, "Metamorphosis, Refuge, and the Gaze," 367.
21. Gatens, "Feminism as 'Password'," 60.
22. This change in focus from "unity" or the "whole" to the connections between parts, both organic and mechanical, is the idea that Donna Harraway develops so productively with her concept of the cyborg. As she writes: "Cyborgs are not reverent; they do not re-member the cosmos. They are wary of holism but needy for connection" (Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," 4).
23. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 280.
24. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 280.
25. Izcovich, "Identification féminine et pousse-à-la-femme dans la psychose."
26. Lacan, *The Psychoses*. Lacan terms this type of identification in schizophrenia the "push-to-the-woman." Much more could be said on Lacan's approach of transgender identification but that is not my concern here. My aim is simply to contrast Deleuze and Guattari's association of trans identification ("becoming-woman") and schizophrenic delirium with psychoanalysis' understanding of the connection between these two terms. Simply put, the latter is pathologizing while the former is (politically) empowering.
27. "The idea that transsexuality is grounded in the conviction of being a man or a woman is one fallacious certainty that the evidence of transsexuals enables us to dismiss. Another certainty that must also be called into question is the notion that the transsexual malaise can only be remedied through sex-change . . . analysis of dreams of those awaiting surgical transformation reveals that the step they are about to take provokes psychic conflict, and that their sexual identity is far from free of contradictions, as has been claimed." Millot, *Horsexe*, 143.
28. One is tempted to read "becoming-woman" as Deleuze and Guattari's response to Lacan's "push-to-the-woman." In accord with these authors' very different readings of schizophrenic delirium, these concepts manifest opposed movements; while becoming-woman represents a movement of divestment and escape from a social category, "push-to-the-woman" constitutes the point of arrival and resolution of Schreber's delirium in Lacan's analysis. If what is at stake in these concepts is indeed a certain account of trans identification, then they offer very different readings of the movement represented by the prefix "trans". (For some productive musings on the different possible meanings of "trans", see: Stryker, Currah, and Moore, "Introduction: Trans-, Trans, or Transgender?")
29. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.
30. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 292.
31. Stark and Timothy, "Deleuze and Transfeminism," 129.
32. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 315.
33. "How would these decoded and deterritorialized flows of desiring-production keep from being reduced to some representative territoriality, how would they keep from forming for themselves yet another such territory, even if on the body without organs as the indifferent support for a last representation?" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 315).
34. For Deleuze and Guattari, we are part of subjugated groups when our desire is subordinated to socially regulated and enforced identities, such as "man" and "woman," "heterosexual" and "homosexual," and even "cisgender" and "transgender."
35. Gatens, "Feminism as 'Password'," 72.
36. While firmly rooted in English grammar, a non-binary subject's preference for the pronouns *they/them* interestingly seems to reflect that multiplicity, the refusal to present as one and self-identical.
37. Millon, "Metamorphosis, Refuge, and the Gaze," 368.
38. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 296.
39. Nelson, *The Argonauts*, 83.
40. Stark and Timothy, "Deleuze and Transfeminism," 134.

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Decolonial Trans Futurity: A Trans of Color Critique of Normative Assimilation

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Anchored in a decolonial framework, we understand race and gender as co-constructions of colonial modernity. Drawing on María Lugones's concept of the colonial/modern gender system, we argue that non-normative racialized trans subjects are pathologized through the imposition of a racial-colonial system of binary gender. We argue that coloniality, when adopted into the medical-psychiatric apparatus, takes shape as *transnormativity*: an individualized, medicalized form of trans identity that is rooted in a white, Western understanding of gender. Building on Jasbir Puar's framework of homonationalism and trans(homo)nationalism, and critiques of assimilationist queer politics through the lens of racial capitalism and anti-imperialism, we argue that trans(homo)nationalism is the absorption of transnormativity into the broader operations of state power, and see transnormativity as an extension of coloniality, operating as neo-colonialism. We argue that the political implications of trans(homo)nationalism include the sanctioning of violence and marginalization of non-normative and racialized trans subjects, and the continued imposition of a regime of racialized normative gendering.

This assimilationist nationalist agenda is funneled through the for-profit medical-psychiatric apparatus wherein transition is co-opted into a curative, progress-based temporality. Looking to theorizations of trans temporality, we critique notions of linearity and futurity insofar as they bolster the deployment of racist, nationalist, and imperialist state agendas. We articulate a vision for futurity grounded in a trans of color framework which resists assimilation into normativized gender, and call for truly radical futures for trans people that resist the medicalized forms of trans identity that subscribe to the colonial, white, Western ideals of gender.

1. COLONIAL PRACTICES AND RACIALIZED GENDER

1.1 THE DECOLONIAL FRAMEWORK

The decolonial framework is chiefly concerned with identifying colonial forces and the continuation of coloniality, which permeates modern society. In this paper, we are most interested in examining how coloniality structures conceptions of identity, personhood, and agency, particularly as it pertains to racialization and gendering. Various academic traditions address racialization from unique perspectives, but the psychoanalytic lens of Martinican scholar Frantz Fanon is foundational for understanding the effects of racialization on a subject's sense-of-self. In his first book, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon argues that colonialism strips a racialized subject's independent identity to construct a "colonized mind," that is, a complete isolation of the subject from their personhood, thereby reconstructing them according to the colonizers' will. Control of the body is relinquished and the flesh itself is rendered a violent caricature, an object subjected to racial domination. The colonized mind, then, does not belong to the subject but rather to the colonizer. Fanon describes the affective response of a racialized subject made viscerally aware of their prescribed condition:

> [T]he corporeal schema crumble[s], its place taken by a racial schema . . . it was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but a triple person . . . I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics . . . completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood?[1]

The abrasive imagery present in Fanon's writing is reflective of the perpetual violence inflicted by racialization. For Fanon, colonialism did not simply re-work an existing reality but rather introduced a new reality altogether, one defined by the demarcation between white men and racialized Others. This reality is so heavily constituted by histories

of kidnapping, enslavement, objectification, policing, segregation, and further marginalization that the colonized mind is battered into subjugation:

> I move slowly in the world, accustomed now to seek no longer for upheaval. I progress by crawling. And already I am being dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes. I am *fixed*. Having adjusted their microtomes, they objectively cut away slices of my reality. I am laid bare. I feel, I see in those white faces that it is not a new man who has come in, but a new kind of man, a new genus. Why, it's a Negro![2]

Coloniality infects each of its subjects with white supremacist thought, making synonymous the identity of a racialized subject and their racialization itself. A racialized subject, then, cannot reasonably exist under coloniality without some degree of recognition of their racialization.

Since *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon and other decolonial scholars have expanded the tradition to include critiques of other dominant systems of oppression and control. Anibal Quijano has argued that the Western model of modernity has placed racialized subjects at the center of capitalist constructions of labor,[3] and María Lugones responded to his work with a critique of her own. According to Lugones, the decolonial framework has remained complicit to gendered domination, which she finds to be an underexplored facet of coloniality.[4] Such complicity, she argues, is found in decolonial texts that analyze the "categorical separation of race, gender, class and sexuality,"[5] thereby reducing gender to an oppression inflicted by patriarchal rule independent of racialization. She takes issue with this analysis and introduces the concept of a "colonial/modern gender system" to describe the ways in which coloniality effectively linked race and gender under one cohesive system of domination.[6] As this paper intends to explore her framework in collaboration with trans scholarship, developing a deeper understanding of the colonial/modern gender system is in order.

1.2 COLONIALITY OF GENDER

In "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," Lugones expresses her concern with "how politically minded white theorists have simplified gender in terms of the patriarchy."[7] She writes:

> [t]he heterosexualist patriarchy has been an ahistorical framework of analysis . . . we keep on centering our analysis on the patriarchy . . . without any clear understanding of the mechanisms by which heterosexuality, capitalism, and racial classifications are impossible to understand apart from each other.[8]

By naming the colonial/modern gender system, Lugones hopes to "make visible the instrumentality of the colonial/modern gender system in subjecting us—both men and women of color—in all domains of existence."[9] In beginning her analysis, Lugones contests the popular notion (as echoed by Quijano) that sex is strictly biological. She argues that the existence of intersex individuals is evidence of a taxonomical problem which clearly demarcates males and females by phenotypical—and, rarely, hormonal or chromosomal—characteristics, consequently demanding the enforcement of sexual dimorphism through medical intervention. She posits:

> The cosmetic and substantive corrections to biology make very clear that "gender" is antecedent to the "biological" traits and gives them meaning. The naturalizing of sexual differences is another modern use of science that Quijano points out in the case of "race." Not all traditions correct and normalize intersexed people. So, as with other assumptions, it is important to ask how sexual dimorphism served and continues to serve global, Eurocentered, capitalist domination/exploitation.[10]

By dismissing the biological substantiation of a sex binary, Lugones opens the decolonial tradition to an investigation of sex/gender as yet another product of coloniality. "Colonialism," she writes, "did not impose precolonial, European gender arrangements on the colonized. It imposed a new gender system that created very different arrangements for colonized males and females than for white bourgeois colonizers."[11] That is, colonialism introduced a gender system dependent on the racialization of its subjects, making race-gender a continuous network of colonial legacies.

A history of binary thinking—white and black, male and female, superior and inferior—has dictated the colonial reality in which each system of domination uniquely ties back to the operations of white supremacy. Lugones describes the "encompassing phenomenon"[12] of coloniality as the "global, Eurocentrist, capitalist domination/exploitation"[13] of "all control over sex, subjectivity, authority, and labor"[14] as prescribed by colonial powers. One can view coloniality as an "epistemological project"[15] that recenters "human reality"[16] as a practice based in sexual dimorphism forming a production of labor upheld by "two groups: superior and inferior, rational and irrational, primitive and civilized, traditional and modern."[17] The two groups were notably racialized in that one (superior, rational, civilized, and modern) exclusively described white Europeans[18] and their traditions as the only valid modes of being, effectively naturalizing the remaining populations as inferior, irrational, primitive, and traditional. The naturalization makes non-white populations targets for colonial violence, frames them as responsible for the violence enacted on them, and positions colonizers as the producers of "the most advanced moment in the linear, unidirectional, continuous path of the species."[19]

1.3 NORMATIVIZING GENDER PRACTICES

Non-white, non-Europeans are merely hurdles that the modernization of global life must work to overcome, but Lugones notes that previous attempts to examine colonial racialization fell short when describing gender: sexual dimorphism has been centered in decolonial texts, but only in the sense of its naturalization through the means of labor. Non-normatively sexed—and subsequently gendered—subjects remain shadowed by coloniality's natural modes of being, ultimately regarded as secondary

to the realities established through a colonial lens. In this way, one can think of both race and gender not as "predetermined destinies, nor biological or genetic facts for human beings,"[20] but rather as realities that "come into being"[21] following a legacy of colonial domination. The conflation of race and gender means that both racialized and non-racialized subjects are bound to particular colonial institutions which naturalize gender as an inherent reality. Even "European/white women, while subordinated to the category of 'Man,' [are] still *fundamentally* a part of the project of colonial modernity,"[22] making both racialized and non-racialized subjects bound to Lugones's concept of the colonial/modern gender system. It is necessary to understand the ways in which racialized gender has come to permeate our current reality if we wish to work towards any sort of racial or gendered liberation; Alex Adamson notes that feminism and queer theory "cannot only be about denaturalizing sex, gender, and sexuality; [they] must also make visible the mode of being human in which these categories emerge,"[23] those modes, of course, being distinctly related to racial categories as inscribed by hegemonic structures of colonial whiteness.

Notably, for Lugones, colonized people are not gendered so much as sexed, where "colonized people became males and females. Males became not-human-as-not-men, and colonized females became not-human-as-not-women."[24] The forced assimilation of colonized people into the binary, oppositional, and hierarchical gender system thus marks people of color as "failures juxtaposed to the ideal of *real* women or men . . . [since] gender legitimation was reserved for those who were constructed as 'human' within the colonial order, that is, land-owning, bourgeois white men and women."[25] Lugones's work provides a vital and rich account of the ways in which colonization operates through the imposition of this racialized gender system. However, engaging with her work for a trans of color project necessitates paying attention to the silences, erasures, and absences of transness. Brooklyn Leo's work reveals that Lugones's account of the colonial/modern gender system remains mired in the assumption that "there would not be bodies that failed to meet either sex-gender requirements of male/female within the colonial/modern gender system."[26] Leo points out that for Indigenous Two-Spirit communities, neither "not-human-as-not-men" nor "not-human-as-not-women" captured the mechanism of targeting for violence reserved for Two-Spirit and colonized trans people of color. In fact, Leo argues that this targeted violence is necessary and central to how the colonial/modern gender system is upheld and legitimated. Leo's reframing of the colonial/modern gender system as a colonial/modern *[cis]* gender system shows that central to its maintenance is the "disciplining of gender-nonconforming peoples of color who threaten the factious narrative of gender as static, indexed to one's sex at birth, and dimorphic."[27] A decolonial trans of color framework is thus called for as a method of understanding, grappling with, and ultimately resisting the violent imposition of this [cis]gender system.

In uncovering the racialized history of gender, we can discover the ways in which gendered normativity is directly influenced by colonial notions of race. C. Riley Snorton tells us that Black gender remains separate from white gender in that it "finds expression and continuous circulation within blackness, and blackness is transected by embodied practices that fall under the sign of gender."[28] Snorton's claim of gender as both a cultural and social racial phenomenon is backed up with significant genealogical evidence relating to continuous colonial institutions.[29] Under colonial realities, it is imperative that sexing and gendering remain enfleshed in each other; attempts to "[aestheticise, value, and modify] one's body to become intelligibly sexed and gendered"[30] naturalize a reality in which facets of gender are tied to physical features of a sexed body. "Intersex genital mutilation" and other normalizing practices such as some forms of gender affirming care must be called into question when working to move beyond the colonial/modern gender system and its effects on racialized, sexed, and gendered subjects, as these practices assume an attempt to appeal to normalized bodily comportments and modality.[31]

The method by which the colonial/modern gender system identifies non-normatively gendered subjects and distinguishes them from normatively gendered subjects is *pathologization*: the practice of assigning uniquely medical terminology to an individual on the basis of non-normative behaviors, appearances, or otherwise interpellating factors. The goal of pathologization is often twofold: (a) to isolate a subject from the status of normativity so as to preserve the exclusive nature of the status altogether, and (b) to "cure" a subject of any perceived ailments or faults by urging the subject to abandon non-normative traits or expressions. Dean Spade writes that since "gender nonconformity is established as a basis for illness . . . the description of the 'ill' behavior . . . creates not a prohibitive silence about such behavior but an opportunity for increased surveillance and speculation" of the transsexual subject.[32] Essentially, transsexual and gender nonconforming subjects are assigned a diagnostic label that makes obvious their transsexuality or nonconformity, rendering such subjects vulnerable to discrimination and violence. The need to subdue various gendered subjects—particularly racialized gendered subjects—stems from a colonial history of supremacy and domination. Indeed, pathology and the gendered normativity that it works to buttress are both products of coloniality and worth critiquing.

2. TRANSNORMATIVITY, WHITENESS, AND THE MEDICALIZATION OF TRANS IDENTITY

The colonial co-construction of race and gender enshrines a racialized division of binary gender; while trans people disrupt colonial impositions of a cisgender binary, the colonial pathologization of gender variance results in a drive toward normalization and assimilation. stef shuster explains how the emergence of trans healthcare in the twentieth century came with a "particular concern" expressed by healthcare professionals to normalize "transsexual bodies and experiences."[33] Healthcare workers were only interested in providing care to trans people who were willing to "prove their reliability" as a credible patient who willingly conforms to normative gender expectations.[34] This was to the benefit of the medical community: they could restrict care while upholding themselves "as benevolent and paternalistic for offering aid" at all.[35] The criteria of

patient credibility was structured to be classist and racist, and required that the patients would bolster the integrity of the provider by "being a productive citizen" post-transition.[36] The "regulatory power and surveillance of the medical community" allowed providers to deny care to any patient they deemed to be unable or unwilling to "move undetected through social life."[37]

This pathologized regulatory script forced onto trans people is *transnormativity*: a framework that constructs and maintains the hegemonic narrative of transness all trans people are expected to uphold. This narrative assumes that all trans people conform to the account of being born in the wrong body, that they all want and require medical transition, that they all should and do seek to present and be perceived as cisgender and binary, and that they all experience transness the same way.[38] Thus transnormativity functions as an extension of coloniality, aiming to fit transness into a neat homogenous structure that replicates binary, oppositional gender systems. shuster writes that the normalized narrative of trans experience requires that "beginning in childhood, trans people . . . [must] feel disgust with their bodies, particularly with their genitals, and always want to dress in the clothing and play with the toys of the opposite gender. Any deviations from this narrative was met with suspicion by those in the medical community.[39] As Sandy Stone points out, in transnormative narratives trans people "go from being unambiguous men, albeit unhappy men, to unambiguous women. There is no territory between."[40] However, many trans people exist in this "territory between," and "transnormativity and trans exceptionalism are aspirational fantasies that very, very few trans subjects are able to live out phenomenologically."[41] The ability to embody proximity to what Hil Malatino calls "normative gendered legibility"[42] relies on the medicalized model of transition, which necessitates adherence to normative, binary, racialized gender.

Transnormativity also relies on the constructed binarisms of sex and gender, which work to reinforce each other and derive from the imposition of a colonial gender system. Drawing on Lugones, Adamson claims that "sex is not, and has never been, dimorphic, but rather the hegemonic construction of sex as necessarily dimorphic is a construction of colonial/modernity."[43] Noting the recognition of intersexuality in Indigenous societies prior to colonization without assimilation into a sex binary, Lugones argues that colonial organizations of sex and gender operate to "correct" the sex of intersex people to be in line with gender, and hence that gender is the system which enforces meaning upon biological traits, rather than a system *based* on biological traits.[44] Sexual dimorphism as well as the gender binary are hence brought into question as racialized colonial constructions. The goal of the medicalized model of transition, too, is to bring sex into alignment with gender, undergirded by the assumption that the movement is from one binary pole to another.

The intertwined colonial constructions of race and gender mean that "gender is always racialized and racialization is also always gendered."[45] The medical model requires that trans people adequately perform transness by demonstrating alignment with the binary, heterosexual, and wrong body narratives associated with transnormativity. Such a performance is necessarily racialized, and whiteness is enmeshed in the medicalized model such that "trans persons of colour are expected to uphold ideals of white femininity and masculinity if they wish to gain access to medical services."[46] On top of rendering the navigation of trans healthcare systems additionally challenging for trans people of color, this medicalized white Western model of transition also results in a "hierarchy of gender normativity" that pathologizes not only trans people as a whole but specifically non-normative racialized trans people.[47] The centering of dysphoric distress within the psychiatric-medical apparatus props up another transnormative narrative: that of an atomistic individual who feels they were "born in the wrong body"; but, as Spade points out, such an individualized understanding of transness demonstrates "[a]nother immediate error and danger of the medical model of transsexuality . . . its separation of gender from cultural forces."[48] This masks the role of colonial racialization and the social world of gendered experiences and isolates trans individuals as pathological.

Individual trans people, even when they may not subscribe wholly to transnormative narratives about themselves, need to perform this normativity in order to access gender-affirming care. As Spade writes, "[m]y quest for body alteration had to be legitimized by a medical reference to, and pretended belief in, a binary gender system that I had been working to dismantle since adolescence . . . not only medical treatment, but also legal rights and social services for trans people are dependent upon successful navigation of that medical system."[49] The highly regulated binary gender normativity that institutions demand of trans people in order to access gender-affirming care can be deeply harmful and dehumanizing for those that navigate these structures, and especially so for racialized non-normative trans people. An individualist analysis of transnormativity is thus less useful than a structural examination that focuses on the complicity of the transnormative subject in the broader operations of neoliberal capitalism, imperialism, and racism.

3. COLLUSIONS OF TRANSNORMATIVITY AND HOMONATIONALISM: TRANS(HOMO)-NATIONALISM

3.1 CONSTRUCTING HOMONATIONALISM: HOMONORMATIVITY, RACIAL CAPITALISM, AND IMPERIALISM

In *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Jasbir Puar introduces the concept of homonationalism to argue that state acceptance of normative homosexuality operates as a form of sexual exceptionalism that is "contingent upon the segregation and disqualification of racial and sexual others from the national imaginary."[50] Puar argues that liberal state acceptance of normative gayness takes place at the expense of sanctioning the exclusion of and violence against non-normative queer and racialized subjects. This absorption of gay subjects into the "national imaginary" develops from what Lisa Duggan refers to as a "new homonormativity" that "does not

challenge heterosexist institutions and values, but rather upholds, sustains, and seeks inclusion within them."[51] Duggan argues that this "new homonormativity" is the manifestation of neoliberal sexual politics, which "upholds and sustains [dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions] while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption."[52] Homonormativity adapts gay rights to fit in with dominant heteronormativity, ensconced in the ethos of a racial capitalist logic that reinforces dominant class and race positions while claiming the alterity of sexual identity.

Within the broader scope of liberal gay and lesbian politics, patriarchal, heterosexist, capitalist, and often nationalist and imperialist institutions such as marriage, the family, and the military, become sites of seeking inclusion rather than sites of radical queer protest.[53] As Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore so stringently points out, "Wilful participation in US imperialism is crucial to the larger goal of assimilation, as the holy trinity of marriage, military service and adoption has become the central preoccupation of a gay movement centered more on obtaining straight privilege than challenging power," crucially failing to understand that "assimilation *is* violence" and that "against the nightmare backdrop of assimilation, queers striving to live outside conventional norms become increasingly marginalized."[54]

The assimilationist goals of homonormativity, when absorbed into imperialism and nationalism, mean that homonationalism then "provides an alibi for the necropolitical violence perpetrated on racialized and sexualized others inside and outside of US borders."[55] Challenging the standard notion that "the nation is heteronormative and that the queer is inherently an outlaw to the nation state," Puar argues that, particularly notably in the post-9/11 US context, homonormativity in its collusions with nationalism demonstrate sharply how "the celebration of the queer liberal subject as bearer of privacy rights and economic freedom sanctions a regime of racialized surveillance, detention, and deportation."[56] The liberal discourse of individual rights conceals the selective granting and denying of rights, and assimilation promises tentative protection within the system without challenging any of the foundational inequalities that remain baked in or the simultaneous harm enacted as an extension of the same nationalist imperialist project.[57]

3.2 TRANS(HOMO)NATIONALISM: TRANSNORMATIVITY AS A FUNCTION OF COLONIALITY

For Puar, queer subjects are "normativized *through* their deviance (as it becomes surveilled, managed, studied) rather than despite it."[58] While homonormativity and homonationalism primarily emerge as an analytic for liberal gay and lesbian politics, trans subjects are far from exempt from the same capture. Tracing homonationalism as a development of homonormativity's capture for nationalistic goals can help provide an understanding of the ways in which transnormativity can also be subject to neoliberal assimilation into state aims. Puar extends the framework of homonationalism to argue for the emergence of a trans(homo)nationalism and processes of trans normativization, whereby rights and citizenship are conditional based on assimilation into gender normativity.[59] Assimilation provides for the marginalized a path to acceptance, but the underlying conditions of normativity rely on the simultaneous exclusion of the racialized other.

Trans of color subjects thus emerge as "biopolitical failures" who cannot and do not meet the conditions of normative integration into the national imaginary.[60] Drawing on Susan Stryker and Aren Z. Aizura's work on the "production of transgender whiteness,"[61] Puar extends the argument that trans of color subjects are incorporated into a broader process of value extraction from bodies of color. This makes clear that a liberal rights discourse is incapable of conceiving trans of color liberation and in fact reinforces their oppression, since the "inconceivability is a precondition to the emergence of the rights project, not to mention central to its deployment and successful integration into national legibility."[62] As Jin Haritaworn and C. Riley Snorton point out, the possibility of assimilation is not universally distributed, and transnormative inclusion is only possible when "those whose multiple vulnerabilities lend the moral panic its spectacularly violated bodies are continually reinscribed as degenerate and killable."[63] Transnormativity when channeled through state power (or transnationally through imperialism) appeals to neoliberal rights discourses while simultaneously demarcating trans of color subjects for pathologization and violence. The politics of viewing transnormativity as a function of coloniality allows for trans assimilationism to be understood as furthering the aims of neoliberal, racist, imperial states in Othering, exploiting, and enacting violence against racialized trans subjects.

4. AGAINST TRANS(HOMO)NATIONALISM: TOWARDS A DEMEDICALIZED, DEREGULATED, TRANS FUTURITY

Transnormativity, when channeled through state apparatuses as trans(homo)nationalism, promises acceptance, but only to those willing to capitulate to the "desire to be 'normal.'"[64] However, as Aizura argues, not only is this "normative social sphere" a fantasy, it is one that is "racially and culturally marked as Anglocentric, heteronormative, and capitalist."[65] The appeal of the fantasy goes beyond the desire for normative acceptance. Since the constructors of the fantasy are also those with the power of alternately bestowing and taking away rights, the hope of acceptance also comes with the goals of safety and protection. Trans of color critique and intervention is vital here specifically because of the racialized nature of this neoliberal fantasy peddled and sustained under the guise of acceptance. The politics of transnormativity "secure[s] citizenship for some trans bodies at the expense of others, while replicating many forms of racism, xenophobia, and class privilege."[66]

Separating ourselves from the state apparatus necessarily includes a separation from the medical industrial complex with which it colludes. As we discussed in Section II, there have been many critiques on the pathologization and medicalization of trans identity, often dissenting from the

claim that trans subjects should produce clearly articulated accounts of dysphoria in order to access gender-affirming care. These critiques are valuable and necessary, but we may find that they are perhaps too narrow for the scope that futurity requires. The material issues which trans people face in our current political conditions—those of job and home insecurity, improper designation on legal forms, unfair and dangerous treatment from insurance companies, etc.—certainly need to be addressed, but liberal stances on these issues cannot be our only solution. Even if the federal government mandates that hormone replacement therapy be free to any trans person seeking treatment (which is more of a fantasy than anything else), we are still faced with this issue of pathologization and medicalization; we are still burdened with the knowledge that the state is supporting the endeavor of assimilating the transsexual into normative society. We and many other queer theorists find the issue of assimilation to be very alarming, if only because assimilation seems to be the antithesis to queer politics altogether.[67] The problem remains that we have to find a way to make the world safer for transsexuality without diluting it into a politic of normative legibility. The "slipperiness of gender,"[68] as Spade called it, cannot reasonably be captured by any such politic, as the slipperiness describes an evasion of legibility itself. Given that transition is co-opted into a curative, progress-based temporality that serves the assimilationist nationalist agenda in this manner, we look towards trans theorizations of temporality in order to envision an anti-assimilationist queer trans futurity.

4.1 THEORIZING TRANS TEMPORALITIES, BUILDING TRANS FUTURES

Trans temporalities have been theorized in a number of ways; we examine how notions of linearity and futurity are developed within conceptualizations of trans time in order to articulate how temporalities of transition are involved in the deployment of racist, imperialist goals of trans(homo) nationalist projects, and then aim to articulate a vision for futurity grounded in a trans of color framework.

Laura Horak theorizes "hormone time," as it operates in transition vlogs on YouTube, as evidencing a "progressive temporality"[69] that mirrors heterosexual reproductive time in its linearity but wherein the goal is reappropriated away from reproduction and nation building towards building "expansive trans subjects and communities."[70] However, trans lives are "irreducible to the presupposed chronological progression from a 'terrible-present-in-the-wrong-body' to a 'better-future-in-the-right-body,'"[71] which is the normative narrative of transition. The temporality of transition relies deeply on factors of class, race, ability, citizenship, geography; a homogenous linear progressive narrative hence fails in that it "reifies and perpetuates hegemonic structures of power, producing privileged and subaltern trans subjects."[72] Therefore, recognizing that "the shape of most trans lives doesn't mimic the progressive teleological contours of such narratives," Hil Malatino offers an analysis and critique of Horak's conception of hormone time as a utopian formulation where "the future is always better than the present, a site of promise, deliverance."[73] While Horak's hormone time offers a useful framework for understanding how transition is temporalized within a particular context, it also highlights the operation of transnormativity at the level of temporality, in homogenizing a linear progressivism that functions as an "erasure of the lived temporality of particular trans lives."[74]

For Malatino, hormone time and other such ameliorative futural narratives of medicalized transition are suspect, in that they encourage "trans subjects to cathect hope for a more livable life to a for-profit medical industry that, too often, lacks empathy and sensitivity and treats trans subjects as a niche market rife for economic exploitation" and because "the politics of access to forms of medical transition . . . aren't significantly engaged, and those that experience compromised access are encouraged to understand this as tantamount to a foreclosed future."[75] In our analysis of how transnormativity gets taken up for nationalism and imperialism, these futural narratives additionally can be understood as attached to a nation's image of progressiveness. So trans subjects "cathect hope for a more livable life"[76] also to the promises of nationalist projects that stress the normativity of (implicitly white) trans subjects as a precondition for livability while non-normative and racialized trans subjects are written out of the rights agenda.

Our project seeks to ground itself in an understanding of temporality and futurity that draws from trans of color figurations, such as that of Jian Neo Chen and micha cárdenas, who understand transness as being "not about a crossing from one location to another but about a multidirectional movement in an open field of possibility" and thus as fluid rather than linear or teleological.[77] In fact, the latter conception is seen as evidence of "the dominant culture's diminishing of trans temporalities to the visible and calculable [which] attempts to regulate and assimilate trans experiences into the times and spaces of the state, society, and nation."[78] The racialization embedded within transnormative temporalities can be understood as a form of what Stryker calls "biopolitical racialization" wherein "biopower constitutes transgender as a category that it surveils, splits, and sorts in order to move some trans bodies toward emergent possibilities for transgender normativity and citizenship while consigning others to decreased chances for life."[79] The futural narratives of medicalized transition and its "emergent possibilities" are therefore ensconced both in the medical industry and the national imaginary. A trans of color figuration aims to resist the imperatives of normative gendering, requiring "the decolonial acknowledgment of the injustice of the present, which sees that present as emerging from a past colonial encounter and works for futures that will exist after racial capitalism's totalizing logics."[80]

In thinking with decolonial trans of color theorizations of temporality, one can develop a notion of futurity that does not capitulate to neoliberal co-optations. Brooklyn Leo's theorization of a "spiraling time of cocooning" shows how one can think of trans identity and transition beyond the individual and the linear:

> Tarrying inside this wound, I am faced with the task of building it anew with only the fabric of my

> body—what some might call "transitioning" . . . I do not walk this journey alone; rather I find myself joined at the flesh of my hips to others, to my ancestors, elders, lovers, queer friends, teachers, and strangers, to the summer-yellow-hornets who occasionally slip into the cracks of my bedroom screen door and the hornworms of my partner's wild medicine garden.[81]

In this temporal account, Leo sees transition as embedded within relationships that span generations, stretching back into the past and forward into the future.[82] Thus in Leo's account of cocooning, transition is seen not as an individual process of "self-transformation" but rather as "a radical recreating of a new world in which we can fly," such that it rejects wholesale the neoliberal co-optation of transition (understood as an individual linear process) into neoliberalism and imperialism.[83] Here, transition is understood in terms of Lugones's world-traveling, as a process of "creatively remak[ing] gender"[84] where "we world-travel in-between the histories of our Indigenous past, present, and future . . . rupturing the space of the cocoon and the worlds of sense that force Trans folks back into the violent categories of the coloniality of gender."[85] Trans identity is not abstracted from relations of care and interdependence with the world, nor is it separated from histories and processes of colonialism. Coloniality is understood as a structure predicated upon violence against trans people, and on framing them as primitive, backward, and thus without a future in (colonial) modernity.

Referring to the "trans-" prefix as a "spatial marker of possibility," Nael Bhanji argues that "it is also evocative of the *transgressions*, *transmogrifications*, and *transmutations* of established norms."[86] Trans futurity requires that we resist the power of gender normativity, particularly in its collusions with the colonial, racist, neoliberal state, as such complicity both expands the reach and power of the state and renders non-normative and racialized trans people particularly vulnerable. As Leo writes,

> A re-weaving of current relations unto decolonial possibilities requires one to not only interrogate their own positionality but to recognize the ancestral *raíces* which have sustained the ground one walks, especially when these roots solidify the knotted binds of other people's oppression.[87]

A decolonial trans of color framework centers coalitional politics as resistance against the normativizing forces of the imperial state, refusing to collude in a neo-colonial reinscription of Western dominance.

5. APPLYING THE TRANS OF COLOR FRAMEWORK

Trans(homo)nationalism extends and sustains colonial preoccupations with domination and control over those deemed deviant and "Other." As discussed in Section 1, colonial logics inscribe the violence of colonialism with the "benevolence" of bestowing upon the colonized modernity, progress, and thus, a future at all; the "primitive" colonized are brought towards this promised future through the systematic violence and destruction that characterizes the colonial project. The normative gendering processes are an extension of this relationship between the colonizer and the colonized; like Fanon's description of colonial racialization separating a subject from their independent personhood, colonial gendering involves similar dislocation. Colonial rhetoric insists on the position of cisnormative gender as the only natural, modern, and progressive expression, distinct from the unnatural (trans) non-normativity that is primarily articulated through a model of disease. It would follow, then, that individualized curative responses to (trans) non-normativity are merely colonially induced illusions of beneficiaries—i.e., medical assimilation is assumed to be the basis of trans safety and condition for survival, as non-normativity in any respect is deemed unnatural and dangerous. It should not be a surprise, then, that individual trans people take up medical assimilation with the hope of garnering sociopolitical security and longevity.[88] We find that pathologization is consistently peddled as a sustainable method of incorporating trans people into a functioning society, and so it is precisely the progress narrative that reproduces the violently medicalized logics of coloniality that allow trans(homo)nationalism to continue to operate in the West.

The state's projection of a national image of progressiveness thereby claims to benefit even those subjects who exist in the gendered margins. This projection is contested, however, when it becomes clear that the state does not grant rights categorically and unconditionally. Instead, liberal politics necessitate that trans people adhere to "white, middle class, able-bodied, heterosexual understandings of normative gendering" to be considered rights-bearing citizens.[89] It is only when a trans person fulfills these conditions that state rights are extended to the individual. When (trans) non-normativity is present in the public sphere, protections of the state falter given colonial prescriptions of danger upon visible oppositions to normative gender. It is imperative, then, that the normative gender narrative is not threatened by the presence of (trans) non-normativity; (trans) non-normativity must be assimilated into the public sphere in an effort to avoid a division of the colonial reality that naturalizes only those expressions that reasonably fit those white, middle class, able-bodied, heterosexual standards. Visible transness and euphoria are then lost, relegated to private expression that is incapable of effectively combating coloniality.

A trans of color framework is capable of articulating the colonial processes that intervene into these experiences of visibility and euphoria and of opposing assimilation through normativity. We can use a trans of color framework to understand how these processes are intertwined with (trans)homonationalism; it accounts for the way (trans)-homonationalism functions in cases of assimilation as a means of integrating subjects into a particular national imaginary. This national imaginary is, indeed, a colonial mythos: in cases where one's gender is intimately connected to a racial or cultural identity that is discounted under colonial realities, one can see the mythos interfering with individual accounts of gender and self. Akwaeke Emezi, when describing their complicated journey of accessing a gender-affirming hysterectomy, wrote:

> An *ogbanje* is an Igbo spirit that's born into a human body, a kind of malevolent trickster, whose goal is to torment the human mother by dying unexpectedly only to return in the next child and do it all over again. . . . The possibility that I was an *ogbanje* occurred to me around the same time I realized I was trans, but it took me a while to collide the two worlds. I suppressed the former for a few years because most of my education had been in the sciences and all of it was Westernized—it was difficult for me to consider an Igbo spiritual world equally, if not more valid. The legacy of colonialism had always taught us that such a world wasn't real, that it was nothing but juju and superstition. When I finally accepted its validity, I revisited what that could mean for my gender. Did *ogbanje* even have a gender to begin with? Gender is, after all, such a human thing.[90]

Without the trans of color framework, one might not be able to see how Emezi's own perception of self is affected both by normative gendering *and* colonial histories, but with such a framework one cannot help but see clearly that "transness and race are inextricably bound within the colonial project"[91] and that a project of trans liberation must see colonialism and the colonial/modern gender system as maintaining its dominance through the violent marginalization of trans people of color.

6. CONCLUSION

It is not possible for trans activism to advocate for liberation, let alone gain momentum in doing so, without taking on a decolonial politic. The possibilities for trans people to exist fully, freely, and without shame have been continually limited by models of white supremacy, pathology, and medicalization that permeate the very conceptions of trans identities. Many movements centering pro-trans politics have been unable to stipulate a means of liberation without appealing to the racialized, gendered colonial structures that work to isolate trans individuals as non-normative, perverse, or otherwise dangerous to a functioning society. The argument remains that no amount of assimilation of trans people into normative spaces can erase the effects of a colonial legacy upon racialized and gendered subjects; gender variance, gender freakiness, and outright gender fuckery cannot be eclipsed for the purpose of assimilation. A trans of color framework may be the *only* framework capable of actively resisting assimilation into the normativizing impulses of a state-medical apparatus steeped in coloniality. Indeed, moving towards a deregulated and expansive vision for trans futurity requires those "truly radical" politics that "seem to be located in [an] ability to create a space in opposition to dominant norms."[92] We find that this radical opposition and vision can be cultivated in the decolonial trans of color framework.

NOTES

1. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 112.
2. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 116. Emphasis original.
3. Quijano identifies this as the "coloniality of power."
4. Lugones,"Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 189.
5. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 188.
6. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System."
7. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 188.
8. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 187. Lugones later clarifies that her work builds off other feminists of color who have continued to explore the connection between race and gender, which she says has not been "sufficiently jointly explored" (188) by more mainstream decolonial thinkers.
9. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 189; Although this paper does not directly utilize Lugones's other intent of making "visible the crucial disruption of bonds of practical solidarity" (189) between men and women of color, it is worth noting that a good portion of her paper is concerned with addressing "the indifference that men… who have racialized as inferior, exhibit to the systematic violence inflicted upon women of color" (188). Unfortunately, an article of this length is not suited to adequately explore this aspect of Lugones's work.
10. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 195–96.
11. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System, "186.
12. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 195.
13. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 196.
14. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 192.
15. Paris, "Humanism's Secret Shadow," 82.
16. Paris, "Humanism's Secret Shadow," 82.
17. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 192.
18. Lugones clarifies that default modes of gender generally only refer to European men, excluding women of any category from default gendering practices.
19. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 192.
20. Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 192.
21. Adamson, "Beyond the Coloniality of Gender," 307.
22. Adamson, "Beyond the Coloniality of Gender," 301–02. Emphasis original.
23. Adamson, "Beyond the Coloniality of Gender," 304.
24. Lugones, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism," 744. Hortense Spillers's "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" articulates the ways in which denying the gendering as "man" or "woman" to enslaved black people operates within the dehumanization of enslavement.
25. Leo, "Colonial/Modern [Cis]Gender System," 455.
26. Leo, "Colonial/Modern [Cis]Gender System," 461.
27. Leo, "Colonial/Modern [Cis]Gender System," 467.
28. Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*, 2.
29. In "Extermination of the *Joyas*," Deborah Miranda explains that Spanish colonial forces, upon discovering third gender populations in California, reorganized their own gender structure to include a denomination solely associated with indigeneity. The *Joyas*, a title created by the Spanish, operated outside the realm of colonial notions of gender because of their status as not only racialized subjects but gendered as well.
30. Adamson, "Beyond the Coloniality of Gender," 307.

31. Adamson, "Beyond the Coloniality of Gender," 304.
32. Spade, "Resisting Medicine/Remodeling Gender," 24–25.
33. shuster, *Trans Medicine*, 24.
34. shuster, *Trans Medicine*, 31.
35. shuster, *Trans Medicine*, 36.
36. shuster, *Trans Medicine*, 44.
37. shuster, *Trans Medicine*, 40.
38. See Riggs et al., "Transnormativity in the Psy Disciplines"; Ruin, "Discussing Transnormativity through Transfeminisms."
39. shuster, *Trans Medicine*, 32.
40. Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back," 225.
41. Malatino, *Side Affects*, 25.
42. Malatino, *Side Affects*, 32.
43. Adamson, "Beyond the Coloniality of Gender," 312.
44. Lugones, "Heterosexism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," 195.
45. Adamson, "Beyond the Coloniality of Gender," 311.
46. Vipond, "Resisting Transnormativity," 32.
47. Vipond, "Resisting Transnormativity," 36.
48. Spade, "Resisting Medicine/Remodeling Gender," 24.
49. Spade, "Resisting Medicine/Remodeling Gender," 24.
50. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 2.
51. Duggan, "The New Homonormativity," 50. Cited in Currah, "Homonationalism, State Rationalities, and Sex Contradictions."
52. Duggan, "The New Homonormativity," 179.
53. Currah, "Homonationalism, State Rationalities, and Sex Contradictions."
54. Sycamore, *That's Revolting*, 1–5.
55. Currah, "Homonationalism, State Rationalities, and Sex Contradictions," 3.
56. Puar, "Rethinking Homonationalism," 336. For more on the relationship between post 9/11 security state and surveillance in relation to trans and gender non-conforming people, see Beauchamp, "Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility: Transgender Bodies and U.S. State Surveillance After 9/11" (2009), who argues that: "The monitoring of transgender and gender-nonconforming populations is inextricable from questions of national security and regulatory practices of the state, and state surveillance policies that may first appear unrelated to transgender people are in fact deeply rooted in the maintenance and enforcement of normatively gendered bodies, behaviors and identities" (356–57).
57. "A gay rights agenda fights for an end to discrimination in housing and employment, but not for the *provision* of housing or jobs; domestic partner health coverage, but not universal health coverage. Or, more recently, hospital visitation and inheritance rights for married couples, but not for anyone else. Even with the most obviously 'gay' issue, that of anti-queer violence, a gay rights agenda fights for tougher hate crimes legislation, instead of fighting the racism, classism, transphobia (and homophobia) intrinsic to the criminal 'justice' system" (Sycamore, *That's Revolting*, 2).
58. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xx. Emphasis added.
59. Puar, "Bodies with New Organs."
60. Puar, "Bodies with New Organs," 46.
61. Stryker and Aizura, "Introduction: Transgender Studies 2.0," 10.
62. Puar, "Bodies with New Organs," 46.
63. Haritaworn and Snorton, "Trans Necropolitics," 67.
64. Aizura, "Of Borders and Homes," 290.
65. Aizura, "Of Borders and Homes," 290.
66. Stryker and Aizura, "Introduction: Transgender Studies 2.0," 4.
67. Queer politics takes many forms, and there have been large, complicated disputes between queer theorists on what exactly queer theory should be. In "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," Cathy J. Cohen tells us that queer theory is rooted in postmodernism and should oppose the liberal, hegemonizing tendencies of earlier gay and lesbian studies and activism. For Cohen and for us, this means taking on a distinctly anti-assimilationist politic. See also Sycamore, *That's Revolting*, and Spade, "Resisting Medicine/Remodeling Gender."
68. Spade, "Resisting Medicine/Remodeling Gender," 23.
69. Horak, "Trans on YouTube," 579.
70. Horak, "Trans on YouTube," 581.
71. Fisher et al., "Introduction: Trans Temporalities," 2.
72. Fisher et al., "Introduction: Trans Temporalities," 4.
73. Malatino, *Side Affects*, 25–26.
74. Ruin, "Discussing Transnormativities through Transfeminism," 204.
75. Malatino, *Side Affects*, 27.
76. Malatino, *Side Affects*, 27.
77. Chen and cárdenas, "Times to Come," 473.
78. Chen and cárdenas, "Times to Come," 474.
79. Stryker, "Biopolitics," 41.
80. Chen and cárdenas, "Times to Come," 475.
81. Leo, "Colonial/Modern [Cis]Gender System," 468.
82. Leo ("Colonial/Modern [Cis]Gender System") draws on the work of Indigenous scholar Kyle Whyte to describe "intergenerational time—a perspective embedded in spiraling temporality (sense of time) in which it makes sense to consider ourselves as living alongside future and past relatives simultaneously as we walk through life" (Whyte, "Indigenous Science (Fiction) for the Anthropocene," 229, as cited in Leo, "Colonial/Modern [Cis] Gender System," 468).
83. Leo, "Colonial/Modern [Cis]Gender System," 455.
84. Leo, "Colonial/Modern [Cis]Gender System," 460.
85. Leo, "Colonial/Modern [Cis]Gender System," 470.
86. Bhanji, "Trans/scriptions," 521. Emphasis original.
87. Leo, "Colonial/Modern [Cis]Gender System," 459.
88. But, as we noted earlier, normativity is not achievable for most, if any, trans subjects (see Malatino, *Side Affects*).
89. Beauchamp, "Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility," 47.
90. Emezi, "Transition." Emphasis original.
91. Leo, "Colonial/Modern [Cis]Gender System," 455.
92. Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," 22.

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Trans Philosophy: A Tale of Two Futures

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I have been involved in trans philosophy as a gardener, trying to nurture it into being, as something that is not yet fully present, fully upon us, or fully here. I was involved in the first conference explicitly devoted to trans philosophy, held back in 2016 at the University of Oregon. In addition to organizing the roundtable on trans life in the profession, I spoke there of the cisnormative exclusions that constitute public space.[1] The meta resonance of my remarks was not lost on me. At the time, trans philosophy and trans philosophers were, by and large, constitutively excluded from philosophy, jettisoned as wasted thoughts, wasted energies, and an embarrassment to clean thinking, best shuttled away out of the everyday life of philosophy as a discipline. What would it mean for gender non-conformity, and a philosophy accountable to it, to take up space in the heart of philosophy itself? As a retrospective on the conference, I wrote an APA blog post making recommendations for the inclusion (a frame I now find quite limiting) of trans philosophy and trans philosophers in the field.[2] To my knowledge, this is the first time that the phrase "trans philosophy," as currently understood, was used in publication.[3]

Then and since, I did not spend much time thinking about trans philosophy's future (or futures), only about securing its presence. I turned to work co-initiating and supporting the Thinking Trans // Trans Thinking Conference and the Trans Philosophy Project. I set pen to paper to help expand the legibility of trans philosophy as an enterprise, especially to enhance the legitimacy of junior scholars working in the area. These efforts included a *Stanford Encyclopedia* entry on "Trans Philosophy" and the first collection of *Trans Philosophy*.[4] In addition to the work of the present, I also became obsessed with trans philosophy's pasts, excavating the early years and early commitments of trans philosophizing in the US.[5] I wrote my own book of trans philosophy: *How We Make Each Other: Trans Life at the Edge of the University*, and I just finished another, which offers a critical history of the term *cisgender*—a term generated and theorized by trans people, including trans philosophers, over the last three decades. These are the records of a gardener, however, not a seer.

I *still* have not thought much about trans philosophy's future(s). To have a future, one must already have a present and a past. In building trans philosophy's present and excavating trans philosophy's past, trans philosophy's future has, for me at least, gone underthought. I welcome the opportunity of this special issue to pause and to reflect.

From where we are, where are we going (or where could we be going)? If we shifted our weight on our feet (or in our knees, our hips, or our shoulders) could we end up somewhere else? And what is desirable here—on what grounds and for whom? What I will propose in the following pages is that, in chiseling out the figure of trans philosophy, we are already at risk of having chiseled away what I take to be one of its constitutive elements: accountability to and in trans community. I argue that *for the sake of its future, trans philosophy must be (re)rooted in trans sociality*.

1. HEWING STONE

There are many ways to tell the story of trans philosophy coming into its own. One could start with the moment the term *trans philosophy* was spoken or appeared in print; or one could start with the philosophizing that self-described "trans" people have been doing for decades; or one could start well before (and importantly beyond) the use of the term *trans* at all. One could start with the material practices and social structures agglomerating around the term *trans philosophy* (e.g., conferences, publications, outreach initiatives, etc.); or one could start with the academic conditions that enabled trans people to survive in higher education long enough to initiate a new subfield (e.g., feminism, LGBT studies, DEI efforts, etc.); or one could start with the emergent conditions of trans wisdom (and the love of it) that are developed and sustained outside the university (e.g., activism, care circles, survival tactics, etc.). It matters how the story gets told—and where it starts. I am invested in all of these ways of telling the story, especially those ways that upset our already underthought attachments to trans and to philosophy as well as to the West and to the university. "Trans philosophy" is not only an academic formation, nor is it purely a liberatory one.

Today, however, I would like to trace the story of *trans philosophy* not by way of discourse or material conditions, but rather by way of feeling. I want to begin with the feelings of frustration and of anger. Back in the mid-1990s, the atmosphere was saturated with non-trans academics and medical professionals theorizing, diagnosing, and treating trans people. People with positions and power—people produced by and often sustained by higher education—took trans people as their objects of study and made lucrative careers out of us. Trans folks were fed up. In this moment, frustration was a trans public feeling.[6] Over and over again, we were pathologized; over and over again, we were silenced. Hale's "Suggested Rules for Non-Transsexuals Writing about Transsexuals, Transsexuality, Transsexualism, or Trans__" was a product of this moment.[7] He wrote from a deeply communal space of activism, sex radicalism, and personal friendships, and he wrote against those who knew nothing of that space: he names people from Harvard, Yale, UCLA, Penn State, and UMass Amherst. Posted and reposted to listservs and websites, his rules caught like wildfire.

An artifact of trans community, the rules were also a trans philosophy artifact. Hale was a pre-tenure philosophy professor at California State University, Northridge. Two of his four primary interlocutors for the piece were philosophy professors, too. The contribution of the "Rules," moreover, is a philosophical one: trans lives cannot be understood on non-trans terms, for non-trans ends. Trans knowledge is built in and sustained by trans community, and any who would taste of this knowledge must "travel in our trans worlds."[8] All else is folly. Hale directs his injunctions explicitly to non-trans people: *Practice humility. Don't objectify, fetishize, and subjectivize us or what we think, say, or do. Don't totalize us. Don't assume our lives are mere suffering or an impossibility. We live them; hence, they are livable. If we engage with you, it is a gift; take it as such*. In his prefatory remarks, however, he writes that many of the rules also apply "to trans-folk writing across trans-trans differences."[9] The wisdom, in that case, would be the same. Trans knowledges are built in trans communities. If you would speak of a trans experience that is not your own, learn to travel in that world and honor those who walk that path.

Years, even decades, followed. Viviane Namaste published her important essay insisting trans people no longer be objects of feminist theory but be made participants in the theorization process.[10] More strongly, Susan Stryker argued, in her introduction to the first *Transgender Studies Reader*, that trans people do not need to be included in a pre-existing knowledge production process; they are already trans knowers and already stewards of trans knowledge.[11] Blas Radi argued that whatever trans knowledge produces, it is never simply a critique of non-trans knowledge; rather, we make creative contributions in our own right.[12] Betwixt and between these landmark essays, a growing chorus of voices insisted that trans people have theoretical insights into classical philosophical questions about the nature of embodiment, knowledge, personal identity, metaphysics, politics, and history. A growing coterie also argued that the project of desubjugating trans knowledges and trans people cannot be divorced from efforts to dismantle settler-colonialism, racism, ableism, and class politics. Our (trans) theoretical insights into philosophical questions, however, were not yet called "trans philosophy."

Enter the first trans philosophy conference in the US and a return to feeling. As Megan Burke, one of the organizers, recalls, the word "f*ck" was everywhere over those three fateful days in May 2016.[13] "F*ck this" and "f*ck that." "F*ck philosophy" and "f*ck the world," but also "we're f*cking doing philosophy" and "we're f*cking building worlds." "It was a real mood," as Burke puts it. As one of the keynotes, alongside C. Riley Snorton, Talia Bettcher galvanized that mood by offering the preliminary remarks for what would become her field-defining 2019 essay "What Is Trans Philosophy?"[14] From that stage and the later essay, she argued that, while philosophy begins with a cultivated perplexity about a world that philosophical questions make strange, trans philosophy begins in a natural perplexity about an already strange world that prompts philosophical questions. Perplexity is a cognitive affect. It is typically defined as a state of feeling confused or bewildered, a state in which one becomes anxious or frustrated by not understanding something. Perplexity is a trans public feeling, Bettcher implies, a feeling shared across trans people in a transphobic world. It is a "WTF" feeling. As such, trans philosophy does not start with engaging in traditional philosophical literature to prompt traditional philosophical questions. It starts on the ground, with trans consternations

and the philosophical perplexity of trans people. But it is also more than this.

For Bettcher, trans philosophy starts not only on the ground but on specific grounds:

> Trans philosophy needs to proceed from pretheoretical sociality among trans people—whatever form that takes—standing in a relation of resistance to the prevailing mainstream world of WTF. [. . .] It's culturally, geographically, and temporally indexed. I write from my own personal experiences in various Los Angeles trans subcultures from around the mid-1990s to the present.[15]

It is trans subcultures in LA, "discursive and nondiscursive practices," that inform Bettcher's philosophical questions and intuitions.[16] "Alternative socialites are required" for trans philosophy, she baldly asserts, as the *pretheoretical* ground.[17] A trans philosophizing that strays increasingly far from trans socialities and trans subcultures "through repeated iterations of literature engagement alone" has a higher likelihood of obfuscating rather than illuminating trans life.[18] This is not to say we should be blasé about which literatures we engage with and the hard work of "literature travel," she is quick to acknowledge, but it is to say that literature engagement is neither a sufficient nor a primary means of generating trans philosophy.[19] Invoking María Lugones's conception of worlds and world-traveling, Bettcher concludes that the question of "How one lives one's life, with whom one develops bonds of sociality and intimacy, becomes an integral component of [trans] philosophical methodology."[20]

To my knowledge, Hale's "Rules" was the first philosophical piece by a trans philosopher, in the US, to receive wide uptake in academic and non-academic circles. Bettcher's "What Is Trans Philosophy?" was the first piece, written by a trans philosopher, in the US, to name and theorize "trans philosophy" as a unique philosophical subfield and practice. As such, the two offer an orienting constellation for at least one strand of trans philosophy. Crucially, Hale and Bettcher are longtime friends. They are part of the LA trans scene together and have engaged in trans activism, sex radicalism, and community building there for decades. They move in each other's worlds, sharing feelings of frustration, anger, perplexity, and urgency, and they philosophize from there. Whatever trans philosophy is and whatever its futures, these figures from its past and present insist that trans philosophy be rooted in trans sociality—especially in non-academic trans subcultures, discursive and non-discursive trans practices, and the on-the-ground resistance of trans life.

2. CHISELING OUT THE SHAPE

That might be how it started, but how is it going? I was surprised recently to attend several talks, panels, and colloquia purportedly dedicated to "trans philosophy" but where non-trans and trans people alike made non-accountable, totalizing claims about trans experience. I have reviewed paper after paper, written by trans and non-trans people alike, that continue to make claims about trans lives and propose theoretical innovations with respect to them without demonstrable knowledge of relevant trans literatures, histories, or communities. Good, well-meaning trans and non-trans people are writing things because they sound philosophical, rather than because they are sound trans philosophy. They write things on traditional philosophical terms to make traditional philosophical sense without attending to where their arguments come from or what they might do to actual trans people.[21] Interpreted generously, perhaps these efforts are so focused on contending with cisnormativity that they think their way out of trans community.

I worry that in chiseling out trans philosophy in these ways, we are actively chiseling away one essential element of the trans philosophical project: trans sociality. Indeed, I worry that as we press into trans philosophy's future, the first thing to get cut is our ties. But, the reader might object, that is probably only true of people doing trans philosophy badly. What about the careful philosophers who are producing trans accountable work that argues for trans accountability? Here, too, I find an implicit move away from trans sociality as a bedrock of trans philosophizing. Specifically, I find calls to read trans philosophers and heed first-person accounts of trans experience, but in the absence of accountability to trans communities and their many non-verbal, extra-textual cultural elements. Let me give a few concrete examples. I take, as my inroad, trans philosophers' theorizations of cisnormativity and their commensurate calls to trans accountability.

In "Cisgender Commonsense and Philosophy's Gender Trouble," Robin Dembroff diagnoses why philosophy is so hellbent on making pronouncements about transgender life while being dismissive of what trans people actually say.[22] It all has to do with philosophy's "cisgender commonsense," which is buoyed by a singular commitment: "Don't read—just think." Such an injunction to think drives "cisgender" philosophers back to their own intuitions about gender. No wonder, then, that their work gets off base so quickly! In response, Dembroff implicitly urges, "Go read!" Be informed about the literature produced by "trans studies and trans voices" and make your philosophical pronouncements from there.[23] Strangely, however, Dembroff's own citations to trans voices are quite limited. They cite a personal communication with Stephanie Kapusta, a public letter they wrote with Susan Stryker and Quill Kukla, and two blog posts (only one of which they engage) by Talia Bettcher and Samantha Hancox-Li, respectively. With the incredible breadth of trans philosophizing and trans theorizing available, especially on this very topic of non-trans people pontificating about trans people, Dembroff's choice is a strange one. It suggests that while "cis" philosophers ought to read work by trans people, we as trans philosophers need not read each other and we certainly need not do more than read. It is enough to be trans and to reason from there.

In "Cis Sense and the Habit of Gender Assignment," Megan Burke extends Dembroff's analysis of cis commonsense from the context of analytic philosophy to the world.[24] Utilizing classical phenomenological literature and methods, Burke argues that if "cisgender commonsense" is "the how of academic philosophy," by which cisnormative

intuitions always win the day, then "cis sense" is "the how of everyday perception," by which cisnormative gender ascriptions win the day.[25] In a world of cis sense, it matters not what "my sense" of my gender is; my gender is whatever cis sense accords me. My sense is nonsense. Cis sense "undermines if not entirely diminishes the meaning 'I' make, or might want to make, of myself."[26] Within trans contexts, however, a "trans sense" reigns that "hold[s] open" the opportunity for "me" to make sense of myself.[27] In contrast to the citation politics of Dembroff's essay, Burke cites multiple papers by trans and nonbinary theorists (e.g., Bettcher, Butler, Malatino, and Spade), including papers that theorize cisness (e.g., Ansara, Dembroff, and Enke). It is not, however, to reading that Burke calls us. It is to the self-determinative rights of the "I" and the "me." Again, it seems, it is enough to be trans and to build my gender and my gender thoughts from there.[28]

Non-trans philosophers have reiterated these calls to trans texts and trans intuitions. In "Becoming Cisgender," Louise Richardson-Self argues for the necessity of non-trans people not only acknowledging their cis status but "becoming cis," embracing what it means for their political resistance practice.[29] It is cis people's responsibility to reject their own "privileged recognitive failure," by which they see themselves as men or women rather than cis men or cis women.[30] They ought instead to adopt "cis" as an "epistemic resource" for reckoning with power structures and begin the work of undoing them.[31] Such "self-recognition," however, must "be paired with apprenticeship to trans texts," Richardson-Self argues.[32] Indeed "an active apprenticeship to the texts of trans folks" is "obligatory" for cis people.[33] The goal of apprenticeship is to gain "substantive, rich understanding" of cisgender status, cisnormativity, and trans resistance.[34] Richardson-Self explicitly situates her appeal to trans texts with a reference to Dembroff's call to read. For her, however, light reading is not enough; the trans texts that cisgender people read and the epistemic authority of those who write them need to sink into their bones.

Granting philosophy's gender trouble, the rise of gender-critical feminists, and political disputes over trans lives, Kate Manne, in a recent essay for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, similarly makes a case that trans philosophers be read.[35] The primary reason that they should be read, however, is not because readers need to have their cisnormative assumptions corrected or their cis privilege illuminated (although that will happen as a byproduct), but because trans philosophy is a helpful tool to address our current moment of trans panic. It is a prime example of philosophy mattering, Manne argues. The resources of trans philosophy, however, are going unrecognized and unplumbed. "I worry that if we go on as we have before," Manne muses, "we will end up with a discipline and even a world in which there will be fewer and fewer trans thinkers to learn from."[36] After engaging with Bettcher's work and then naming thirty other trans philosophers and theorists (Dembroff first among them), Manne closes her essay with three simple words: "Go read them."[37] Manne thus models precisely what circulates, in the academy, as best practice in trans accountability: Read.

It is a model of best practice I have used and endorsed. In that APA blog post after the first US trans philosophy conference, before enjoining privileged trans philosophers, university administrators, and non-trans allies to use their power to effect trans inclusion in the field (a framing I now find incomplete and patronizing), I cited work by Bettcher, Veronica Ivy, Loren Cannon, Dembroff, and C. Riley Snorton, all academics. I concluded, "The future of trans philosophy lies in doing, as much as in engaging with, work like this:" i.e., philosophical work on trans issues by trans philosophers and theorists.[38] Then as now, I too believe that trans philosophy and trans accountable philosophy must engage with scholarly literature produced by trans people and grapple with first-person accounts of trans life. But this is not all I have come to believe.

I mean to put this starkly: as trans academics, we are not born into a scholarly politics that has trans justice at its heart simply by virtue of being trans ourselves. That must be learned, and it must be sought as an always unfinished project. I started reading trans histories, doing trans oral histories, going to trans support groups, participating in peer-to-peer trans counseling, and socializing with local trans organizations. I got to know more trans academics (students, staff, and faculty) and I acquired trans family and friends. I studied trans autobiographies.[39] Working closely with trans and non-trans collaborators, I came face to face with the white, US-centric, and sane and able-bodyminded assumptions I had about trans thought and trans experience. I stared repeatedly into the dizzying preference academics have for theory done by other academics, rather than by people on the ground. And I became saturated with the bigness of trans and non-trans gender disruptive life, especially outside of those professional academic publishing circuits. I could not shake the wisdom I found there, nor the complexity that would rebuff any simplistic appeals to philosophical clarity, universal truth, or definitive definition.

I realized something. I do not want to live in a world of philosophy, or of trans philosophy, that is accountable merely to trans philosophers or trans academics who have written some things. A small coterie of well-educated people trained to take their own thoughts more seriously than others. I have heard more times than I can count philosophers—including trans philosophers—opining about their superior ability to illuminate the messy world of everyday people. I do not want a trans philosophy that assumes the superiority of the written word ("texts") and the primacy of the individual subject ("I") who avows thus-and-so. This is not a future I want. Nor do I want a trans accountability that is, in practice, an accountability to a handful or two of academics who happen to be trans and who may very well write without accountability to their own or other trans communities (if they even have them). I do not want a trans accountability that assumes the "trans ordinary" is the ordinary life of choice few trans academics—or that there is a geographically, temporally, and culturally universal trans ordinary at all.[40] I also do not want a culture of trans accountability or of trans philosophy that supervenes on a popularity game, where a handful of "big names" are cultivated (and vied for) via professional circles and social media as the voice of trans or of trans

philosophy (e.g., Bettcher, Dembroff, etc.), instead of each and every one of us aspiring to be listeners of trans and non-trans gender disruptive voices.

I want a different future for trans philosophy. One that does not replicate, in its constitution, some of the very same structures that subjugate trans knowledges in the first place.

3. SAVING THE CHIPS

We are well past the moment of hewing stone. *Trans philosophy* is a recognized (if sometimes derided) term. People across multiple continents refer to themselves and others as trans philosophers doing trans philosophy. Conferences, colloquia, courses, and class modules, not to mention articles and books, proliferate under its name. We are now in the moment of chiseling out what trans philosophy is and will be. As I have argued, one of the things that is being chiseled away, in that process of chiseling out, is the rootedness of trans philosophy in trans sociality. Trans philosophy is actively becoming a project among trans and non-trans academics that, much like traditional philosophy, functions primarily via textual argumentation and individual intuition. Its accountability is, if we are lucky, to the intuition, reason, and literature of a few trans philosophers and theorists. It is at this moment that I find myself wanting to hit the brakes. Push pause. Run around saving the chips.

What does it mean to (re)root trans philosophy in trans sociality? It means, in Bettcher's terms, to take the discursive and nondiscursive *pretheoretical* practices of trans subcultures as the ground of philosophizing. From Hale's perspective, it means philosophizing in and with those already *theorizing* in trans subcultural spaces. Non-academic Dexter D. Fogt was one of Hale's interlocutors for the "Rules."[41] As "litter mates," the two started transition together and worked through a lot together. That working through involved talk—conversations spoken and written, in real life and across changing social media platforms. But it also involved activity. They frequented gay bars, drag clubs, queer core clubs, marches, protests, and so forth together. They even made a cameo in a short film about bathroom cruising at UCLA.[42] Hale's philosophical insights are learned from and built with those who engaged with him in these discursive and non-discursive practices, these collectively crafted spaces of trans language and trans embodiment. But Hale and Bettcher are not the only ones to point to here.

I want to tell two stories of trans philosophy's rootedness in discursive and non-discursive trans subcultural practices, and I want to grant in advance the theoretical vibrancy of those practices. Let me begin with the latter. In 2019, Susan Stryker keynoted the annual conference of the second largest philosophy organization in the US: the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP). Stryker titled her address, "How Being Trans Made Me a Philosopher!" To a who's who crowd of continental and pluralist philosophers, seated in the Pittsburgh Marriott's Grand Ballroom, she cited Gaston Bachelard, Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze, Sigmund Freud, Elizabeth Grosz, Luce Irigaray, Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, and Plato—a perfect SPEP lineup. As one of the precious few trans philosophers in the audience, I was proud to see a trans studies heavyweight at the front. Stryker focused her remarks on trans history, as one might expect, but also on the San Francisco sex dungeons she frequented in the 1990s.[43] Her descriptions were frankly explicit. I could feel collared necks reddening around me, and I felt a certain embarrassment. Her remarks were offered "in the spirit of 'pornosophy' [. . .] the militant insistence on an epistemic parity between the disparate knowledges of the scientist, the philosopher, and the whore—and as a refusal to discredit what our own carnality can teach us."[44] Trans life far exceeds academic etiquette. As such, trans philosophy must be—militantly—an impure mixture of epistemic resources, methodological techniques, orienting values, and presuppositions.

How did being trans make Stryker a philosopher? She did not become a trans philosopher by merely "identifying" as trans and philosophizing from there, or musing over her trans intuitions, or putting her trans life through the sieve of traditional philosophical methods or literatures. Rather, she became a trans philosopher by participating in queer and trans BDSM spaces, where the author of the trans self and of trans thought dissolves into dungeon intimacies. Pain and pleasure. Rhythm and ritual. Role substitution across continuous play scenes. There is not a who here; there is a making. She writes:

> S/M had become for me [. . .] a technology for the production of (trans)gendered embodiment, a mechanism for dismembering and disarticulating received patterns of identification, affect, sensation, and appearance, and for configuring, coordinating, and remapping them in bodily space. [. . .] Transsexual masochism affords me a glimpse of non-unique revolutionary potentials [. . .], demonstrating how body modification can become a site of social transformation, proving that the real can be materialized differently than it now is or once was.[45]

For Stryker, the "poesis" of dungeon space holds the transformative power to remake body and world together, transing the existing configurations of each.[46] Witnessing and physically participating in this subcultural scene, as world-theorizing and world-changing, is the foundation of Stryker's trans philosophizing.

But now let me tell the second story, this time of trans philosophy's rootedness in discursive trans subcultural practices. On September 9–10, 2015, Judith Butler joined host and queer theorist Richard Miskolci to offer the Queer Seminar I in São Paulo, Brazil. Purportedly concerned with subversive identities, the seminar centered in part on trans and travesti lives. Seminar leaders were reportedly cis, white, middle class, and university educated. Not one was trans or travesti. Public attendees, a cohort of whom were trans and travesti theorists and activists, from in and outside the academy, "bitingly renamed" the event the "Queer Cisminar," Argentine trans philosopher Blas Radi recalls.[47] "*Cisminar* [*cisminario*]" was a linguistic innovation, a moment of creative epistemological contribution.

According to local lesbian transfeminist bloggers Aylín and Irassema, the term *cisminar* names:

> a specialized technical or academic gathering of cis people who are also cissexists, which tries to develop an in-depth study of trans issues without including real-life trans people or by masquerading them to fit their theories, ignoring and erasing their life experiences. Its motto could well be, "my theories are more important than your experiences."[48]

When pressed, Butler and Miskolci reportedly both doubted the capacity of "cisness" to describe queer people.[49] Miskolci also doubted whether trans people have the theoretical vocabulary to participate in theorizing their own experiences.[50]

Needless to say, the event created a stir. Perhaps most striking in the fallout are the repeated injunctions to abandon traditional academic venues and instead return to and build alternative poetic spaces and socialities. Reporting on the incident, *Blogueiras Negras* author Thayz Athayde writes, "Let us not be afraid of this other place we can build. May we not be afraid to leave a hegemonic, sanitized place, in addition to recognizing our own privileges. May we build subordinate places, knowledge and vocabularies."[51] Radi, who confronted Butler himself, similarly admits to a deep frustration with the cisminar and with academic cisnormativity. He invites trans and travesti people to pivot elsewhere.

> For my part, I cannot call to break an alliance [between trans/travesti people and feminist/queer theorists] that does not exist. I do invite trans people and those who intend to examine and transform academic inquiry and/or investigate and renew the mechanisms for building local political agendas, to vacate these spaces and build from another place.[52]

Trans communities are always at the philosophical work of illuminating their own lives. As an exemplary instance, the term *cisminar* critiques worlds that continue to capitalize on trans topics but exclude trans knowledges, trans people, and trans subcultures. *Cisminar*, however, does more than diagnose the system that refuses us; it also refuses that system's grasp on our imaginations and our tongues and our enfleshed presence. Some enterprises deserve to be abandoned. Academia will sometimes be one.

In arguing that trans philosophy be rooted in trans sociality, I take Hale, Bettcher, Stryker, and Radi as (some of) my guideposts. I do not mean to suggest that trans philosophy is best rooted in trans philosophers hanging out at APA conference bars, nor that trans philosophy is best evidenced when trans philosophers, especially in elite circles, cite (and overcite) each other's work. I mean something harder, riskier, less philosophically and professionally palatable. Rooting trans philosophy in trans sociality involves taking discursive and non-discursive practices of trans subcultures—and, indeed, the alternative poesis and theorizing they already generate—as the grounds of collective thought. I am under no illusions here. Doing philosophical work grounded in trans sociality, which by and large exists outside the academy, will necessarily involve, at least for trans philosophers situated within the academy, failing certain philosophical norms and leaving certain philosophical spaces. It will require being an embarrassment and sometimes an exile.[53] I insist on this because the *trans* in trans philosophy has to point to something more robust than academic philosophers who happen to be trans, thinking their philosophical thoughts in their cozy classrooms and offices. It is time we pivot from insisting non-trans people be accountable to us and begin reckoning with the contours of our own accountability.

4. FOR THE FUTURE'S SAKE (FFS)

I take trans philosophizing, as a project, to already be occurring in and outside of the academy. Trans philosophy within the academy, like any other philosophical subfield dedicated to a marginalized group (e.g., feminist philosophy, queer philosophy, Africana philosophy, Indigenous philosophy, Latinx philosophy, philosophy of disability, etc.), risks reinstituting methods and perspectives from traditional academic philosophy that, by its better lights, it would resist. The replication of dominant frameworks is especially likely during this moment in which trans philosophy, even if only in small ways, is being institutionalized. Co-optation is to be expected in the university, where dominant modes of analysis quickly assimilate new knowledge sources.[54] Getting folded in means getting your teeth filed down—or never growing them. Reflecting on the "unavoidable tendency of subaltern counter-knowledges to wind up co-opted by and/or confirming the leading ways of knowing," Otto Maduro enjoins members of subaltern communities to cultivate a fundamental epistemic humility with respect to their own discourses.[55] In chiseling out what trans philosophy is and will be, there is reason to take stock of what is being smuggled in, despite our better judgment and our best intentions.

It is in the spirit of epistemic humility that I offer, then, a tale of two cities. Of two pills. Of two futures. There is a future of trans philosophy before us, one toward which we are fast hurtling. Such a future

1. Reiterates the centrality of academic attention.
2. Insists upon the individual as the primary source of meaning and value.
3. Reinscribes the dominance of the written word.
4. Maintains the primacy of agonistic argument and assertions of "my account."
5. Separates the thinker from the social context in which they become capable of thinking.
6. Demands but disavows the continued (inter) dependencies of that thinker.

Sure, such a trans philosophy is led by professional trans philosophers and concerned with trans issues, but its epistemological commitments and methodological styles

do little to disturb traditional philosophical ones. It, too, will privilege the I's intuitions and textual argumentation over and against accountable social practice and collective conversation. It, too, will be bedeviled by small circles of elite university leadership. We have every reason to believe that such a trans philosophy will get uptake in academic philosophy as a viable, if marginal, subfield and will even be used, at times, to prove philosophy's liberalism and assuage "cis" guilt.

There is another future of trans philosophy before us, one toward which we would need to pivot if it is to mark anything other than trans philosophy's own margins. Those involved in that future would

1. Write, speak, and create from non-academic contexts and deep intimacies.

2. Centralize concepts and practices used, theorized, and contested in trans communities.

3. Honor non-verbal, non-written expression and experimentation as forms of theorizing.

4. Cultivate a listening practice and distill collective wisdom.

5. Tether themselves to the alternative socialities from and for which they query.

6. Focus on their own (trans) accountability to their own and other (trans) communities.

Such a trans philosophy will be led by trans and non-trans gender-disruptive philosophers and theorists, in and outside the academy, concerned with issues relevant to their communities and who, across continents, philosophize as part of and collaboratively with those communities.[56] As such, it will be a kind of "public philosophy" that bears none of the patronizing and saviorist assumptions that term can so often imply, nor its presumption of university-centered outreach. We have every reason to believe that such a trans philosophy will have difficulty making inroads in professional philosophy. It is unlikely to be well received. Indeed, at specific junctures of epistemological methods and theoretical content, it will be an embarrassment. In this future, trans philosophy does not serve the emperor, but rather breaks the water pitcher and may look, from a long way off, like flies.[57]

This story of two futures dramatizes two possible relationships to traditional philosophy. As practiced, traditional philosophy insists upon the primacy of the academy, the written word, and the singular individual. Such an insistence is, however, a historical contingency. Across history, philosophizing has occurred, by turns, quite outside of the university (which dates to the ninth century), apart from the written word, and without final attachment to a singular individual; and it has been practiced through engagement with everyday conversations, theater, music, literature, religion, and other cultural practices and artifacts, not to mention scientific data. While there is a future in which trans philosophy doubles down on these three professional norms (i.e., academy, text, individual), there is another future in which trans philosophy, precisely because it stems from and is accountable to trans subcultures, resists them. This second sort of trans philosophy takes, as fundamental to its project, the everyday, the non-written, the nonverbal, the relational, and the collective. It takes these things as a ground upon which it germinates as much as a ground to which it accountably returns.

To be clear, the non-academic, the social, and the relational are not, in themselves, fail-safes or godsends. But they are, nevertheless, essential to trans philosophy and its ground. Of course, there remain open questions as to the nature of trans sociality that, if we are to turn in this direction, we will need to ask (if not finally answer): What distinguishes the alternative sociality of trans subcultures and, for that matter, of non-trans gender-disruptive subcultures? In what ways are trans asocialities constitutive of trans socialities?[58] What are the roles of physical and virtual space in the constitution of trans socialities? What is the role of embodiment (and its disintegration) in them? Do alternative socialities include present and past participants? In what ways do our ancestors figure into them? Are fictive members of alternative socialities as legitimate as non-fictive ones? What is the role of artistic expression in not only cultivating but constituting trans and non-trans gender disruptive subcultures? I could go on. As important as such "what is" questions are, however, I find there is another, still more urgent, set: the "how" questions.

5. EXPANDING METHODS AND MATERIALS

In "What Is Trans Philosophy?" Bettcher argues that philosophy is guided by empiricism—not in the simplistic sense of social science data collection and analysis, but in a simpliciter sense of each philosopher's own "worldly engagement" with their surroundings.[59]

> We eat, read, sleep. We walk around. We talk to people. Perhaps we buy milk. We live in some everyday, and we possess a worldly perception that I take to include not only our lived experiences, but also our knowledge of local common sense, as well as familiarity with the social practices that shape experiences and in which "common sense" inheres.[60]

Trans philosophy for her, too, is guided by empiricism. Because trans folks live in a WTF world, however, they have an "alternative worldly perception" and an "alternative form of the social."[61] Trans philosophy is grounded in those alternative perceptions and social experiences. If I can offer an oversimplification of the trans philosophical process, for Bettcher, it would be this: Be a (trans) philosopher worldly engaged in the discursive and nondiscursive pretheoretical practices of trans subcultures and then "think really hard."[62] It is enough to be a (trans) philosopher, in a trans subculture, and theorize from there.

For me, Bettcher's characterization still insufficiently roots trans philosophy in trans sociality. For her, trans philosophy is a scholarly practice grounded in the trans ordinary. When she speaks of trans philosophers—or philosophers in general—here, they are such by virtue of their standing in the

academy. If, in the nascent discussion of trans philosophy today, a thin sense of accountability to trans philosophers and their texts is commonly mobilized, Bettcher calls for a thicker sense of academic accountability to non-academic trans worlds of sense. I want to press for a still thicker sense of accountability, however, to the people and materials that sustain those worlds and the philosophizing already happening there. For me, trans philosophy is not simply the practice of an academic philosopher, who happens to be trans, wading into trans subcultural spaces, making some observations, and then retreating into their head to produce theory. It is not the practice of simply applying their expertise in critical history, argument structure, textual analysis, intuition-pumping, and thought experiments to the trans forms of life around them and their own. Trans philosophy is already happening in and must grow from the materials and the people that constitute trans subcultural worlds *and* must do so accountably.

How does someone, in or outside the academy, philosophize from those materials and those people? Trans communities are and have been kept out of traditional educational spaces—and certainly from the professoriate—for multiple decades and across the globe. As such, their substance lies well outside of academic texts and (highly educated) intuitions. If we are to philosophize from and in these spaces, we do and will find ourselves using words we have heard in friendship, reflections that circulate by word of mouth in trans huddles, stories we have stumbled upon in autobiography, anecdotes from clinical settings, and shared scenes of physicality (á la Stryker). Likewise, we do and will find ourselves using trans commentary on various social media sites, trans photos on Tumblr, notes on trans fashion choices, paraphernalia from trans organizing, and historical records of trans resistance. There are ideas—trans philosophical ideas—in all of these places. This is not merely "pretheoretical" fodder for the academic trans philosopher to work with. Crucially, *we do not automatically intuit appropriate methods for the (ethical) use of these materials by being either trans or a philosopher, in or outside the academy*. It is the conceit of traditional philosophy that all epistemic resources are available for untutored philosophical reflection. Trans philosophy needs to be more accountable than that. We need to learn *how* to accountably use those words, experiences, stories, anecdotes, reflections, and scenes we encounter or participate in. We need to learn *how* to accountably engage with those commentaries, photos, clothes, paraphernalia, records, and shared memories. Trans philosophy requires a consciously developed suite of philosophical methods for thinking with and through trans subcultural spaces and the poesis and grounded theorizing they sustain.

As surely as we may rely on found resources passively received or encountered, we may also need or want to construct new ones. Depending on the philosophical question we are pursuing, we may need or want to speak at length with one or more gender-disruptive people, record their life stories, or take down our own field notes. We may need or want to participate in trans aesthetic production, trans activism, or trans archival work and theorize with the theorizing already happening there. As such, people doing trans philosophy may need to develop social studies skills for interpreting (or collecting) interviews, oral histories, and ethnographic materials, just as they may need to develop cultural studies skills for analyzing (or creating) art, literature, fashion, and archives. This is not to suggest that trans philosophers become academics in general, or social scientists and cultural analysts in particular, but rather to insist that trans philosophy must be meaningfully tethered to the trans social and that philosophical training does not already equip us to handle those materials and people with the care and attention, the ethics and accountability they deserve. It may in fact limit those who have it.

Many fields have put enormous effort into thinking through their own disciplinary research ethics, including their ethical relation to lay scholarship and citizen science. Philosophy is not one of them. Philosophy believes it needs no research ethics.[63] Indeed, I am not aware of a single PhD program in the US that requires or even has a course in philosophical research ethics (not, mind you, the philosophy of research ethics, but research ethics in philosophy). Trans philosophy needs to be different in this respect. Trans philosophy (and therefore trans philosophers, in and outside the academy) ought not simply to cull, take, hew, distill, and extract. In no way am I proposing further extractivism. Trans philosophy needs to be accountable to trans communities by being grounded in trans sociality, utilizing best practices for engaging with the epistemic materials and resources there, and thinking collectively and collaboratively in such a way that the people and elements of the trans social craft as much as speak back to, at, and against trans philosophy. The potential for critique precisely from the constituents of trans subcultures is a necessary condition of accountable trans theorizing.

My book *How We Make Each Other* is informed by more than one hundred interviews, alongside archives and ethnographic field notes. One interview, in particular, haunts me most. Jason, by his own description a white queer trans man with experience of mental illness, told me, with evident frustration, "I understand the purposes of theory in a lot of ways, but I also think that sometimes it's used in a way that cuts off people who it's affecting."[64] Whatever trans philosophy, as a form of theory, is to become, it needs to maintain a constant willingness to reevaluate both the dominant methods and frameworks it may be unintentionally replicating and the trans people it may be forgetting, alienating, or simply ignoring because they muddy the argument. While trans philosophy can certainly turn to trans theory more broadly and to other philosophical and theoretical subfields dedicated to illuminating marginalized lives, including those aforementioned, for some models of accountable theorizing, it can also turn to trans histories and presents where the paths of wisdom, kindness, and courage are being, and have already been, sought out.

The kind of trans philosophy I am describing needs to work transversally between philosophy and its others,[65] between inside and outside the academy, between trans and non-trans gender-disruptive experiences, between the word "trans" and its especially decolonial critics. It is essentially a sideways project.[66] More than this, it must be humbly committed to trans locality in ways that honor the local

and dishonor professional philosophy when necessary. It must be able to negotiate trans opacity and not insist on transparency. It must remain grounded in affect. It must leave room for embarrassment and exile—precisely because the philosophical project is undertaken collaboratively and accountably. With these commitments, we have a chance of cultivating a future of trans philosophy that is capacious enough to account for, if not also contribute to, the bigness of trans and non-trans gender-disruptive stories, struggles, and hopes.

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Perhaps, as we take up hammer and chisel, we are carving out not one future of trans philosophy, after all, but several. Many of us are at work on various figures that will become something called trans philosophy. In that pluralist context, the future or futures I hope to be a part of are ones in which trans philosophy is more than a field dedicated to academic philosophizing about trans issues, or academic philosophizing done by trans people, or even academic philosophizing about trans issues done by trans people. It will also be more than philosophizing done by predominantly trans academic philosophers who are a part of specific trans subcultures and participate in their discursive and nondiscursive practices. The future of trans philosophy I hope to help define and mobilize (like so many dreams come to life) is a philosophizing led by trans and non-trans gender-disruptive people, among other gender deviants and gender drifters, who are not only active members of local sexgender subcultures but who also *theorize collaboratively and accountably with the wide range of people and materials that sustain those subcultures*.[67] Such a trans philosophy will continue to redden necks, and its academic practitioners will choose, at points, to do philosophical work at the outskirts if not outside of the confines of professional "philosophy." Crucially, they won't be the first ones there.

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NOTES

1. Zurn, "Waste Culture and Isolation."
2. Zurn, "Trans Experience in Philosophy."
3. The phrase *trans philosophy*, again as currently understood and deployed in the US, should also be traced further back to the graduate student organizers of that conference. Previously, the phrase *transgender philosophy* appeared as the title of a course taught by Amy Marvin, one of the organizers, in fall 2015 at the University of Oregon. The phrase *trans philosophy* first appeared in the conference email address (transphilosophy@gmail.com), also released in fall 2015. While the phrase did not appear on the conference program, it did appear in the conference report that Megan Burke submitted for the *Hypatia* Diversity Grant in Summer 2016. Finally, it appeared in *Hypatia*'s own report of that funding year (https://hypatiaphilosophy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Hypatia-Annual-Report-2015-final.pdf). It should be noted that, while University of Oregon philosophy professor Alejandro Valega is listed as the applicant and recipient of the Hypatia Diversity Grant, the grant application was drafted by Burke (with input from Fulden Ibrahimhakkioglu) and the conference was organized by Burke, Ibrahimhakkioglu, and Marvin, all graduate students.
4. Zurn, "Trans Philosophy"; Zurn et al., *Trans Philosophy*; Zurn, *How We Make Each Other*.
5. Zurn and Pitts, "Trans Philosophy"; Zurn, "The Path of Friction."
6. Cf. Cvetkovich, *Depression*.
7. Hale, "Suggested Rules for Non-Transsexuals Writing About Transsexuals, Transsexuality, Transsexualism, or Trans___."
8. Hale, "Suggested Rules for Non-Transsexuals Writing About Transsexuals, Transsexuality, Transsexualism, or Trans___."
9. Hale, "Suggested Rules for Non-Transsexuals Writing About Transsexuals, Transsexuality, Transsexualism, or Trans___."
10. Namaste, "Undoing Theory." I take exception to Namaste's misuse of Indigenous theory and practice in this piece.
11. Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges."
12. Radi, "On Trans* Epistemology."
13. Perry Zurn, Personal interview with Megan Burke (January 10, 2024).
14. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?"
15. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 657.
16. Cf. Bettcher, "How I Became a Trans Philosopher."
17. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 644.
18. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 657.
19. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 664.
20. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 159. Cf. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*.
21. I take calls to universal pronouns in this spirit.
22. Dembroff, "Cisgender Commonsense and Philosophy's Transgender Trouble."
23. Dembroff, "Cisgender Commonsense and Philosophy's Transgender Trouble," 404.
24. Burke, "Cis Sense and the Habit of Gender Assignment."
25. Burke, "Cis Sense and the Habit of Gender Assignment," 214. One would expect a citation here to Julia Serano's "cissexual assumption" and gender assignment, but it does not appear. See Serano, *Whipping Girl*.
26. Burke, "Cis Sense and the Habit of Gender Assignment," 215.
27. Burke, "Cis Sense and the Habit of Gender Assignment," 215.
28. The ease—or better yet, surety—with which cis sense infiltrates trans people goes unacknowledged.
29. Richardson-Self, "Becoming Cisgender."
30. Richardson-Self, "Becoming Cisgender," 613.
31. Richardson-Self, "Becoming Cisgender," 615.
32. Richardson-Self, "Becoming Cisgender," 618.
33. Richardson-Self, "Becoming Cisgender," 620.
34. Richardson-Self, "Becoming Cisgender," 619.
35. Manne, "Trans Philosophy Matters."
36. Manne, "Trans Philosophy Matters."
37. Manne, "Trans Philosophy Matters."
38. Zurn, "Trans Experience in Philosophy."
39. Zurn, "Puzzle Pieces." Cf. a revised version in Zurn, *Curiosity and Power*, 173–97.
40. See Harris-Aultmann, *The Trans Ordinary*.
41. Zurn, "The Path of Friction," 74.
42. Personal correspondence (April 21, 2022).
43. Stryker, "Dungeon Intimacies."
44. Stryker, "Dungeon Intimacies," 39.
45. Stryker, "Dungeon Intimacies," 43–44.

46. Stryker, "Dungeon Intimacies," 43. This poesis is worth interpreting in conjunction with Harney and Moten, *The Undercommons* and Hazard, *Underflows*.
47. Radi, "On Trans* Epistemology," 56.
48. Chik, "Butler en Cisminario Queer en Brasil."
49. Athayde, "I Seminário Queer e os saberes subalternos."
50. Miskolsci, "O que é o Queer?"
51. Athayde, "I Seminário Queer e os saberes subalternos."
52. Radi, "Economia del privilegio."
53. Hale himself is familiar with both, having found in sex radical, trans, ftm, BDSM, and leather communities greater capacities for meaning making than professional philosophy offers.
54. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things*.
55. Maduro, "An(other) Invitation to Epistemological Humility."
56. I use the term "non-trans gender disruptive people" to expressly contradict the assumptions a) that non-trans people are necessarily cis and b) that all gender disruptive people are trans, two assumptions that deny numerous personal testimonies, intersex experiences, and cultural differences.
57. See Borges, "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins," 101–04; Foucault, *The Order of Things*, xv.
58. Many thanks to Amy Marvin for this question.
59. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 11.
60. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 12.
61. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 13. See also Bettcher's development of these ideas in *Beyond Personhood*.
62. Bettcher, "What Is Trans Philosophy?" 12. I use the parenthetical (trans) here to mark that while Bettcher privileges the trans philosopher doing trans philosophy, she certainly leaves room for non-trans philosophers doing trans philosophy.
63. For a related argument, see Basu, "Risky Inquiry."
64. Perry Zurn, Personal interview with Jason (October 4–5, 2017).
65. Butler, "Can the Other of Philosophy Speak?"
66. Here I build on DiPietro's *Sideways Selves*.
67. I use the term *sexgender*, instead of sex and gender, to resist the common notions that sex is biological and gender is social, and that body and mind can be meaningfully separated.

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APA STUDIES ON

Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy

LORI GALLEGOS, EDITOR

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FROM THE EDITOR

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By now, you are likely to have heard—and perhaps puzzled over—the term "Latinx." This is the term that is currently used in US academia, at least, for referring to Latin American-descended people living in the US. It includes both those who were born outside of the US and those whose families have lived in the US for generations. The term, however, has generated significant backlash. Indeed, several Republican lawmakers have proposed or passed legislation that would ban the use of "Latinx" in official state documents.

This issue of *APA Studies on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* brings together a group of philosophers to untangle (or, further *en*tangle, but in a systematic way) some of the issues surrounding "Latinx." Although people in Latinx Studies and popular media have written about the topic, I wanted to see how the ideas would take shape when a group of philosophers apply their skills, methods, and experiences to the task. The authors in this issue do not disappoint.

The first essay, written by José Jorge Mendoza, is called "What's the Trouble with 'Latinx'? A Qualified Defense of a Vilified Term." Mendoza describes three major objections to the use of the term "Latinx" and suggests ways in which a proponent of "Latinx" might respond to each of the objections. In doing so, Mendoza hopes to show that, for the moment, "Latinx" is the best possible term to use to refer broadly to the Latin American community in places like the US.

In the next essay, "The History and Hope of Labeling Yourself," author G. M. Trujillo, Jr. draws from his own uncomfortable experience with labels, highlighting the myriad stakes and complexities involved in labeling oneself. The essay offers a rough history of previously used terms, and it examines the motivations for the use of those terms. Trujillo, Jr. proposes that "Latine" is more inclusive, works in both Spanish and English, and continues the process of finding ways to label yourself in a language that your soul doesn't speak.

The issue concludes with Alejandro Arango and Adam Burgos's essay, "No Latinx without Afro-Latinx: A Desideratum for Accounts of Latinidad." The authors begin by noting that the concept of Latinidad has a pernicious, exclusionary history. They argue that in order to be reflective of those whom it purports to describe, the term "Latinx" must be plastic enough to encompass the many internal differences, and even antagonisms, between its different constituent parts. Arango and Burgos propose that there is no adequate conception of Latinx without an attendant conception of Afro-Latinx. They claim that a certain *African-descendedness* is constitutive of Latinidad in multiple registers, including history, cultural practices, and social identificatory processes.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

APA Studies on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy is accepting contributions for the Spring 2025 issue. Our readers are encouraged to submit original work on that topic or on any topic related to Hispanic/Latinx thought, broadly construed. We publish original, scholarly treatments, as well as *meditaciones*, book reviews, and interviews. Please prepare articles for anonymous review.

ARTICLES

All submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Electronic submissions are preferred. All essay submissions should be limited to 5,000 words (twenty double-spaced pages) and must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language and *The Chicago Manual of Style* formatting. All articles undergo anonymous review.

BOOK REVIEWS

Book reviews in any area of Hispanic/Latino philosophy, broadly construed, are welcome. Submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Book reviews may be short (500 words) or long (1,500 words). Electronic submissions are preferred.

DEADLINES

The deadline for the spring issue is November 15. Authors should expect a decision by January 15. The deadline for the fall issue is May 1. Authors should expect a decision by June 15. Please send all articles, book reviews, queries, comments, or suggestions electronically to the editor, Lori Gallegos, at LoriGallegos@txstate.edu, Department of Philosophy, Comal Building 102, Texas State University, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

The *APA Studies* adhere to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Use as little formatting as possible. Details like page numbers,

headers, footers, and columns will be added later. Use tabs instead of multiple spaces for indenting. Use italics instead of underlining. Use an "em dash" (—) instead of a double hyphen (--). Use endnotes instead of footnotes. Examples of proper endnote style: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 90. See Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?" *Noûs* 34 (2000): 31–55.

ARTICLES

What's The Trouble With "Latinx"? A Qualified Defense of a Vilified Term

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In March of 2023, *ABC News* ran an article with an attention-grabbing sub-headline: "One poll shows only 4% of U.S. Latinos use the non-binary term, Latinx."[1] If one were paying close attention, however, they would have already known that three years prior the *Pew Research Center* had released a report headlined by a similar finding: "About One-in-Four U.S. Hispanics Have Heard of Latinx, but Just 3% Use It."[2] Even the year before that, Ross Douthat had accused Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren of being as clueless as Donald Trump when it came to engaging with the Latin American community. What evidence did Douthat offer to defend such a serious accusation? It was Warren's use of the term "Latinx" on her campaign trail and thereby "describing Latinos with a term that few would use themselves."[3]

For those not closely following these debates, this might all come as a surprise. After all, for over a decade now the term "Latinx" has been the most often used term by US academics, politicians, marketers, and the media to refer to peoples of Latin American—and sometimes even Iberian—descent.[4] What is even more interesting is that, at a time when the US is as politically polarized as it has ever been, one of the few areas of common political agreement seems to be with respect to a shared opposition to the term "Latinx."[5] For those on the political right, the term "Latinx" is just another example of "woke" politics gone amok. For those on the political left, "Latinx" is a term imposed on the Latin American community by outsiders and furthermore it is a term that continues to display an undue preference for European ancestry at the expense of African, Asian, and Indigenous heritage.[6] Even political moderates are upset with this term. They see it as yet another political litmus test that undermines "sensible" (i.e., non-radical) politicians and thereby only helps to fuel the political polarization that is paralyzing US politics today.[7]

It therefore seems that finding reasons to oppose, or even hate, the term "Latinx" is not hard. And given the amount of animosity and anxiety generated by this term, perhaps we would be better off without it, and we should move on to a less controversial term (e.g., "Latino/a," "Latiné" or "Hispanic"). In this essay, however, I want to do something risky and provide a qualified defense of "Latinx." I will start by looking at what I take to be the three fundamental criticisms of "Latinx." These criticisms are its grammatical inaccuracy, its susceptibility to the domination objection, and its lack of respect for the Latin American community. What I hope to show in this essay is that, even though it is far from perfect, in places like the US, "Latinx" might be the best term we have to refer to the Latin American community.

1. GRAMMATICAL INACCURACIES AND LINGUISTIC DISRUPTIONS

> When spoken, "Latinx" sounds like neither normal English nor conversational Spanish, and it looks like what it is, a word designed for ideological purposes rather than for felicity in speech. If you are deep inside progressive discourse, you will immediately understand those purposes—"dismantling the default masculine" of romance languages, centering gender neutrality or nonbinariness in place of a cisgender heteronormativity.[8]

The passage above comes from the political analyst and *New York Times* columnist, Ross Douthat. It is a standard criticism that has been leveled against the use of "Latinx" by political conservatives. It charges the term with being both grammatically inaccurate and ideologically driven. In this section I want to examine the first part of this criticism and suggest ways in which a proponent of "Latinx" might respond. The conclusion this section comes to is that "Latinx" is not grammatically inaccurate, at least not in contemporary US English usage, and to the extent that it defies conventional linguistic norms, it does so for the sake of disrupting established patterns of linguistic oppression.

There is some truth to Douthat's criticism; the word "Latinx" is not a standard one in either Spanish or English. Its construction also does not seem to follow the conventional norms of either language. This, however, should be taken as an opening to a longer conversation not the final word. A proponent of "Latinx" can and should remind their critics that languages are not fixed or static. They are alive and constantly evolving, generating new words, new phrases and new conventions. This is something we are all familiar with about languages, and it's the reason why some of our current words, phrases, or linguistic conventions would seem absurd to an earlier generation of speakers or even to contemporary speakers in different contexts. To be fair to Douthat, he is not actually confused about this point. He is more concerned about the second part of his criticism, the ideology part, but before moving on to that I want to make sure we have adequately dealt with the worry of grammatical inaccuracy.

As Douthat himself recognizes, the use of "Latinx" is part of a growing movement in the US to make language, specifically English, more gender inclusive and less oppressive overall. This to me seems like a worthy goal, but let us bracket for the moment whether or not it is a good thing. The question to consider first is whether, despite its potential for social justice, "Latinx" is a comprehensible English term. There are some strong reasons for thinking

that it is. To begin with, the term "Latinx" already appears in the Merriam-Webster English dictionary. It has also been in public usage for well over a decade and there is not mass confusion about what the term is supposed to denote. This doesn't mean there are not people who would prefer a different term or that there is not a heated debate about who counts as an authentic member. There is all of this and more. But the point is that no US English speaker is befuddled by what "Latinx" is supposed to mean any more than they are befuddled by a term like "Hispanic." If there is a problem with "Latinx," grammatical inaccuracy in contemporary US English usage is not it.

If "Latinx" suffers from grammatical inaccuracy, it would probably have to do with its use in Spanish or, more specifically, the worry that it masquerades as an authentic Spanish term, when it is far from proper Spanish. This line of criticism is strong, especially since "Latinx" is hardly, if ever, used by Spanish speakers nor did the term arise in a wholly Spanish-speaking context. Instead, it is a kind of hybrid term—a term that blends a Spanish word with some contemporary US English conventions.

Here, however, we would do well to distinguish between failed uses of language and linguistic disruptions that aim to combat oppression. Failed uses of language and linguistic disruptions are similar in that they both discombobulate or cause discomfort in the intended audience. They differ, however, in that the discombobulation in the former case is the result of the intended message not coming through. In the latter case, the message comes through, but the discomfort is the result of the audience being made aware of previously hidden forms of linguistic oppression that they perhaps would have rather kept submerged. Linguistic disruptions, unlike failed uses of language, should therefore not be quickly dismissed. Take, as an example, the work of theorists like Gloria Anzaldúa, and specifically her defense of Spanglish against charges of grammatical inaccuracy:

> For a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castilian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but the create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves—a language with terms that are neither español ni ingles, but both.[9]

As Douthat himself concedes in his criticism above, "Latinx" is not pretending to pass itself off as a neutral term. It was designed with the stated intention of dismantling the cisgender heteronormativity of language, but it also tried to do much more than that. The use of the "x" is also supposed to be a nod to both the Black and Indigenous ancestry of the Latin American community—an ancestry that is often covered over or forgotten. "Latinx" does this because the "x" was earlier adopted as a last name by some in the US Black power movement (e.g., Malcom X) and it also became common practice within the Chicano movement to replace the "ch" in Spanish words with an "x." This is because phonetically the "x" in Nahuatl makes the "ch" sound. So as a way of recognizing and showing respect to their Indigenous roots, some within the Chicano movement began replacing the "ch" with an "x" (e.g., Xicano). So, to simplistically dismiss "Latinx" as being grammatically inaccurate because it discombobulates or causes discomfort in the intended audience misses the deeper linguistic disruption "Latinx" is performing. "Latinx" thumbs its nose at proper Castilian Spanish not because its users don't understand basic grammar, but for the sake of both gender equality and a recognition of Latin America's Black and Indigenous ancestry.[10]

Now, whether "Latinx" accomplishes this overly ambitious task is another matter, which we will consider in more depth in the following sections. For our purposes in this section, it seems that "Latinx" has a convincing response to the charge of grammatical inaccuracy. Its response to this charge is similar to Anzaldúa's defense of Spanglish. So long as we restrict ourselves to places like the US, "Latinx" does not seem to have a problem of grammatical accuracy. It is both a part of contemporary US English, and it serves as a laudable linguistic disruption that takes advantage of the clashing of Spanish and English in places like the US.

2. THE ONTOLOGY OF THE DOMINATION OBJECTION

> The concepts of Latinx and Hispanic . . . center a common European heritage. . . . Both Latinx (or any of its variants) and Hispanic take on different meanings in different locations and within various groups throughout the U.S. But many whose identities may fall under these umbrella terms openly question whether they should cancel the concepts of Latinx and Hispanic communities that center a centuries-old, European project of conquest and empire.[11]

The idea of "Latinx" as a linguistic disruption is useful in responding to the charge of grammatical inaccuracy, but it leaves it open to other lines of criticism. One of these lines is articulated by Adriana Maestas above. This line of criticism, which we can call the domination objection, suggests that terms like "Latinx" and "Hispanic" favor the dominant race or ethnicity in Latin America (i.e., Europeans) while ignoring or disavowing the dominated races or ethnicities (i.e., non-Europeans). According to this line of criticism, even with its supposed nod toward more inclusivity, "Latinx" is irredeemably Eurocentric and therefore a tool for perpetuating ongoing relationships of domination. If correct, this criticism is devastating. It takes what should have been a strength of "Latinx" (i.e., its ability to linguistically disrupt relationships of oppression) and turns it back on itself. If "Latinx's" ability to disrupt Eurocentrism was supposed to both differentiate it from other similar terms (e.g., "Hispanic") and was key to circumventing the charge of grammatical inaccuracy, what happens if it is not any better than traditional terms like "Hispanic"? Perhaps this means we need to quit using "Latinx," as Maestas suggests, and begin using terms that center historically dominated groups (e.g., Chicano)?

Is there anything a proponent of "Latinx" can say in response? Perhaps the first thing a proponent should do is point out that this criticism applies to terms other than

"Latinx." Presumably, this criticism should apply *mutatis mutandis* to terms such as "Hispanic," "Latino," and "Latino/a." This criticism therefore seems to have less to do with the choice of terminology, and more to do with something else. I submit that this something else is the ontology undergirding what Maestas calls "umbrella" terms. What actually motivates the domination objection is the worry that relationships of domination get covered over by "umbrella" terms. These terms give off the mistaken impression that there is a unified and clearly defined social group undergirding them. For critics, there is no such group. Instead, what we find is a collection of oppositional groups whose condition of domination would be better understood, and correctly diagnosed, if we did not try to lump them all together into one homogenous group. In covering over these important group differences, critics charge terms like "Latinx" and "Hispanic" with presenting an inaccurate view of reality that undermines projects of liberation.

If this is the case—if the domination objection is, at bottom, an objection based on ontology—then what are the different ontological positions one can take, and is there one that is friendly to proponents of "Latinx"? Let us start with the position that is least favorable toward "Latinx." This position, Denier Eliminativism, denies that there is a unified and clearly defined social group underlining a term like "Latinx" and suggests that we should eliminate (i.e., cancel) "Latinx" talk because it does not refer to anything real. Instead, by referring to a mythical or nonexistent thing (e.g., latinidad) it perpetuates or covers over ongoing relationships of domination.

On the other side of this ontological debate are Truther Conservationists. These folks believe that there is a unified and clearly defined social group undergirding a term like "Latinx," even if they do not believe "Latinx" is the best term to use to refer to this group. These folks might also disagree among themselves about what this group is, is supposed to be, or who gets to count as a member, but they all agree that it exists and that terms like "Latinx" have an extension. They furthermore reject the eliminativist proposal, and instead argue we should, at least in certain circumstances, hold on to terminology that can refer to this group.

Alternatively, there are some who fall in-between. These folks are not deniers, but they are pessimistic about the status of the social group undergirding "Latinx." They believe this social group currently exists, but they doubt it will remain a unified and clearly defined social group for very long. Perhaps the best exemplar of this position is Cristina Beltrán, who argues that the social group undergirding "Latinx" is a recent formation, cobbled together by political and media forces. This same social group, however, is currently under intense pressure to dissolve and will likely do so.[12] A Pessimist therefore believes that, regardless of whether one approves or disapproves of the term "Latinx," there are strong forces already at play that are pulling this social group apart and will likely succeed.

So here is a brief summary of the three ontological positions:

Denier Eliminativist: believes that no social group exists to which "Latinx" or any similar term applies, so we ought to dispense with this terminology.

Truther Conservationist: believes a social group exists to which "Latinx" or a similar term applies, so we ought to continue using this terminology.

Pessimist: concedes that a social group exists to which "Latinx" or a similar term applies, but also believes this terminology is becoming obsolete, since this social group is (or will be) dissolving.

A proponent of "Latinx" can adopt either a Truther Conservationist or a mild Pessimist position, but they cannot be Denier Eliminativists of any stripe. So what case could a proponent of "Latinx" make against Denier Eliminativism? Perhaps the most convincing case begins by noting that as a group, Latin American-descended peoples have and continue to experience discrimination, oppression, and marginalization in places like the US. If this is the case, then it seems that, if we want these forms of group discrimination, oppression, and marginalization recognized and confronted, we need a term with which to refer to this group in places like the US. Unfortunately, there is not enough space in this essay to provide a full defense of the antecedent claim—that Latin American-descended peoples have and continue to experience discrimination, oppression, and marginalization in places like the US. I therefore ask the reader to simply grant the truth of this antecedent claim for the sake of argument. So, assuming that the antecedent claim is true, the Denier Eliminativist seems to be in a weak position, at least in places like the US. It seems that without a term like "Latinx" we have no way to acknowledge, recognize, or use to combat the discrimination, oppression, and marginalization that afflict Latin American-descended peoples, as a group, in places like the US.

Assuming one finds this rebuttal of Denier Eliminativism persuasive, does it entail that the Truther Conservationist position must be correct? Not necessarily. It could be the case that we are caught in a double bind: we neither want to ignore the group-based discrimination, oppression, and marginalization that afflict Latin American descended folks, nor do we want to cover over important divisions and distinctions internal to this group by deploying problematic "umbrella" terms.

To get us out of this potential double bind it might be helpful to divide our terminology into two camps, terms that aim to be general and terms that are more specialized. We can also further divide each of these into those that are higher-order and those that are lower-order. On this parsing of terminology, a proponent of "Latinx" could argue that the kinds of "umbrella" terms that worry folks like Maestas are general terms, but if we think of "Latinx" as a specialized term, it seems that we might be able to avoid the domination objection.

This is because general terms attempt to capture something universal in scope and are meant to be used and comprehensible across time and location. For example,

Miguel de Cervantes and Antonio Banderas are both "Spanish" even though they existed in different times and locations. Similarly, Benito Juárez and Saúl Canelo Álvarez count as "Mexican" despite their respective differences in time and location. The importance we place on these claims might change depending on our time and location, but the changes of venue neither add to nor subtract from the Spanish-ness of Cervantes or Banderas, nor the Mexican-ness of Juárez or Álvarez.

Terms like "Spanish" and "Mexican" are therefore universal terms, but they are lower-order ones in that they can be subsumed under higher-order general terms, such as "Hispanic" or "Latin." For example, included within a higher-order general term like "Hispanic" we find Spanish folks (i.e., Cervantes and Banderas), Mexican folks (e.g., Juárez and Álvarez), and folks of other Iberian-descended nationalities (e.g., Argentinians and Cubans). One last point about general terms is that both lower-order and higher-order general terms contain groups that can, and often should be, recognized with specialized terms (e.g., Chicano, Nuyorican, Tejano), or by race (e.g., Black, White, Asian, or Indigenous) or ethnicity (e.g., culture, language, or religion).

We can therefore see why higher-order general terms, like "Hispanic" or even "Latin," lend themselves to the domination objection. These are the sorts of terms that Maestas rightly criticizes as "umbrella" terms. They cover over important divisions and distinctions internal to the group. I submit, however, that if used correctly both lower-order general terms and specialized terms can avoid this objection. By correct usage I mean that they are used strictly as what they are (e.g., nationalities) or in the case of specialized terms they do not get applied beyond their specific boundaries. So what are specialized terms and can "Latinx" be one of these terms?

Unlike general terms, specialized terms are not meant to be used nor are they supposed to be comprehensible across time and location. These terms attempt to capture something very specific and often only at a particular time and place. Paradigm examples of specialized terms in the US include Chicano, Nuyorican, and Tejano. These terms are often used and are comprehensible to people in the US, but they might not travel well outside of this context. It is also the case, however, that there are higher-order but still specialized terms. These are terms like "Latino/a." They subsume lower-order specialized terms (e.g., Chicanos, Nuyoricans, and Tejanos), but their meaning is not universal enough to travel far beyond its original context, so they are not broad enough to count as general terms. A proponent of "Latinx" can therefore suggest that "Latinx" is one of these higher-order, but specialized, terms and that it is a mistake to think of it as a general term. This means that "Latinx" does not aim to be an "umbrella" term like "Hispanic" or "Latin," but is also not a lower-order term that is in competition with terms like Chicano, Nuyorican, or Tejano.

Assuming this is a plausible account, where does it leave us? If Denier Eliminativism is wrong and, furthermore, if "Latinx" is conceived, not as a general term, but as a higher-order specialized term, then it seems that "Latinx" can avoid the domination objection. This, however, comes at a high cost to its proponents. First, the term "Latinx" cannot be expected to travel very far. The term might be comprehensible in places like the contemporary US, and it might prove helpful in recognizing and combating discrimination, oppression, and marginalization in this context, but it's not clear that it can function or even be comprehensible outside of places like the US. Second, in most cases we ought to defer to lower-order specialized terms—or race and ethnicity—rather than using "Latinx." Maestas's worry about terms becoming totalizing should be heeded. It is not just general terms, but also higher-order specialized terms that are at risk of going rogue. So higher-order specialized terms (which includes "Latinx) ought to be used as sparingly as possible. For some proponents, these qualifications might take away some of "Latinx's" shine, but they are necessary if the term is to get around the domination objection.

3. DISRESPECTING THE REFERENT GROUP

> [T]he language that dominates progressivism ["Latinx" being one example] often emerges out of a dialogue among minority activists and academics and well-meaning white liberals, without much engagement with the larger minority population, its assumptions and habits and beliefs.[13]

The idea of "Latinx" as a higher-order specialized term might get it around the domination objection, but there is yet another criticism which is not based on either a concern for proper grammar or ontology, but on respect for the referent group. As the passage from Douthat above suggests, even if there are social justice-based reasons for adopting "Latinx," if the term is disrespectful toward the intended referent group, we have good reason not to use it. Douthat's criticism therefore raises the following two-part question: When and how is it possible for a term to disrespect the intended referent group, and is "Latinx" guilty of this charge?

To my way of thinking, there are two ways in which a term can disrespect the intended referent group. The first is easy enough. If a term is a slur or in some other way offensive to the referent group (e.g., making fun of the group, its language, or culture), then it is clearly disrespectful and we have good reason not to use it. The second way does not necessarily require that a term be offensive. The term itself could be neutral or even complementary, but if the term is imposed on the group without the group's consultation or approval, then it is disrespectful. It is disrespectful in that it attacks the group's sense of self and who they are. It is a form of imperialism.

As far as I can tell, no one is suggesting that the problem with "Latinx" is that it's a slur. There are some who have taken offense to its grammatical construction, so they feel insulted by the way the term looks, but we have already addressed a version of this objection in section one. So, for these reasons, I will put this first possibility to the side and instead focus on the second way in which "Latinx" might be disrespectful. On this second way, "Latinx" is disrespectful because the elitist and more English-speaking segment of US society has imposed this name

on the less powerful and more Spanish-speaking segment with little or no consultation. Here the polls that show few Latin American-descended peoples in the US use "Latinx" becomes relevant. If "Latinx" is in wide circulation among academics, liberal politicians, and the media, but less than 5 percent of the Latin American community uses the term, then there is strong reason to think that this term has been disrespectfully imposed on the intended referent group, and this is a good enough reason to stop using the term.

It is hard to argue that "Latinx" has gotten much uptake within the Latin American community. But let's also recall that "Latinx," if it is to avoid the domination objection, must restrict itself to being a higher-order specialized term. This means that "Latinx" does not require uptake from Latin Americans worldwide, it just needs uptake from a specific group within a particular time and place (e.g., the current US). Even with this caveat in place, polls show that something like less than 5 percent of Latin American-descended peoples in the US use the term. So what can a proponent say in response?

One thing a proponent could do is challenge the validity of these polls, but this strategy is unlikely to succeed. The results of these polls are probably close to accurate. Proponents can, however, say that these polls are misleading in a number of ways. First, they tend to give the mistaken impression that if only 5 percent of the Latin American community use the term "Latinx," then there is a term that garners the agreement of the other 95 percent. This is far from the case. If one looks deeper into these polls, they will quickly find out that there is no consensus on terminology and no one term whose usage garners a majority. The battle over what to call Latin American-descended people in general and in specific places like the US remains at a stalemate. So when it comes to the title of being the referent group's consensus choice, no term can claim victory.

Another way in which these polls can be misleading is that they run together general and specialized usage. One reason it has been difficult for the Latin American community to collectively settle on a term is that different terms capture different sets of experiences, and those polled are not often instructed on which set of experiences they want the term in question to capture. For example, in places like the US we find that Mexican-Americans living in California or Texas (i.e., Chicanos or Tejanos) have a different set of experiences than people of Puerto Rican descent living in New York (i.e., Nuyoricans), or Cuban-descended peoples living in Miami. This means that if the person polled has their specific situation in mind (e.g., the Mexican-American experience in California), it should be no surprise that they would reject any term that is broader than a lower-order specialized term (e.g., "Chicano"). This does not tell us what their thoughts would be if what we needed—perhaps to recognize and address a particular brand of US xenophobia—was a higher-order specialized term like "Latino/a."

In short, these polls do not seem to compare apples to apples. They are not clear about whether the respondents are rejecting "Latinx" as their preferred higher-order specialized term, if they are rejecting it along with any other higher-order specialized term, or if they are merely expressing their preference for using lower-order specialized terms. This is an important difference, because it's only in the first case that the Disrespect for the Referent Group objection holds. If people are not using "Latinx" because it is not the kind of low-order specialized term their particular circumstance calls for, they are right to reject it. Yet, it can still be the case that "Latinx" is (or would be) the higher-order specialized term they would prefer when such a term is called for. We can run a similar argument if the respondent is rejecting "Latinx" because their interest is in finding a general term. If the respondents are looking for a term that captures something universal in scope and can be comprehensibly used across time and location, then "Latinx" is not it. But we don't always need general terms. Sometimes what we need is a higher-order specialized term and, potentially, "Latinx" could be it.

So in order to see if the Disrespect for the Referent Group objection holds, we need to see how "Latinx" fares against other terms when the kind of usage we are looking for is unequivocally a specialized higher-order usage (e.g., "Latino," "Latino/a," "Latin@," and "Latiné"). Unfortunately, no such customized poll exists and even if it did, it is unlikely to produce a clear winner. So, given that no term is likely to gain the consensus of the referent group, are there other reasons to prefer one higher-order specialized term over the others? I think there are, and I think "Latinx" comes out the winner.

Let's return to the prior criticisms. On grounds of grammatical inaccuracy, "Latinx" turns out to be as good, if not better, than most of the competition. If we look at terms such as "Latino/a" and "Latin@," they do not necessarily have a leg up on "Latinx" with respect to grammar. Terms like "Latino" and "Latiné" do have an advantage, but they are so inoffensive that they are the most susceptible to the domination objection. "Latinx," "Latino/a," and "Latin@" are linguistically disruptive, in a good social justice sort of way, so they here have an advantage over "Latino" and "Latiné." But "Latinx" has an advantage over all of them in that it is not just concerned with gender inclusivity. It also tries to recognize and represent non-White members of the Latin American community. "Latinx" might do this in a clumsy manner, and we might wish it did a better job, but unlike the other higher-order specialized terms, at least it tries.

CONCLUSION: THE BEST WE HAVE, FOR NOW

The term "Latinx" generates a lot of anxiety and conflicting emotions. There are some who think we would be better off without the term. Some suggest that the term should be replaced with other, more fitting terms (e.g., "Hispanic," "Chicano," "Mexican," "Latino/a," or "Latiné"), while others think we ought to quit trying to find a totalizing term altogether. This essay is under no illusion that it can or will resolve all of the problems that bedevil a term like "Latinx." Hopefully it has at least provided a roadmap of the various criticisms leveled against "Latinx" and put forth a fair, yet strong, case in its favor—even if such a case is ultimately unconvincing. This might also not be the most resounding victory for proponents of "Latinx," but for the moment it seems that it's the best we got.

NOTES

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The History and Hope of Labeling Yourself

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1. NAMING YOURSELF IN A LANGUAGE THAT YOUR SOUL DOESN'T SPEAK: A HISTORY

Sometimes I wish that I didn't have to be philosophical, and I fantasize about moving fluidly through the world. But then I have to do something stupid and mundane, like fill out a doctor's office form or apply for a job, and metaphysical and existential questions beset me. Is your race Black, Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, or White? (Remember, you are only Native for them if you maintain tribal affiliation.) And if White, are you ethnically Hispanic (whatever that means)? Maybe, as a third-grade teacher once told me, I *am* basically *White* with a non-White last name. Maybe this question about what I should call myself is not a question with objective answers. Nonetheless, I face it continually, and it doesn't feel resolved. In fact, Latinx and Latine (the current trending terms for Latinos, at least in my interactions), result directly from dissatisfaction with the previous terms. So, what have we tried to call ourselves? (And what has been tried on us?)

"Spanish"? No thank you. This term overdetermines people, gives the false impression that if we went to Spain, that we would be understood or fit in or somehow resonate with the culture. Additionally, the term directly relates to the Spanish, who not only colonized their "New World," but also fought to distinguish themselves from the *criollos*, *mestizos*, and *indios*. That is, they cared to distinguish themselves from people like me, my family, and my friends because, if they could not be born in Spain, at least they wouldn't be all mud-blooded like me.

OK, so "Hispanic"? Maybe. This term denotes a Spanish-ish-ness, a descendent relation. That is undeniable in a genealogical way. But maybe the term just rehashes the same problems as "Spanish," albeit with a bit of conceptual distance. The priority with this term, again, is relating people to the *Spanish* point of origin, even though Hispanics might never have set foot in Spain, learned Spanish, or cared about Spanish customs. Additionally, the term certainly doesn't give much consideration to the cultures of the Americas.

So, then we arrive at "Latino." This one is even more complicated. It does seem to describe all of those affected by the *Spanish* colonization of the Americas. But what about the Brazilians and others affected by Portugal? What about French colonization around the Mississippi River or Haiti or other parts of the Americas? What about Black members of the communities of the Southwest who became *vaqueros* and learned the language, customs, land, and people? Are they not part of the same family with some of the same core issues? What may have started as separate has blended, beautifully.

Critics might think that I'm paying too much attention to too many marginal cases, or that I'm overcomplicating the distinction. But in a culture as large and vibrant as ours, the so-called "exceptions" don't provide a *foil* for the rule; they're the *rule*. We're the exceptional.

"Latino" also bears a mark of contention in the suffix -o. Same as "Chicano." (A term I won't address here for brevity's sake.) -o is a masculine ending in Spanish, and some activists have argued that it underemphasizes the contributions by women to political movements. So, they proposed Chican@ or Latin@, the "@" being an "a" within an "o," an irreducible typographical representation of men and women contributing to a movement together. There's no Cesar Chavez without Dolores Huerta, no Diego Rivera without Frida Kahlo, no Hernán Cortés without Malintzin, hell, no Jesús without La Virgen. We're tied together in

complicated ways, and we need a term that respects this. Ropes get their character and strength from their twists of integrated fibers. And when there are people we have not integrated, we weaken ourselves. The problem with "Latino" is not just that it relegates women. Rather, it points to a deeper problem: not all Latinos are men or women. Some are nonbinary or genderqueer or two spirit or searching for new terms or identities. I consider myself someone born of and fluid in these liminal spaces. I consider my deepest friends those who understand living in these liminal spaces and who refuse to collapse the ambiguity and weirdness of life into convenient categories. In spaces for queers and weirdos and mutts, places for people like me, I've learned new words and new ways of being.

Enter "Latinx." As a *metalero* myself, a metal foo, I can appreciate the edginess and disruptiveness of the "x," the denial that some value will define you. It looks cool. It's confrontational. It won't be passive or easy to bear. But as a speaker of English and Spanish, I've heard this term pronounced far too many ways: la-tinks, la-tenks, latin-ecks, latin-uhhh . . . [hesitation]. For all its typographical badassery (like the @), "Latinx" fails in practical oral communication, especially in Spanish. In fact, I've seen the term memed on TikTok and Instagram recently. The general lesson of the memes is that you cannot offend Latine people, or not easily. The setup is a video zoomed in on a Latine person and someone off-camera calling them a *frijolero* or something similar, which elicits no reaction stronger than an eyeroll or a sigh. The punchline is that, after being called Latinx, that same, previously cool, Latine person charges at the camera with a balled fist. Like so many jokes, the comedy depends on the delivery. However, also like many jokes, there is at least some truth. The joke expresses a common sentiment among my friends. And I suspect it comes from the tangle of weird feelings that people get when *other people* (from outside the relevant community) tell *you* (who's a part of the relevant community) what you need to call yourself if you want to be considered a conscientious person. Sometimes in the Southwestern USA, you'll hear the phrase "We didn't cross the border. The border crossed us." Meaning, we get maligned as *mojados* or border bunnies or whatever. But we were just living our lives, and then some imaginary border changed and made us into villains. Maybe there's something similar going on with the language here, *if* it is imposed on people from the outside. And given the ways that language can be policed in off-putting ways, Latinx has unfortunately been weaponized as a tool of gentrification for some people, whatever its origins or intentions. This needn't be the case. But I know that many people feel it to be so.[1]

But there is also another reason that some people defend Latinx's -x (the same reason that some prefer Xicano/a/@/x/e): it is reminiscent of Nahuatl phonemes. But even a preference for Nahua or Mexica people, as desirable as it might be to the current total erasure of indigenous roots, does its own damage if it makes it seem like the Nahua were the only people indigenous to the Americas. So, sure, maybe we can tie Xicanx to Nahuatl. But what about the people who are not Nahua, or the people who have complicated social relationships with the conquests of the Nahua Empire?

So, now we have "Latine." My ultimate suggestion is that we try this one out. I think that this suggestion works especially well in Spanish, a neutral -e being neither a masculine -o nor a feminine -a, but still being a vowel ending. I've heard it used fluidly in simple welcomes to events in queer spaces, as when an MC says, "Bienvenidos, chicos, chicas, y chiques." The new suffix provides a novel linguistic marker for new forms of gender, sexuality, and expression, all while preserving the vowel endings in Spanish and the conventional phonetic sounds. The only hangup here is that in English, it looks like La-tie-n (rhyming with "mine"). Maybe if we make the term "Latiné," giving an accent to the final e, we can set off typographically the separateness of the final vowel sound, like *The New Yorker*'s diaeresis over repeated vowels with distinct vocalizations (writing "coöperate" or "reëlect" to ensure that we do not say coop-erate or ree-lect), like Shakespeare or Romantic poets might distinguish "blessèd" from "blessed" to mark a distinct set of syllables. The technologies that are languages adapt to their users and their uses. And as language users change how they see themselves, it makes sense that the language would change too. But it's also important to stress convenience. Adding special typography might be just inconvenient enough to turn people off of the term.

As a practical and aesthetic decision, I prefer the term Latine to Latinx, Latino, Spanish, or Hispanic. It's practical in that it works in English and Spanish with very little explanation required. It's aesthetic in the sense that, to me, it *feels* better than the other terms. But I don't pretend that I'll settle any of the deep semantic, metaphysical, or other philosophical issues here. And I think it'd be a mistake to insist on any linguistic purity here, or maybe even that we use one term for all of us, especially if imposed on us from the outside.

Linguistic purity would be a strange thing for philosophers to maintain. But it would be especially hypocritical for Latine philosophers. English represents the colonization done by Great Britain and the United States. Spanish represents the colonization done by Spain. And even the insertion of Xs into Xicanx or similar terms obscures that the Native people of the Americas spoke more than Nahuatl. There is no purity. There is no going back. There was never an ideal age. This is what we got. And we gotta make things work. For my time and effort, I prefer the -e of Latine. And I could see getting people to use it and understand it, even if they had never heard it before.[2]

This, too, is a point that philosophers sometimes neglect. The *logos* is not all that matters, though that is our specialty. It makes sense that we philosophers would defer to logic or precision. But the *ethos* and *pathos* matter too if we want to win people to our sides. And in order to get a term to spread, make no mistake: we'll have to win most people to our side. I should mention, though, I've been laughed at for calling myself Latine because those unfamiliar with the term thought I was calling myself Latina, and I guess the juxtaposition of my beard and shoulders and baritone voice made it comedically incongruous. Since the laughers were my friends, it was easy to bear and explain. But I don't know how I would've reacted to strangers with the same reaction to Latine, and I don't know if I would've had the patience

or energy to correct strangers. In fact, among strangers, I'll often resort to whatever term makes me legible to them, usually "Latino." I mention my personal waffling on the term because I think that it shows how messy these things are in practice. And yet, by not correcting people, maybe I'm making it more difficult on queer Latines who *need* to introduce the term to feel recognized, especially those without pale skin, masculine features, and a negligible accent like me that can make me more sympathetic to otherwise unsympathetic people.

And that's exactly the bind of creating new language and insisting on its use: you have to decide whether the indignity of being called something that doesn't represent you is worse than the epistemic and social strain of educating people who don't know what they don't know (or don't care). Since my people know a history of genocide, lynching, forced assimilation, and oppression, we can certainly acknowledge that the harms of language and ideas are far different than those of chains and nooses. But the assimilation and oppression also tell us that dehumanizing, disrespecting, or disregarding words and ideas go hand-in-hand with oppression. Worse, the most insidious forms of oppression are when the externalized and physical punishments become internalized and spiritual disciplines, when the words *they* use to describe you displace and delete the words *you* would use for yourself, when the truer concepts and vulnerable realities whimper and wither away. First, they're on your horizon. Then, they're in your homes. Then, you're smothered and dead. Then, you never existed at all.[3]

It's appropriate to grieve not only the history and continuation of oppression, but also the many ways that oppressed people cannot even understand or feel their oppression because they've lost the words and concepts and practices that might contribute to their liberations. So, what can I call myself in a language that my soul doesn't speak? I don't know. But I guess I'll try and retry and remember that these digital squiggles and ink scribbles and pulses of air from mouth to ear are not the only ways to communicate. After all, I can talk with my dog and my land and the stars, and we all seem to understand each other without a literal language.

2. USE YOUR WORDS

Something that people often voice to me, in less formal settings, is "Why care about these words or identity politics?" They seem to think that if we fight for *linguistic* reform that we somehow lose focus on *institutional* reform.

In hypothetical cases, I can hypothetically agree. *Were* the choice between equitable institutions and more accurate and socially conscientious language, the clear choice would be for institutions. And *if* linguistic reinvention ever impeded justice or degraded the lived lives of actual Latines, in that hypothetical world we would have an obligation to stop the linguistic reformation. But no such cases exist now, and I don't think that these critics are right, or really concerned with anything plausible. How uncreative such critics are in imagining the depths of my rage at injustice, as if it weren't an inexhaustible source, one that I couldn't direct toward many targets at once. How uncreative such critics are to imagine that people who form communities and organize movements can't use the linguistic reform as an important part of advocating for systemic justice. There are reasons why you might see "Latinos for Trump" signs but never "Latinxs for Trump" signs (hopefully). These terms are symbols not only of descriptive problems about the metaphysics of race or ethnicity. These terms are also symbols of *aspirations* that our communities have about who we wish to become and how we would talk and live with each other in an ideally just society.

As implausible as I find these critics, I'll nonetheless share an experience that I always think of when critics bring up such issues. I think it illustrates how language and institutions can come apart; proper language doesn't always indicate respect. I lived in Germany for a year as a Fulbright. Germans, as well as many Western Europeans, were oblivious to their own forms of racism. I heard many casual slurs for various groups—outright slurs for Turkish, Romani, or Black people, veiled slurs like "Asi" (short for "Asozial") for undesirables, literally meaning "antisocial" but loosely meaning uncouth, uncivilized, rude, not-German-enough. And yet, I spoke with many people—including a man who begged at the train station nearest my apartment and with whom I went to lunch on occasions—who felt well in Germany and other Western European nations. Some at the bottom of the social ladder knew that they had a basic social safety net. They knew that petitions for asylum would be heard. They could access education, including university and graduate education, for free (or nearly so). They could access health care, dental care, and prescriptions for reasonable prices. They could rely on infrastructure and governmental agencies. And generally (though history certainly adds caveats in a country like Germany), there was a social agreement that basic resources for living a decent life would be assured, no matter shifts in the political landscape. I could imagine asking a German who just slurred an ethnic group about American politics, and he'd probably call us monsters for the ways our government treats our people.

Whereas in the United States, more than Germany or other Western European countries, people generally don't say slurs, or not in public. Even if they grumble about pronouns or politically correct language, they won't say much in open air. (Speaking comparatively and generally here. Of course, there are exceptions.) And yet, for whatever conscientious language we might have in the United States, or for whatever social pressures we might have in place, the United States is actively hostile toward minorities. Policing is the obvious example. But you could also look at approval and interest rates for loans. You could look at the quality of public schools for minorities. You could look at rates of home ownership. You could look at the demographic numbers of graduates from universities, law schools, medical schools, and graduate schools. You could look at demographic percentages of C-suite executives in Fortune 500 companies. You could look at pretty much anything in the United States and see the disparities. My first two years in college were a painful deprogramming of American propaganda. All my life I'd felt the effects of these things. But it's one thing to be a minority, and it's another to have all the pains catalogued and displayed in front of you.

I can live in three languages—English, Spanish, and German. As such, I could live not only in the United States, the UK, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. I could also move to countries such as Germany, Austria, or Switzerland. I could move to countries such as Mexico, Argentina, Chile, or Spain. I could certainly move to other countries with cosmopolitan cultures, where English is the *lingua franca*. But in considering leaving the United States, I face this dilemma: (1) Do I stay here in the United States where I can find small pockets in cities where I can be fluid in the culture but where I also face consistent systemic violence, or (2) Do I move somewhere where the system will facilitate my flourishing as an abstract human but where the particularities of my culture and identity will be misunderstood and I'll constantly feel that I don't belong? Which do you pick? (1) The society where your friends and family are and where you (usually) won't be slurred in public, but where everything is set up against you, or (2) the society where you'll face the most obtuse forms of stereotyping and the most casual use of slurs but where everything will protect your ability to lead a safe and secure life? Generally speaking, consent requires that one could answer in whatever way and not face ill effects; free choice requires the absence of overwhelming negative pressures that force you to one side. Generally speaking, though, my choice to stay in the United States doesn't feel like a choice that I can get right; rather, it feels like a decision that I have to make and then make right.

There are real consequences to the language, though. And here I think especially of my trans and nonbinary homies. They face large rates of being kicked out from their families and being assaulted. And if I, as a simple gesture, can use "Latine" or "Latinx" or whatever term makes them feel more at home in the world, then whatever practical or aesthetic inconvenience I might face pales in comparison to helping them. I only wish that others saw the issue the same way. And if language can give me a weapon to feel better about myself, or make my friends feel better about themselves, then I'll use it. And if language can mobilize a movement or make occasions for conversations about race, gender, sexuality, class, and politics, then I'll use it. And given that this conversation has already done these things in my life, I think that my concern for the labels of Latine people holds up to casual criticisms that many people voice. Language can create a home, so I build a place for myself and my homies. Even if I understand that a single home is not enough to compensate for a community, that a single community doesn't make up a country.

3. WHAT WORDS CANNOT DO

I think that we should call ourselves Latine, especially when talking with each other. I think this is relatively important. But I also know that this gesture won't solve many philosophical or existential debates. And maybe that's OK. Let me explain.

There is an important and unassailable way in which I know who I am. I'm the son of Glenn Trujillo and Katrina Gutierrez. I'm the grandson of the Trujillo, Valdez, Lovato, and Quintana families. I'm the product of people who worked industries that emerged from railroads and oil fields. I grew up with the infinite horizon of the Llano Estacado that underlined the sun and clouds and stars that themselves underlined my family's devotion to the divine. But not the divine of churches, though we certainly attended many Roman Catholic ones. I mean more the divine of *tortillas* and *chiles* and cruising to oldies on the radio. If being Latine is a way of life, I can live it. Moreover, I like living it, and I miss living it whenever I can't.

But I didn't generate myself, and my family members are not the only ones who I interact with. So, there's also a sense in which I don't know who I am. At least not in a demographic way that seems to be important for institutions and people outside of my community. Many just want to get to know you, asking (innocently enough), "Where are you *really* from?" or "What part of you is Mexican again? I'm just not seeing it." I'm not opposed to labels, but no one can decide on one for me, and it's been this way since my beginning. It says "Spanish" in both boxes 7 and 13 of my State of Texas Certification of Vital Record, which asked my father and mother (respectively) to input their *races*. It also says "Hispanic" on the same document in boxes 8b and 14b, where Texas asked for more specifics (verbatim: "If yes [of Spanish origin], specify Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, etc."). In most other boxes on legal forms today, I check "White" for race and "Hispanic" for ethnicity. This is a common experience among Latines. If being Latine is having words that describe your origins with precision, I don't know that I'll ever be able to meet that standard. And I don't think that that's an important standard for determining who's Latine.

To better understand who I am, I asked my grandmother Rosa where we were from originally, and she said, "Here." For her, that meant Northeastern New Mexico. That is true for her (and by extension true for me). But I know I also have a great grandmother Adela Weldon of direct Irish descent. As I asked further, no one in my family could answer very definitively, in Spanish or English. But I felt different things from different members when asking—mystery, uncertainty, and regret; pride, shame, and rage. Mystery and uncertainty usually preceded regret. My elders grieved not asking more of their elders to retain the family history. But we also lacked opportunity since my lineage is full of young deaths and departures, and if you know anything of Mexican or Native peoples in the Southwest, we weren't exactly encouraged to maintain our cultures. Genocide, lynching, and other forms of harassment have a way of making people devalue, underemphasize, and (eventually) forget their history. Pride and shame and rage I can only speculate about—family secrets (shame), survival (pride), family remembering being called *mojados* (rage), family fighting those slurs (pride and shame), family always teaching the kids to pronounce their last names with diction and enthusiasm (pride), even if many only spoke Spanglish (shame). I took a DNA test hoping that science might help. Results: 41 percent Iberian, 5.5 percent Irish, 35.3 percent Indigenous American, and the other 18.2 percent from all over the world. No, not much clarification there either. I mean, did I really think that blood quanta would help me when I know what such rules about bloodlines did in North America? Shame. After all, do the labels matter more than knowing how to conjure a feast from beans, *chiles*, *manteca*, flour, and hot water? Pride.

I hope that you don't take this as academic self-indulgence. I hope you take this as me expressing that I'd like very much to know what to call myself. But when people give me available options, I must often guess. Boxes must be checked, after all. However, the black-and-white checkmarks offer only artificial clarity. The monochromaticity of the symbol cannot capture the flushed and vital referent.

There's magic in words. But philosophy has traditionally paid most attention to the locutionary utterances, the naïve realism of words latching onto reality like atomic numbers do to atoms. Only recently in the millennia-long history of philosophy have philosophers started to consider illocutionary and perlocutionary magics, the ways that our words can express speaker intentions and have effects on audiences that go beyond quasi-scientific reference. And while I do think that language matters, I want to emphasize that anyone who prioritizes the locutionary over the illocutionary and perlocutionary isn't a neutral party. Race and ethnicity cannot be reduced to biology, even if it plays a part. Race and ethnicity (and the terms that we use to understand and shape them) also include social, historical, moral, and political components that express where we've come from, where we are now, and where we're headed. They mark boundaries with varying degrees of porosity. They point toward values with varying degrees of realizability.

When using Latino/a/@/x/e, I have all of these things in mind. But I know that one word can mean radically different things in different contexts. Reliance on context doesn't evacuate meaning from terms. It just means that we need to know when we're speaking in restricted domains with formal definitions and logical connectives about academic abstractions. And we need to know when we're not doing this, but instead are speaking to souls and hopes and people outside of scholarly communities who we need to coordinate with. This meta-awareness of the language and what it can and cannot do is what will keep our moral, social, and political expectations in check about what a certain word has done or might do.

It would be nice if I had a magic word that made my problems go away. But I don't think that there will ever be a term that can find my historical origins or undo the forced assimilation. Sometimes histories are destroyed. Sometimes there is only going forward. I don't think that there's a term that will buy me automatic credibility with people I meet. I will be Latine enough for some but not for others, both for kin and strangers. I don't think that there will ever be a term that will matter more than my cultural knowledge and practical experience. Give me orthopraxy over orthodoxy. I don't think that there will be a term for all Latines here and now, much less for who we become later. And yet we need to call ourselves something, or others will make that decision for us.

Words are as helpful as borders—they shift throughout history and get policed on all sides; they get reinforced and crossed, in ways public and clandestine; they get praised and cursed and dismissed as social constructs. Like borders, our words can't be wished away, nor can they have their material effects ignored. Borders are constantly negotiated. But if we can make pyramids and poetry from mud and beans and corn, I think we can make something of this situation too.

NOTES

1. It's also certainly possible that we Latines might be conscientious of race here in the USA or class in Mexico, but that we have much more work to do in terms of combatting misogyny or homophobia. Intersectionality matters. And membership in a minoritized class certainly excuses no one from practicing self-critical and community-focused criticism, which includes scrutinizing why one uses Latinx or not.
2. An anonymous reviewer offered two fantastic suggestions here. First, the reviewer asked about "Latin American," which seems less fraught than the other terms in its political implications and has direct English and Spanish words. And second, the reviewer emphasized their own position of letting people use whatever term they feel best suits them. I addressed these concerns as best I could in the word limit, but they deserve more words.
3. A more comical example might be the use of stereotypes within Latine spaces. This is something I have no idea how to make sense of. I know that for my parents and older generations, context would determine whether it was safe to lean into the boots and big hats, or flannel and Chuck Taylors, or tortillas and beans, or whether you opted for less stereotypical stuff. Even for my generation, Latine kids in high school would separate pretty clearly between the rural kids that dress like *vaqueros* with boots and jeans and straw hats, and the kids who dressed like *cholos* with pressed Dickies and Nike Cortezes and oversized polos or graphic t-shirts, and the kids who wore Doc Marten dress boots, jeans, polos, and baseball caps. When it came down to it, we were all Latine. But we let it show in different ways. I think it's been a big move, then, for millennials in the United States to reclaim traditional motifs such as *nopales*, *luchadores*, *pan dulce*, tortillas, etc., maybe in ways most basically displayed on social media accounts such as We Are Mitú. But I have seen growing dissatisfaction among my zoomer students and their peers on the internet with dismissing all of the traditional motifs as cheesy millennial pandering. Even if the identity remains consistent, the expression shifts and gets negotiated, especially across generations.

No Latinx without Afro-Latinx: A Desideratum for Accounts of Latinidad

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this essay is to articulate a specific desideratum for any theory of Latinidad, namely, that there is no adequate conception of Latinx without an attendant conception of Afro-Latinx.[1] If the term "Latinx" is going to be retained as a meaningful category of social identity, it is essential that it include Afro-Latinx as a core element. It is essential, first, because to do so is historically and conceptually honest, and second, because this allows Latinidad and Latinx to be understood in their fullness rather than in ways that hide and exclude certain constituent elements.[2] This articulation entails critical genealogical attention to the role of racist, antiblack, and colorist histories within the emergence and construction of Latinidad, up to the present and as an ongoing process.[3] Those histories

have excluded, sidelined, distorted, belittled, dwarfed, and otherwise rendered invisible or insignificant African-descended peoples and cultures and their participation and contributions in and to the construction and development of Latinx identity. In contrast, we seek to show that such excluded realities nevertheless remain defining features of Latinx, and remain so despite the exclusion and partly characterized by it.

In order to be reflective of those whom it purports to describe in the US and elsewhere in the hemisphere, the term Latinx must be plastic enough to encompass the many internal differences, and even antagonisms, between its different constituent parts. Within it, we argue here in particular, it must include its Afro-descended history, which includes not just African-descended people but also a denial of the influences of African-descended culture writ large.

Our central claim here, then, is that a certain *African-descendedness* is constitutive of Latinidad in multiple registers, including history, cultural practices, and social identificatory processes despite Latinidad's pernicious exclusionary history. We bring a specific argument to bear on, and with regard to, that pernicious history: we draw and seek to understand an explicit link between Afro-Latinx and mestizaje.[4] Briefly, mestizaje has historically been one of the most decisive ways in which Afro-Latinidad has been sidelined. Reclaiming and centering Afro-Latinx involves grappling with the role of mestizo identity, the ways it's been understood and played out, in erasing it.[5]

II. CRITICAL GENEALOGY

We are interested here in the historical constitution of present social realities. In describing our process as a critical genealogy, we focus on the ever-evolving historical repertoire of socially meaningful concepts associated with Latinidad for certain sets of peoples, as well as the array of actions available for and allowed to them. That is, we are looking for the conditions that gave rise to what has emerged historically around the concepts and identities associated with Latinidad, as they developed socially, politically, etc.[6] These are the overarching historical givens that at any particular moment structure action and events, the conditions immanent to historical reality, that are also nonetheless products of antecedent events and actions. We are asking: What is the historical ontology—"not only 'material' objects but also classes, kinds of people, and, indeed, ideas . . . the coming into being of the very possibility of some objects"—that we find within Latinidad?[7]

Bernard Harcourt, writing specifically about the importance of *critical* genealogy, advises, "Rather than sorting critical philosophers into these taxonomies [validating, debunking, problematizing, and possibilizing], arguing over the essence of their method, or asking us to take sides, I believe it would behoove us instead to conceive of the different types of genealogy rather as different modalities that we can draw upon in combination or serially, together or at different times, *to achieve the objective of critical philosophy, namely to augment and nourish our praxis*."[8] Harcourt focuses his conception of genealogy on whether or not it is useful for action, and whether that action is productive or unproductive.[9] This is alongside the more traditional view of genealogy, which understands it to be doing the work of uncovering, demystifying, or problematizing concepts or objects through analysis of their historical unfolding,[10] or of understanding the development of meanings.[11]

Such a focus on action is important for us because we recognize that it is not only how we understand concepts like Latinx that matter for the material realities and lives experiences of persons, but what we *do* with those concepts. Our understanding of concepts takes shape, pragmatically speaking in what we do, in our current practices. And since current social practices regarding Latinx and Afro-Latinx are continuously being decided and negotiated, there is a place to see how the available concepts and categories do the work of inclusion or exclusion, or contribute to personal and social identification or of alienating people. In this sense, critical genealogical work has an outlet of action and practice that we are interested in.

III. FROM INHERITANCE AND IMPOSITION TO TRANSFORMATION

There are well-known critiques of a whole host of concepts related to the very idea of Latin America, including Latinidad, Latinx, and mestizaje. The term "Latin America" itself originates in French usage. As Linda Martín Alcoff has pointed out, the terminology "Latin" was introduced by the French to demarcate French Catholic colonial territories from Anglo-Saxon ones.[12] In the 1830s French economist Michel Chevalier was the first to use the term "Latin race" to refer to the people in the Americas. The term "Latin America" was first used in writing decades later by Chilean politician Francisco Bilbao at a conference in Paris. Finally, in 1856 an alliance was formed across "Latin America" in opposition to the US recognizing William Walker's regime in Nicaragua. From this very brief mapping of moments in which the term was mobilized, we can see it shift from European imposition to "local" usage and endorsement for political ends.[13]

As such history clearly illustrates, these are all colonial terms, and we must grapple with their coloniality. We cannot simply reject them because of their unsavory history, a move that strikes us as an attempt to divest from an ineliminable historical connection to things. Our critical account begins with these histories and the details of their emergence in the crucible of colonialism, which must be reckoned with. That colonial context is antiblack and colorist, and non-European populations, African-descended and Indigenous, have been excluded from the construction of Latinidad.[14] Those exclusions are the conditions of possibility for colonial conceptions of Latinidad and Latinx identity.

The history of the concept of Latinidad was built on drawing social and political distinctions relative to a center of whiteness, Europeanness or civilization. In that context, from enslavement and colonialism in the Americas and the creation of the very idea of Latin America; from the *criollos* to the adoption of a Pan-Latino identity against colonialism; to contemporary erasure of Afro-Latinx folks in the United States, African-descended peoples have been

systematically excluded from definitions of Latinidad. A similar pattern appears when exploring the twentieth-century question of Afro-latinidad that interested many black intellectuals, for it takes place against the background of mestizaje.[15]

There are myriad figures whose work is illustrative of this history, though here we focus on only one of the most prominent figures in the construction of Latinidad, Simón Bolívar.[16] Bolívar's identifications first as *criollo* and then as *mestizo* in his Jamaica Letter and Angostura Address, respectively, shed light on the dynamics of identity construction of certain forms of anticolonialism, as he attempts to consolidate a new continental identity by excluding *both* Europeans and African-descended peoples, as well as distancing himself from any Indigenous populations.

In particular, the Angostura Address shifts to emphasize mestizaje as a solution to the problem of governing in the Americas without a shared nationality, people foreign in their own land: "We . . . do not even retain the vestiges of our original being. We are not Europeans; we are not Indians; we are but a mixed species of aborigines and Spaniards. Americans by birth and Europeans by law, we find ourselves engaged in a dual conflict: we are disputing with the natives for titles of ownership, and at the same time we are struggling to maintain ourselves in the country that gave us birth against the opposition of the invaders."[17] 'We' here means *criollos*: he rejects indigenous peoples and he leaves Africans and African-descended identity excluded entirely.

In this brief foray into Bolívar's famous words, we can already see what Alejandro Vallega calls the "abyssal truth" Bolívar is grappling with.[18] Namely, that identity in the Americas will be marked by an essential "uprootedness" and "self-negation" that brings with it a "perpetual internal violence."[19] The relation between identity-formation and violence is apparent in the development of mestizaje, to which we now turn.

IV. MESTIZAJE

Any consideration of Latinx identity and the development of Latinidad must grapple with mestizaje, which, as the foregoing example of Bolívar illustrates, is intertwined with the place of its African influences. Alcoff highlights the Spanish acceptance of mestizaje, though she is less forthcoming about the underside of that acceptance: the denial of Blackness as an acceptable part of Latinidad.[20] Even a text as potentially radical as Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* has been read as excluding Black geographies from its analysis.[21] This is the idea that Anzaldúa's alternative geography does not and cannot generalize, and must be read as a specifically Chicanx geography alongside an alternative Black geography.[22] According to Madelaine Cahause, the two begin from different places and historical moments, and as such grapple with different particular problems. Ultimately, the Black geographies that are foundational for Anzaldúa's Chicanx geography, due to the relationship between 1441 when the Portuguese first arrived in what we now call Senegal, Columbus's arrival in the Caribbean in 1492, and the Spanish colonization of what we now call Mexico in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are absent from her framework.[23]

It is not only as a vector of antiblack racism that mestizaje has been criticized. In this very publication, in his "Letting Go of Mestizaje: Settler Colonialism and Latin American/Latinx Philosophy," Julio Covarrubias argues that the concept itself is an instance of epistemic injustice against both Indigenous people as well as "*mestizos*" themselves.[24,25] His argument is that mestizaje as an identity and the idea of *indigenismo* that came along with it were products of colonial state-formation that on the one hand prioritized the integration and assimilation of Indigenous peoples in the name of national cohesion, and on the other hand treated Indigenous ways of life as static and frozen in the past. The result is an erasure of contemporary Indigeneity as well as a denial of Indigenous futures.[26] In the same vein, it is instructive to note that the erasure of African-descended realities—people, cultural practices—can be inscribed in the twentieth century in the context of "the idea that race was not an important dimension of Latin American societies."[27] In the context of the "racial democracies" of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the groups that made up societies in Latin America were seen by the powers of the state as social classes rather than other sorts of groups, some of which would clearly be races.

Additionally, Jared Sexton argues that the general discourse of multiracialism, of which mestizaje is surely a form, is itself a move to exclude Blackness. As he writes in *Amalgamation Schemes*, "Impurity and hybridity, in and of themselves, are no guaranteed challenge to the racial orders of white supremacy and antiblackness—such are their conditions of possibility."[28] At the very least, Sexton and Cahuas set some parameters of what any conception of *mestizaje* must live up to, and that our account of Afro-Latinidad hopes to reach.

Mestizaje is an important locus of our critical-genealogical approach, which aims is to provide an apt, epistemologically and ontologically anticolonial version of a *constellation of mixings* that reflects the historical realities involved. Our positive proposal is that mestizaje and other hemispheric modes of racial mixture should be understood in a way that embraces not only their internal differences between their constituent parts but also the antagonisms.[29]

In charting this path, we are aiming to address how the development of mestizaje has gone hand in hand with the erasure of any connection to Africa. This is a distinct, though parallel, wrong to the one that Covarrubias highlights, namely, that erasure of "contemporary Indigenous complexities . . . renders indigeneity no longer fluid or dynamic or coeval: to be Indigenous is to exist in the past."[30] While indigeneity on his view is frozen and tied to the past by mestizaje, we are focused on how mestizaje has rendered its African-descendedness completely unseen or erased.

Accordingly, we understand mestizaje pragmatically to appreciate the cultural, linguistic, religious, etc. interconnections that occur under the umbrella of

Latinidad, while avoiding any ontological commitments relating to purity and mixture. Indeed, as Sexton has also pointed out, "The general is *always already mixed*, if only because it inheres in a restless contradistinction to the particular as its most fundamental differential term."[31] Or, in complementary fashion, as Marisol de la Cadena writes, "A multiplicity of meanings can be uttered through the same word, at the same time—yet mostly only some of them get to be heard."[32] We reject, then, any logic of mixture that is dependent on purity, that is, on the mixing of supposed pure elements. According to our pragmatic approach, when someone is identified as Latinx, it is an identification based on a set of possibilities for action and understanding and grounded in the context in which the identification occurs, which includes realities such as power relations and histories of oppression. This is opposed to an approach focused merely on categorization that essentializes identities.

With that approach in mind, we highlight three paths forward for thinking through the transformation of mestizaje against its explicit antiblack political and social history. First, Marisol de la Cadena, who develops a genealogy of the terms "mestizo" and "mestizaje," argues that the terms are hybrid in multiple ways. She argues that in the different meanings of mestizaje some appear to be dominant, while others "circulate either marginally or cloaked under dominant meanings." That exploration allows her "to rescue mestizos from mestizaje—and thus challenge the conceptual politics (and the political activism) that all too simplistically, following a transitional teleology, purify mestizos away from indigeneity."[33,34] For us, this means that the story of mestizaje is both its overarching political history of identity formation through exclusion, as well as the myriad ways that it is lived and negotiated in everyday life in very different ways in different places, as evidenced by Cadena's recounting of her experience as a Peruvian encountering a Native American man in Arizona.[35]

Second, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui offers an alternative to mestizaje through the Aymara idea of *ch'ixi* (chehe), which may be translated as "motley" and points to the color seen as unified from a distance but that reveals its parts up-close: "the notion of *ch'ixi*, like many others (*allwa*, *anyi*), reflects the Aymara idea of something that is and is not at the same time. It is the logic of the included third."[36] What is *ch'ixi* has a potential of undifferentiation that can bring opposites together without combining them. *Ch'ixi* is not autonomous, it entails a type of heteronomy that "alludes . . . to the idea of muddling, to a loss of sustenance and energy . . . it is feeble and intermingled."[37] But, importantly, it is *not* hybrid. Rivera opposes what she calls the "hybridity lite" championed by scholars like Néstor García Canclini, a type of amphibian identity that one can use to "enter and leave modernity." The mestizo type of existence, understood as *ch'ixi*, is for Rivera not the new product, a mixture of two things, that harmoniously preserves, in some form, its two components. Instead, *ch'ixi* lives in the "coexistence of multiple cultural differences that do not extinguish but instead antagonize and complement each other. Each one reproduces itself from the depths of the past and relates to others in a contentious way."[38,39]

Lastly, Maria Lugones argues that the logic of purity underlies our understanding of racial categories, and even of mestizaje when conceived as a certain type of mixture—the lazy metaphor of the melting pot. For Lugones, we should reject the logic of purity and replace it with curdling. She focuses on the type of dual personality that is produced by an ethnocentric and racist culture, one example of which is the Chicano, whom she describes as "the curdled or mestizo person."[40] Lugones argues against both assimilation and authenticity, each being a "mythical portrait" that actually obscures reality.[41] Her response is to invoke "curdle-separation" as an embrace of heterogeneity and of not attempting to overcome any internal differentiation of the self. It "is not something that happens to us but something we do . . . in resistance to the logic of control, to the logic of purity."[42]

These three thinkers show us inventive ways to grapple with the complex history of mestizaje that in no way undermines facing up to the pernicious role that it has played in, on the one hand, the construction of Latinx identity, and on the other hand, simultaneously, the exclusion of Afro-Latinidad. Our treatment of mestizaje, hybridity, the motley and muddled and curdled, and ch'ixi is threefold. First, it recognizes the historical and contemporary antiblack deployments of mestizaje, while insisting that they not be taken as definitional of the potential of mestizaje itself. Second, we contest the role of "purity" in identity. A richer take on the cultural, ethnic, and racial hybridity of people in Latin America and their descendants in the US is itself a breaking down of the seemingly clear lines that demarcate race and ethnicity which have been articulated as instances of some sort of purity. Following Sexton, all conceptions of purity are always already mixed. Finally, although it is an identity central to understanding of the Latin American and Latinx peoples, it need not necessarily be claimed as an identity by all individuals there even though it may be available to them.

The relationship of Latinidad with Afro-Latinidad has often been one of antagonism and exclusion, and yet also of coexistence that yields a motley landscape. Instead of shying away from the tensions, we invite the aforementioned three paths—a doubly hybrid mestizaje, the Aymara, high-Andean notion of ch'ixi, and the curdled—to help us understand the contentious motley that constitute Latinidad as a constellation of mixings.

V. AFRO-LATINX

The relationship between Afro-Latinx and mestizaje has been one of exclusion within, as we have seen. Often, the notion of mestizaje has been used to affect that exclusion, inextricably linking Afro-Latinidad and mestizaje. We have termed this excluded within *African-descendedness* to counteract the English-language word for Latinidad, Latinness. The importance of the choice is reflected in the fact that, although Afro-Latinx identity is usually applied to a Black Latinx person, phenotype and skin color do not exhaust the identity. The concept of Afro-Latinx exceeds the narrow meaning of race as phenotype or skin color, thus going beyond the identification of Afro-Latinidad and Blackness. We are aiming here for a broader identity concept that allows for other elements to be part of the

identity, and which may be context-sensitive, such that they may apply to people in different ways in different contexts.

In different contexts—whether New York City, Miami, Santo Domingo, or anywhere else—the vectors of meaning within which being Latinx operates are ever-shifting. Maria Lugones writes about navigating her experiences across different contexts in terms of "worlds." She writes, "In describing my sense of a 'world,' I am offering a description of experience, something that is true to experience even if it is ontologically problematic."[43] Ontology is generally thought of as being or not being. Applied to personality traits or to individuals, the thought is that we are a thing or we are not a thing—we have an attribute or we do not. Against this, Lugones is writing of her experience of being *both*, of being and not being something, here the example being a stereotypical Latina as opposed to simply being a Latina. In that way, she inhabits multiple worlds and has to navigate moving between them. Her real lived experience, then, runs counter to the ontological entreaty to be or to not be. Her distinction between the experiential and the ontological is helpful here. It highlights the fact that there are often tensions between individual experiences and the overarching, historically constructed concepts like Latinx or Afro-Latinx, such that the latter can never fully inhabit or manifest the former. As a result, some behaviors or self-conceptions can seem ethically puzzling or performatively problematic, or ontologically problematic as Lugones describes.

Latinidad has erased or excluded Blackness, both politically and conceptually, which underscores the necessity of grappling with antiblackness in any attempt to understand Latinidad, and with it, to illuminate the options of jettisoning or retaining it. But it should also underscore the fact that there is no way to separate Latinidad from its links to Blackness. From the very beginning, both historically and conceptually, articulations of Latinidad and of Latin America have grappled with being "Afro." The Afro in Afro-Latinidad has functioned as a constitutive outside, denied repeatedly, both explicitly and implicitly, yet always present and determining the content of Latinidad.

Eric Bayruns García has outlined how certain situations demand the use of Afro-Latinx in certain contexts where its use brings additional explanatory power that either Latinx or Black (or others, like Dominican) do not. One way of framing the issue is that Blackness doesn't exhaust the concepts at hand or the experiences of those who navigate those concepts, and neither does Latinidad. He writes, "Even if 'Afro-Latinx' is more apt in certain cases because it yields subjects understanding that 'Latinx' does not, 'Latinx' will still be apt in many, if not more, cases because 'Latinx' will yield understanding that 'Afro-Latinx' does not similarly yield. A basic idea here is that whether an identity term is apt will depend on the event, episode or portion of social reality that a subject seeks to explain and thus understand."[44]

VI. DISTINGUISHING CONCEPT AND IDENTITY

An important upshot in arguing for the centrality—indeed, the indispensability—of Afro-Latinx for any conception of Latinx, is a distinction between concept and identity, and so our analysis operates on those two distinct levels. At the macro level, we find the history of what we now call the Americas, including its violent colonization and the collision, asymmetrical in nature, between its pre-Columbian Indigenous inhabitants, European colonizers, and the enslaved Africans and their descendants' subjection to discrimination and oppression. Here we find the discourses circulating over time that give us our inherited conceptualizations of race, place, and ethnicity, including the concepts of Latin America and of Latinidad, and more recently of Latinx.

At the micro level, we find the multitude of lived experiences of individuals and collectives throughout the hemisphere, experiences that are not always clean fits within the black/white binary but that are often made to be understood in relation to it nonetheless.[45] Sometimes white/non-white and black/non-black binaries enter the explanatory picture. Time and place determine to some degree which explanatory frame is given and whether multiple frames of reference come into conflict.

At the conceptual level, we affirm Latinidad as having always been Afro-Latinidad, a claim that means at least two things. First, the cultural history of Latinidad is incoherent and impossible to understand separate from its connection to African-descended peoples and practices.[46] Second, it means a normative call to be accountable for the racist and colonial dimensions of inheriting the history within Latinx identity, and to move forward rejecting that dimension.

Shifting from the level of concept to the level of identity, there is also an additional thing that it emphatically does *not* mean. In terms of an individual's social identity, it does not mean that nonblack Latinxs are now to be considered Black. In other words, a white Latinx person does not become an Afro-Latinx person. Yet what it does mean is that Latinx folks, of any race or ethnicity, or any combination thereof, in understanding themselves as being predicated of the concept of Latinx, exist in relation to the African-descended history we have written of here.

This is not a wholly *racial* claim, but a claim about the centrality of African-descended influence in the construction of the concepts of Latinidad and Latinx. Normatively, it is incumbent upon Latinxs to understand and grapple with this history in much the same way it is for white North Americans to grapple with the legacies of racism that structure the worlds in which they live.

There are many texts to look to, and stories to tell, that articulate the meaning of being Afro-Latinx from within, and that highlight its plurality. That path leads to particular narratives of navigating the complexities of what is often thought of as the racial paradoxes of Latinidad.[47] Pablo "Yoruba" Guzmán, one of the founding members of the radical Puerto Rican group the Young Lords Party in New York City, gives voice to this complexity when he recounts the group's coming into being. He writes,

> Even in New York, we found that on a grass-roots level a high degree of racism existed between Puerto Ricans and Blacks, and between light-

> skinned and dark-skinned Puerto Ricans. We had to deal with this racism because it blocked any kind of growth for our people, any understanding of the things Black people had gone through. So, rather than watching Rap Brown on TV, rather than learning from that and saying, "Well, that should affect me too," Puerto Ricans said, "Well, yeah, those Blacks got a hard time, you know, but we ain't going through the same thing." This was especially true for the light-skinned Puerto Ricans. Puerto Ricans like myself, who are darker-skinned, who look like Afro-Americans, couldn't do that, 'cause to do that would be to escape into a kind of fantasy. Because before people called me a spic, they called me a n****r. So that was, like, one reason as to why we felt the Young Lords Party should exist.[48]

Guzmán's forceful articulation, in the YLP newspaper, of the seeming paradox of thinking Black alongside Latinidad—of thinking Afro-Latinx identity—also points the way toward its possible overcoming.

VII. REMAINING TENSIONS

Rather than arguing that the concept of Latinx can *overcome*, *outgrow* these colonial and antiblack histories, the aim of our larger project, of which this essay is one of the building blocks, is to re-articulate the meaning of Latinx through critical analysis of the role of antiblack racism in the construction of Latinidad, and outline the ways that Afro-Latinidad is lived, felt, and experienced by Afro-Latinx people.

One's social identity has an undeniable subjective element, albeit one that exists within a public and historical context.[49] It is therefore central that any understanding of being Latinx does not erase the identity of those who understand themselves as both Latin and Black. Rather, the social identity Latinx does not require the rejection or replacement of other social identities. It is an explanatory requirement that our proposal can articulate that some Latinx folks see themselves as belonging to certain racial or ethnic groups or subgroups while Latinidad itself is neither a race nor an ethnicity.[50] In this sense, Latinidad as currently lived by many Latinx folks remains significantly racist, while Latinidad is lived by many Afro-Latinx folks as part of their identity.[51]

Consider the case of the famous Cuban singer Celia Cruz, as told by Frances Negrón Muntaner: "Given [Celia's] 'undistinguished' class origins and membership in a racial and ethnic group rarely afforded the dignity of individuality, Celia's shoes insisted on her uniqueness as a person and a performer."[52] It is worth noticing here the individual performance of someone who cannot only be said to have thought of themselves as Latin American, yet understands that given her racial and ethnic background she must act in certain ways. Shoes, for her, afforded a type of distinction that was perceived as cutting across class and race.

Cruz directs us to how Latinidad extends beyond the visual into perceptual practices. But the fact of visual racial identification is not eliminated, instead being provided for by the affordances of Latinidad. Cultural mestizaje in Latin America, and in Latinx populations more broadly, is inconceivable without its African heritage: in food, in clothing, in music, in dancing, in spoken language, and in innumerable other ways. Accordingly, the perceptual practices linked to the wide cultural backgrounds of Latinx folks are partly nonvisual. As Latinidad was being constructed in ways that explicitly excluded Indigenous and African peoples, that construction was being done using practices from those very populations being excluded and whose relation to those practices were then being effaced. Here we can think of religion, music, food, etc., which we can easily see today as making up various aspects of different Latinx cultures. The content of Latinidad was, upon inspection, thoroughly Afro and Indigenous, even as that link was being disavowed. Here, our focus on the African-descendedness of Latinidad is not only racial or phenotypical, but more broadly cultural as well.

VIII. CONCLUSION

We understand Latinidad in terms of a constellation of mixture that on the one hand calls into question any logic of purity and on the other hand makes explicitly its inheritance of *African-descendedness*, including practices surrounding food, music, and religion, to name a few, that define in large part the hybridity of Latinx folks. Latinidad is undeniably Afro-descendant. To insist on the necessity of Afro-Latinx within any articulation of Latinx is not to imply that other identities are not also at play. Be they class, sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or disability status, they are each also at play, with their specific social pragmatics. Myriad racial and ethnic categories are always at play in the lives of Latinx folks, while Latinidad itself has been constructed through interaction with those categories. This means that racial and ethnic categories are sometimes part of what being Latinx means for some, perhaps not for others. By the same token, to say that Afro-Latinx is at the heart of Latinx, when thought of at the level of persons, means that for some persons the Afro-dimension comes to infuse their social identity in a particular way.

Latinidad must be understood as a concept and an identity perpetually in tension with itself due to its political history. That tension cannot be resolved or overcome, but demands a response, which we argue must be anti-antiblack and, in a more general sense, must oppose Afro-descended exclusion, thus pointing toward the possibility of solidarity across Latinx populations, Afro-Latinx and non-Afro-Latinx. It must also acknowledge and affirm the ineliminable *co-constitutive* presences within Latinidad of a foundational African relation, and its denial down through the generations.

NOTES

1. "Latinidad" as a noun is a quality, property, or condition that refers to a sociohistorical reality that attaches to persons, customs, objects, ideas, etc. "Latinx," as an adjective, is an identity marker. To ascribe the term Latinx to someone, some thing, etc. is to claim that it partakes of Latinidad. Linking Latinx and Latinidad in this way allows us to make a broader claim than one simply about Latinx, as it most often refers to persons. Not only, then, "no Latinx without Afro-Latinx," we also want to say "no Latinidad without Afro-Latinidad." As such, we use both Latinx and Latinidad throughout, alternating when context demands. We, too, are not litigating the x of Latinx and accept it as is.

2. This essay is part of the development of our monograph-in-progress, *From Latinidad to Latinidades: The Radical Plurality of a Social Identity*. See also Arango and Burgos, "Neither Race nor Ethicity"; and Arango and Burgos, "The Social Identity Affordance View" for other elements of our under-development study of Latinidad.
3. See, e.g., the *Pew Research Center* report on *Latinos and Colorism:* "Latinos and Colorism: Majority of U.S. Hispanics Say Skin Color Impacts Opportunity and Shapes Daily Life."
4. Latinx is to Latinidad as mestizo is to mestizaje.
5. There are many examples of analyses that bring these exclusionary manifestations of mestizaje to the fore. See, for example, Ramírez, "Colonial Phantoms"; Mayes, *The Mulatto Republic*; Paulino, *Dividing Hispaniola*; Rappaport, *The Disappearing Mestizo*; Covarrubias, "Letting Go of Mestizaje"; Abreu, *Rhythms of Race*; Miller, *Rise and Fall of the Cosmic Race*; and Talante, "Fungible Indigeneity and Blackness." We discuss some of these in more detail below.
6. It may be helpful here to think of our methodology in terms of Deleuze's reception of Kant. Deleuze transposed Kant's quest for the (transcendental) conditions of possible experience to the (immanent) conditions of real experience. We understand critical genealogy to be providing something like the conditions, immanent in the historical constitution of the present, for real experience, action, and decision making at both the individual and collective level. See Daniel W. Smith, "The Conditions of the New."
7. Hacking, *Historical Ontology*, 2.
8. Harcourt, "On Critical Geology," 2.
9. Harcourt, "On Critical Geology," 16–17.
10. Harcourt, "On Critical Geology," 2.
11. De la Cadena, "Are Mestizos Hybrids?" 263.
12. Alcoff, "Latino vs. Hispanic," 401–2.
13. See Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* and Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Latin America: The Allure and Power of an Idea*. The notion of Indigeneity is entangled with colonialism in similar fashion. See Nahwilet Meissner and Whyte, "Theorizing Indigeneity, Gender, and Settler Colonialism."
14. Regarding colorism, see Quiros and Araújo Dawson, "The Color Paradigm."
15. Hooker and Guridy, "Currents in Afro-Latin American Political and Social Thought."
16. We could speak as well, for example, of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, José Martí, Samuel Ramos, José Vasconcelos, José Mariátegui, and others. The dialectic between José Enrique Rodó's influential *Ariel* and Roberto Fernández Retamar's *Calibán* is another.
17. Bolívar, "Address," 69.
18. Vallega, *Latin American Philosophy from Identity to Radical Exteriority*, 20.
19. Vallega, *Latin American Philosophy from Identity to Radical Exteriority*, 21.
20. Alcoff, "On Being Mixed."
21. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*.
22. For a proposal that articulates and centers such a geography, see García-Peña, *Translating Blackness*.
23. Cahuas, "Interrogating Absences in Latinx Theory and Placing Blackness in Latinx Geographical Thought"; see also Talante, "Fungible Indigeneity and Blackness."
24. Covarrubias, "Letting Go of Mestizaje," 4; emphasis his.
25. For the relationship between genealogy and epistemic standing see Srinivasan's "Genealogy, Epistemology and Worldmaking."
26. Covarrubias, "Letting Go of Mestizaje," 4.
27. de la Fuente and Andrews, "The Making of a Field: Afro-Latin American Studies," 2.
28. Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes*, 35.
29. Miller, *Rise and Fall of the Cosmic Race*; Wade, "Repensando el mestizaje"; Wade, "Rethinking Mestizaje"; Wade, "Race, Ethnicity, and Technologies of Belonging"; Lugones, "Purity, Impurity, and Separation."
30. Covarrubias, "Letting Go of Mestizaje," 5.
31. Sexton, *Amalgamation Schemes*, 24.
32. De la Cadena, "Are Mestizos Hybrids?" 261.
33. De la Cadena, "Are Mestizos Hybrids?" 262.
34. The complexities of Latinidad relate in a variety of ways to the drawing of racial lines, which can play out very differently given changes in context. There is the familiar black/white binary. There is also a (i) black/non-black binary, as well as a (ii) white/non-white binary. All three can make sense as the explanatory framework for understanding a given context. Furthermore, again central to the subject of Latin America and Latinidad, (i) indigenous people are distinct from black people, and not all mestizos are black. In (ii) some mestizos are white, but certainly all indigenous people aren't white. Lastly, of course, these different ways of carving up the racial polarities of a given situation can come into conflict. A fuller articulation of these different binaries is not possible here.
35. De la Cadena, "Are Mestizos Hybrids?" 261.
36. Rivera Cusicanqui *Ch'ixinakax Utxiwa*, 65.
37. Rivera Cusicanqui *Ch'ixinakax Utxiwa*, 65.
38. Rivera Cusicanqui *Ch'ixinakax Utxiwa*, 66.
39. Similar to Rivera Cusicanqui's notion of *ch'ixi* is Fernando Ortiz' argument that *ajiaco*—a stew-like dish that receives different names across the Caribbean—offers a rich analogy for understanding the diverse composition of the Cuban people. He writes, "Being an ajiaco, its people is not a finished stew, but rather a constant cooking. From the dawn of its history until the hours that now scurry by, the pot of Cuba has always known the renewing entrance of exogenous roots, fruits, and meats, an incessant gush of heterogeneous substances. This is why the composition is changed and cubanidad has a different flavor and consistency depending on whether it is scooped from the bottom, from the fat belly of the pot, or from its mouth, where the vegetables are still raw and the clear broth bubbles." See Ortiz, "The Human Factors of Cubanidad," 463. We thank Sergio Gallegos for this suggestion.
40. Lugones, "Purity, Impurity, and Separation," 134.
41. Lugones, "Purity, Impurity, and Separation," 136.
42. Lugones, "Purity, Impurity, and Separation," 144.
43. Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception," 89.
44. Bayruns García, "Afro-Latinx, Hispanic and Latinx Identity."
45. In our view, social identities are embodied pragmatic realities to be investigated in actual social life, where historical and political dimensions are central and in which lived experience is listened to, without reducing social identities to those experiences. This is a deflationary view open to the plasticity and multidimensionality of social identities. Our broader view on social identities, including those under the umbrella of Latinidad, is articulated using the notion of social affordances: a possibility for action or interaction within a given social niche, where such possibility is prompted and constrained (but not fully defined) by the objective, perceivable reality of a thing (a person, a ritual, etc.), while also being partly defined by the properties of the thing relative to the perceiver or agent (for a fuller sense of our view of both social identities in general and of Latinidad in particular see Arango and Burgos, "Neither Race nor Ethnicity"; "The Social Identity Affordance View: A Theory of Social Identities."
46. There are many studies exploring the African-descended contributions to the culture of the region. Those attempts have been well documented, focusing "on black religion, dance, linguistics, and other cultural forms, or on community studies" (de la Fuente and Andrews, "The Making of a Field: Afro-Latin American Studies," 6). See, e.g., Juncker, *Afro-Cuban Religious Arts*; Feldman, *Black Rhythms of Peru*; Abreu, *Rhythms of Race*; Flores, *From Bomba to Hip-Hop*. One example that the reader

may find illustrative is the history of tango. Its connections with African rhythms and its long path to being adopted by many as a symbol of Argentinidad are explored by Marylin Grace Miller, *Tango in Black and White*. According to Alejandro de la Fuente and George Reid Andrews, historically these studies largely "left aside questions of racial inequality or discrimination, largely accepting the argument that Latin America's historical experience of racial and cultural mixture had eliminated racism and prejudice and produced societies that offered equal opportunity to all" (de la Fuente and Andrews, "The Making of a Field: Afro-Latin American Studies," 6).

47. Jones, "Blackness, Latinidad, and Minority Linked Fate," 425.

48. Young Lords Party, *Palante: Young Lords Party*, 68.

49. Our central group identity concept is that of *social identity*. See Arango and Burgos, "The Social Identity Affordance View: A Theory of Social Identities," for a detailed presentation. A few relevant points from our approach at this point are the following: first, social identities encompass both a subjective and a public aspect, and as such they carry elements of both self-conception and identification by others. Second, both aspects are contextual. The public meaning of a social identity is a function of a given social, cultural and historical situation. On the subjective side, different persons can interpret the subjective aspects of a social identity differently, even in the same social context. Third, there is a feedback loop between the subjective and the public aspects. Public understandings shape self-understanding, and a person can influence (to a limited extent) the way they are perceived by others. It is worth noting that our view aims at providing criteria for determining who counts or does not count as Afro-Latinx. An important reason is that, consistent with our view of social identities, social identification is fluid, multifaceted, and context-dependent. Additionally, our treatment of Afro-Latinidad is also about the category itself, not only about the individuals.

50. This does not entail that Latinidad is "colorblind," that there are no racial dynamics at play, just that Latinx itself is not a race or an ethnicity. A critical approach to Afro-Latinidad must distance itself from the trend that Ian Haney López has theorized as *reactionary colorblindness*, which would reject the social reality of race, in some cases replaced by a multiplicity of ethnicities. See López, "'A Nation of Minorities': Race, Ethnicity, and Reactionary Colorblindness," 990.

51. Hordge-Freeman and Veras, "Out of the Shadows, into the Dark: Ethnoracial Dissonance and Identity Formation among Afro-Latinxs."

52. Negrón-Muntaner, "Celia's Shoes," 67.

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APA STUDIES ON

Native American and Indigenous Philosophy

JOSEPH LEN MILLER, EDITOR

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FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

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In this issue of *APA Studies on Native American and Indigenous Philosophy*, we have four articles concerning ethics as it pertains to Native American and Indigenous philosophy, as well as a review of a new book on Indigenous philosophy. Each of these articles demonstrates different ways of engaging with Native American or Indigenous philosophy. From asking whether Westerners can write about Indigenous philosophy to articulating, clarifying, and defending Indigenous ethics, these four articles offer a range of ethical questions concerning engaging with Native American or Indigenous ethical concepts and frameworks.

First, we have "Can it be Ethical for a Western Philosopher to Write about Indigenous Philosophies?" by Kat Wehrheim, which, as the title suggests, offers an argument concerning what is required to engage with Indigenous philosophy as a Western philosopher. Second, we have an article by John Miller (Métis Nation), a PhD student from the University of Toronto, entitled "Obligation, Accountability, and Anthropocentrism in Second-Personal Ethics." In this article, Miller argues that the analysis of obligation we get from accounts of second-personal ethics cannot properly account for our obligations *to* nonhuman beings and ecosystems, and instead offers an account of obligation that is based on the Métis notion of w*ahkootowin* or kindship. Third, we have Áila Kel Katajamäki O'Loughlin's (Sámi) "'Surely, you don't mean *rocks*': Indigenous Kinship Ethics, Moral Responsibility, and So-Called 'Natural Objects'" in which O'Loughlin details moral responsibilities we have towards rocks using Indigenous Kinship Ethics. Lastly, E. Ornelas explains the ethics of care that inform an Indigenous abolitionism in "An Indigenous Abolitionist Ethics of Care." Ornelas argues that further articulating an abolitionist ethics of care also affirms Indigenous futurity.

These articles are followed by a review of Andrea Sullivan-Clarke's (ed.) *Ways of Being in the World: An Introduction to Indigenous Philosophies of Turtle Island* (Broadview Press). Reviewed by Dennis H. McPherson, Tracy Shields, and J. Douglas Rabb, this book contains four readings that were written specifically for the book, and other contemporary readings that cover a range of philosophical topics (i.e., metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics). As few explicitly philosophical anthologies exist concerning Native American thought, this book is a welcomed contribution to the lineage of bolstering Native American and Indigenous thought.

We are incredibly honored and grateful to include these articles and this review in our fall issue. As we look forward to future issues of the journal and further engagement with Native American and Indigenous philosophy, we hope to strike a balance between explaining Indigenous concepts and frameworks and addressing contemporary issues faced by Indigenous peoples and communities. We hope that these articles serve as a way of honoring our traditions, ideas, and ancestors, as well as serving as an invitation for readers to engage with Native American or Indigenous philosophy.

FROM THE CHAIR

Exciting Times for Native American and Indigenous Philosophy

Joseph Len Miller
WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

Hesci! This is my first issue as chair of the APA's Committee on Native American and Indigenous Philosophers, as well as the new managing editor of *APA Studies on Native American and Indigenous Philosophy*. As such, I first want to thank our former managing editor, Agnes Curry, for providing me guidance (and reminders!) in taking on this new role, as well as for her commitment to her position and our journal during her time as managing editor. Her dedication, kindness, and patience served as an inspiration for me, and, as I'm sure my colleagues will agree, her time as managing editor will be missed (note to my colleagues and the reviewers: though I will fail, I promise I'll *try* my hardest to emulate Agnes's work ethic and politeness!). I also want to thank former chair, Andrea Sullivan-Clarke (Muscogee), for her time as our chair, but also for her continual professional support throughout my career. I first met Andrea in my first year in my PhD program. Outside of the Philosophy Department at the University of Washington, Seattle, we were talking with a group of fellow graduate students, and I mentioned that I was Native American. Andrea said she was too. I asked, "What tribe?" She responded, "Muscogee." I thought she was kidding... I had never met another Muscogee outside of either my family or the state of Oklahoma. From that point on, Andrea has been a source of encouragement and (professional and emotional) support for my career. Her ambition and excitement in professional matters will be hard to replace, but I will do my best to follow in her footsteps. Okay, now, on to some updates.

APA ANNUAL MEETINGS

This year, our committee was able to host sessions at each of the annual APA meetings. At the Eastern Division meeting in New York, Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner (Luiseño and Cupeño) and I presented on an initiative that we started (along with Getty Lustila (Choctaw), Janella Baxter (Choctaw), John R. Miller, and Ashley Lance (Blue Lake Rancheria tribal member, Yurok descendant)) called *pine* (Philosophy of Indigenous Education). We had a fantastic discussion about the place of Indigenous ideas and students in philosophy courses, and we were able to make connections to people and areas of philosophy that were exciting and encouraging. In New Orleans, at the Central Division meeting, we had a fantastic, well-attended session by John R. Miller (whose article is included in this edition) and Joel Alvarez on the epistemology of dreams. Both presentations received positive feedback and engaged the attendees in conversations and exchanges that challenged common Western notions concerning the moral status of non-human animals and eco-systems and the epistemic status of dreams. During the Pacific Division meeting in Portland, we were able to host two sessions. One session was dedicated to Sullivan-Clarke's (ed.) new book, *Ways of Being in the World: An Introduction to Indigenous Philosophies of Turtle Island*, and highlighted ways of using the book in different philosophy courses (e.g., Environmental Ethics, Intro to Philosophy, etc.). The other session included incredibly engaging presentations by Ornelas and O'Loughlin (both of which are included in this issue). These presentations seemed to challenge attendees in the best possible ways by encouraging them to critically challenge their notions of moral status and the methods (e.g., incarceration) of settler colonialism. Each of these meetings and presentations helped to not only expose audiences to Native American and Indigenous philosophy but engaged them in critical conversations that challenged Western assumptions concerning normativity.

SAVAGE EDUCATION WORKSHOP

In the summer of 2023, Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner and I were able to organize and host a summer workshop—with funding from the APA's Diversity and Inclusiveness Grant—entitled *Savage Education*. This was the first iteration of the workshop, as we're hoping to have this be an annual event. The aim of each workshop is to focus on pedagogical implications of Native American boarding schools. The theme of the first workshop was "Epistemic Injustices of Native American Boarding Schools." Given its proximity to Carlisle, PA—grounds of the former Carlisle Indian Industrial School—our first workshop was held at West Chester University. As part of the workshop, we traveled to the gravesites of former Carlisle students to remember and pay our respects. Jeremy Johnson, Cultural Director of the Delaware Tribe of Indians, joined us and opened the workshop with a prayer and discussion of the history of Lënapehòkink ('Homelands of the Lenape')—the land now occupied by West Chester University. Although these topics and histories can be painful and difficult to discuss, this was an uplifting and encouraging experience. Besides being an opportunity to discuss an under-discussed topic in philosophy (e.g., the epistemic legacies of Native American educational policies), most of us had never attended a workshop in philosophy that was comprised of entirely Native American and Indigenous participants. We hope that this workshop will continue to be a source of inspiration and conversation concerning epistemic legacies of Native American boarding schools and Indigenous pedagogies.

READING GROUPS: *INDIGENOUS FICTIONS* AND *INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGIES*

There are also two virtual reading groups that were started over the past year. Both hosted by *pine*, there is an Indigenous Pedagogies Reading Group that meets in the spring (started in spring 2023) and an Indigenous Fictions Reading Group that meets in the fall. In the fall of 2023, the Indigenous Fictions group read Louise Erdrich's *Future Home of the Living God*, and in the spring of 2024 the Indigenous Pedagogies group read Vine Deloria Jr. and Daniel Wildcat's *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*. For the upcoming Indigenous Fictions group in fall 2024, the reading will be Mona Susan Power's *A Council of Dolls*. For spring 2025, the Indigenous Pedagogies group will be reading *Plantation Pedagogy: The Violence of Schooling Across Black and Indigenous Space* by Bayley J. Marquez. If you're interested in joining or hearing more about either group, please feel free to contact me at JMiller4@wcupa.edu.

NEWLAMP 2024 (NORTHEAST WORKSHOP TO LEARN ABOUT MULTICULTURAL PHILOSOPHY)

Lastly, this past June at Northeastern University in Boston, Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner helped to organize a workshop with Candice Delmas on teaching Native American and Indigenous philosophy for non-Native philosophy teachers. With funding in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): Democracy Demands Wisdom, this workshop was a weeklong event led by me, Getty Lustila, and Yann Allard-Tremblay (Huron-Wendat First Nation) from McGill University. There were over thirty participants that engaged in discussions of Indigenous philosophy texts, creation of Native American/Indigenous philosophy syllabi, and discussions concerning Native American and Indigenous philosophical concepts and ideas. I can only speak from my experience, and I won't be able to say enough here to convey my excitement and gratitude for the workshop and all those that participated, but this was an incredibly moving and encouraging week that highlighted the need for, and increasing interest in, engaging with Native American and Indigenous philosophy. Leaving the workshop, I felt rejuvenated and encouraged to keep researching, teaching, and engaging others in discussions concerning Native American philosophy. This workshop highlighted that it's not just that more people are becoming interested in Native American and Indigenous philosophy—it's that there are more and more people that are willing and wanting to engage with it in a positive and respectful manner. If you're interested in finding more info on the workshop, please visit NEWLAMP's website.

SUMMARY

Given these past events, given the number of new people that have become interested in Indigenous thought, and given the wonderful work and commitment by members of the APA's Committee on Native American and Indigenous

Philosophers, I'm incredibly optimistic about the status of Native American and Indigenous thought in philosophy. It's clear that people are interested in Native American and Indigenous thought, and I hope this issue can serve as a way of encouraging people to further engage with Indigenous scholars and ideas. To all of you contributing to these efforts by reading this issue, I'd like to say *mvto* (thank you)!

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

We invite you to submit your work for consideration for publication in *APA Studies on Native American and Indigenous Philosophy*. Work submitted goes through anonymous peer review. Our project in this journal is to engage in scholarly and pedagogical conversations that further develop this field in its integrity. We accept work that foregrounds these philosophical perspectives. We also accept work that addresses the professional and community concerns regarding Native American and indigenous philosophies and philosophers of all global indigenous nations. This is an inherently decolonial project. **We do not accept work that engages merely in comparative exercises or uses Native American and Indigenous philosophy merely to solve the philosophical or practical problems generated by Western thinking.**

We welcome comments and responses to work published in this or past issues. We also welcome work that speaks to philosophical, professional and community concerns regarding Native American and indigenous philosophies and philosophers of all global indigenous nations. Editors do not limit the format of what can be submitted; we accept a range of submission formats including but not limited to papers, opinion editorials, transcribed dialogue interviews, book reviews, poetry, links to oral and video resources, cartoons, artwork, satire, parody, and other diverse formats. In all cases, however, references should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* and include endnotes rather than in-text citations. For further information, please see the Guidelines for Authors available on the APA website. Please submit material electronically to Joseph Miller (JMiller4@wcupa.edu). For consideration for the spring 2025 issue, please submit your work by January 15, 2025.

ARTICLES

Can It Be Ethical for a Western Philosopher to Write about Indigenous Philosophies?[1]

Kat Wehrheim
INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR

1. INTRODUCTION: A LAST STEP INTERWOVEN WITH A FIRST ONE

In one way, I should have asked the above question years ago. In another, I feel relief at the sight of each further question revealing itself along the way: it is only when learning has been confined to its pre-existing comfort zone that all one's questions can be asked from the outset.[2]

As a Westerner based in the United Kingdom, I recently conducted some research in the discipline of Environmental Philosophy. The research project looked at the all-but severance of post-Enlightenment Western relationships with the more-than-human world, and asked whether and how the West might be able to learn from and with Indigenous philosophies to regenerate these relationships lost.[3] It looked at the Dialogues and at the shared ground that they found with quantum theory;[4] it looked at Viola Cordova's work and at the shared ground that she found with Spinoza's thought;[5] it looked at everyone in Anne Waters's anthology[6] and at a number of authors beyond, and at the shared ground that they found with American Pragmatism and with phenomenology.[7] Perhaps more than anything, it helped me to begin to feel more comfortable in my own skin as I argued the difference between science and scientism, which was something I had been discouraged from articulating as an undergraduate in the 1980s.

I hope I came in humility. Whether or not I did, I certainly closed in humility: to my relief, and as a corollary of the project's engagement with the participationalist paradigm underlying the areas of shared ground sketched above, I saw a conclusion emerge that predicted no similarity of experience if and when the West embarks on its own journey of regeneration. Had this been otherwise, concerns of having fallen into the trap of validation would have needed to be raised.

I was generously invited to meet a group of Indigenous philosophers in an informal setting last winter. In the near future, I am going to be seeing some of the group's members again in a more formal context. This raises questions of how I can become a good colleague to them. Although I think, with Henry Bugbee, that the answers may emerge in the act of working together,[8] I do not want this to be my only thought: engagement with existing experience need not involve expectation of encountering its exact replica.[9]

In parallel, following completion of the above research project, I continue to try and honor the final step on Gregory Cajete's list of stages when creating a new object—the step

of making the new object (in my case, the project's results) available to be used for good.[10] I ask myself how *this* can be done ethically too. Both questions, on reflection, sit within the wider issue of whether it can be ethical at all—and, if so, how—for a Western philosopher to write about Indigenous philosophies. Boundaries are certain to reveal themselves, and these will deserve to be respected.

"Define *ethical*," many might urge me now. And I find, having at least partially become disentangled from exclusively Western ways of looking at things, that I am unable to do this fully in advance. I could discuss universalized principles of deontology and of utilitarianism and of virtue ethics, and then duly apply these. I could make a case from the legalities of the issue and dismiss it as one of simply making sure everyone is cited when they should be. Much as these thoughts matter, I feel that exclusive focus on them would miss the point. In light of a participationalist paradigm that has me continuously co-creating more than it has me aiming to represent what may already be manifest,[11] part of the challenge will relate to questions arising in the living, where noun-answers based on preconceived categories will not help.[12] An honest approach must be one of engaging with dynamics as they emerge as much as it will be one of considering previously familiar states of affairs.[13] The ethics of my engagement may turn out to have more to do with Brian Burkhart's jazz analogy[14] than with a series of preconceived requirements to be ticked off a list.

However, a few points to consider have already come into view.

How can my work interact with the past wrongs of colonialism?[15] And with present-day, technically post-colonial, but actually worryingly similar injustices?[16] What good can it do, and what harm, and what circumstances are likely to nudge it towards the former? What meanings are likely to emerge from it? How can I ensure that issues of incommensurability between paradigms do not translate into my talking nonsense anyway?

The questions are interwoven, and it will not be entirely possible to answer them in sequence. I will stay with the above sequence at the beginning, and treat the remainder as the complex that it is about to show itself to be: with the remainder, I am going to progress from caveats regarding the two paradigms sharing any philosophical debate at all to thoughts relating to potentially fruitful modes of engagement.

2. PAST AND PRESENT WRONGS

I was shocked as I began to learn about past wrongs. Being based in the United Kingdom, I almost certainly understood less about these than I would expect someone to if they were based in a settler colonial state. I remember commenting to a friend at the beginning of my project that I was baffled by our European imposition of first traveling to help ourselves to other continents and now complaining about migration to ours. Vaguely knowing that there had been past wrongs then turned out not to be the same at all as learning what some of these were. I am sorry, not because I was personally present to commit these wrongs, but because they were committed on my behalf in the sense that I have been on the receiving end of privilege resulting from them to this day.

With regards to present-day wrongs, I learned that much of what used to be understood as specifically colonial injustice is still going on in technically post-colonial times.[17] I saw my project on the receiving end of one of the dynamics of its still going on, finding it accused, by some, of being "not philosophy" because it did not limit itself to Western philosophy.[18] Sharing in one of the dynamics, however, is not the same as sharing in a web of them. I have not done the latter, and it is likely that the option of doing the latter may not even be available to me:[19] I may not have an option of choosing whether I want to be courageous enough to, nor of choosing whether to assume that it would solve anything if I did. What I do hope to do is to become a colleague who contributes usefully as a way of acting responsibly on what I am learning.

Emergence of useful contribution relates to the above questions of good and of harm, of meanings, and of coherence. Vine Deloria's quip of each Indigenous family having their own resident anthropologist[20] has been echoed many times over: for example, once again at last year's Congress of the Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences at York, when stories emerged of academic practices falling short on all three of the above fronts.[21] The relevance of this point cannot be limited to the discipline of anthropology alone:[22] a philosopher cannot be assumed to be immune simply on the grounds of their being a philosopher. The questions, then, deserve a closer look.

3. WESTERN ENGAGEMENT WITH INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES: POTENTIAL GOOD, POTENTIAL HARM, AND ISSUES OF MEANING AND COHERENCE

3.A) A SERIOUS CONCERN'S MOST SERIOUS SIDE: CAN THE TWO PARADIGMS PHILOSOPHIZE TOGETHER AT ALL?

The question of whether philosophical discussion between Indigenous and Western paradigms can successfully take place at all—irrespective of whether, within this, Westerners then comment on Indigenous paradigms or only on their own—is an open one, particularly in light of the above issues of discrimination. Concerns such as Dale Turner's have been raised for good reason:[23] a philosopher is not going to argue that debating philosophies will not work unless they have seen it not working, and unless they believe that the roadblocks preventing it from working have remained in place.

Disrespect precludes the knowledge process, as Shay Welch points out.[24] Welch's point is richer and more serious than it would have been within an exclusively representationalist paradigm: within an exclusively representationalist paradigm, we would be dealing with epistemic injustice pertaining to knowledge understood as the thing known, such as, for example, that discussed by Miranda Fricker[25] (albeit, now in a context of philosophical

diversity, with a need for additional accommodation of genuine incommensurability problems,[26] some of which may be understood through the impossibility of a complete phenomenological reduction[27]). Corruption of the knowledge base (as understood from within an exclusively representationalist paradigm)[28] resulting from the above could arguably be viewed as a less serious concern here. Not much is likely to be lost if an approach fails to gain traction whose fault lines have already been shown to be too great: cherrypicking from each of the existing frameworks, or approaches of meeting in an imaginary middle of the existing, have been dismissed for being doomed from the beginning, as all that is likely to emerge is incoherence and potentially more domination.[29]

There is more at stake than this, however: when Welch points out that disrespect precludes the knowledge process, the wording chosen, as well as the fact of her statement being made in the context of her book discussing performative knowledge processes, demonstrates that her concern relates to more than just to Western conceptions of epistemic injustice in a representationalist paradigm. It is also Merleau-Ponty's weaving of the network that carries our existence,[30] and the playing of Brian Burkhart's above jazz, which disrespect is going to preclude from taking place. Where there is no respect, but where there is, instead, objectification, agency cannot move into the relationships concerned, because the objectifying partner is, in the act of objectifying, retaining unilateral control.[31]

It is at this point that a crucial dimension to Dale Turner's concern is revealed. To the extent that universalist disrespect remains in place, it is not only the above, inappropriate cherrypicking from the existing which is going to be prevented: it is also potentially fruitful, shared learning and creation of new paths towards liveable neighborliness which is going to be short-circuited.

I am going to argue, however, that it is the disrespect that needs to go, not the engagement. Once it has, there may be hope of Brian Burkhart's above jazz being played, and of Merleau-Ponty's next network being woven skillfully enough to carry our neighborly existence.

3.B) HUMILITY, THE MIND-BODIES OF CABBIES AND VIOLINISTS, AND A PRAGMATIC THOUGHT WITH A SMALL p: CAN IT BE ETHICAL FOR THE WEST TO ASK FOR HELP OPENING OUR PARACHUTES?

The post-Enlightenment West has, through our own fault as we struggled to distinguish between the science enabling us to have vaccination programs on the one hand and the scientism preventing us from seeing the wood for the trees on the other,[32] spent five hundred years largely segregated from the subjective company of the more-than-human world. Our interspecies relationships have mostly been based on objectification,[33] and our openness to interaction with the sacred appears to have narrowed, as pre-Enlightenment expectations of the inclusion of shared meaning-making in interspecies relationships[34] gave way to post-Enlightenment prevalence of dogmatised forms of interaction[35] with what has been referred to by Sa'ke'j Henderson as a "noun-God."[36] If we were to seek attunement in interspecies kinship, there is every possibility that we would, at least until we had embarked on a period of retraining, find that we had, through lack of practice, deprived ourselves not only of role models and of Wittgensteinian riverbeds in this regard, but also of some aspects of the necessary neurophysiological makeup.[37]

Intolerance emerged as a corollary of universalist near-reduction of the world's dynamics to those of but one familiar set of billiard balls.[38] The trouble with this is not that Newtonian physics is suddenly "wrong":[39] the trouble starts when we work on the assumption, and expect others to, that Newtonian physics must be all that there is. Indigenous societies have, as a result, through our Western fault as discussed above, also experienced gaps in their opportunity to continuously renew and keep alive their rhythms of interaction in interspecies kinship. These gaps have been imposed rather than chosen, and have therefore understandably been unwelcome and, wherever possible, duly resisted.[40] The resulting smaller gap in intellectual, emotional, embodied, and spiritual affinity means that Indigenous understandings of philosophical concepts such as agency in relationship are likely to be richer among Indigenous philosophers than in Western philosophical circles by and large, and it means that Indigenous philosophers, as well as their Indigenous friends and families without formal philosophical training, are on average likely to become more easily reaccustomed to attunement in hearted, minded, embodied, and spiritual interspecies kinship.[41]

The West would be foolish not at least to try and learn from this attitude of respectful responsiveness, just as we would be negligent if we failed to acknowledge that we ought to. It is not only our own, Western well-being in relationship with our own non-human kin in Western—in my case, European—localities that is at stake here. It is also time for a much-needed spur to become better neighbors to those currently impacted, potentially in localities many miles from ours, by our overgrazing of the world's climate commons.[42]

There remains, of course, the unfairness of our having pushed everyone off a climate cliff, and of our now asking those who did not do the pushing to show us how to open our parachutes. There also remains, however, the even greater unfairness of *not* asking, when we already know that our impact at the bottom of the cliff will destroy our homes for everyone.[43]

3.C) HOW CAN THE PRAGMATIC QUESTION OF OUR FALLING OFF THE CLIMATE CLIFF INTERACT FRUITFULLY WITH PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE BETWEEN PARADIGMS?

Attempts have been made by contemporary Western science to learn from physical expressions of Indigenous relationships with non-humans alone, thus once again severing engagement with the physical from engagement with questions of meaning. Outcomes have been found to display the characteristics discussed in the context of

inappropriate cherrypicking from the existing above.[44] I would argue, with the Indigenous philosophers so far referenced, that the two above issues are inextricably related, and that at least two dimensions to this relatedness are relevant here.

Firstly, when Viola Cordova asks her three philosophical questions of what the world is, of what it is to be human, and of what the role of a human is,[45] it is only in the very first instance of post-Enlightenment Western perception that the three questions may appear anthropocentric and thus largely unrelated to questions of kinship with the more-than-human world. They are not: this not only becomes clear through other authors' works referenced (for example, Brian Burkhart's above *Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land*), but also through Cordova's own (for example, her above "Ethics: The We and the I"). Cordova's philsophical questions may use the word "human," but they use it in the knowledge that to be human is to be inextricably interrelated with those who are not.

Secondly, as shown in the context of terminology at the beginning of this paper, in a paradigm where philosophy relates to our hearted, embodied, and spiritual as well as to our minded interaction with the humans and non-humans around us, a pragmatic question cannot be a pragmatic question alone: it is also, by its very nature, a philosophical one. Here, the physical manifestations of climate emergency are, by necessity, as much at the heart of any philosophical endeavor as Cordova's (at first glance) generalized questions are, as the two modes of enquiry are one. A Western philosopher worth their salt, when encountering physical expressions of Indigenous practice in relation to interspecies kinship, will therefore not be able to help but engage with the philosophical meanings involved too.

Any sense of the unexpected about a Western philosopher writing about Indigenous philosophies in relation to the climate emergency may thus well be connected, I would argue, with another concern.

The inaugural issue of the *APA Studies on Native American and Indigenous Philosophy* (at the time known as the *Newsletter on American Indians in Philosophy*)[46] contained several contributions arguing in favor of philosophical debate between paradigms—on the proviso that it *was* philosophical debate rather than ill-conceived research methodology thinly veiling post-Enlightenment Western imposition, misinterpretation, and disregard. Between the lines, the inaugural *Newsletter* feels as full of hope and as full of resolve now as it is likely to have felt in 2001: Indigenous philosophers at the turn of the millennium were claiming this new avenue opening up to assume their rightful place at the table.[47]

The inaugural *Newsletter* contains no setting out of expectations with regards to Western philosophers' subsequent engagement with Indigenous philosophers' scholarly contributions to be published. My interpretation of the absence of this discussion is to conceive it as likely to be related to the continuing and unprofessional prevalence of Western failure to cite Indigenous scholars,[48] rather than to see it as an indication of Indigenous philosophers' unwillingness to be cited in Western-authored work. The tone of the inaugural *Newsletter* leaves me with a sense of a hand being extended in friendship, on the proviso that when I extend mine in response, this must be done with integrity. The question does not seem to be one of whether or not it is possible for me to be welcomed. The question seems to be one of how I can take steps to increase the likelihood of my being any good.

3.D) A POTENTIAL ROLE FOR AN ACADEMIC APPROACH, AND FOR A WESTERN PHILOSOPHER WITHIN THIS

The discussion, thus, returns to the question of how a Western philosopher's writing on Indigenous philosophies can find a useful role to play in engagement with the pragmatic and philosophical issues at stake. It will be unusual for a Western philosopher to have anything to offer with regards to any particular tribe's interspecies kinships: we will not usually have lived these and, when engaging with transformative philosophies, reading is not the same.[49] A Western philosopher's writing on the subject of Indigenous philosophies will therefore usually—and in my case, certainly—remain within the academic bounds of commenting on areas of philosophical unity in diversity between Indigenous worldviews such as those outlined by Leroy Little Bear.[50] Any reference to my own hearted, minded, embodied, and potentially spiritual experience, where I include it, will not be Indigenous because I am not.

Can such an academic approach play a useful role?—I would argue that it can: for example, Shay Welch describes her approach in *The Phenomenology of a Performative Knowledge System* as an academic one.[51] I have learned from her book, and I now hope that this learning is making me better able to grow into new forms of emotional and embodied kinship with non-humans where I am. Andrea Sullivan-Clarke's recent thoughts on scalability cast further light on issues of shared ground between Indigenous philosophies,[52] as do examples of other authors positioning themselves as writing from a tribal perspective while acknowledging the relevance of their thinking to wider Indigenous philosophical debate.[53]

Can such an academic approach play a useful role when it is being offered by a Westerner, though? Again I am going to argue that it can, despite the fact that, even as I write this, alarm bells ring. There are pitfalls to be wary of. There are prerequisites to be met. Finally, crucially, any prerequisites known in advance, although these may be necessary, cannot be sufficient in a realm where agency may move into relationship and where it is thus impossible to predict all that may turn out to be required. With this in mind, it is, nonetheless, going to be helpful to have a closer look at any alarm bells already ringing now.

3.D.1. SOME PREREQUISITES OF AN ACADEMIC APPROACH BEING SUCCESSFUL

Examples of academic approaches to engagement with previously unfamiliar paradigms misfiring are plentiful,[54] as

are examples of misuse of what has been learnt outside academia.[55] Conversely, looking at the above-mentioned Dialogues as an example of an academic approach felt to be successful by those involved,[56] some key features transpire: measures were taken to counteract any known potential for epistemic injustice, and experts were involved and were listened to.[57] A list of participants at the first Dialogue,[58] alongside a discussion of comments made by those present,[59] both show that there must have been transdisciplinary, joined-up thinking. Between the lines of references to the Dialogues, there remains a sense of underlying mutual respect,[60] and of willingness to be surprised rather than to meet the surprising with incredulity and to disreard it as an unwelcome anomaly.[61]

These known characteristics of an approach felt to be successful by those involved can be seen to be mirrored in work reflecting on encounters between non-Indigenous paradigms too: for example, in an anthology discussing feminist and intersectional thought in relation to what is currently perceived to be mainstream philosophy,[62] as well as in John Polkinghorne's thoughts on the relationship between the findings of quantum theory and possible engagement with a Western form of spirituality.[63] Having thus featured in a range of related scenarios, the above characteristics may, at least arguably, represent elements of a family resemblance of what may be necessary prerequisites to successful engagement with a previously unfamiliar paradigm.

And yet, they cannot be sufficient: as stated above, where there is agency in relationship, not all prerequisites to a successful approach can be anticipated. Relatedly, when commenting, academically or otherwise, on an approach involving heart, body, and spirit as well as mind, useful comment cannot come from mind alone. Shay Welch is an expert on Indigenous philosophy and on dance, but the reasons why I feel I have learned from her book are about more, beyond these observable forms of expertise: I would argue that they are about the fact of her knowing what she is talking about being synonymous with the fact of her living it.[64] Once the dynamics of a participationalist paradigm are taken into account, interaction with an Indigenous philosopher's work cannot usefully limit itself to accurate representation in citation alone: it will, if it is going to be any good, also involve co-creative engagement.[65]

3.D.2. SPINOZA'S FICTIONS AS ONLY THAT, AND THE ROUNDABOUT HELPFULNESS OF HAVING LITTLE TO SHARE

This co-creative engagement deserves a closer look.

Previous sections showed Indigenous philosophies to be rooted in locality, so that any elements of philosophical unity in diversity identified cannot be all-encompassing. Relatedly, it was shown that philosophies engaging with hearted, embodied, and spiritual as well as minded interaction in a world conceived under a participationalist paradigm cannot be approached through the written word alone.

At first glance, then, it might appear at odds with this for me now to be arguing that a Western philosopher, with no Indigenous background of their own enabling lived knowledge of Indigenous philosophies, may nonetheless engage co-creatively and potentially comment usefully on these.

I would also consider, however, that an easily overlooked crux of the matter lies in the very dynamics of such a participationalist paradigm grounded in locality: in a roundabout way, my absence of lived Indigenous knowing may well turn out to have its own, unexpected use in my own, specific context. It was argued above that much of the trouble in our contemporary Western overgrazing of the climate commons relates to the five-hundred-year gap in our preparedness to enter into our own kinship relationships with the more-than-human world in our own localities. A Western philosopher engaging with Indigenous paradigms and, as a result, taking their own baby steps towards bridging their own gap, minded, hearted, embodied and, perhaps, in time, eventually spirited, as agency finds its way back into their own interspecies relationships—in my case, in Europe—may in time produce writing that rings true in the lives of my fellow European overgrazers of the world's climate commons.

Under a performative knowledge system in a participationalist paradigm, where learning cannot simply mean taking on board someone else's propositional knowledge, the push created by my lack of lived experience of interspecies kinship in Indigenous localities towards seeking lived engagement in my own locality may turn out to be conducive to fruitful philosophizing. For one thing, when knowledge is hearted, embodied, and spirited alongside being minded, propositional knowledge is not enough even when argued from within a largely representationalist paradigm, as, for example, John Dewey points out.[66] Secondly—and Dewey alludes to this,[67] as does Merleau-Ponty,[68] as does Bugbee,[69] but none of them with the subtlety of Viola Cordova's pond analogy[70]—*any* form of direct knowledge transfer between interlocutors, propositional or otherwise, must fall short of being able to tell the recipient what to do because in the living dynamic of shared learning and creation in locality and under a participationalist paradigm, the recipient's jazz band will be playing its own variations on any signature tune.[71] When debating the wisdom or otherwise of explaining a story just told, Lindsay Keegitah Borrows decides against it with the words, "I don't want to steal the story from you."[72]

Simply to reference an author's thoughts without relating to them as Dewey's entire live creature[73] in one's own, ever-emerging network of relationships would therefore be bound to fall flat. Equally, to resort (perhaps in an ill-conceived attempt at experiential learning in order to overcome this flatness) to appropriating another person's or group's ceremonial customs in their existing relationships of interspecies kinship—in relationships, in other words, which are someone else's and not ours—would also be bound to end in failure: it would not only be the arrogant cultural appropriation that it is, on a par with the peyote "pilgrimages" deplored by Cajete above, which would be reason enough not to go anywhere near

it. Equally importantly, it would be an empty, ineffectual gesture because the relationship from which a meaningful gesture could grow is not there.

It is thus not the noun-based outcome, tamed to submit to membership of categories already familiar, which is available to be learned here: it is the signature tune of shared dynamic, to be improvised upon. It is in the relationships that *are* there to be formed, in a Western learner's own locality, where shared learning and creation lies waiting to be allowed to find its way back to the center, and it is the verbs of shared learning and creation that are needed for this.[74] When Mary Midgley speaks of our need to begin from familiar categories as we set out to approach the previously unfamiliar,[75] she immediately qualifies this by emphasizing the importance of then letting go, just as Spinoza emphasizes the use of fictions as early stepping stones and as nothing more than these.[76] McPherson and Rabb,[77] and Linda Tuhiwai Smith,[78] caution with regards to the same pitfall.

A small proportion of my sharing may be propositional: I may, for example, be able to help a fellow Westerner's engagement with Grimaldo Rengifo's work[79] by remembering my own difficulties and nudging them in the direction of Kyle Whyte's[80] alongside. More importantly, I hope that as my lack of lived experience of interspecies kinship in Indigenous contexts pushes me to embark on my own relationships with non-humans near me, I may, between the lines of my writing, play variations on signature tunes which may resonate with my fellow overgrazers beyond our minds alone, and which may help them, too, to help us all to find our way to a better way in and with the post-Enlightenment European places where we are.

4. CONCLUSION

It was shown that any philosophical engagement between the paradigms concerned will necessarily be undertaken not only in the shadow of past colonial wrongs, which in itself is reason for humility, but also from a position of wariness of continuing universalist imposition: universalist structures have been shown still to be in operation; universalist paradigms have been found to be adept at hiding under an invisibility cloak.[81]

A number of caveats arose from these considerations, and it was shown that these become all the more serious once conceived from within a participationalist paradigm. A handful of prerequisites to potentially fruitful engagement were identified. However, it had to be emphasized that these, necessary as they may be, cannot be expected to be sufficient, as additional ones may arise from the dynamics of lived engagement.

Bearing in mind the above caveats, potential for positive engagement was then also found. The very impossibility of a Western philosopher taking anything other than a purely academic approach to elements of philosophical unity in diversity between Indigenous worldviews was found to be capable of becoming useful in an unexpected way. It was a Western philosopher's very inability to take a lived tribal perspective which showed the potential to nudge them towards their own hearted, embodied, and spirited engagement in interspecies relationship in their own, different locality, and alongside their minded endeavor. It was shown that this form of engagement may turn out to be helpful to fellow overgrazers of the climate commons in search of their own new path:[82] acknowledgement of the possibility of there being agency in relationship may arguably be taken on board propositionally; openness to its actually being able to emerge appears more akin to William James's thoughts with regards to sleep.[83] It is, I would argue, in this dynamic that the contemporary West may find its way back into kinship in the world, both in its own locality—in my case, in Europe—and then in its neighborly relations.

Space may open up for renewed possibilities as we allow ourselves to be reshaped in the living, agentive interspecies relationships waiting to be rekindled in our own, Western localities. It may become possible for our regeneration of our own ability to be hearted, embodied, and spirited beings alongside being minded ones to grow into more than a means to an end of learning more *about* Indigenous philosophies to indulge our idle curiosity. It may become possible that we will, as we learn *from* more than *about* (and with *from*, for the reasons discussed, necessarily involving the experiential, co-creative in our own locality), become more thoughtful neighbors to those currently affected by our overgrazing of the climate commons. It may then become possible that we develop capacity to do even more than this, and that a few of us may go on from learning *from* to learning *with*: while the importance of neighborly, peaceful coexistence over universalist imposition cannot be overstated,[84] some neighborly questions may, at the same time, benefit from collaborative ways forward being sought.[85] Such collaborative ways forward become more likely to lead to liveable networks of neighborly coexistence the more we in the post-Enlightenment West, too, learn to regenerate our own interspecies kinships, and the more we allow ourselves to reattune to our own experience of the unity of philosophical and pragmatic engagement. The land in Europe, for one, has endured a dearth of such engagement for centuries now, with the fallout being felt all over the world. In a network of living complexity that is more than controllable billiard balls, thriving connections between neglected nodes are waiting to be woven back in.

If Spinoza's thinking is anything to go by, and if it is true that the network of all that there is is too complex for any of us to grasp, then we will need each other. If Raimond Gaita's thinking is anything to go by, then the way we may find each other is in the awe we may experience when we allow ourselves to be moved by the inherent dignity of each, so that all may contribute[86] to the great jazz band of the whole. When I think about that, it helps my Western heart feel the gap in understanding narrow: it brings concepts into view, such as Anne Waters's of sacredness being located in our maturing in relationship,[87] which would previously have felt too far away from my accustomed way of being in the world to approach. These concepts may, in turn, help to narrow all manner of other gaps as they appear along the way. This hope of mine is for myself, as well as for my fellow overgrazers, a few of whom may, with any luck, have read this far.

NOTES

1. Some agonizing went into terminology here: the term "philosophy," defined as "thinking about things" in the first philosophy lecture I ever attended, is arguably too small for what is being asked of it when arguing from within a paradigm where mind will not submit to its post-Enlightenment Western separation from heart, spirit, and embodied interaction (for example, Leanne Simpson with Edna Manitowabi, "Theorizing Resurgence from within Nishnaabeg Thought," 290). However, replacement of the term would carry some risk of placing what is being said into a context of mainstream claims of other-than-Cartesian philosophies somehow being "less-than" (for example, Andrea Nye, "It's Not Philosophy," 104). On balance, "philosophy" stayed.
2. For example, Mary Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter*, 127.
3. Questions of scalability may arise from my use of the generalized term "Indigenous" here: with one distinctive feature of Indigenous philosophies being their inextricable connectedness with relationships between humans and non-humans sharing in the same land, there cannot, of course, be any one universal learning outcome at the end of any such research. This issue is going to be explored further in the course of this paper—in particular, in section 3.d, with particular attention to the thoughts of Leroy Little Bear and of Andrea Sullivan-Clarke in this regard. For the purposes of this introduction, suffice it to say that authors from a range of Indigenous backgrounds are going to be cited, both from various parts of the Americas and from further afield (for example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith). As discussed in greater depth in section 3.d, these citations relate to areas of philosophical unity in diversity as initially proposed by Leroy Little Bear, rather to any attempt at any form of comparative study.
4. The Dialogues were a ten-year series of transdisciplinary academic conferences taking place from the early 1990s into the early 2000s. Their purpose was to explore shared ground between a cluster of three elements of philosophical unity in diversity between Indigenous worldviews proposed by Leroy Little Bear on the one hand, and the findings of quantum theory on the other. Direct reference to outcomes of discussions at the Dialogues is made, for example, in David Peat's work (F. David Peat, *Blackfoot Physics*), as well as in Glenn A. Parry's (Glenn A. Parry, *SEED Graduate Institute: An Original Model of Transdisciplinary Education Informed by Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Dialogue*), Sa'ke'j Henderson's (James Sa'ke'j Youngblood Henderson, "*Ayukpachi*: Empowering Aboriginal Thought," and in Gregory Cajete's (Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*. In subsequent years, additional Indigenous philosophers made reference to there being shared ground between Indigenous thought and quantum theory (for example, Viola F. Cordova, *How It Is*; Anne Waters, "Broadening the Scope of American Philosophy at the Turn of a New Millennium"; and Shay Welch, *The Phenomenology of a Performative Knowledge System: Dancing with Native American Epistemology*. In the later examples, boundaries become blurred between output directly coming from the Dialogues and additional understandings emerging through further engagement.
5. Viola F. Cordova, *The Concept of Monism in Navajo Thought*.
6. Anne Waters (ed.), *American Indian Thought: Philosophical Essays*.
7. For example, Scott Pratt, *Native Pragmatism: Rethinking the Roots of American Philosophy*, as well as aspects of Bruce Wilshire's work (Bruce Wilshire, *The Primal Roots of American Philosophy: Pragmatism, Phenomenology, and Native American Thought*, and *Fashionable Nihilism: A Critique of Analytic Philosophy*.
8. Henry Bugbee, *The Inward Morning*, 224.
9. For example, Thomas Norton-Smith, *The Dance of Person and Place: One Interpretation of American Indian Philosophy*, 127.
10. Cajete, *Native Science*, 46–52.
11. For example, Viola Cordova's shifting sand analogy (Cordova, *The Concept of Monism in Navajo Thought*, 99), and Karen Barad's agential realism (Karen Barad, "Meeting the Universe Halfway: Realism and Social Constructivism without Contradiction."
12. For example, Henderson, "*Ayukpachi:* Empowering Aboriginal Thought," 262–64.
13. For example, Pratt, *Native Pragmatism*, 163–66.
14. Brian Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land: A Trickster Methodology for Decolonizing Environmental Ethics and Indigenous Futures*, 292.
15. For example, Dennis H. McPherson and J. Douglas Rabb, *Indian from the Inside: Native American Philosophy and Cultural Renewal*, 26–59.
16. For example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies*, 14.
17. For example, Andrea Sullivan-Clarke, "A Case of Epistemic Injustice," and also, more recently and now with stronger focus on structural issues, Andrea Sullivan-Clarke, "Epistemic Refusal as a Form of Indigenous Resistance and Respect."
18. Well-known examples of this dynamic include references made by Viola Cordova to having been called "primitive" and thus deemed incapable of engaging with philosophical thought (for example, Cordova, *How It Is*, 40), as well as the above-referenced insight offered by Andrea Nye into similar experiences in a variety of feminist and intersectional contexts (Nye, "It's Not Philosophy").
19. Alison Bailey, "Locating Traitorous Identities: Toward a View of Privilege-Cognizant White Character."
20. Vine Deloria Jr., "Knowing and Understanding," 44.
21. Alanis Obomsawin, after a moving keynote address emphasising the transformative power of love while being candid with regards to the issues in need of transformation, in her subsequent interview with Eve Tuck related encounters with anthropologists where unhelpful questions were asked and heads measured, both of which reinforced harmful patterns of racism and objectification, perpetuated unloving and disrespectful meanings created, and remained largely irrelevant with regards to any research output useful to the community concerned. Congress 2023 of the Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Reckonings & Re-imaginings, "Seeds of the Future: Climate Justice, Racial Justice, and Indigenous Resurgence."
22. For example, Devon Abbott Mihesuah and Angela Cavender Wilson, eds., *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*.
23. Dale Turner, "Oral Traditions and the Politics of (Mis)Recognition."
24. Welch, *Phenomenology of a Performative Knowledge System*, 45.
25. Miranda Fricker distinguishes between two types of epistemic injustice, both arising from discrimination, and both (since Fricker's points are made from within a predominantly representationalist paradigm) relating to knowledge as a thing known (rather than to knowledge as process). The two types are: testimonial injustice (prevention of contribution to the knowledge base on the grounds of who the potential contributor is) and hermeneutic injustice (prevention of contribution to the knowledge base through failure to make available mainstream concepts, thus making it unnecessarily difficult for a potential contributor to make themselves understood to the mainstream). Miranda Fricker, "Evolving Concepts of Epistemic Injustice."
26. For example, McPherson and Rabb, *Indian from the Inside*, 147–48.
27. For example, Ted Toadvine, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty."
28. Miranda Fricker, "Epistemic Contribution as a Central Human Capability."
29. For example, Eduardo Grillo, "Development or Decolonisation in the Andes?" in *The Spirit of Regeneration: Andean Culture Confronting Western Notions of Development*, ed. Frédérique Apffel-Marglin with PRATEC (London/New York: Zed Books, 1998), 236. The abbreviation "PRATEC" stands for *Proyecto Andino de Tecnologías Campesinas*. PRATEC is an organization founded and led by Western-educated academics originally from an Indigenous background, whose aim it is to strengthen Indigenous-led attempts to regenerate Indigenous modes of interaction with the land in the Peruvian Andes. In relation to Grillo's comments referenced here, an important distinction needs to be made explicit: the "eclectic and impossible stance" criticized by Grillo in his paper is that of attempting to pick and mix from existing ideas extracted from both paradigms as they currently are. Grillo is not precluding, on the other hand, the possibility of embarking on processes of shared innovation and

becoming: in light of his and his surviving colleagues' accounts of PRATEC's continuing operations, he cannot be. What appears to have taken place, rather, is that PRATEC's founders found it impossible, and thus refused, to continue to engage with Western structures on Western terms, and instead drew a line in the sand by "deprofessionalising themselves": they insisted on operating on their own terms, and initially with limited contact with mainstream institutions. Eventually, from their position of strength thus developed, they then (and only then) located areas of potentially fruitful collaboration. Their courses (which had initially been offered without mainstream involvement), focusing on Indigenous forms of relationship with the land, and on the interaction of these with the discipline of agronomy, were then (and only then) developed into an accredited program at master's level. (For example, Jorge Ishizawa, "Community-Based Learning in the Peruvian Andes: Decolonising the Academic Disciplines.")

30. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France*, 176.

31. Brian Burkhart references Martin Buber's work on *I-thou* relationships in this regard: Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy Through the Land*, 108. Buber, while acknowledging the relevance of both *I-thou* and *I-it* relationships to successful interaction (for example, Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, 23), makes clear that the absence of objectification in *I-thou* is crucial to the emergence of living relationship (for example, Buber, *I and Thou*, 28).

32. For example, while Gregory Cajete characterizes science as dealing in "systems of relationships and their application to the life of the community" (Cajete, *Native Science*, 66), David Bohm and David Peat point out that the tendency of post-Enlightenment Western science to engage in fragmentation and, as a corollary, its frequent failure to consider unintended consequences of a course of action embarked upon, has much to answer for when it comes to present-day melting ice caps (David Bohm and F. David Peat, *Science, Order, and Creativity*, ix–xxiii.

33. There is a world of difference between the exploitative relationships found, for example, in the course of research conducted by Compassion in World Farming (Compassion in World Farming, *Farm Animals: Dairy Cows*) and the interspecies kinship discussed, for example, by Viola Cordova in "Ethics: The We and the I."

34. For example, Louise Westling, *The Logos of the Living World: Merleau-Ponty, Animals, and Language*, 49–60.

35. The issue of fragmentation discussed by Bohm and Peat above not only expresses itself (as pointed out by the authors) in a contemporary Western tendency to see science as an entirely separate issue from questions of meaning and of sacredness: a parallel ossification of both secular and spiritual engagement through a preference of each for allegedly universalizable principles over mutually responsive, respectful relationship also appears to have taken place (for example, Cordova, *How It Is*, 43–44). This is despite the fact that, at second glance, we may find that there is less of a need to choose between the two than initially anticipated from a post-Enlightenment Western point of view (for example, Anne Waters, "Language Matters: Nondiscrete, Nonbinary Dualism").

36. Henderson, *"Ayukpachi:* Empowering Aboriginal Thought,*"* 253.

37. Although, for example, William James supports the primacy of lived relationship with the sacred, as well as the diversity of such relationships necessarily following from this (for example, William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 332–33), James was aware at the time of writing that his stance was going to ruffle feathers, as post-Enlightenment Western religious understandings tend to take a different view (James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 334). The corresponding near-absence of Western engagement in embodied, ceremonial relationship with more-than-human nature, in turn, is likely to have entailed at least temporary loss in our neurophysiological capacity for such engagement. For example, John J. Holder, "James and the Neuroscience of Buddhist Meditation") discusses neurophysiological change in London cabbies and in accomplished violinists in response to sustained engagement in their respective occupations (which only occurs in individuals with sustained engagement in these); Frans de Waal, relatedly, reports findings of seasonal neurophysiological change in songbirds (*Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* 267).

38. For example, Enrique Dussel, "Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures)."

39. For example, Peat, *Blackfoot Physics*, 170. David Peat here gives a mathematical example of potentially fruitful shared ground once post-Enlightenment Western scientific engagement is no longer viewed to be in a relationship of mutual exclusion with Indigenous conceptions of science. The example chimes with Anne Waters's thinking in "Language Matters: Nondiscrete, Nonbinary Dualism" referenced above.

40. For example, Pratt, *Native Pragmatism*.

41. Examples of initiatives to support such reattunement are being reported to be finding their way into formal education: for instance, Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner, "Teaching Reciprocity: Gifting and Land-Based Ethics in Indigenous Philosophy."

42. The above-mentioned PRATEC project is a case in point: although no major carbon emitter itself by any stretch of the imagination, the project reports being adversely affected by the climate emergency. (PRATEC, *Climate Change in Andean Communities*, http://www.pratec.org/wpress/pdfs-pratec/climatechange.pdf). Parallels thus become observable between the climate emergency and Garrett Hardin's Tragedy of the Commons (Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons"): in the short term, there are—albeit selfish as well as short-sighted—benefits to be had from overgrazing. A change in attitude, rather than mere technological intervention, would be required to create a sustainable way forward.

43. For example, NASA, *Global Climate Change*, https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/carbon-dioxide/.

44. For example, Christopher Low, "Different Histories of Buchu: Euro-American Appropriation of San and Khoekhoe Knowledge of Buchu Plants."

45. Cordova, *How It Is*, 83.

46. *APA Newsletter on American Indians in Philosophy* 01, no. 1 (Fall 2001), https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.apaonline.org/resource/collection/13B1F8E6-0142-45FD-A626-9C4271DC6F62/v01n1AmericanIndians.pdf.

47. For example, Viola F. Cordova, "What Is Philosophy?" 16.

48. For example, Devon Abbott Mihesuah, "Academic Gatekeepers," 33.

49. While the very fact of my finding ample Indigenous philosophical thought available in written format implies that Indigenous philosophers must envisage readers being able to benefit from reading their work, consensus also soon emerges, on the other hand, on reading on its own being insufficient. (For example, McPherson and Rabb devote almost the entire second half of *Indian from the Inside* to experiential learning.) The latter chimes with the underlying participationalist paradigm: as a corollary of, for example, Burkhart's locality and of Welch's performative knowledge systems discussed above, it cannot be possible simply to distill Indigenous knowledge into propositional knowledge, consume it as such, and then to copy and paste it into a different situation with different relationships. It can only be possible to learn to become aware of opportunities, dynamics, and attitudes conducive to embarking on one's own hearted, embodied, and spirited as well as minded journey of shared learning and creation within one's own relationships.

50. In the context of the above-mentioned Dialogues, Leroy Little Bear proposed three elements of philosophical unity in diversity between Indigenous worldviews. These were, firstly, his point of nature being alive and imbued with spirit; secondly, of Indigenous individuals and groups being coparticipants in nature, which shows patterns as opposed to following laws; and thirdly, of knowledge including that which may be manifesting (also referred to as the spiritual) as well as that which is manifest (also referred to as the physical) (Parry, *SEED*, 89). Although Little Bear broke up the above areas of philosophical unity in diversity into three separate key elements for the purposes of initial knowledge transfer on this occasion, he treats these as one dynamic in his own work (for example, Leroy Little Bear, "Jagged Worldviews Colliding"). An overarching theme not made explicit by Little Bear in the three elements referenced, but emerging between the lines (as well as becoming evident, for example, from his above paper), is a tendency for Indigenous worldviews to conceive dualisms as complementary rather than

as diametrically opposed in the way that they would tend to be viewed in a Cartesian-based, contemporary Western paradigm. Anne Waters's paper on this characteristic of Indigenous worldviews was referenced in relation to questions of scientism above (Waters, "Language Matters: Nondiscrete, Nonbinary Dualism").

51. Welch, *Phenomenology of a Performative Knowledge System*, 4.

52. Andrea Sullivan-Clarke points out that while areas of philosophical unity in diversity (such as, for example, those cited from Leroy Little Bear's work above) cannot be all-encompassing, a realistic approach will acknowledge that these exist, alongside there being, on the other hand, features which will not travel between localities (Andrea Sullivan-Clarke, "*Discovering Reality* and a First Nations/American Indian Standpoint Theory").

53. For example, Jill Doerfler, Niigaanwew James Sinclair, and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark, "*Bagijige*: Making an Offering," xxvi.

54. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's above-referenced seminal work, *Decolonising Methodologies,* was first published in 1999, and recent research shows that the problems outlined have by no means gone away: Jeffrey Ansloos, "Rethinking Indigenous Suicide," is but one example.

55. Cajete, for example, points out that Western "pilgrims" taking the medicine plant of peyote out of context only to get high simply represent yet another instance of cultural appropriation (Cajete, *Native Science*, 209).

56. For example, Peat, *Blackfoot Physics*, 15.

57. For example, Peat, *Blackfoot Physics*, 14–15; and Parry, *SEED*, 45–60.

58. Parry, *SEED*, 62.

59. Parry, *SEED*, 45–60.

60. For example, Peat, *Blackfoot Physics*; Henderson, "*Ayukpachi*: Empowering Aboriginal Thought"; and Cajete, *Native Science*, 307–09.

61. For example, Parry, *SEED*, 66.

62. I found a number of contributions to the above anthology edited by Uma Narayan and Sandra Harding, *Decentering the Center*, helpful in this regard. In particular, and dovetailing with the distinction made in the previous section in the context of Grillo's thought between (inappropriate) cherrypicking from the existing on the one hand and shared learning and creation on the other, Sandra Harding asserts the nature of philosophy to be such that it must permanently remain unfinished (Sandra Harding, "Gender, Development, and Post-Enlightenment Philosophies of Science," 256).

63. John Polkinghorne, after a distinguished career as a quantum physicist at Cambridge (where he had originally studied under Paul Dirac) later became one of a number of physicists exploring potential shared ground between quantum theory and the spiritual (in his case, between quantum theory and Christianity). His treatment of the necessity of our inability to understand the world in its entirety remains close to a representationalist view of verisimilitude: his work stops short of embarking on comprehensive engagement with a participationalist paradigm of shared becoming, although, due to some of his arguments being made from quantum theory, elements of a participationalist paradigm do shine through. Of particular relevance to the points being made here is Polkinghorne's comment regarding the importance of embracing the unexpected: "There can be times when one just has to hold on to the strangeness of experience by the skin of one's intellectual teeth, knowing that progress will not come from a facile abandonment of any part of that experience" (John Polkinghorne, *Quantum Physics and Theology*, 90).

64. Welch positions herself not exclusively as an author who writes about Indigenous philosophies from an academic perspective as cited above (Welch, *Phenomenology of a Performative Knowledge System*, 4) but, alongside this, as a writer who values her Oklahoma Cherokee heritage in its own right as well as as a source of starting points for experiential learning for others (for example, in a practice-based integration of an Indigenous conception of creative engagement into a Higher Education program in Native Philosophy: Shay Welch, "Assignment Description: Native American Philosophy, Spring 2022." It is in the interplay of the theoretical with lived participation in co-creation that a glimpse of the potential for learning emerges: Welch regards a dance performance as a successful one if it succeeds in guiding the audience on *their* right path (Welch, *Phenomenology of a Performative Knowledge System*, 160).

65. McPherson and Rabb, for example, besides (as discussed above) devoting almost the entire second half of their book to experiential learning, stress the importance of Indigenous philosophies being transformative philosophies: McPherson and Rabb, *Indian from the Inside*, 158–63.

66. John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 70. Dewey asserts that an entire lifetime might not be enough to verbalize even one emotion.

67. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 51–52.

68. Merleau-Ponty, *Nature: Course Notes From The Collège de France*.

69. Henry Bugbee, as Dewey and Merleau-Ponty above, works on an assumption of our participation with the world around us, thus showing shared ground with the above-referenced findings of quantum theory, with Spinoza's network of relationships, and with Indigenous philosophies, to the extent that he acknowledges the misapprehension of attributing exclusive validity to a representationalist understanding of our interactions. Bugbee adds to previous American Pragmatist and European Phenomenologist discussion an explicit synthesis of our imaginative engagement in meaning-making with our embodied participation: drawing on his wartime experiences on board a naval vessel, he sketches defining moments for the protagonists as those when understanding materialises (frequently in non-verbal form) as a naturally developing fruit of their commitment to the relationships they are participating in (Bugbee, *The Inward Morning*, 187–93). What even Bugbee stops short of, however, is engagement with forms of interaction at eye level with more-than-human nature, such as, for instance, the relationality described by the above-referenced PRATEC project, which exemplifies Leroy Little Bear's elements of philosophical unity in diversity in the sense that spiritual as well as material agency can be understood to be located in inter-species relationship as much as in the individuals concerned. Bugbee relies on—and visibly appreciates—non-human nature as a backdrop for *his* philosophizing (for example, Bugbee, *The Inward Morning*, 226). This is, however, not the same as to acknowledge non-human nature as a partner in a relationship of co-creative philosophizing.

70. For example, as discussed in a lecture shortly before Cordova's death, "Together with the place we live, we are cocreators of the world, bringing it into existence moment by moment. So there is no escaping responsibility. (. . .) "Your life is a pebble thrown in a pond," she told the students (. . .) . "And not just the pebble; your life is the pebble and the water and the energy that moves the waves and the movement of the waves themselves." (. . .) They knew the magnitude of the gift of self-respect and wisdom she was giving them." Kathleen Dean Moore, "Introduction," in Cordova, *How It Is*, xiii–xiv.

71. It may be useful to recapitulate here that Brian Burkhart's jazz analogy (Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land*, 292) is offered in the context of the remainder of his work emphasizing the importance of allowing interspecies relationships in place—which entails locality rather than universalism—to grow into ethical forms of shared becoming. This chimes with Shay Welch's above-referenced comments regarding the dynamics of interaction between (nonverbal as much as verbal) story, teller, and recipient (Welch, *Phenomenology of a Performative Knowledge System*, 160), whereby a story successfully told will be helpful in guiding the audience on their own path (as opposed to expecting them to follow the teller's).

72. Lindsay Keegitah Borrows, "Stories and Reflections from Neyaashiinigiming," 407.

73. Dewey, *Art as Experience*, 32.

74. For example, Henderson, "*Ayukpachi:* Empowering Aboriginal Thought," 262–64.

75. Midgley, *Animals and Why They Matter,* 127.

76. For example, Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, 175: E5P31S.

77. McPherson and Rabb, *Indian from the Inside*, 63–64. In the context of their phenomenological analysis of a vision quest, the authors offer a nuanced discussion of the potential usefulness or otherwise of references to Western categories when approaching non-Western experience. Their focus when

discussing the positives of such an approach is, in contrast to Midgley's and to Spinoza's above, mainly on the potential use of Western categories to overcome initial Western scepticism: less prominence is given to their role in offering initial help on a journey towards learning to a Westerner whose first encounter with the previously unfamiliar may have left them off balance and in need of a pair of stabilizers before they regain their balance and are able to continue their journey to meet the unfamiliar on its own terms. Either way, McPherson and Rabb could not be clearer with regards to the need then to leave behind any reliance on previously familiar categories borrowed from a different paradigm: "We make these comparisons not to subsume the vision quest under these preconceived categories" (*Indian from the Inside*, 63.).

78. Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies*, 58. The passage referenced here is a particularly pertinent example of the thrust of Smith's argument in the remainder of her seminal work: in the context of her discussion of conceptions of time and space, the author describes Western persistence in subsuming non-Western experience under Western categories as an approach resulting not only in misunderstandings, but also—as, for example, discussed in sections 3.a and 3.b above—in domination.

79. For example, Grimaldo Rengifo, "The Ayllu": Rengifo explains that when conversation takes place between, for example, a human and a stone, the stone is not anthropomorphized but is, rather, conversed with as a stone.

80. I found Kyle Whyte's thoughts regarding diverse animacies helpful when approaching Rengifo's account of relationships experienced in "The Ayllu" referenced above. (Kyle Whyte, "An Ethic of Kinship," 32.)

81. For example, Wilshire, *Primal Roots of American Philosophy,* 164.

82. This chimes, for example, with a point made by Vine Deloria with regards to land being consecrated by groups placing their roots in it, and entering into new relationships with fellow humans and non-humans sharing in the land, thus developing new forms of spiritual unity in the locality in question (Vine Deloria Jr., *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion*, 288).

83. James, "The Varieties of Religious Experience," 405: James points out that sleep must be experienced to be known.

84. For example, Pratt, *Native Pragmatism*, 78–106.

85. Pratt, for instance, exemplifies this line of thought by referencing a ship analogy first offered by Roger Williams: "Passengers can be expected to support the smooth operation of the ship as a present shared interest," while retaining their ability to make use of private cabins while travelling. The latter serve as a metaphor for passengers' ability to retain and embrace the diversity of their distinctive characteristics and preferences (Pratt, *Native Pragmatism*, 133–34).

86. For example, Raimond Gaita, *A Common Humanity: Thinking about Love and Truth and Justice*, 106.

87. Anne Waters, "Sacred Metaphysics and Core Philosophical Tenets of Native American Thought: Identity (Place, Space), Shared History (Place, Time), and Personality (Sacred Emergence of Relations)," 13–14.

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Obligation, Accountability, and Anthropocentrism in Second-Personal Ethics

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The Métis Nation has a long and ongoing relationship with the nonhuman creatures with whom it shares territory. Naturally, any culture that lives so closely with the other beings in its territory develops ideas about the proper relations between humans and other beings. For the Métis,

a guiding principle of the relations between humans and other beings is *wahkootowin*, or kinship.[1] *Wahkootowin* underlies Métis politics, governance, social life, and ethical thought.[2] *Wahkootowin* ethics, as I interpret the view, is committed to two important features of ethical obligation.

First, obligation is *direct*. My *wahkootowin* obligations, when I have them, are always between me and some other being, with no intermediary. It is the kinship relationship directly between my spouse and I that binds me to honor our vows. When I have obligations to my siblings or parents, it is also that kinship relationship between the two of us that generates the obligations and has normative power over me. *Wahkootowin* obligations are also *directed*: they are always obligations *to* someone else. It makes no sense to say that I stand in a kinship relationship to no one in particular. Because those relationships are the basis of the *wahkootowin* ethical system, it likewise makes no sense to say that I have an obligation to no one in particular. Neither of these points are stated directly by the Métis thinkers who have written on *wahkootowin*, but I take them to be obvious features of kinship relations generally, and so take them as features of obligations generated by *wahkootowin* relationships as well.

There is an already established picture of ethics which can give an ethical worldview where obligations are direct and directed. Second-personal ethics is a style of ethical thought that takes our obligations *to each other* as central to moral life. In the second-personal ethics literature, one prominent analysis of obligation comes from Stephen Darwall: roughly, I am obligated to act in a certain way toward you just in case you have the proper standing to hold me accountable for so acting.[3] In this paper, I argue that this analysis of obligation cannot properly account for us being obligated *to* nonhuman beings and ecosystems. One potential solution to the problem I raise comes from Scanlon's Trustee Model.[4] On that view, the reasonable rejection of our principles for action by a human trustee standing in for nonrational beings stands in for such an act by the beings themselves. While this view has some apparent positives, I argue that it retains a problematic anthropocentrism. On the trustee view, I argue, our obligation is not directed to the proper object, and so depends in an undesirable way on rational agents, viz. human beings.

I use the Métis notion of *wahkootowin* as the basis of an account of obligation. While a literal translation of *wahkootowin* is something like "relative" or "relation," I use the English word "kinship" as a translation of *wahkootowin*, since I think it captures some of the normative connotation that comes along with the term in Michif and Cree.[5] Métis scholar Brenda Macdougall says that *wahkootowin* is a Cree concept that "represents how family, place, and economic realities were historically interconnected, the expression of a world view that laid out a system of social obligation and mutual responsibility between related individuals."[6] I argue that *wahkootowin* offers a ground for obligation that can provide the attractive features of a second-personal account while including all the beings that ought to be included in our ethical reflection.

From a *wahkootowin* perspective, the domain of related individuals is much broader than just human beings. Métis elder Maria Campbell writes of *wahkootowin:* "at one time, from our place it meant the whole of creation. And our teachings taught us that all of creation is related and interconnected to all things within it. *Wahkotowin* means honoring and respecting those relationships."[7] Métis scholar Zoe Todd even extends kinship to oil, as a part of the landscape of the Métis homeland.[8] The idea that we might have ethical obligations to oil demonstrates the radical departure that *wahkootowin* makes from other ethical views. Oil is not normally among the beings considered in moral deliberation. Thus, the notion of kinship that *wahkootowin* seeks to capture is much broader than the English word would imply.

In her book *One of the Family: Métis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan*, Brenda Macdougall explains four major values of *wahkootowin*: reciprocity, mutual support, decency, and order.[9] While Macdougall does not give us an explicitly ethical interpretation of *wahkootowin* (the pieces are there, but her concern is about social structures and not ethics in particular), I want to use *wahkootowin* and the principles we get from Macdougall as the foundation of a distinctly Métis ethical system. This is not to say, of course, that I intend to speak for all Métis communities in articulating my interpretation of a *wahkootowin* ethics, nor that all Métis communities would look to *wahkootowin* as the central concept or value on which to build their ethical worldview. I seek instead to articulate one Métis person's interpretation of the principles of *wahkootowin* as a central concept in ethical life, and to explain why it offers a preferable picture to the second-personal ethics that we get from Darwall.

I argue that each *wahkootowin* principle has a place in a *wahkootowin* ethical system. Mutual support can fill out the positive content of *wahkootowin* ethical relationships. We can use mutual support to help us figure out what a relationship demands of us, given the type of relationship and the needs and abilities of the parties. Reciprocity helps us understand relationships that seem to have a one-sided dependence relation. With attention to reciprocity, we can see why not every relationship has to be an exchange of material support. Reciprocity can also help us understand when our relationships are failing, and in so doing help us understand the claims *wahkootowin* relations put on us. I argue that decency can be used to give an explanation of impermissibility in a *wahkootowin* ethics. To say that an action is impermissible is to say that doing it would be *indecent*. The question of how to establish what would be decent in a particular circumstance is a difficult one, but I think that the fourth characteristic, order, can help us understand what demands decency places on us.

Order functions as something of an "ideal" against which to compare our actions and institutions. The smooth functioning of kinship relations is the product of order, and so once we understand what it is for a kinship relationship to function smoothly, we can refer to order to evaluate our relationships and institutions to see whether they meet the requirements of smooth functioning. What it means for a relationship to function smoothly is, obviously, deeply

dependent on the nature of the relationship, the individuals involved in it, and so on. But attention to the needs and capacities of the related beings and the nature of the relationship can help orient our ethical deliberation toward an ideal of smooth functioning. That ideal is the purpose that order serves in a *wahkootowin* ethical system. This is only a quick outline of the *wahkootowin* ethics, and, of course, much more could be said on each of the principles and how they function to give us a comprehensive account of ethical life. But for our purposes here, this sketch should suffice.

DARWALL AND THE ACCOUNTABILITY PICTURE

One interesting approach to ethics in the anglophone world—for instance, by Stephen Darwall—is *second-personal* ethics. These views emphasize as central the idea that ethical obligations are primarily second-personal in nature, i.e., that they are owed by some agent to some other being. Darwall's analysis of obligation, which I call the "accountability analysis," provides a theory of obligation that can easily capture the directness and directedness of obligations I outlined above. However, the accountability analysis is not well-suited to explain our obligations to nonhuman creatures and the land. It leads to a picture of obligation that is fundamentally anthropocentric. So this article is meant to explain the features of Darwall's view that are compatible with the *wahkootowin* view, and also to explain why his analysis of obligation is ultimately unable to account for what I consider vital (true!) claims of the *wahkootowin* ethical system.

There are two important features of second-personal ethical obligation that are well-suited to include beings that have been left out of most ethical deliberation. As such, they are also features of my interpretation of *wahkootowin* ethics. Like second-personal obligations, *wahkootowin*-based obligations are *direct*, i.e., that they hold between two agents without intermediaries,[10] and they are *directed*, i.e., they are obligations *to some other* and not general obligations. An example that I take to be an undirected obligation would be something like "reduce suffering." This obligation is one that Darwall would call third-personal, I contend—there are some state of affairs, like suffering, that are bad. If we have an obligation to reduce suffering generally, the obligation in that situation is to change the state of affairs. This is an *agent-neutral* obligation. Instead of an obligation that holds between me and someone else, it is one that is supposed to give any agent a reason to act, without reference to their relationships to others.[11] An undirected obligation means that there is no obligation *to* some other to reduce suffering.

My argument is that *wahkootowin* offers a way to get obligations of the appropriate kind—direct and directed—without falling prey to the anthropocentrism present in the accountability analysis of obligation. *Wahkootowin* obligations, as a result of their nature as kinship relations, are both direct and directed. The key feature of the accountability analysis which results in anthropocentrism is the requirement for second-personal competence that Darwall demands in his picture of obligation. In the next section, I will explain why a requirement for second-personal competence results in problematic anthropocentrism, and why the attempts to include nonhuman creatures in second-personal ethics lapses back into anthropocentrism when it tries to hold on to the requirement for second-personal competence.

As a first pass at Darwall's picture of moral obligation as accountability, we can look to his chapter "Moral Obligation: Form and Substance" where he says that an argument can be made from "moral obligation's form as fundamental answerability to one another as representative persons."[12] The idea here is that the basic nature of moral obligation has to do with others, and their ability to call us to account for our actions. Answerability is at the center of accountability—to be answerable to someone else is for them to have a claim on you to give an account of your actions. We often think, for instance, that parents are not answerable to their children. We implicitly endorse this idea when we accept "because I said so" as a legitimate answer to a child's question about why they can or cannot do something. Parents are not answerable to children, we might think, because children lack the right sort of abilities to legitimately demand answers from their parents.[13] On the other hand, there is an idea that a government only has the moral authority to constrain or demand the actions of its citizens if there is some mechanism through which that government can be held accountable—often, through democratic or legal structures which allow the citizens to force the government to explain, defend, and redress harms done by its actions.

The basic requirement to be a moral agent in Darwall's picture is to have what he calls *second-personal competence*—"whatever psychic competences are necessary to enter into mutually accountable, interpersonal relationship."[14] The vital pieces of second-personal competence, for Darwall, are these: First, rational agency.[15] Second, the ability to imaginatively project into some other's point of view.[16] Third, the capacity to make normative judgments, and to regulate one's own behavior by such judgments.[17] The combination of these three capacities is what characterizes second-personal competence for the rest of this article. The idea is that someone is second-personally competent if they are capable of recognizing the demands others make on them, and that they make on others, and if they are capable of changing their behavior in virtue of these demands.

As I understand it, Darwall's picture of obligation depends on accountability. So, for Darwall, *x* is obligated to *y* just in case *y* has the standing to hold *x* accountable for acting (or refraining from acting) in a certain way. I take it that both standing and holding accountable are necessary. If a creature could hold us accountable but lacks the standing to do so, then no obligation exists. Likewise, if the creature has standing but is utterly incapable of holding us accountable, then no obligation exists. If another creature with standing chooses not to hold us accountable, then no obligation exists—this, I take it, is how we explain the possibility of consenting to acts which would be immoral to commit without that consent. This is why, for example, it is not immoral for a surgeon to cut me open, even if the surgery is a failure or ends up causing me harm. It would be immoral for a burglar to cut me open, even if they do

little lasting harm. Indeed, even if the burglar accidentally performed a perfect appendectomy, which unbeknownst to me I needed, it would be immoral of them to do so without my consent.

Darwall's view is that second-personal obligations are both direct and directed.[18] The argument that these obligations are directed is relatively simple—in virtue of their second-personal nature, these obligations are always directed at some other. It makes no sense to say that I have an obligation *to you*, where the "you" refers to no one. We might think that sometimes the "you" refers to an imagined person, or some composite body like a group, corporation, or city population. But even in these cases, the directedness of the obligation is clear—it's to another, whether the other in the case is a representative person, a group, or a concrete individual.

As for directedness, it is not clear that Darwall is committed to the idea that *all* obligations are direct. Nonetheless, I think that the basic case of a dyadic second-personal moral obligation *is* always direct. If I owe you some act, then I owe you that act directly, not through my owing the act to some other person. So if I have an obligation to not harm my sister, then my obligation is to her and not my parents who might be happy that I treat her well. Rather, it is because I have an obligation *to my sister* to refrain from harming them that I ought to do so. This follows from the structure of second-personal obligations, especially the basic case of a dyadic[19] obligation.

Having established the directness and directedness of Darwall's view, we can move on to some interpretive work. I want to explain why I think that Darwall's accountability analysis cannot keep the directness and directedness that I find so appealing about second-personal pictures of ethics when nonhuman creatures are considered objects of obligation. There is an obviously anthropocentric way to interpret Darwall's view, which I will call the "literal" interpretation. If we interpret the phrase "holding *x* accountable" in the strongest way possible, then we would say *y* needs to be able to use language to satisfy their side of the obligation relation. That is, it would only be possible for *x* to be obligated to *y* if *y* can articulate or communicate their intention to hold *x* accountable. Since we humans primarily communicate using language, and only understand human language,[20] it's clear that the literal interpretation of Darwall's requirement is anthropocentric. Leaving aside the question of standing, on this view only humans could possibly hold one other accountable.

This is not a particularly plausible interpretation of Darwall's position, however, because it completely leaves out cases in which our being held accountable could be reasonably expected, but we are not actually called to account by anyone else. Clearly, this less demanding kind of accountability is the kind that is at play in most normal situations. When I walk down the street, if I, for some reason, seriously consider blocking the street to another walker or restraining a stranger, I simply imagine and take as authoritative the fact that they would likely hold me accountable for impeding their progress down the street and that they have standing to do so. In these common cases, the expression of the intention to hold someone accountable is not explicit. We need an interpretation that accounts for the hypothetical nature of most of the accountability relations between people. After all, we do not refrain from engaging in immoral behavior because someone has expressed their intent to hold us accountable for it in every case.

So let us abandon the literal interpretation of holding someone accountable in favor of a less explicit interpretation of that action, according to which we have a reasonable expectation that we would be held accountable by others. This is where the idea of a representative person comes back into the discussion. A representative person need not be someone who actually exists. Rather, it is an embodiment, in some sense, of the moral community. For Darwall, I take it that often actual persons *are* representative persons, who speak on behalf of the moral community. But I leave open the possibility that a representative person might be a hypothetical person. Darwall's requirement for imaginative capacities as a part of second-personal competence leads me to think that these capacities might be used to conjure up a hypothetical representative person, at least some of the time. The idea is that there are some things which are legitimately claimed by *any* being that possesses second-personal competence. Since I have second-personal competence, I can use my imaginative capacities to understand what I owe any arbitrary being that also has second-personal competence.

Now we have a picture of obligation that looks something like this: *x* is obligated to *y* just in case *y* has the standing to hold *x* accountable, and *x* has reason to believe that *y* would hold them accountable for acting in some way even if *y* never, in fact, expresses their intention to hold *x* accountable before the act takes place. Hence, I know without blocking the doorway into the hospital that I would be legitimately held accountable for doing so. I therefore recognize that it would be immoral for me to unnecessarily restrain someone else's freedom of movement without good reason. Or, as another example, it would be immoral for me to knowingly give false directions to a stranger, even when I know I'd never be caught, and never see that person again.

Darwall's discussion of representative persons, and the requirement for imaginative projection in second-personal competence, both open the door for this less demanding sort of interpretation. It is a less demanding interpretation than the "literal" interpretation above because it does not require explicit statement of an intent to hold someone accountable—the imaginative capacities of the agent can take the place of these explicit declarations in many cases. Because it is less demanding, this interpretation is more plausible than the literal interpretation. It matches more closely our actual experience of moral life, which is not one in which we spend much time making or receiving declarations of an intent to hold each other accountable for this or that action. However, I argue that even this less demanding version of Darwall's analysis of obligation cannot account for our obligations to nonhuman beings.

The reason that even the less demanding version of Darwall's analysis cannot account for our obligations to nonhuman beings is because the requirement that *y* hold *x* accountable unavoidably excludes nonhuman beings who *should* be included. Even in the less demanding version of the accountability analysis of obligation, it is required that *y* hypothetically hold *x* accountable. The challenge, then, is to come up with a picture of holding *x* accountable that can include all the relevant nonhuman beings. First off, it cannot be a picture that involves human language. After all, nonhuman beings do not use human language. Human language is certainly the most common mechanism for articulating that *y* wants to hold *x* accountable, but even in the most plausible cases, like orcas or corvids, human language is not a possible mechanism for holding another accountable.

The next solution, which I take from Darwall himself, is to focus on *reactive attitudes*.[21] Examples of reactive attitudes are things like indignation or resentment. It seems plausible to think that indignation or resentment can express an intention to hold someone accountable for their acting in a way that produces the relevant reactive attitude. So if we can infer from their actions that orcas or corvids can feel resentment or indignation toward us, we can infer that they intend to hold us accountable for our actions.[22] And indeed, it seems that we often do this with humans. It's hardly an unfamiliar situation to recognize through nonverbal clues that a person has taken offense to your actions.

The reactive attitudes approach manages to explain how we might be held accountable by some animals. And this is not nothing—it definitely serves to account for our intuition that we owe something to what are sometimes called "higher animals." But the view that I want to defend does not limit our ethical obligations to higher animals, whatever one takes that term to denote. Rather, I want to defend the idea that there is something literally true about the idea that we have obligations to rivers and ecosystems, plants and all the animals. While some animals can be captured by the reactive attitude approach, it certainly won't work for other candidate beings. At this point, the reader can choose which they think is the most plausible candidate for ethical consideration. The point stands that for many animals, plants, and probably all ecosystems, reactive attitudes cannot be the mechanism for accountability. It seems almost incoherent to say that a river is indignant; even if not incoherent, it would be a kind of indignance that is so different as to make us (almost) completely insensitive to it. It would therefore not function as a mechanism for accountability.

THE TRUSTEE MODEL

One attempt to explain how we might include nonverbal and even nonhuman beings into the moral world comes from Tim Scanlon's book *What We Owe to Each Other*. While Scanlon would not have characterized his approach as a second-personal one, especially since this book predates Darwall's use of the term, I think that the contractualism in Scanlon's book is a natural fit for the theory of obligation as accountability. Scanlon's view is that his contractualism says an action is right when the principle on which it is based could not be reasonably refused by others.[23] I think the attention to whether others accept or reject the principles for our actions is closely related, though of course not exactly the same in all respects, to the picture of obligation that we have seen from Darwall—it is concerned with consideration of others as autonomous, rational agents who have standing to object to our actions or principles.

I'll call this approach the "trustee model," and it works basically how it sounds like it would: a human takes up the position of trustee for the nonverbal or nonhuman being, and advocates on their behalf.[24] The trustee holding us accountable stands in the for nonhuman being holding us accountable. An example of this would be wildlife conservancy and stewardship initiatives: in these cases, human beings advocate and act as trustees for the nonhuman beings under their care. Humans are the ones who hold us to account for our actions that affect the creatures under their care.

There are a couple things to say about this right away. First, I don't want to argue that there is nothing valuable about reminders from other humans that we have obligations to nonhuman beings. Elders, friends, and other members of the human community can *and should* remind us, when we need a reminder, that we have obligations to others. They do this in the case of humans too. Children might need instruction on their obligations to the nonhuman beings around them as they learn, which they get both from interactions with other beings on the land and from human teachers and kin. In that sense, human trustees are necessary and fulfill an important role in communities.

The reason the trustee model fails to properly capture our obligations to nonhuman beings is not because it is or would be bad for humans to act as reminders or advocates for nonhuman beings. The reason the trustee model fails is because it depends unavoidably on humans to work. If the mechanism of our obligation is mediated by humans, as in the trustee model, then we end up with a theory that says that, were there no other humans, we could have no obligations to nonhuman beings. So it is safe to say that the trustee model is fundamentally anthropocentric. It is an indirect mechanism of obligation, and the obligation that we have to other beings is not indirect. We have an obligation to other beings and the land, not via some other person but via our kinship relations to those beings.

WAHKOOTOWIN

At the beginning of this piece, I mentioned that *wahkootowin* as a concept is a natural consequence of the Métis nation's close relationship with the beings of their homeland. While this is not the place to defend the claim in detail, I want to give my explanation of why we have *wahkootowin* relations with nonhuman beings. In this, I do not pretend to explain how other Métis thinkers ground these relations. I only want to present my understanding of them, to give one picture of our relationships to other beings. I draw my understanding of kinship from Marshall Sahlins's book *What Kinship Is—And Is Not*. In that book, Sahlins defines kinship as "mutuality of being."[25] He says that mutuality of being means that two beings are "intrinsic to one another's existence."[26] My interpretation of what it is to be intrinsic to another's existence is what makes

it true that we have *wahkootowin* relationships to other, nonhuman beings.

First, if I depend on another being for my existence, then that being is intrinsic to my existence. Second, I think that if I cannot be fully understood without reference to another, then that other is intrinsic to my existence. So we can say that my parents are kin; to understand *who* I am, one must understand that I stand in relations to them. This is also true of non-biologically related humans too: one's spouse is (typically) an integral part of one's life and identity. A complete description of me without my spouse is simply not a complete description of *who I am*.

The main idea of Sahlins's view, I think, comes from the titles of the chapters of his book: first "What Kinship Is – Culture" and second "What Kinship Is Not – Biology."[27] Kinship is not merely a record of biological inheritance. Biological facts are important, certainly—my biological parents are *in some sense* intrinsic to my existence, since without them I would not exist. But they may or may not be intrinsic to it *now*—they may or may not currently be kin. Likewise, I did not have a *wahkootowin* relationship to the land on which I currently reside until I moved here—I grew up in the territory of the Ktunaxa people, and their land was the land intrinsic to my being during my formative years. Now I have less of a connection to that land, and my more pressing *wahkootowin* obligations have to do with the traditional territories of the Lək̓ʷəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) peoples.

The formulation that Sahlins uses—that kinship is mutuality of being—is not a Métis formulation of the notion of kinship. But it is an explanation for what Métis thinkers say about *wahkootowin*: that it is a connection that "drew the land, creatures, and people together as spiritual relatives with all of creation."[28] That "at one time, from our place it meant the whole of creation. And our teachings taught us that all of creation is related and interconnected to all things within it."[29] Precisely what draws together the land, creatures, and people is not stated explicitly in Macdougall nor in Campbell's explanation. My candidate explanation is that the facts of our dependence on other creatures to maintain the lifegiving functions of the land and other beings, and the necessity of referring to these particular other creatures in a full description of our selves, draws us together "as spiritual relatives with all of creation," as Macdougall puts it.[30]

There are several reasons for preferring *wahkootowin* relations as a foundation for obligations to the accountability analysis we saw above. First, kinship relations take the right sort of directed form. They can explain our obligations *to* other beings. Second, kinship relations are direct. They do not depend on intermediaries, like the trustee model. With attention to these two facts, we can see that *wahkootowin* ethics not only retains the attractive features of the second-personal view of ethics, but it is also able to include other beings that also should be within the domain of morality. *Wahkootowin* allows us to capture the obligations that we have to nonhuman beings and to land as well as to other humans.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this essay is not to argue against Darwall's view on its own terms. I do not hope to have shown any internal inconsistency, any fallacy, or any other error in argumentation. Perhaps there are some! But my purpose is instead to show that, if we accept the (eminently plausible) idea that we humans can and do have obligations to nonhuman beings and to the land, Darwall's analysis of obligation, and ones like it, are not fit to account for those obligations. These views are too attached to anthropocentric notions of cognitive capacities and accountability that leave them unable to account for nonhuman beings. They either cannot include such beings at all, or have to give up the directness, which I take to be a key feature of the relationships that humans have to their nonhuman kin. We need a different theory of obligation to explain those cases.

I argued that the Cree/Métis concept of *wahkootowin* can provide the beginning of such a theory, because kinship relationships also have the attractive features of Darwall's second-personal theory. They are direct and directed, and so if we take my ethical interpretation of *wahkootowin*, we can preserve the attractive features of the second-personal picture without accidentally excluding a large part of the ethical domain. When we interpret the notion of kinship as "mutuality of being," I argued that we are able to explain why nonhuman beings should be included. They should be included because they sustain the conditions necessary for our existence, and because a full understanding of a human being is impossible without appeal to the land and other beings that make their life possible. Therefore, the nonhuman beings and land around us are intrinsic to our existence. We are what we are, inescapably in virtue of the nonhuman beings and land around us. *Wahkootowin* captures the way that more than just humans are intrinsic to our being, and the obligations that come along with those relations.

NOTES

1. Brenda Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan*; Saunders and DuBois, *Métis Politics and Governance in Canada*.
2. Saunders and DuBois, *Métis Politics and Governance in Canada*, 42; Gaudry, *Kaa-Tipeyimishoyaahk — 'We Are Those Who Own Ourselves'*, 78–79, 143–47; Teillet, *The North-West Is Our Mother*, 469–70; Brenda Macdougall, "*Wahkootowin*: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Métis Communities," 433.
3. Stephen Darwall, "Form and Substance" 42.
4. Thomas M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, 182–87.
5. Macdougall, "*Wahkootowin*: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Métis Communities," 433.
6. Macdougall, "*Wahkootowin*: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Métis Communities," 432–33.
7. Maria Campbell, "We Need to Return to the Principles of Wahkotowin," 5.
8. Zoe Todd, "Fish, Kin and Hope: Tending to Water Violations in *Amiskwaciwâskahikan* and Treaty Six Territory," 106–07.
9. Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 8.
10. In the basic case. I think that the generalization from individual agents to community-agents probably merits some discussion (it's not entailed from what has come before now), but it does not seem too problematic to make the argument.

11. Darwall, *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability*, 9.
12. Darwall, "Moral Obligation: Form and Substance," 42.
13. This is not absolute, of course—children do sometimes have standing, depending on the context. I do not want to endorse this style of parenting here, either. I only use this example as one with which most readers will be familiar.
14. Darwall, "Moral Obligation," 46–47.
15. Darwall, "Moral Obligation," 47.
16. Darwall, "Moral Obligation," 47.
17. Darwall, "Moral Obligation," 47.
18. Darwall, "Moral Obligation," 9.
19. That is, between two people. In this context, this means it's both direct and singular. I take that to be the basic case of both kinship and obligation, here.
20. I am not a linguist nor a philosopher of language, but I want to leave space here because it seems to me like complex communication between other species could be counted as language, at least in some cases—I'm thinking here of orcas, who have complex cultures and pass down information from one generation to another, apparently through some means other than genetics.
21. Darwall, "Moral Obligation," 70.
22. This may be even more liberal than Darwall would prefer—it seems that reactive attitudes might require more recognizably human cognitive capacities than I indicate here. If that's so, then his view is even more restrictive, and reactive attitudes are clearly not going to solve the anthropocentrism problem. In this section, I grant perhaps too relaxed a picture of the capacities needed for reactive attitudes, yet I think even that relaxed picture fails.
23. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, 195.
24. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other*, 182–83.
25. Marshall Sahlins, *What Kinship Is—and Is Not*, 2.
26. Sahlins, *What Kinship Is—and Is Not*, 2.
27. Sahlins, *What Kinship Is—and Is Not*, 1, 62.
28. Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 132.
29. Campbell, "We Need to Return to the Principles of Wahkotowin," 5.
30. Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 132.

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"Surely, you don't mean rocks": Indigenous Kinship Ethics, Moral Responsibility, and So-Called 'Natural Objects'

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> Mino-Mnaamodzawin [living well] considers the critical importance of mutually respectful and beneficial relationships among not only peoples but all our relations, which includes all living things and many entities not considered by Western society as living, such as water, rocks, and Earth itself.[1]
>
> Traditionally, one of the most important ways to maintain relations and the socio-cosmic order has been the practice of honoring various *siedis* with gifts. *Siedis* are sites of thanking for the abundance of the land and giving back to various spirits that guard certain activities or spheres of life. Commonly they are rocks in their natural locations which sometimes are of unusual shape and color.[2]

1. INTRODUCTION

"Surely, you don't mean *rocks*?"—I have been asked this question more than a dozen times during philosophy presentations on moral responsibility within the ethical framework of Indigenous Kinship Ethics. As the opening epigraph from Deborah McGregor (Anishinaabe) outlines, *living well* in Indigenous Kinship Ethics requires moral consideration of other-than-human animals and so-called "natural objects,"[3] such as water and rocks. This moral maxim is culturally familiar to me as someone who is a part of both my mother's Sámi culture as well as my father's Irish culture where consideration of so-called "natural objects," including and especially rocks, is practiced in everyday contemporary life, such as Sámi *siedis* featured in the second epigraph from Rauna Kuokkanen (Sámi). However, via the "surely, you don't mean rocks?" question raised unremittingly at philosophy conferences, I have realized the extent of the gulf in misunderstanding by the field of philosophy when it comes to moral responsibility toward so-called "natural objects."

To be clear: I *do* mean rocks. Or more specifically, I mean to clarify that the relation-measure in Kinship Ethics generates moral responsibility toward all members of the moral community (anything in relation to any other thing),

including human-animals, other-than-human-animals, and so-called "natural objects" such as trees, water, and rocks. While my argument in this paper can stand for any so-called "natural object," I focus on rocks for two reasons: first, because rocks represent the largest misunderstanding in philosophy when it comes to moral responsibility, or in other words, because rocks are the *hardest sell*, and second, because of my own cultural familiarity with the moral value of rocks. In short, the gulf between what I know to be true and what is reasonably acceptable to argue in philosophy is the widest when considering rocks. I aim to speak to that gulf here.

Therefore, my focus in this paper is rocks. When I say rocks, I mean the solid mineral material that forms parts of the earth's surface, otherwise known as pebbles, boulders, or a mountain range. Specifically, my aim in this paper is to detail the kind of moral responsibilities that humans have toward rocks within the ethical framework of Indigenous Kinship Ethics. This responsibility is complex and contextual—like all moral responsibility—but complexity is not a compelling argument to dismiss ethical obligation. To do this work, I provide a brief overview on Kinship Ethics and the relation-measure in Section 2. In Section 3, I detail the pluralistic moral responsibilities that human agents have to so-called "natural objects" such as rocks, including an example of Sámi *siedi* gifting practices in Section 3.1. In Section 3.2, I expand the conversation on the moral responsibilities that so-called "natural objects," such as rocks, have toward human agents through a model I refer to as *two tiers of humility*. Finally, in Section 4, I connect the rock-responsibility view presented in this paper to contemporary moral issues in Indigenous Environmental Justice.

2. THE RELATION-MEASURE IN KINSHIP ETHICS

Kinship Ethics is a family of ethical theories united by the central role kinship plays in determining right action. Indigenous Kinship Ethics is one variety of theory within the broader Kinship Ethics orientation which specifically engages Indigenous conceptions of kinship as a guide for right action.[4] Indigenous conceptions of kinship provide ethical guidance derived from origins distinct from kinship conceptions rooted in the queer relationality of Queer Kinship Ethics, for example, or caretaking in Feminist Care Ethics. When I refer to the *relation-measure* of Kinship Ethics, I mean the standard for moral community membership and with that, moral responsibility, based on relatedness. The relation-measure asks: Is a thing/being/entity in relation to any other things/being/entity? If the answer is yes, the thing/being/entity in question has moral value and is a member of the moral community due to its relatedness.

The moral community is a network of moral responsibility. I take being a member of the moral community to mean that I have moral responsibilities toward those other members, and that those other members have moral responsibilities toward me. While philosophers have accepted moral responsibilities toward animals (for example, to disavow animal cruelty) as increasingly reasonable over the past fifty years, it is still puzzling for many philosophers to think about human agents having moral responsibility to so-called natural objects, such as trees, water, and rocks.[5] It is further puzzling to think about trees, water, and rocks having moral responsibilities toward human agents. Questions abound. For example, Do I have a responsibility to all rocks, all trees, all water? Is the moral responsibility I have to a tree identical to the responsibility I have to my human family member? How do I know if a rock is fulfilling its moral responsibility to me? In the following Sections 3–3.2, I begin to answer these questions by honing in on what reciprocal moral responsibilities between rocks and human agents look like.

3. A HUMAN AGENT'S MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ROCKS

Once I started focusing specifically on rocks two years ago, friends and colleagues sending bits of "rock theory" my way. A dear friend and writer, Adam Swanson, emailed me sections of Ticht Nahn Han's reflections on the Diamond Sutra in Buddhism, which details rocks as "beings without thought" and "beings not totally without thought," as well as what respectful relations look like with these beings. My sister-in-law Lauren sent me a text that read "That person is my rock—as a common saying to express how supportive and reliable someone is!" Patricia Johnson-Castle (Inuit), a colleague and friend from the University of Minnesota's workshop for American Indian and Indigenous Studies, pointed out the central feature of rocks in the 2022 academy-award winning film "Everything Everywhere All At Once" when another workshop member had a still from the film with the subtitled dialogue "Be a rock" as their Zoom background. Once I began to pay attention, it was apparent that information on the moral value of rocks was everywhere. In this section, I explicate what it means to fulfill or not fulfill the moral responsibilities human agents have toward rocks in Indigenous Kinship Ethics.

The moral responsibilities human agents have toward rocks is grounded by where the responsibility is derived from—relationality. Moral community membership and moral value derived from relatedness is based on a metaphysical understanding of the connection of all things. Patty Krawec (Lac Seul First Nation Anishinaabe) illustrates one way of thinking about the connection between rocks and the human when she contends: "When I say that the land is my ancestor, that is a scientific statement. . . . Stones are also our relatives. Whatever I eat has taken up nutrients from the ground, including minerals, and the land itself becomes part of me."[6] Krawec offers one micro example of a connection between rocks and humans through the food chain as a way to illustrate the many and ultimate connections between all entities. It is this network of connection which grounds reciprocal moral responsibility and provides both evaluative and prescriptive guidance on how to act rightly (and wrongly) toward rocks.

McGregor writes about the Anishinaabek concept of *mino-mnaamodzawin*, loosely translated from the eastern dialect Anishinaabe language as 'living well with the world." McGregor details mino-mnaamodzawin as "encompass[ing] the well-being of other 'persons' . . . although there are many paths to achieving it (Borrows 2016:6)."[7] When McGregor clarifies that "there are many paths to achieving" living well, she affirms Indigenous Kinship Ethics as a moral pluralism. That is to say that there is one clear wrong but

many ways to do right by rocks, depending on who you are, which rocks we are talking about, the cultural context, the land upon which these decisions are being made, etc. The wrong in Indigenous Kinship Ethics is violating the relationality that imbues all life with meaning. Therefore, I commit a moral wrong against rocks when I violate the dignity of or fracture reciprocity between these entities and myself, or between those entities and other entities. Due to the morally pluralistic nature of Indigenous Kinship Ethics, committing wrongs (or *not* living well) according to Indigenous Kinship Ethics is altogether a clearer task than living well and doing rightly. Anything that violates reciprocity through excessive taking such as acts of subjugation or patterns of exploitation violates a criterion of living well in Indigenous Kinship Ethics.

What it looks like to positively live well and act rightly by rocks in Indigenous Kinship Ethics is more complex. Looking again to McGregor, living well in Indigenous Ethics means to "consider the critical importance of mutually respectful and beneficial relationships among not only peoples but all our relations" through reciprocity which "continually strive[s] for balance."[8] In practice, reciprocity and actions which reflect consideration for an entity's dignity will look differently according to context. Philosopher Brian Burkart (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) refers to this contextual application of living well in Indigenous Kinship Ethics as *Land-Based Locality*.

Burkhart maintains that a universalizing way for a thing-in-relation to live well is through doing and meaning making according to the specific context of a particular relation with the land. There are multiple ways to live well and act rightly, and those ways to live well according to one's relations are understood only through getting to know those relations, including and especially the relation a moral agent has to land. Indigenous Kinship Ethics includes a universalizable wrong of exploitation and fracturing relational reciprocity; however, the normative right in Indigenous Kinship Ethics is only universalized in specificity to one's land-based locality. McGregor's ways of living out mino-mnaamodzawin is grounded in Anishinaabe land and culture. My own specific ways of living well will depend on the lands and cultures of both my Sámi and Irish ancestors, as well as looking to the leadership of the Dakota and Anishinaabe peoples upon whose land I currently reside/occupy in what is called Minnesota.

If living well and doing right by rocks can only be practiced in land-based specificity, how does a human agent go about discovering what one's own contextually right action looks like? I can offer two instructions for discovering what living well looks like in practice by looking to scholars of Indigenous Kinship Ethics such as McGregor (2018), Burkhart (2018), Krawec (2022), Wildcat (2009), Yunkaporta (2020) and Yazzie and Baldy (2018). First, to practice "living well" in land-based locality means the following:

1) paying attention to one's relations, and

2) investing in one's relations/divesting from exploitation.

Paying attention is hard work. I like the word choice of "paying" in the phrase "paying attention" as a reminder that attention is a form of resource and currency.[9] To whom and what I pay attention are the relations in which I invest. I can pay attention to who I am, where I come from, the land upon which I live, the history of that land and the Indigenous peoples who are the traditional and contemporary stewards, and the many ways that I am bound up in relations. It follows that the more I know about my next-door neighbors, for example (what they like, dislike, what is important to them, who counts as family), the better neighbor I will be to them. If I know that their three grandchildren spend the night every other Thursday, then I can consider that schedule when planning my next raucous backyard party as a way to show respect and care for both the relationship I have with my next-door neighbors and the relationships my neighbors have with their children and grandchildren. Paying attention as a way to be a better neighbor, or relative, works the same way for rocks.

There is a third and essential component of living well in land-based locality: community. The work of paying attention and the work of investing in relations and divesting from (even complicit) participation in exploitation and marginalization is hard work that cannot be done alone. So to practice "living well" *well* in land-based locality means the following:

1) Paying attention to one's relations,

2) Investing in one's relations/divesting from exploitation, and

3) Growing this ongoing work in community.

One single human agent cannot hold all perspectives on the many relations of this world. We need to do this work of attention with others to help us check for opportunities to pay attention that we might have missed or help support us in accountability processes as we work to divest from exploitation.

Anthropologist and friend Esther Liu recommended Elizabeth Povanelli's 2021 *In Between Gaia and Ground* as an example of paying close attention to rocks. I find the shift in perspective striking in this passage and here I quote Povanelli at length:

> One can also see how skin—or perhaps at this point, we can say a sack that holds something that operates in relation to itself—also provides a crucial imaginary for the difference between organic skin and rock surfaces. Skins, or sacks, are protective covers; surfaces are simply the place where this comes to an end. This difference ramifies into subsequent ones like the legalities of the difference between murder (possible with human life), killing (with animal life), and destruction (inorganic objects). Without these insides or outsides, murder, killing, and destruction weave into and out of each other. If a rock is a rock qua rock or the soil is soil qua soil, then from its point of view humans are merely a moment on the

> journey and travels of minerals. In producing us, they maintain themselves insofar as we will return to their condition. In other words, the assertion that the self-repair of life has a different status than the inert passivity of nonlife allows the latter to be treated very differently than the former. But rocks use gravity to sack themselves, or gravity sacks rocks; the more gravity, the denser the rock is. To unsack these various formations of rocks requires other sacked materials—whether the chemicals that frack shale or diamonds that cover drill tips.[10]

Through paying attention to rocks, Povanelli is able to trouble the distinctions Western paradigms have set up between "life" and "non-life," and the subsequent justifications of the differences between murder, killing, and destruction.

Povanelli's troubling of the differences constructed between human-animals, other-than-human-animals, and rocks is indicative of how "becoming kin," as Krawec analyzes, "often begins with having difficult conversations, and being willing to listen to the things marginalized people, the ones we are so used to helping, have to say can be difficult."[11] This kind of paying attention allows a human agent to invest in relations, which often requires divesting from (even passive) participation in exploitation and subjugation. For example, "We cannot talk about restoring our relationship to land without talking about restoring the land to relationship with the people from whom it was taken," Krawec assesses.[12]

3.1 SIEDI

There is a beach in Tanafjord at the top of the world in Sápmi, the northernmost region of the fennoscandian peninsula, where egg-shaped pebbles audibly sing in chorus as they wash back up the shore with the arctic tide. Roughly 320 miles southwest of Tana, the Enron Polku trail rises [thirty meters] above the tundra landscape to look out over the boreal forests of Lapland. A little more than halfway up the accent, there is a Scots pine tree that is over seven hundred years old, surviving at least five forest fires in the region. In between Tanafjord and the centurion Scots pine is the Äijih island in Lake Inari, a towering rock formation in the middle of the lake, one of the over two hundred islands in the largest lake in Finland, which is a well-known *siedi*.

I offer one example of relationality with rocks—the reverential role that *siedi* rocks hold in Sámi culture, both in Sápmi and in the Sámi-American diaspora—to detail the kinds of moral responsibilities to rocks that Indigenous Kinship Ethics commits us to in pluralistic ways. In the arctic Indigenous culture of the Sámi peoples, *Siedi* are sacred sites, typically large stones in the landscape where vows are made and offerings are given.[13] In the Sámi worldview, it is an important and regular practice to spend time with and give gifts to certain rocks known as *siedis*. Not all rocks are *siedis*, although it is important to morally consider all rocks as relatives, just as it is important to consider the seven-hundred-year-old Scots pine and the conical signing pebbles as having their own relations. *Siedis* are unique in that they are a site of give-back ceremonies for all of the abundant natural world. Perhaps this is because although the centurion Scots pine will eventually decompose back into the earth, the rocks have and will see it all. They are one of the oldest relations.

Kuokkanen frames gifting to *siedi* as a practice of respect for the land:

> Siedis are considered an inseparable part of one's social order and thus it is an individual and collective responsibility to look after them. . . . I suggest that [giving to siedis] rather is a voluntary expression of a particular worldview that reflects the respect of and intimate relationship with the land. The Sami siedi practices, like many other gift practices concretely contribute to the well-being of an individual and a community. They represent relation and constant engagement with the living world and keep its abundance in motion with the help of gifts.[14]

Sámi anthropologist Tiina Äikäs maintains, "the relationship between a siedi and a human [is] a reciprocal one."[15] The "natural" world sustains all human and other-than-human life, and human agents give back to *siedis* in gratitude for this sustenance. The reverential role that *siedis* play in contemporary Sámi culture—both in Sápmi and in the Sámi-American diaspora—demonstrate one example of what rightful relations with rocks look like in the context of land-based locality.

3.2 RETHINKING RECIPROCITY WITH TWO TIERS OF HUMILITY

Rocks are a part of reciprocal moral responsibility with human agents. In addition to the moral duties human agents have to rocks, this reciprocal moral responsibility means that rocks have moral responsibilities to humans, albeit how a rock acts wrongly by me is unknowable to a human agent. In this section, I aim to expand the conversation on how rocks fulfill their moral responsibilities to human agents with two considerations: first, I argue that a model of what I call *two tiers of humility* assuages concerns for knowability of moral responsibilities from rocks, and second, I refer to Kuokkanen's theorizing of give-back ceremonies to assert that while unknowable in specificity, human agents have good reason to believe rocks have already fulfilled all moral responsibilities toward human agents.

First, I argue that a model of what I call *two tiers of humility* assuages concerns for knowability of moral responsibilities from rocks. While some philosophers argue for a separation of moral agents and moral patients[16] to mitigate the unknowability of how, for example, a rock, acts rightly or wrongly, I disagree with this view on grounds that it erases agency from beings deemed nonrational by human agents. Instead, I prefer framing a *two tiers of humility* view of agency in a discussion on reciprocal moral responsibility. In the two tiers of humility view, the first tier is comprised of beings which I think I can surmise what their moral responsibility looks like in action (such as other human agents[17]). The second tier consists of beings whom the specifics of acting out their moral responsibility seems to be beyond my surmising (rocks, a river, babies). The two

tiers of humility view is indicated by the fact that a limit to human understanding does not prove an absence of the metaphysical moral responsibility, only that a human agent could not understand the shape of that responsibility in the same ways we think we can with members of our own human species. Agency is maintained for all parties in the two tiers of humility view; it simply takes more humility on the part of human agents to acknowledge the agency of beings such as trees, water, and rocks by accepting a limit to human knowledge.

Brian Burkhart (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) offers that when considering the relationship between human agents and non-humans, "I must see myself as an agent, but not an active agent in relation to passive things but an agent among agents" because for Burkhart, recognizing the agency in non-humans "is part of coming to terms with what I am in concrete locality. What I am is a thing-in-relation and not an isolated thing that can come into relations or not."[18] Burkhart illustrates the reciprocal responsibility between human and non-human agents in Indigenous Kinship Ethics.

Rocks, as members of the moral community, can fulfill their reciprocal responsibilities because "all beings have the potential to realize mino-mnaamodzawin . . . mino-mnaamodzawin recognizes that other beings or entities in Creation also have their own laws (natural laws) that they must follow to ensure balance."[19] McGregor recognizes the moral duties of beings such as rocks as nonidentical to the duties that human agents have. The moral responsibilities that rocks have toward human agents is specific to their rock-ness and context, and can be interpreted as following "natural laws."

Second, I refer to Kuokkanen's (2006) theorizing of *give-back ceremonies* to assert that while unknowable in specificity, human agents have good reason to believe rocks have already fulfilled all moral responsibilities toward human agents. Kuokkanen suggests that:

> the notion of the gift is one of the structuring principles of many Indigenous peoples' philosophies. The understanding of the world which foregrounds human relationship with the natural environment, common to many Indigenous peoples, is manifested by the gift, whether give-back ceremonies and rituals or individual gifts given to the land as a recognition of its abundance and reinforcement of these relationships. While these gift practices are often very different from one society and culture to another, the purpose of giving is usually alike: to acknowledge and renew the sense of kinship and coexistence with the world."[20]

From Kuokkanen's analysis, we can see that give-back practices such as Sámi *siedi* gifting "concretely contribute to the well-being of an individual and community."[21] Kuokkanen describes the practice of gifting to *siedis* as a give-back ceremony that is common to many Indigenous cultures. By taking Kuokkanen's theorizing seriously, we can understand that a human agent's act of "giving-back" recognizes the gifts that a human agent has already received from so-called "natural objects" such as rocks. A human agent would not be alive at a juncture to give thanks unless gifts from the natural world had already sustained that human agent's life.

Kuokkanen distinguishes gift practices and give-back ceremonies from gifts within a system of capitalist economic exchange. Instead of a goal of accumulation present in ethos of indebtedness or "tit for tat" reciprocity, giving back to the earth in the Sámi worldview foregrounds gratitude for the abundance of the land which has already sustained all life.[22] Kuokkanen is careful to apprehend that "this is not romanticization: the relations Indigenous peoples have forged with their environments for centuries are a consequence of the living off the land and the dependency on its abundance. They are a result of a relatively straightforward understanding that the well-being of land is also the well-being of human-beings" therefore "the land itself . . . [is] considered equals that need to be respected and honored rather than endlessly exploited."[23]

Give-back ceremonies are predicated on a worldview that recognizes that humans are only alive, with family, and able to flourish as a direct result of the natural world including rocks being the glue of the earth and water as integral to all life. Therefore, within a give-back paradigm, rocks have always already fulfilled their duties to human agents.

In brief, I do mean to commit us to expansive reciprocal responsibility where human agents are morally responsible to rocks, and rocks are morally responsible to human agents. For "if these reciprocal obligations and duties are enacted," McGregor argues, "then balance is achieved."[24] The two tiers of humility view and the give-back paradigm help shape a conception of rock-responsibility where rocks do have responsibilities to human agents, although what those responsibilities look like in practice is unknowable to human agents.

4. IMPLICATIONS: NATURAL RELATIVES AND INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

In this last section, I discuss the implications of moral responsibility to so-called "natural objects" such as rocks in both personal and political spheres. I am especially interested in how a discussion on the moral responsibilities that human agents have to rocks come to bear on global conversations in Indigenous Environmental Justice.

First, the personal: each human agent has moral responsibilities to rocks, and that human agent has the potential to fulfill or not fulfill those responsibilities. An individual from any cultural background has the potential to live well with all of one's relations. However, I want to stress here that I do not mean that non-Sámi human agents should start leaving gifts at rocks like the Sámi practice of *siedi* gifting, for example. This would be an inauthentic attempt at paying attention to one's relations and would instead reflect paying attention to someone else's particular relations, not to mention cultural appropriation which fractures relationality as a practice of exploitation. Instead, I mean that one should look to the patterns of 1)

paying attention to one's relations, 2) investing in those relations/divesting from exploitation, and 3) growing this ongoing work in community, to derive one's own land-based way to live well with rock relations. Additionally, the rock-responsibility view presented in this paper requires protecting other entity-to-entity relations as a part of living well. That means living well includes acts of solidarity with Indigenous water protectors, for example, as a way to protect the relations water has to all other beings on this planet.

The Water Protection movement within Indigenous Environmental Justice is one exemplar of the results of paying attention to one's relations with so-called "natural objects" and investing in those relations. As Melanie Yazzie (Diné) and Cutcha Risling Baldy (Hupa, Yurok and Karuk) celebrate:

> From the Oceti Sakowin protecting the Missouri River from contamination from the Dakota Access Pipeline, to the Māori declaring that the Whanganui River has rights akin to those of Humans (Roy, 2017), water is seen as an ancestor and a relative with agency within this network of life, one who deserves respect, care, and protection.[25]

Yazzie and Baldy connect paying attention to and investing in water as a relation to the emerging political success of water protection worldwide. They go on to spell out how water protection policies present an:

> accountability to water view [which] envisions and enacts an ethos of "living well," which Harsha Walla (2013) points out defies "the capitalist and colonial system's logic of competition, commodification, and domination. . . . Living well requires "interdependency and respect among all living things.[26]

Yazzie and Baldy emphasize the role of water protection predicated on connection and respect among all beings as a requirement of living well. My hope is that we can look to the work of Indigenous water protectors and philosophers such as Yazzie and Baldy[27] when discerning what living well with rocks can look like in a contemporary moral context.

When it comes to rocks, one such contemporary moral context is the minerals in the ground of the Sámi city of Kiruna on the Swedish side of the borders of Sápmi. For those who are unfamiliar with the history of rocks in Kiruna, here is a brief summary: The Swedish mining company Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara AB (LKAB) manages a mine that began operations mining iron ore out from "underneath" Kiruna in 1898. Since 1898, the LKAB mine has removed 950 million tons of iron ore. So much iron ore that in 2004 the Swedish court declared that the village of Kiruna would have to be relocated further away from the mine due to buckling of the ground underneath the village. Then in 2020, a 4.9 Mw magnitude earthquake went off in the footwall of the mine; this earthquake was not produced by natural causes, but instead, by mining.[28]

In January 2023, LKAB announced they had discovered twenty million tons of rare earth minerals adjacent to the mine, including lanthanum, lutetium, lanthanum, cerium, praseodymium, neodymium, promethium, and samarium; all minerals needed for the production of iphones, wind turbines, and electric cars.[29] Swedish Minister for Energy, Business, and Industry Ebba Busch has heralded that "the EU's self-sufficiency and independence from Russia and China will begin in the mine," as there are no current deposits of rare earth minerals outside of control of Russia and China.[30]

Spokesperson for LKAB Jan Moström has conferred

> We are already investing heavily to move forward, and we expect that it will take several years to investigate the deposit and the conditions for profitably and sustainably mining it. We are humbled by the challenges surrounding land use and impacts that exist to develop this into a mine and that will need to be analysed to see how to avoid, minimize and compensate for it. Only then can we proceed with an environmental review application and apply for a permit

according to the press release from LKAB's website, which cites cooperation with Swedish government officials as the news of the newfound deposit went to press.

Taking a closer look at Moström's statement, the "land use and impacts" which Moström feels "humbled by" are the 10,000-year-old traditional reindeer migration routes of the Indigenous Sámi people, which are protected under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Assuming generosity that LKAB sincerely wants to "avoid, minimize and compensate for" the destruction of Sámi way of life, the use of the "and" conjunction of that statement communicates clearly that mineral extraction in Kiruna will continue with or without right relations with the Sámi of the area.

How do our moral responsibilities to rocks come to bear on the Kiruna mine both past and present? What does "living well" with rock relatives in Kiruna look like in this pivotal moment? I leave these questions for the focus of future work. However, I mean to highlight here the necessity to pay attention to rightful rock relations as a pressing moral problem in contemporary ethics.

5. CONCLUSION

The relation-measure in Indigenous Kinship Ethics counts any thing in relation to any other thing as a member of the moral community. Therefore, human agents have reciprocal moral responsibilities with all things in relation. This reciprocal moral responsibility means that I have moral duties to rocks and that I can act wrongly toward these so-called "natural objects" when I violate the dignity of or fracture reciprocity between these entities and myself, or between those entities and other entities. Living well, or acting rightly by rocks, looks different in practice according to a human agent's land-based locality. One example of living well with rocks according to land-based locality is the gifting to *siedi* rocks in Sámi culture. This example

provides one illustration of the general requirements to live well, which include 1) paying attention to, 2) investing in one's relations/divesting from exploitation, and 3) growing this ongoing work in community. Another example of living well in relation to so-called "natural objects" on a larger scale is the emerging political protections for water that Indigenous Water Protectors have led worldwide over the past forty years. Examples like water protection can help guide our thinking through kinship with rocks in pressing contemporary moral contexts such as the Kiruna mining dilemma.

NOTES

1. McGregor, "Living Well with the Earth: Indigenous Rights and the Environment," 10.
2. Kuokkanen, "The Logic of the Gift: Reclaiming Indigenous Peoples' Philosophies," 261.
3. I use the term "natural object" following Andrew Brennan, *The Moral Standing of Natural Objects*, to denote things like rocks, trees, and water, even though all objects are natural.
4. In this paper, I provide only the most succinct overview on Kinship Ethics and the relation-measure. For a more in-depth version of my own overview, see O'Loughlin (forthcoming). In addition, see Deborah McGregor, Rauna Kuokkanen, Melanie Yazzie (all of whom I cite in this text) as well as Kyle Whyte, Brian Burkhart, Leanne Betasomasake Simpson, Daniel Heath Justice and more.
5. Richard Sylvan's 1972 Last Man Thought Experiment acquainted analytic philosophy with the intrinsic moral value of trees.
6. Patty Krawec, *Becoming Kin*, 137.
7. McGregor, "Reconciliation and Environmental Justice," 10.
8. LaDuke, *Last Standing Woman*; McGregor, "Reconciliation and Environmental Justice," 10.
9. Lakota and Dakota scholar Kaylen James theorizes an intervention on the term "paying" in "paying attention" and suggests we think about attention as something we "gift," as in "gifting attention" (forthcoming).
10. Elizabeth Povanelli, *In Between Gaia and Ground*, 128.
11. Patty Krawec, *Becoming Kin*, 148.
12. Patty Krawec, *Becoming Kin*, 131.
13. Turi, *An Account of the Sámi*; Itkonen and Koskimies, *Inari Sámi Folklore*; Kuokkanen, "The Logic of the Gift."
14. Kuokkanen, "The Logic of the Gift," 161.
15. Äikäs, "What Makes a Stone a Siedi, or, How to Recognize a Holy Place?" 14.
16. The moral agents and moral patients view holds that rational agents have moral responsibilities toward both other rational agents, as well as "moral patients" which are broadly defined as beings without rationality who are worthy of moral consideration from rational agents, but do not have moral responsibilities toward rational agents. One example of the moral agents vs. moral patients divide is between human-animals and other-than-human animals. See Evelyn Pluhar, "Moral Agents and Moral Patients."
17. Though I am probably wrong about this surmising anyway.
18. Burkhart, *Indigenizing Philosophy through the Land*, 292–93.
19. McGregor, "Living Well with the Earth," 19.
20. Kuokkanen, "The Logic of the Gift," 255–56.
21. Kuokkanen, "The Logic of the Gift," 263.
22. Kuokkanen, "The Logic of the Gift," 265.
23. Kuokkanen, "The Logic of the Gift," 263.
24. McGregor, "Living Well with the Earth."
25. Melanie Yazzie and Cutcha Risling Baldy, "Introduction: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Water," 1.
26. Yazzie and Baldy, "Introduction: Indigenous Peoples and the Politics of Water," 2.
27. In addition to the work of Melanie Yazzie (2017 interview) as well as Yazzie and Baldy, see Deborah McGregor ("Traditional Knowledge: Considerations for Protecting Water in Ontario"; "Living Well with the Earth"; "Mino-Mnaamadzawin"); Cutcha Risling Baldy ("Water Is Life: The Flower Dance Ceremony"); Winona Laduke (*To Be a Water Protector*); and Kyle Whyte ("Indigenous Women, Climate Change Impacts, and Collective Action.").
28. Reuters, "Sweden Reports Its Biggest Ever Quake Caused by Mining in Arctic," May 18, 2020, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sweden-quake-idUSKBN22U1QM/.
29. "Why an Arctic Treasure Is Spurring Hope and Dread," *The Journal*, January 30, 2023, https://www.wsj.com/podcasts/the-journal/why-an-arctic-treasure-is-spurring-hope-and-dread/349B258C-BABD-4FC7-8302-F53C43CCB382.
30. "Europe's Largest Deposit of Rare Earth Metals Located in Kiruna Area," LKAB, January 12, 2023, https://lkab.com/en/press/europes-largest-deposit-of-rare-earth-metals-is-located-in-the-kiruna-area/.

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An Indigenous Abolitionist Ethics of Care

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INTRODUCTION

What is the relationship between abolition and decolonization? And how can Indigenous philosophies and practices foster both? What might be the components of an Indigenous abolitionist ethics of care? Hupa scholar Stephanie Lumsden explains, "prison abolition politics are indispensable to tribal sovereignty" because abolition necessitates "the dismantling of all violence done to communities by settler colonialism" and "entails a commitment to a future in which communities are safe and healthy."[1] By settler colonialism I mean "a structure not an event," as Patrick Wolfe clarifies; it is that which "strives for the dissolution of native societies" as well as "erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base," not as a one-time occurrence but as a continual configuration.[2] In terms of the settler colonial carceral state, we might also understand carcerality to be a structuring force rather than a single moment.[3] In order to further connect the stakes of abolishing prisons and police with the stakes of decolonization, in this paper I illuminate the ethics of care that inform an Indigenous abolitionism, which I identify as: (re)claiming relationality, building movements of solidarity, ensuring bodily and community sovereignty, delegitimizing settler law, defining mending and safety on one's own terms, and fostering cultural resurgence. Finally, I end by arguing that further articulation of an abolitionist ethics of care—that builds up and restores capacities[4] of Indigenous individuals, communities, and nations—also affirms Indigenous futurity.

While I draw from Indigenous scholars across Turtle Island, as well as so-called Australia and New Zealand, I also recognize the need for cultural specificity in this work. Just as criminologist Chris Cunneen asserts, "the praxis of decolonialism cannot be universally prescribed and will be differentiated along a range of axes, determined by historical and contemporary contingencies," so too must abolition be nonprescriptive.[5] Instead, I encourage readers to think of these Indigenous abolitionist ethics of care as *de*scriptive rather than *pre*scriptive, as possible articulations of ways in which we might practice abolition and decolonization from our particular locations. In this spirit, I endeavor to describe the abolitionist elements and throughlines that I have noted across a diversity of locations, contexts, and Native nations. At the same time, I do not wish to be prescriptive, because I affirm the sovereignty and self-determination of all Indigenous peoples to experiment, collaborate, and find what works best. This is what Coulthard and Simpson refer to as grounded normativity, or "Indigenous place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge."[6]

ABOLITION AS A DECOLONIAL PROJECT

The present-day movement for abolition takes its name from the project to abolish slavery in the United States—still an unfinished project due to the Thirteenth Amendment.[7] The Thirteenth Amendment bans slavery and "involuntary servitude" in the United States; yet it includes the clause "except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." Hence, slavery and involuntary servitude are still legal so long as they are solely inflicted as punishment for a convicted crime. This also means that the pursuit to abolish slavery is ongoing. Despite the etymology of the term emanating from the location of the US settler state, the movement for police and prison abolition has nevertheless come to be relevant across a multitude of geopolitical contexts.[8]

Abolitionism tells us that policing, prisons, and punitive justice lack both efficacy and compassion, that these practices are rooted in racialized terror;[9] these structures are an outgrowth of settler colonialism;[10] and they are misogynist, ableist, classist, homophobic and transphobic.[11] The present-day overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the criminal punishment systems of settler states, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, confirms that such systems function as tactics of removal, exclusion, marginalization, destabilization, dispossession, erasure, control, and death.[12] As Yavapai/Chiricahua Apache legal scholar Grace Carson writes on Turtle Island,

> Policing and incarceration of Native people has taken place from the moment our lands were colonized. Not only was the genocide of Indigenous people enacted by the State—a literal policing of who did and did not have a right to be alive on stolen land—but our people were forced into detainment in boarding schools, our spirituality and languages were policed so that our culture would be erased, and our movements have historically been met with violence by police and military. This policing and incarceration of Indigenous peoples still takes place in what is now known as the United States.[13]

In light of these historical and contemporary violences, the ethical implication of abolition draws on a concern for the welfare of all bodies, at all levels—individual, collective, geographic—affected by carcerality.[14] The "object of abolition," according to Harney and Moten, is "[n]ot so much the abolition of prisons but the abolition of a society that could have prisons."[15] In other words, abolitionists reject a social system that sees the practices of threatening, confining, controlling, maiming, and killing people (who may or may not have caused harm) as a legitimate and desirable form of redress.[16] At the same time, abolition's advocates know that it is not a single event based in diminishment nor absence. Instead, abolition must be thought of as an addition, transformation, alteration, reordering, creation, and substitution to our present

world.[17] In this way, abolition is an aspiration that seeks to move beyond retributive institutions that, at present, do more harm than good.

A specifically Indigenous critique informs us that abolition is a key element of decolonial resistance to settler violence, control, and attempts at monopolizing sovereignty at all levels.[18] As Tuck and Yang aver, decolonization is not an abstract metaphor for liberatory politics—it is centered on the unsettling of settler colonialism and the rematriation[19] of land to Indigenous peoples, and it is primarily "accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity."[20] For this reason, I cover the abolitionist ethics of care that most resonate with Indigenous sovereignty and futurity: (re)claiming relationality, building movements of solidarity, ensuring bodily and community sovereignty, delegitimizing settler law, defining mending and safety on one's own terms, and fostering cultural resurgence.

INDIGENOUS ABOLITIONIST ETHICS OF CARE

While arguably "ethics" or "ethics of care" are terms that have emerged within the Western philosophical canon, nevertheless "the stories of an Indigenous community may include the existence of virtues, like humility or gratitude," that serve as ethical guideposts.[21] For example, Muscogee philosopher Joseph Len Miller says,

> While there is no Mvskoke word that directly translates as "harmony," my understanding of harmony is based on the phrase *etemeyaske vpokate*, which translates to "living together peacefully." . . . Harmony is a standard of relationships. . . . Relationships are the roots or foundation of ethics. Relationships confer responsibilities.[22]

Similarly, Boulton (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngai te Rangi, and Ngāti Pukenga) and Brannelly describe relationships, support, and stewardship as all Māori ethics of care, contrasted with settler colonial and neoliberal "privileged irresponsibility."[23] Therefore, we might still consider what ethics, values, standards, protocols, and practices ground and guide an Indigenous abolitionist framework.

(RE)CLAIMING RELATIONALITY

Considering that settler colonial carcerality is predicated on disconnection, an Indigenous abolitionism labors to (re) claim connections to land, kin, and lifeways.[24] Such an ethic of care requires attention to responsibilities, obligations, interdependence, collectivity, reciprocity, engagement, communication, and relationships with both humans and the more-than-human world.[25] This might take the form of what Robyn Maynard and Leanne Simpson describe as community experiments in collective care. As numerous abolitionist scholars have pointed out, an ethic of care grounded in decolonization and abolition is not attempting to reform harmful institutions in order to make them kinder and gentler—it is about more than merely surviving within settler states' cages that continue to disconnect us, it is about "a vision of a different world altogether" wherein we all may thrive.[26] Within this "different world," we must continually maintain relationships and enact solidarities. Following Leanne Simpson, Diné scholar Andrew Curley encourages us to build "constellations," or "shared political orientations . . . [that] allows one to build connections across difference."[27]

BUILDING MOVEMENTS OF SOLIDARITY

Crucially, movements for decolonization and abolition must be allied with those who are most systematically impacted by settler colonial carcerality.[28] For this, we must consider how anti-Blackness functions through the state's policing, prisons, and punishment.[29] And we must acknowledge that Black and Indigenous communities are not discrete; forgetting to do so would ignore the lived experiences of Black Indigenous people.[30] Simultaneously, we are able to recognize how any calls for bolstering settler power and jurisdiction are antagonistic to the aims of such movements for solidarity.[31] As Carson suggests, both abolition and decolonization are "invested in eliminating the structures of white supremacy"; therefore, these praxes put us all on the path towards collective liberation.[32] Hence, an Indigenous abolitionist ethic of care serves and benefits more than Indigenous communities—it affirms self-determination to all those who have been denied it. As Joanne Barker (citizen of the Delaware Tribe of Indians) states plainly, "Our liberation is bound up together."[33]

ENSURING BODILY AND COMMUNITY SOVEREIGNTY

Through a settler colonial imperative to sever Indigenous relationships to land, the goal is to strip Indigenous peoples of stewardship and sovereignty in their traditional and ancestral homes. This cleaving also serves to deny access to life-giving relationships and resources.[34] Clearly, incarceration is one such method of achieving these aims, by separating a person in order to control an entire peoples.[35] In contrast, decolonial and abolitionist spaces are those where all bodies, at all levels—individual, collective, geographic—are free.[36] Indigenous abolitionist ethics of care are therefore tethered to self-determination and sovereignty.[37] Sarah Deer (Muscogee Creek) provides a comprehensive overview of US settler colonialism's sexually violent history, in which there is an inseparable connection between the sovereignty of Native bodies and the sovereignty of tribal nations. "It is impossible," Deer tells us, "to have a truly self-determining nation when its members have been denied self-determination over their own bodies."[38] The loss of self-determination on an individual level creates the conditions for a loss of political self-determination, and vice versa. For example, the ability for tribal nations to respond, especially in traditionally affirming ways, to gendered and sexualized violence has dwindled over the years, leaving vulnerable many Native relatives who identify as women, girls, trans, gender non-conforming, and/or Two Spirit.[39] Lumsden expands on this: "By displacing Indigenous jurisprudence and imposing state punishment on Native people, incarceration legitimizes settler law."[40]

DELEGITIMIZING SETTLER LAW

The settler state seeks control over whether and how Indigenous peoples may even exist. This is too often and falsely framed as a story of how the enclosure and punishment of individual, communal, and geographic

bodies produces "safety." Concerns over security are only a motivation insofar as the state manages the Other—deemed dangerous, pathological, disposable, criminal, guilty, and deserving of punishment—for the sake of the settler population.[41] This is to say, what constitutes a crime under the purview of the settler state has been constructed with Indigenous (as well as Black and other marginalized) communities in mind.[42] It is as if there is no other option except for the "laws that we don't even create."[43] We are to believe that settler law is superior and more rational, leading to much of the power to solve conflicts and redress harms from within Indigenous communities being "abdicated . . . to the by-law officers, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], and the courts."[44] All of this has simultaneously "undermined and concealed Indigenous legal traditions" while at the same time "justified settler colonial infringement on Indigenous rights, lands, and bodies."[45] Yet settler states do not have a monopoly on law, only a skewed perception of what it should entail.[46] Abolition serves as an Indigenous ethic of care when it challenges settler epistemology, which has only "a unitary vision of the criminal law" and supposedly "'common-sense' perceptions of the world around us."[47] Instead, we are encouraged to "re-cent[er] the worldviews, understandings, and responses of the colonized."[48] This is itself an affirmation of agency and self-governance beyond a politics of recognition.[49]

DEFINING MENDING AND SAFETY ON ONE'S OWN TERMS

One of the greatest lies that the carceral system has told is that it makes an imaginary "us" "safer." But who is sheltered in the arms of the settler state? The disproportionate rates of Indigenous peoples incarcerated in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand paints a very different picture of this supposed safety. For incarcerated Indigenous peoples, such as the women in Seliš-Ksanka-Sčłqetkwmcin Nation scholar Luana Ross's *Inventing the Savage*, the inside of jails and prisons reproduce the gendered settler norms and restrictions of the outside world. Not only are these spaces antithetical to any traditional healing practices—in fact, they are actively antagonistic to those aims—they also subject Native individuals who identify as women, girls, transgender, gender nonconforming, and/or Two Spirit to the cisheteropatriarchal whims of non-Native police, corrections officers, wardens, doctors, counselors, etc. Although Indigenous sentencing courts have been implemented with the settler state's blessing, there exists "a strongly performative element" to these spaces of redress, since "the results of these initiatives have not halted the increase in the rate of Indigenous imprisonment."[50] Even with landmark cases such as *McGirt v. Oklahoma* opening up certain channels of Indigenous-led prosecution, still settler law enforcement, courts, and governing bodies struggle or outright refuse to release their grip on Indian country. Nevertheless, Indigenous communities must be able to define what it means to mend relations and create safety on their own terms. Furthermore, the ways in which Native nations are able to freely determine how best to protect from and address harm is deeply connected to sovereignty; or as Carson suggests, "Tribes cannot practice or continue to shape their traditional restorative justice practices and systems without the necessary sovereignty to enforce these traditions and knowledges."[51] As a form of care, this is yet another expression of bodily, legal, spiritual, and epistemological self-determination, in which healing is practiced without deference to the settler carceral state.

FOSTERING CULTURAL RESURGENCE

Crucial to healing, an Indigenous abolitionist ethic of care fosters space for cultural resurgence. This is pertinent considering that settler states have deliberately denied Indigenous peoples access to—even criminalized and punished—practices such as dancing, speaking our languages, wearing traditional dress, abiding by our lifeways, etc. Lumsden connects Native boarding schools to incarceration, and thereby connects the imperative for both decolonization and abolition: "The federal government attacked the future of Native cultures when it required that Native children be sent to boarding schools tasked with remaking the children into assimilated Americans by eradicating all traces of Native culture."[52] By extension, removing Indigenous people from community, through various modes of incarceration, works to eliminate Indigenous cultures.[53] Surely, the (in)ability to participate in cultural and religious practices is not experienced equivalently by all incarcerated Indigenous people. This is why those who are able to resist in ways such as sharing stories within and beyond prison walls are enacting and affirming forms of Indigenous knowledge production.[54] Such stories—particularly stories from incarcerated Indigenous women, girls, trans, gender nonconforming, and/or Two Spirit people—are "key decolonial theories that offer tools to prison abolitionists not only for prison abolition but also to support decolonial efforts of Indigenous communities on Turtle Island" and beyond.[55] Hearing stories from incarcerated and formerly incarcerated Indigenous people, providing access to cultural practices, "invest[ing] in those areas of life that support and build people and communities," and other quotidian "practices of unsettling and refiguring our relationships" are all forms of care that move toward decolonization and abolition.[56]

CONCLUSION

Within the specificity of the US context, abolition is still an unfinished project. At the same time, abolition is relevant to a multitude of Indigenous peoples throughout differential carceral settler frameworks across the globe. Enacting an Indigenous abolitionist ethics of care is a "continuous creative process" of welcoming Indigenous futurity in and beyond the present moment.[57] Settler colonialism is predicated on reproducing itself into the future and "lasting" Indigenous peoples.[58] An Indigenous abolitionist ethic of care contrasts with this notion of settler modernity and linear progress, allowing us to see that we have—have *always* had—the tools at our disposal to live without policing, prisons, and punishment.[59] This is an ethic of care that is descriptive rather than prescriptive, that links rather than disconnects, and that reaches across time and space. Mvskoke scholar Laura Harjo echoes this in *Spiral to the Stars*: "Indigenous futurity serves the community, and it imagines and constructs the worlds we want to live in. (Re)imagining is a decolonizing methodology."[60] For the purposes of this project, Indigenous futurity is fostered when we (re) imagine and construct an abolitionist, decolonial world by

(re)claiming relationality, building movements of solidarity, ensuring bodily and community sovereignty, delegitimizing settler law, defining mending and safety on our own terms, and fostering cultural resurgence. There was a time before the settler state and its attendant police, prisons, and punishment—and there will be a time after. Indigenous abolitionism performs an ethic of care that takes us closer to this liberatory, decolonial horizon.

NOTES

1. Stephanie Lumsden, "Reproductive Justice," 34.
2. Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 388.
3. Craig Fortier, "Abolition and Decolonization as Pedagogy and Practice," 110; Lisa Guenther, "Settler Colonialism, Incarceration, and the Abolitionist Imperative: Lessons from an Australian Youth Detention Center," 102; Laura Harjo, *Spiral to the Stars: Mvskoke Tools of Futurity*, 10.
4. I understand these capacities and relationships in an expansive, rather than an anthropocentric, sense. Here, I am informed by Seneca Nation scholar Mishuana Goeman's literary analysis of Chickasaw author Linda Hogan's 1994 novel, *Solar Storms*. Goeman establishes that Hogan "asserts a scale [of time and space] based on connection, thus collapsing the settler scale that separates humans, lands, animals, and so on" ("Ongoing Storms and Struggles: Gendered Violence and Resource Exploitation," 101). Goeman goes on to explain that the colonization of (so-called) Canada and the United States produces relationships that are regarded as discrete and distinct from one another. From a settler colonial perspective, the scales of these relationships make them wholly different. In opposition to this, Goeman urges that "we examine spatial injustice and Native feminist practices . . . that enable us to delve more deeply into the ways that gendered and sexualized violence has multiple connections that spread out on vertical and horizontal scales" (100). In this way, injustice reaches across temporal and spatial planes, touching multiple generations and scales of being. Spatial injustice, as Goeman instructs, is an unjust "settler model of redistribution," in which Indigenous "land, resources, and ways of life are infringed on" at these multiple scales (106). All the while, the people of "mainstream" settler states "continue to receive capital and electricity"—not to mention other tangible and intangible resources—as benefits of this infringement (106). Spatial injustices, or the "multiple connections" that Goeman delineates, are exactly the kind of Indigenous feminist theorizing that helps us to see how carcerality is not discrete, but is part of a web of colonization, white supremacy, capitalism, ecological destruction, ableism, and cisheteropatriarchal domination. As Goeman would have it, seeing these scales and connections of spatial injustice requires "a consideration of all bodies: the human, the land, the water" (107).
5. Chris Cunneen, "Decoloniality, Abolitionism, and the Disruption of Penal Power," 20.
6. Glen Coulthard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Grounded Normativity / Place-Based Solidarity," 254.
7. Thalia Anthony and Vicki Chartrand, "Rise Up," 255; Grace Carson, "Tribal Sovereignty, Decolonization, and Abolition," 1109–10; Chelsea Whitaker and Cierra Russell, "An Abolitionist Approach to Creating Communities of Care," 229.
8. Jordan T. Camp and Christina Heatherton, "Introduction," 2; Tracey McIntosh, "Settler Violence, Family, and Whānau Violence in Aotearoa New Zealand," 20; Michael J. Viola et al., "Introduction to Solidarities of Nonalignment 10.
9. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, 2; Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* 10–11.
10. Sherene Razack, *Dying from Improvement*, 4–5; Luana Ross, *Inventing the Savage*, 16.
11. Eric A. Stanley, "Introduction," 2–3; Liat Ben-Moshe, *Decarcerating Disability*, 1–2; Andrea J. Ritchie, *Invisible No More*, 236.
12. Anthony and Chartrand, "States of Prison Abolition," 49–52; Theresa Rocha Beardall and Russell Edwards, "Abolition, Settler Colonialism, and the Persistent Threat of Indian Child Welfare," 536; Danielle Bird, "Settler Colonialism, Anti-Colonial Theory, and 'Indigenized' Prisons for Indigenous Women," 110, 113; Vicki Chartrand, "The Quotidian Violence of Incarcerating Indigenous People in the Canadian State," 257; Cunneen, "Decoloniality, Abolitionism, and the Disruption of Penal Power," 21; Chris Cunneen and Juan Tauri, *Indigenous Criminology*, 6; Fortier, "Abolition and Decolonization," 110; Guenther, "Settler Colonialism," 102; Laurel Mei-Singh, "Accompaniment Through Carceral Geographies," 77–78; Sol Neely, "Aan Yátx'u Sáani," 90; Emily Riddle n.p.; Toronto Abolitionist Convergence, 4.
13. Carson, "Tribal Sovereignty, Decolonization, and Abolition," 1085.
14. Lauren Brinkley-Rubinstein and David H. Cloud n.p.; Allegra M. McLeod, "Abolition and Environmental Justice," 1541; Allegra M. McLeod, "Prison Abolition and Grounded Justice," 1161; Keith Miyake, "The Racial Environmental State and Abolition Geography in California's Central Valley," 591; David N. Pellow, "Struggles for Environmental Justice in US Prisons and Jails," 59; Laura Pulido and Juan De Lara, "Reimagining 'Justice' in Environmental Justice," 77; Carlee Purdum et al., "No Justice, No Resilience," 419; Julie Sze, "Abolitionist Climate Justice, or ICE Will Melt," 44; Malini Ranganathan and Eve Bratman, "From Urban Resilience to Abolitionist Climate Justice in Washington, DC," 116; Amy Shackelford et al., "Abolitionism and Ecosocial Work," 4; Ki'Amber Thompson, "Toward a World Where We Can Breathe," 1699.
15. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons*, 42.
16. Chartrand, "Quotidian Violence," 263.
17. Beardall and Edwards, "Abolition, Settler Colonialism, and the Persistent Threat of Indian Child Welfare," 568; Bird, "Settler Colonialism," 116; Carson, "Tribal Sovereignty, Decolonization, and Abolition," 1087; Debbie Kilroy et al., "Abolition as a Decolonial Project," 231; Mei-Singh , "Accompaniment Through Carceral Geographies," 77; John Moore, "Abolition and (De) colonization," 38, 46; Riddle n.p.; Whitaker and Russell, "An Abolitionist Approach to Creating Communities of Care," 230.
18. Smith et al., "Introduction," 13.
19. "Rematriation is the return of land to Indigenous governance. Indigenous governance is about relationality and responsibility within and across species, territories, and waters. It is as diverse as those beings, that land, the rivers, lakes, and seas to which it is responsible. It upholds values of reciprocity, generosity, and cooperation. It reflects a genuine equity between genders and sexualities and across generations. It accounts for the most vulnerable and advances mutual aid and community care. It assumes that women and other-than-heterosexually-defined individuals center structures of governance and cultural practice. Indigenous governance would abolish state prisons, the military, and intelligence, not because there would be an absence of law but because the law would not be driven by capitalism" (Joanne Barker, *Red Scare*, 116).
20. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," 36.
21. Andrea Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 182.
22. Joseph Len Miller, "What Do We Need to Know?" 185, italics in original.
23. Amohia Boulton and Tula Brannelly, "Care Ethics and Indigenous Values," 77.
24. Carson, "Tribal Sovereignty, Decolonization, and Abolition," 1086.
25. Clément Barniaudy, "Becoming Aware of the Living Air," 172; Boulton and Brannelly, "Care Ethics and Indigenous Values," 81; Cherni Li Liew and Ailsa Lipscombe, "Transforming Indigenous Knowledges Stewardship Praxis through an Ethics of Care," 646; Robert Michael Ruehl, "Reimagining Justice as Preservative Care for Sustained Peace," 360; Naomi Scheman, "The On-the-Ground Radicality of Police and Prison Abolition," 152; Amanda Monehu Yates, "Transforming Geographies," 111.
26. Anthony and Chartrand, "States of Prison Abolition," 58; China Medel, "Abolitionist Care in the Militarized Borderlands," 875; Rodante van der Waal et al., 4

27. Andrew Curley et al., "Decolonisation Is a Political Project," 1051.
28. Anthony and Chartrand, "States of Prison Abolition" 47; Nick Estes et al., "United in Struggle," 256; Jennifer Elyse James, "The Problem Is Not (Merely) Mass Incarceration," 37; Scheman, "On-the-Ground Radicality," 150; Viola et al., "Introduction to Solidarities of Nonalignment," 11.
29. James, "The Problem Is Not (Merely) Mass Incarceration," 36; Kilroy et al., "Abolition as a Decolonial Project," 231; Sepulveda n.p.; Smith, Tuck, and Yang, "Introduction," 13.
30. For more on this topic, see the scholarship of Ann Marie Beals (Mi'kmaq) or Ashton Dunkley (Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape).
31. Carson, "Tribal Sovereignty, Decolonization, and Abolition," 1086.
32. Carson, "Tribal Sovereignty, Decolonization, and Abolition," 1118.
33. Barker, *Red Scare*, 124.
34. Mei-Singh, "Accompaniment Through Carceral Geographies," 76.
35. Carson, "Tribal Sovereignty, Decolonization, and Abolition," 1119.
36. Barker, *Red Scare*, 115.
37. Benson, "Carrying Stories of Incarcerated Indigenous Women as Tools for Prison Abolition," 161; Cunneen and Tauri, *Indigenous Criminology*, 131; Neely, "Aan Yátx'u Sáani," 74.
38. Sarah Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape*, xvi.
39. Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe (1978) divested tribal courts of jurisdiction over non-Natives, meaning such courts could not criminally prosecute non-Native defendants. This is part of a larger pattern of Native nations' diminished and constrained self-determination—overt outcomes for Indigenous bodies and for those that cause harm to Indigenous bodies—of which US federal powers like the Bureau of Indian Affairs embody.
40. Lumsden, "Reproductive Justice," 33.
41. Ross, *Inventing the Savage*, 14.
42. Barker, *Red Scare*, x; Guenther, "Settler Colonialism, Incarceration, and the Abolitionist Imperative," 99; Moore, "Abolition and (De) colonization," 37; Neely, "Aan Yátx'u Sáani," 78; Ross, *Inventing the Savage*, 14; Toronto Abolitionist Convergence, 6.
43. Estes et al., "United in Struggle," 261.
44. Peter Irniq, "Healthy Community," 205.
45. Bird, "Settler Colonialism, Anti-Colonial Theory, and 'Indigenized' Prisons for Indigenous Women," 113.
46. Hunt n.p.; Moore, "Abolition and (De)colonization," 41.
47. Cunneen and Tauri, *Indigenous Criminology*, 17; Sepulveda n.p.
48. Cunneen, "Decoloniality, Abolitionism, and the Disruption of Penal Power," 26.
49. Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 25.
50. Cunneen and Tauri, *Indigenous Criminology*, 124.
51. Carson, "Tribal Sovereignty, Decolonization, and Abolition," 1083–84.
52. Lumsden, "Reproductive Justice," 35.
53. Archibald, "Indigenous Storytelling," 198.
54. Benson, "Carrying Stories," 148.
55. Benson, "Carrying Stories," 145.
56. Chartrand, "Quotidian Violence," 263; Guenther, "Settler Colonialism, Incarceration, and the Abolitionist Imperative," 105.
57. Carson, "Tribal Sovereignty, Decolonization, and Abolition," 1117; Sepulveda n.p.
58. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting*, xxi.
59. Harjo, *Spiral to the Stars*, 4.
60. Harjo, *Spiral to the Stars*, 34.

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BOOK REVIEW

Ways of Being in the World: An Introduction to Indigenous Philosophies of Turtle Island

Andrea Sullivan-Clarke, ed. (Peterborough ON, Canada: Broadview Press, 2023).

Reviewed by Dennis H. McPherson, Tracy Shields, and J. Douglas Rabb

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY

With *Ways of Being in the World*, Dr. Andrea Sullivan-Clarke has produced what is in essence a wonderful anthology of Indigenous philosophical thought. All of the authors are Indigenous. The editor herself is Indigenous, Muskogee Nation of Oklahoma. Even the copy editor is Indigenous, Mi'kmaw. The colorful cover artwork, as well as the five black and whites inside, are by Indigenous artist Po Chapman (Anishinaabe-Haudenosaunee). Four of the readings were written specifically for this book: "Where Does Agency Come From? Exploring Indigenous Models of Mind" by Kurtis Boyer (Métis), "Native American Epistemology through Dreams" by Joel Alvarez (Puerto Rican, Ecuadorian), "The Epistemology of Deep Disagreement and Indigenous Oral Histories" by Paul Simard Smith (Métis), and "What Do We Need to Know to Live in Harmony with Our Surroundings?" by Joseph Len Miller (Muscogee). The other readings are carefully chosen from mostly contemporary sources.[1] For example, the creation story of "Skywoman Falling" is taken from Robin Wall Kimmerer's book *Braiding Sweetgrass*. "Skywoman Falling" is, of course, the origin story of Turtle Island. Sullivan-Clarke is quite well aware that "many Indigenous communities in North America do not use the term 'Turtle Island' and the story of how North America came to be is not part of their worldview."[2] Nevertheless she uses the term in her subtitle to indicate that the Indigenous philosophies examined in her book are limited to those of North America. As she explains:

> I opted to use the term not to privilege one worldview over another. Rather, my decision to use "Turtle Island" resulted from my preference to use an Indigenous term instead of one that stemmed from colonialism. A second reason was that I wished to challenge the presupposition that the Americas were discovered, and named, by Europeans.[3]

In introducing Robin Wall Kimmerer and the "Skywoman Falling" story, Sullivan-Clarke reminds us that "stories often provide the philosophical content of Indigenous philosophies. One can look within the story for metaphysics, epistemology, and values. At the center of the story is the notion of a relationship and it would be part of the community's ontology."[4] Her use of Western philosophical terms such as metaphysics, epistemology, and ontology is quite deliberate. Her "primary purpose is to supplement the texts that are normally assigned in an undergraduate Introduction to Philosophy course."[5] Although her book is divided into sections on Philosophy of Religion, Metaphysics, Epistemology, and Value Theory, she admits that "it is good to realize that these divisions, in the case of Indigenous philosophical thought, are artificial."[6] She even admits that "this is not an Indigenous way of approaching philosophy."[7] Still, her book is intended to encourage fellow philosophers to take an interest in researching Indigenous philosophy and introducing it into the regular first-year Introduction to Philosophy course so that they and their students have "the opportunity to engage with philosophical thought not found in the traditional canon."[8] To that end, "Each of the readings is introduced in the chapter to help the student recognize the context in which the philosophical thought is developed. Additional materials, such as discussion questions and pedagogical/cultural sources, are included after each article to serve as resources for instruction."[9] For example, the following "Suggestions for Critical Reflection" are provided after the "Skywoman Falling" reading:

1. What areas of philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, and value theory) do you find in the story of Skywoman? Provide examples to support your view.

2. What sorts of relationships are involved in the story of Skywoman? What conclusions about relations does the story provide?

3. Does the concept of reciprocity apply to our world today? Would it require a complete change in worldview to achieve it at the same level as it is achieved in the story?

4. What would ethical obligations or responsibilities look like for a worldview that focuses on the sorts of connections and relationships discussed in this piece?[10]

Additional resources are accessed by scanning a QR code. These are given after every reading. They access a wealth of information including videos and documentaries, artwork, suggestions for further reading, etc. In the case of "Skywoman Falling," an animated video that tells a shortened version of the story is provided. It would be suitable for showing in class to initiate discussion.

Sullivan-Clarke's book is much more than an anthology. Let us call it Anthology+. It is a fully prepared course, which could be given as a second- or third-year standalone course or, with some selection, as a supplement to a first-year Introduction to Philosophy. Sullivan-Clarke argues:

> [Given] the number of Indigenous people who conduct research in philosophy as well as those able to teach such courses is quite small . . . it doesn't seem reasonable to expect only Indigenous people to teach this material even if that would be ideal. Arguably, Western institutions should devote space for Indigenous philosophy, especially that of the local communities. However, as it stands, I worry that if we wait until there are enough Indigenous professors to teach philosophy, it may never be offered at all.[11]

We remain nonjudgmental concerning Sullivan-Clarke's unbecoming display of Euro-Western impatience here. In current circumstances, what should the role of the Indigenous philosopher be? Nonindigenous philosophers will approach this material with their own pre-judgments, their own pre-understandings based on their own life experience. In the metaphysics section of Sullivan-Clarke's book immediately following the "Skywoman Falling" reading, there appears an essay by Hilary N. Weaver (Lakota) entitled "Indigenous Identity: What Is It, and Who Really Has It?" Noting that "stereotypes have a powerful influence on identity," Weaver reminds us "nonindigenous people do not want to see aspects of Native people that do not support their own ideas and beliefs, thus leading to a perpetuation of stereotypes. These external perceptions may influence how Indigenous people see themselves."[12] Sullivan-Clarke is well aware that many Indigenous students discover their cultural identity while attending university. She even says:

> I drew from personal experience while drafting the contents of this book. My hope was to inspire those who grew up like me—away from the teachings and community of my people. Colonialism is responsible for so many struggling to find their way home and be accepted as a member, and feeling lost through no fault of their own.[13]

In the supplementary readings in Part One of her book, we are referred to an article by Thurman Lee Hester, Jr., and Dennis McPherson titled "The Euro-American Philosophical Tradition and Its Ability to Examine Indigenous Philosophy."[14] They argue:

> For Euro-American philosophers, or anyone else, to examine Indigenous thought they must be willing to return to the very roots of the discipline; to return to a very basic definition of philosophy. Philosophy is a thoughtful interaction with the world. No one goes through their entire life without at times reflecting upon the world. Some people spend almost their entire lives engaged in this activity. Every nation in the world has had such people. These are their philosophers.[15]

From this Hester and McPherson conclude, "the Indigenous person engages in philosophy by thoughtfully examining the world. The outsider examines Indigenous philosophy by thoughtfully interacting with the Indigenous philosopher."[16] Until we encountered Sullivan-Clarke's book we thought this was self-evident. Now we are not so certain. Let us call it the McPherson-Hester Hypothesis: "The Indigenous person engages in philosophy by thoughtfully examining the world. The outsider examines Indigenous philosophy by thoughtfully interacting with the Indigenous philosopher." Does Sullivan-Clarke's approach challenge or support the McPherson-Hester Hypothesis? Do the author biographies and the introductory essays Sullivan-Clarke has written constitute sufficient interaction with an Indigenous philosopher for the nonindigenous philosopher to get the most out of the readings? Even working through the readings themselves is still encountering Indigenous philosophy admittedly on the page. Is it "thoughtfully interacting with the Indigenous philosopher?" Or is Sullivan-Clarke claiming we don't have to? Is she challenging the McPherson-Hester Hypothesis?

We know of one nonindigenous philosopher who claims that she needs to study an Indigenous philosophy text "only in the company of its author or an Indigenous philosopher, *not in the solitude of my study*."[17] This ally is Dr. Sandra Tomsons, coeditor with Dr. Lorraine Mayer (Cree Métis) of *Aboriginal Rights: Critical Dialogues*.[18] A unique characteristic of their book is "the inter-philosophy dialogues between the two editors at the end of each section."[19] Perhaps Sullivan-Clarke would like to try something like this in a future edition of her book. She could work with a nonindigenous colleague who has successfully used her book in a first-year philosophy class. We are still not clear if her book challenges the McPherson-Hester Hypothesis, or is, in actual fact, a unique way of supporting it. She does provide a list of fourteen points as "tips for teaching the Indigenous philosophies in this text," the most important of which is "get to know the local Indigenous people."[20] Just talking with these folks and recognizing that you are on their ancestral land can be the first step toward the personal changes that often accompany research in Indigenous philosophy. Sullivan-Clarke does not sufficiently warn her readers about this very real possibility. She might have cited something like *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* by Shawn Wilson (Cree): "If research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right."[21] We conclude this review with a drawing by Dennis and Tracy's daughter, Mary McPherson. Titled *Cross-Assimilation*, it won a Governor General's award for Indigenous Art in 2015. In the context

of our review it adds depth to our critique of this important book.

NOTES

1. A complete table of contents is available on the publisher's website: https://broadviewpress.com/product/ways-of-being-in-the-world/#tab-table-of-contents.
2. Andrea Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 2.
3. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 2.
4. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 86.
5. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 3.
6. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 3.
7. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 3.
8. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 3. For the first course/program in Indigenous philosophy to be offered through a department of philosophy and the obstacles encountered, see J. Douglas Rabb, "Ethics in Locality: Confessions of a Not-so-Innocent Bystander," *Canadian Journal of Practical Philosophy* 5 (2021), (https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/csspe/vol5/1/6/).
9. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 4.
10. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 98.
11. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, xiii.
12. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 106.
13. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, xiv.
14. Thurman Lee Hester, Jr., and Dennis McPherson, "The Euro-American Philosophical Tradition and Its Ability to Examine Indigenous Philosophy," *Ayaangwaamizin: The International Journal of Indigenous Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (1997): 3–9.
15. Hester and McPherson, "Euro-American Philosophical Tradition," 9.
16. Hester and McPherson, "Euro-American Philosophical Tradition," 9.
17. Sandra Tomsons, "Epistemology: Constructing or Deconstructing Worlds?" *APA Newsletter on Indigenous Philosophy* 11, no. 1 (2011): 7, emphasis added.
18. Sandra Tomsons and Lorraine Mayer, *Philosophy and Aboriginal Rights: Critical Dialogues* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2013).
19. Tomsons and Mayer, *Philosophy and Aboriginal Rights*, xxvi.
20. Sullivan-Clarke, *Ways of Being in the World*, 4.
21. Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Winnipeg: Fernwood, 2008), 135. See also the section on Transformative Philosophy and the Incommensurable in Dennis H. McPherson and J. Douglas Rabb, *Indian from the Inside: Native American Philosophy and Cultural Renewal*, 2nd ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2011), 158 ff. In her lists of supplementary readings, Sullivan-Clarke on more than one occasion cites only the first edition of *Indian from the Inside* rather than the second. It should be the second edition. In his forward to the second edition, Jace Weaver (Cherokee) writes: "It reminds me of Vine Deloria's second edition of his classic *God is Red*. Although the core remains intact, the text has been so thoroughly revised it is almost a completely new book" (3).

APA STUDIES ON

LGBTQ Philosophy

AMY MARVIN, EDITOR

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FROM THE EDITOR

Amy Marvin
LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

Dear Reader,

In this issue we have prepared for you a long interview conducted with Florence Ashley. Ashley is a professor at the University of Alberta Faculty of Law and is associated with the John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre. They were the first transfeminine clerk serving the Supreme Court of Canada, they serve on several prestigious editorial and advisory boards, and they have published on gender identity in the journal *MIND*. Our conversation centers on their new mixed genre book, *Gender/Fucking: The Pleasures and Politics of Living in a Gendered Body*, and digs into topics such as philosophical abstractions, the relationship between academic and literature writing, the state of transphobia in academia, and how we can grapple with a sense of doom about the future.

I do not like saying goodbye at the end of a party. I prefer to just leave. So, I was tempted to present the interview contained within this issue and head on my way out the door. And yet, this is a space where I am welcome to write, so it seems like a waste to not write *something*. Hence, I will summarize the work that I have done with this journal. For the past few years, I have focused on publishing interviews and more creative pieces. This bookends with a detailed interview between Nicholas Whittaker and Marquis Bey, and the following interview of Florence Ashley. I am excited about work in philosophy that takes up a more conversational or creative tone over our typical defensive style, so I have also published several essays that mix poetry, personal narrative, and philosophy across my run with the journal.

What is the future of this space? Who will be its next editor and what will be its next submissions? I do not know. It may be that the best stewardship this journal could receive is under a more senior scholar dedicated to a longer-term vision and capable of greater outreach than my contingency permits. It is easy for marginalized junior scholars to invest their time in various unpaid committees and projects that aim to make philosophy more inclusive, but this cuts into time that a scholar could use to land a job and participate in academic activities that are more highly valued. It is important to open doors for others but also to have a sense of when you risk getting thrown out using those same doors. As far as my future goes, I first plan to have a more relaxing summer than last summer! Then we will see what trouble I can cause next.

Jovially,

Amy

CONVERSATION

Interview on Gender/Fucking: The Pleasures and Politics of Living in a Gendered Body

Florence Ashley
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Amy Marvin
LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

Amy Marvin: First of all, I wanted to thank you for joining me today to have this conversation about your new book, *Gender/Fucking: The Pleasures and Politics of Living in a Gendered Body* and your work more broadly.[1] Would you mind just briefly introducing yourself?

Florence Ashley: Yeah. I'm Florence. I'm currently an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, the University of Alberta. I'm also affiliated with the John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre, also at the University of Alberta. I'm a transfeminine jurist bioethicist jack of all trades. I'm not really good at following disciplinary boundaries, so I do things a little bit all over the place in law, in philosophy, in bioethics, and in sociology related to science. I go wherever my thoughts take me, and one of the latest places my thoughts took me was writing a more non-academic book compared to what I've done before that essentially tricks people into reading theory by sandwiching it in erotica, or depending how you feel about it, tricking people into reading erotica by sandwiching it in theory.

AM: I love that way of phrasing it. I had just read your first book, *Banning Transgender Conversion Practices: A Legal and Policy Analysis*.[2] Then I was contacted by CLASH who sent me your next book, and it was interesting to track your shift towards integrating erotica alongside more theoretical insights. But you also incorporate poetry and personal narrative in a way that greatly expands your writing style compared with your other book. So I thought, to open, let's really get under the skin of a philosophical audience.

Towards the end of *Gender/Fucking*, you write, "Abstraction is a flawed epistemology. Ours must be one of love."[3] Why do you think we should prioritize love over abstraction?

FA: There's a two-part answer for that. The first is that knowledge isn't to be valued in and of itself. The second concerns the conceptual purity of abstraction. Abstraction may risk prioritizing clearly divided concepts through which we want to analyze the world, but often fails to track the world in the most meaningful ways and the most helpful ways. This can lead to an over-prioritization of knowledge for knowledge's sake as opposed to what knowledge can bring to the world. Right? There's this quote, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."[4] And there's a bit of this in my mindset here. But I'm also thinking about how we should approach epistemology. You cannot understand what's going on in the world, and especially with the world as a social place, by trying to erase nuance to create conceptual categories that are abstract and that are pure, because purity is not of this world. This ties back to the book's emphasis on human messiness, and what it means to truly know something. We have to engage with people on their own terms, and try to really understand how they are experiencing the world. Otherwise, we're bound to distort their experiences through our abstract categories. And so, I think that's a lot of what was in my mind when writing. And of course, this also ties back to the book's idea of arousal as something that can be a source of knowledge rather than just a distortion of knowledge as it's traditionally thought to be.

AM: As someone who just wrapped up and is planning another Philosophy of Love and Sex course, I really appreciate that emphasis on taking up love as epistemology in contrast to purified abstraction. I was thinking this would be a great book to assign next time around. Now that you've explained some of the thoughts that went into your approach, why is it that you wrote this specific book?

FA: That's a really long and also very short story, depending on how you look at it. I think the germs of this book actually came from all the way back in CEGEP, which is a Quebec-specific educational establishment that sits right between high school and university. Being a Frenchie, we have a lot of French classes that kind of turn into continental philosophy classes, but specifically French continental philosophy classes. You know, lots of existentialism and things like that. But we had this assignment to write something inspired by the many books we read. The book I drew inspiration from the most was a book by Dany Laferrière. And it's a book that gets quite self-reflective in many ways, but also has a little bit of salacious content. So I decided to write something inspired by that, which was my first foray into merging some erotic content along with some reflection. And if I recall, that essay was about post-modern alienation and other similar themes. I was proud of it and received quite a good grade. But now that essay is completely lost to the passage of time.

But through the years, moving forward, starting some years ago I had a lot of feelings around bodies, and what bodies do, and the way that embodiment itself is a little non-consensual. The body does what it wants to do, which may or may not track what we want it to do. This is far from revolutionary for anybody who reads anything from disability studies, but it is also perhaps something that a lot of people don't necessarily think about. And these thoughts led to the first essay on "vaginomancy" from the book, and that was the first one that I wrote. It was a way of processing feeling. So I say in many ways this book was in lieu of therapy. Although that's not entirely accurate, because I *did* also go to therapy, but in many ways I think the book helped more than therapy! And so that was where I reignited this style that I had tried out back in CEGEP. It was of course a bit different and updated. Of course, my writing style evolved over the years, along with my writing chops. One might hope. So I incorporated these erotic elements. I do feel like there's something very French about it. This incorporation of sexuality right into the work is something I don't see quite a lot in English language literature, but is quite common in French, like with Georges Bataille. I guess I would say Anaïs Nin does kind of do it in English, but is French, and so in our style. I think there's a bit of an inspiration from there as well. And interestingly, I mentioned is also somebody who makes you think with erotica. There are social critiques there, despite the fact that she's essentially just writing smut for some rich American.

So that was the first essay that I wrote. Then the second one was "Sexually Transmissible Transness," which is the first chapter, and that one was for the t4t Special Issue in *Transgender Studies Quarterly*.[5] But it wasn't taken up, so I had these two essays that I didn't know really what to do with. I started thinking that I have other ideas to continue expanding and developing and so I was like, I'll just write a book and add more essays that reflect this style! Of course, that involved sitting down and thinking about what ties these essays together. Why am I merging erotica with theory at a bigger scale? For "Sexually Transmissible Transness," the fit was natural. Similarly, for "Vaginomancy," the fit is natural, because the experiences specifically involve bringing both elements together. But I wanted to develop a bigger picture of why it is that I'm mixing these things together. What can erotica and theory do together beyond just both being there? And that, essentially, was the inception of this book project.

AM: This may be more of my own personal interest, but you mentioned at one point in the book that you were telling Viviane Namaste that you had a plan to "put the sex back in transsexual."[6] Can you tell me more about that?

FA: It was just a statement I made in passing. I don't quite remember where it was. I think it might have been at the anniversary event for ASTT(e)Q [*Action Santé Travesti(e)s et Transexuel(le)s du Québec*]. And you know Namaste was there looking fly as ever, with her long, white gloves just looking like a superstar. And if I recall, I said something on those lines of, like, "bring the sex back in transsexual," and Viviane was like, "Well, it's never left!" This is a very Viviane thing to say, and definitely holds true for the context of ASTT(e)Q, which has never shied away from its mission. ASTT(e)Q is structured as a project within an HIV / AIDS community organization, and a lot of their work is to serve trans communities more broadly, but also everybody who has a higher risk of HIV transmission. So trans people who

use injections, drugs or otherwise, may share needles or something like that. And then there's trans sex workers. So the politics of respectability and moving away from sex was never really at the heart of ASTT(e)Q. I do think Viviane very much pushes back against respectability on a personal level as well, so it certainly rang true to my ear from her perspective. And yet it's also true that there are lots of trans advocacy organizations and trans communities that have tried to dispense themselves from anything remotely sexual, and present this much more respectable, liberal face. And so where I'm sitting in writing this book, which is a way of pushing back against that and trying to reembrace this branch of trans community that never actually left but was perhaps not given the same spotlight.

AM: Speaking of putting the sex back into things, can you say more about how you understand the book in relation to erotica?

FA: I have a few sound clips prepared for this, okay? I don't know that there's that much to fit into a more academic conversation, but I'll read them out to you just for your own pleasure. The first one was this book is an elaborate ploy to get people crushing on me. And the other one is that this book is all about taking intellectual masturbation a little bit too literally!

AM: I love that tagline.

FA: Yeah, best read one orgasm for chapter! And then, of course, I like that I called it academic smut. The only thing I don't like about the academic smut moniker is that people are running with the word academic a bit too much and not enough with the smut, right? And so people are like, oh, well, if this is academic, maybe it's not for me. And I'm like, yeah, but academic smut is not really academic! It's meant to be about this contrast and how they're seen as a little bit incompatible in many ways, especially because I didn't say academic *erotica*, I said academic *smut* quite on purpose. You know there is that sentiment of lowliness to smut, versus erotica, which has this kind of air to it that, like, oh, we're doing something artistic. Which, I mean, no insult to erotica. But by contrast, smut is seen as like, "Oh, it's just smut!" It's like it's low art. And then you bring it into conversation with *academic* smut. And first, I think that makes it a lot more interesting. Second, I think it's probably the best way to get people interested in academia, frankly. I've had a number of people say if this is what they read in academic learning, they probably would've stayed in school a lot longer! But then, emphasizing the word smut specifically also goes back to the critique of arousal as a distortion of knowledge, right? Because when you do erotica it doesn't hit home quite as much. This sentiment that arousal and sex is something that distorts knowledge. And I think "academic smut" does that more. That's why I like the term so much.

AM: That's why I was thinking that I should assign your book for class. So I'm teaching Philosophy of Love and Sex again in the fall, and I found that over time I have been changing how I manage the content of the course compared with when I first taught it, when it had the same title but was mostly just Philosophy of Love. And then student evals were great but also like, "Oh, you kind of tricked us into filling the class by having sex in the name but then just focusing on love." So now I've been emphasizing the sex part more, especially since it's so important to talk and think about. We discussed bell hooks's "Eating the Other." And at one point she writes about this dynamic of *fucking* the Other.[7] So we had a whole class discussion—respectfully and professionally, of course—about the many ways we use the words "fuck" and "fucking," you know, philosophy as analysis of language use! And then how can we use this to think about what hooks is up to with deploying the word "fuck" philosophically? Because hooks isn't just using it to mean sex, but also exploitation, and using another person. So I think there's a way you can combine these topics that will get people excited about academic work and also help them think about their own lives. Your book navigates that dynamic really well.

FA: Yeah, I would just like to get people thinking. I mean, I know people have been finding it very helpful for themselves and thinking about their lives. I mean, primarily trans folk, but I do think it is relevant for a wider group as well. I do think it has been interesting navigating the question of who is the audience for my book. And I'm like, well, there's so many ways to answer that. On one hand, my audience is transfems and other trans folks. But I mean, in another sense, the entire world is my audience, because I do think that a lot of it is just about living in a body, and we all live in a body. Anybody who's not living in a body should probably let me know their trick. That sounds interesting! But until then we're all living in a body. And so I think there's something to be learned about that. And we're all living in a world that attributes meaning to us, partly based on our bodies. And I think that's true of everybody, it's not just marginalized folks. Marginalized folks feel it very differently, obviously, but everybody has meanings projected onto them. And then their relationships to other people are mediated through that. But I'm still thinking about who my audience is and who it could include.

AM: I guess the audience is just whoever makes it sometimes, right?

FA: Yeah.

AM: It also seems like you're thinking about the institutionalization of trans studies in the context of the academy. You mentioned the t4t issue of *TSQ*. And I know the book grapples with the chaser essay situation at *TSQ*. We don't have to go here if you don't want to, but did you have any thoughts on how you're engaging with trans studies?

FA: Yes. I was interested as somebody who's been involved with the Center for Applied Transgender Studies, which was itself a bit of a response to trans studies at times speaking in high abstraction primarily to other people who did more of a critical theory or cultural theory around trans issues, which is, you know, perfectly fine. But a lot of people felt like there wasn't much room for more. So that's definitely part of the feeling that's feeding into it. And yet, at the same time, this is a book that in many ways very much speaks to the abstraction crowd a lot more than

most of my other work. There is this kind of ambiguity and ambivalence which I work directly into the critique. That's not inherently a problem. The problem comes when we feel like journals only take that abstract style. But I'm not inherently against high abstraction—I mean, this book is about as masturbatory as it gets, quite literally.

AM: We're getting a lot of helpful context here for how you approach the book, how abstraction can become a flawed approach, and how you understand your writing process. Your previous book was *Banning Transgender Conversion Practices: A Legal and Policy Analysis*.[8] I read that as well. I highly recommend it. Currently, we're having a chat for *APA Studies on LGBTQ Philosophy*. So I assume most of our readers will be academic. How is the process with CLASH Books different from a more academic press like UBC Press? What was it like to go with a more popular press? I'm somewhat familiar with CLASH Books because the cover of *Darryl* was inspired by a photo that I took. So I have interacted with them before very briefly. But it was really cool to have them email me and be like, oh, Florence is writing this creative book! I didn't know you were heading in that direction.

FA: I didn't know I was going to head in that direction until I did! It was very different. I mean, I guess there's two main elements that are very different. The first one is for more popular presses. You're doing simultaneous pitches. So you're just kind of throwing it all out there and hoping, you know, hoping something sticks, which is very different from the academic experience where you're typically pitching one press at a time. The other thing is there's no peer review in the more literary scene. And so you're really just working with the editor directly, and you don't have this kind of back and forth with peer reviewers that you have to satisfy, and especially with a smaller press like CLASH. There's also no publishing board that has to move all of the decisions to the top, like the people that had to prove it were the people I was talking to. And so it's a very, very different vibe. I went with CLASH because of the enthusiasm that they had for the project. And that's an interesting thing. I don't see this level of enthusiasm in academic publishing in general, although for my third book project, there has been some pretty strong enthusiasm from one press. But overall, it's just a very different vibe, because when you're doing academic writing, you're definitely closer to the realm of abstraction than you are to the realm of love, at least as conceived in this book. I mean, you know you try to move as much as you can towards love within the academic mindset. But the structures of academic writing, especially in stuffier fields like law, and similarly, in science and bioethics, definitely limit your ability to be more creative and humane. And so very, very different. I also like the fact that the editing wasn't too heavy-handed, which is a little bit unusual even for a literary press. Oftentimes there's quite a lot of back and forth with editors, but I think the editors had concern about messing with the voice of the book too much. So while, of course, we did have editing and back and forth and stuff like that, it was not particularly heavy-handed.

So yeah, a very, very different experience! And of course, another thing that I'm living through now is the element of marketing, because with academic books there's a lot less emphasis on marketing, especially in Canada. Yes, you do a little bit of marketing. But at the end of the day, you just put the work out there and hope people buy it and do book reviews and stuff like that, because also most people are going to get it through libraries or there are academics who want to buy it. They're going to buy it either way, regardless of what you tell them, because it's going to be relevant to their research. But here we're trying to speak to people as people, not just sharing research. And so I have to show people what they'll get from it and that's been a bit frustrating as an author as a flip side to the enthusiasm. But people are so enthused about the book already! There are three Goodreads reviews so far because it came out on Tuesday. But two of the three already said it was life changing for them. And the most consistent feedback I get from people is that it made them cry, and that is so amazing to hear. But then you're turning around and trying to get other people to buy this book and letting them know it's going to be great for you. Look—I'm an academic. I have a salary. I'm not doing this book for money. I'm doing this book because I think it can actually bring something to people. And so there is this sense of being sad that you can't reach everybody who would like it. I'm not trying to convince people who aren't interested. I'm trying to reach the people who are and would be, and that's just hard to do. That's quite a frustrating experience.

AM: I hadn't even thought about the way you have to really ramp up marketing in the context of this kind of book. I noticed at one point—and, once again, this is a place where we don't have to go—but I think you were receiving some pushback online as a member of a committee and you had to lock down your social media account. Did this interfere with your marketing at all?

FA: Oh, yeah, I have so many thoughts on having to lock down. So what happened, essentially, was I was appointed to the WHO Guideline Development Group for the trans health guidelines, and because of complexities around scheduling—it was initially supposed to be earlier, and it was rescheduled for later—it essentially wasn't feasible for me to go anymore. And they were quite unaccommodating around possibilities and options for making it work. So I withdrew. But I didn't want to be the one making the withdrawal public. I was waiting for the WHO to make it public. But in between me telling them and it being made public, there was an immense amount of backlash and criticism towards, well, really, everybody's involvement in it. But they kind of homed in on me because I said, "Be gay, do crimes" in a *TikTok* and I have a big "Do Crimes" tattoo, which looks really fucking awesome. And you know they were all up in arms around that and also around the fact that I supported access to gender-affirming care in peer-reviewed publications, which is like—okay, that's what you're angry about, like, come on, be for real. But yeah, so at some point I had to lock down, but it wasn't even the harassment per se. It was more the fact that far-right journalists were clearly going through my Twitter and going through all my publications, finding anything you can drum up outrage about. Especially things they can just, like, put completely out of context in order to drum up outrage. And so this felt very invasive. And so that was why I ended up

locking things down for a little bit. But when you're locked down you can't really share on social media. And one of my main avenues of reach is on Twitter, because that's where I've built my audience. So it definitely made this hard. And that's why I ended up putting my profile back to public once I was getting closer to the last rush of marketing before the book comes out. And I think if I had felt the need to keep my profile locked longer, it probably would have had a negative impact on marketing and on sales. But hopefully it didn't in the long run. I wasn't locked down for terribly long, but also the reason I wasn't was precisely because of that marketing aspect.

AM: You just mentioned another board that you were appointed to and unfortunately had to duck out. But I know you've been involved with many important committees. You've also done important law work. How do you understand *Gender/Fucking* in relation to this public work?

FA: That's a good question. What's been fascinating to me is that I was kind of worried of how my colleagues would respond to learning about the book. But the feedback has been quite positive. Of course, none of them have read it, so maybe they'll change their minds once they read it! But, like, people have seen the cover, people are aware that it's a book with a lot of erotic content, and they actually think it's pretty cool, and they're quite excited about the fact that the feedback has been very, very positive. I see all my work as being interconnected, because at the end of the day what I am trying to do is to make trans lives better in whatever way I can, and a lot of my work throughout has been really engaging with the messiness of trans existence and of human existence more generally. And that's a recurring theme in a lot of my work. And also, I tried to fit "genderfucking" in the titles of everything. You know, I have not just the book that's called "gender/fucking." But I have a published law review article where the title starts with "genderfucking," and then I have an upcoming article that sets out genderfucking as a critical legal methodology.[9] That's also going to be coming out. And in that academic work I described genderfucking as a politics of messiness, which I kind of situate as in between a politics of recognition and a politics of refusal—definitely, with more affinities towards refusal. But not quite the politics of refusal in and of itself, because it really centers more on the messiness aspect, and I understand there's a bunch of reasons for that, which I go into in the book, but this theme of trying to capture the messiness of the heterogeneity of human experience and of trans experience as a microcosm of that is a thread that runs through a lot of my work, very far from just this book. And so, even though this book is very, very different, and the style speaks to a very, very different audience, it still has these strong ties to a lot of my work, and so I do see it as kind of the continuation of the same work much in the same way as you might think that the work of existentialists, such as the theoretical work of French existentialists, are continued in their theater and fiction work, and so I see it a little bit like that.

AM: With the theme of emphasizing messiness and heterogeneity, I want to ask how do you understand the kind of polyvocal style you brought to *Gender/Fucking*? Do you consider it a kind of memoir? A kind of poetry? A kind of autotheory? And along with this, what or who were some of your inspirations while writing this?

FA: Yeah, that's a good question. The answer is I don't know! I think partly half the fun is the fact that it's all so messy with regards not just to gender, but also to genre, which in French is the same word! And so there is a memoir element. But also, the memoir is not quite fully memoir, right? There's an element of distortion that goes on there, while the stories are pretty much all inspired from actual scenes that happened in my life. I do have tweaks, or composites, or some critical elements changed for narrative purposes to work a bit better. Like, to better make the tie-in with the essay work, and what I'm trying to convey work. I mean, an obvious example is in the "Libidinal Vertigo" chapter. I have this whole thing where it features a sex scene with a vampire. But here the vampire is the image of vampirism as a sort of stand-in for trans femininity and a way that is perceived by society as predatory. Yet, as I hope to show in the actual vignette, it is very much not, but I couldn't let transfemininity be represented for transfemininity, because the entire book is about that. So I had to find something else that was coded as predatory, and yet that I could show as not in fact such. And so you have these things that I play with in a text. Does that make it a memoir? I don't know. Is it autotheory? Maybe. I mean, I don't totally know what makes autotheory. I am certainly doing theory, right? And some people always talk about autofiction. And I'm like, well, but it's also not really fiction either. So I don't really know how I fit against that. I do think that for distribution purposes it's being classified as a memoir. That all has to do with which categories you want to be placed into in the bookstore, essentially. So it's less about actually describing what's going on.

The poetry was interesting because I added that later on, and I'm very self-conscious about poetry because I struggle with anything metaphorical. I'm not a very—I'm not good at metaphor. But I was like, well, but poetry doesn't have to be good, the poetry is not there to be good. The poetry is there to be like the piece of ginger that you eat between sushi, right? And so it's really kind of a palate cleanser between chapters and all it needs to be is good enough not to break the flow. So it is there to act as a sort of reset in between chapters, and I hope that it does a decent job at that. I know some of them I'm more attached to and I think are decent. But I'm not a poet. Probably the only way I can actually get poetry published is by putting it in between chapters here and there!

Now, in terms of inspirations—God, it's so hard to say because there's so many people. How do you even pick out just a few? And also, I think, most of my inspirations are people in my life more so than authors. But, God! I don't even know how to answer that. It's such a big question. I feel like I take in the entire world. And so the entire world is an inspiration. All my friends are inspirations. Every book I've ever written is an inspiration in one way or another. And there are places when the inspirations are fairly obvious because I just quote them outright. So when I'm quoting Audre Lorde or when I'm mentioning Jorge Luis Borges, this is obvious. But then there are things that are less obvious. And then, of course, you know, Torrey Peters, t4t, I

mean, the essay includes all of that. There's your thoughts on t4t and the ethics of care, like transferring ethics of care and stuff like that have definitely also been an influence. You know, Hil Malatino's work has been an influence. There's just so many people have been influences that it feels almost unfair to name anybody, because I can't name everybody. I guess when I am writing at no point am I trying to specifically take inspiration from any particular style. It's more just the way in which all of these readings have built me up as a person and built up my thinking as a person, and that's where the inspiration and of influence lies.

AM: The reception of my t4t essay has been so interesting to me because more people read it than I expected! I guess it's difficult to avoid gossip even if it's made philosophical. I wonder if there's something there with writing a more personal piece as well. Because you get to the question of, well, who has influenced me as the person who I am in the world? Of course, that is going to be so broad! You can't list every single person or author, or musician, even, or pet, or anything like that.

FA: Yeah.

AM: So part of why I was interested in asking about the style of the book is that there's a specific moment I wanted to focus on. The "Cutting Table" chapter ends with a note that the journal was written by someone else and was found later. I have taught and written on Søren Kierkegaard before, so while reading I was thinking about when Kierkegaard will create a pseudonym who finds writing by another pseudonym, and how this forces us to think more deeply with or at least not as straightforwardly about his work. And this was a style of writing that I don't think I've seen from you before, so I was wondering what your thoughts were when you were framing the chapter in that way.

FA: Yeah, so the note at the end is a later addition and also, because you've seen the advance reader copy, I've bolstered that part a little bit more between the ARC and the published version. But I added that later, really to emphasize the distance and the kind of, like, sense of weirdness and alienation in the process and its medicalization. That's what the whole chapter is essentially about. The inspiration is, just very openly, Borges. Borges, is one of my favorite authors. In part, because I have ADHD and he writes short stories. One of my favorite stories by him is like the one paragraph "On Exactitude in Science," which is a fantastic piece about the map territory problem and nuance.[10] And well, not just science, but everything. And I mean, this goes back to my ideas around abstraction versus love. But that essay, along with so many others, are attributed to fictional people that don't exist, and he has this thing where he does book critiques of books that don't exist, written by people that don't exist, and it's such a fascinating gimmick. Because sometimes, first of all, the idea of a book is what's most powerful, not really the execution. Sometimes the idea is where the power lies. And so in that case you don't necessarily need to write the book. You can just write a fake book, critique it a bit, but it's kind of a gimmick and a gimmick inside a gimmick, right? Because, like, the whole journal is set up to be a little bit like I don't know what's going on. Like, who are these people?

That kind of thing happens a little bit in my book, during the section at the doctor's, which is all very inspired from *Malone Meurt* by Samuel Beckett, which is, like, a complete slog of a book![11] And frankly, one of those books that would have probably benefited from never being written, but having a critique of the book being written about because it is a slog. But also, it's a very fascinating book about, essentially, this guy who's in a kind of, like, hospital or hospice-type bed, and seems to be awaiting death in some way, but doesn't really know what's going on. And I mean, we don't really know why he doesn't know what's going on, and there's sort of a mystery around that, but it brings up a lot of feelings about the weirdness of the world. It's an existentialist book. And so I wanted to—the journal is really about turning the lens back on trans health providers as the weird ones as opposed to doctors being the creators with trans people as the weird Frankenstein's monster. And so I was kind of reverting that lens, which makes sense because we all know that Frankenstein, the doctor Frankenstein, was the weird one, not the monster. The monster is perfectly justified. Well, I mean, okay, maybe don't *murder* people, but metaphorically, the monster is the victim here. Which then, again, brings us back to Sandy Stone, Susan Stryker, and the critique of medicalization, and all of that. I wanted to make that clear for the reader in the end. But then there's that gimmick in the gimmick style of writing I left my own mark on. Oh, the doctors are weird. And by the way, this is based on my actual journal that I kept from surgery! Then the ending bits, treating the journal as something that's been found, but as written by something else by somebody else, is itself a kind of Borgesian gimmick, but then, it's pretty evident that the surgery journal is, in fact, written by the person who gets it, right? But there's a refusal of recognition there and so it is meant to disorient. I think the point is that it's meant to disorient. It's meant to be an extremely unreliable narrator both at the level of the journal itself and at the level of the reflection afterwards. and my goal with making this disorienting and having an unreliable narrator is to convey that sense of alienation, of weirdness—of bodies, of medicine, and of the relationship that trans people have with medicine.

AM: So would you say that's part of writing as a form of refusal like you mentioned earlier?

FA: When I say it's a refusal, I think it's a partial refusal. I think it goes back to the politics of messiness and affinities with refusal without ever being fully a refusal, because at the end of the day, yes, there is this kind of rejection going on, but it's also in the context of engaging with the medical sphere. It is not a complete opt out. And so it's ambiguously and ambivalently situated vis-a-vis rejection and refusal. Which is where I get to the sense of messiness a bit.

AM: So back to messiness! One thing that I noticed throughout the book is grappling with difficult conversations. One aspect of this is your frank discussion about sex and specific sexual experiences. You also discuss chasers, which we might define broadly as people who seek out trans people reductively to fuck. You discuss trying to find sexual agency, despite the association between transfeminine people and predation. You also discuss harm within trans

communities. So how do you tend to approach these difficult conversations? And what was it like to put this into writing?

FA: Yeah, it was not easy. All of them are equally difficult. There's a lot of very kind of different difficulties with writing about different things A lot of it touches the fact that I like to say I'm reckless. Partly in response to people being like, "Oh, you're so courageous!" to be out as trans. I'm like, I'm not courageous. I'm just reckless. But it's that sense that if things need to be said, I don't necessarily care about the risk of vulnerability that comes with it. I think there is also a way in which being overly vulnerable itself acts as a defense mechanism where you're just like, well, I'm putting it out there. So if you hurt me with it, then you're the asshole. And also, really, it was exercising my agency and giving you the power to hurt me. So it's fine. So there's that aspect. But then there is also throughout a desire to also be kind of accountable. And in conversation with other folks in trans communities, and especially the ones that I revolve in. And so a lot of those chapters were read by people long before they were published and had gotten feedback. And then there was a bit of an iterative process in engaging with thoughts that the writing brought out in other people as well. And so I did. I think part of it was also the writing becoming a way of making it less just about me and more about broader experiences and phenomena. But yeah, it's not an easy thing to write about, and it's something you have to be very careful and sensitive about, especially because, going back to messiness, there's so many different experiences where you can't just be like, "This is the answer. And this is the situation. And this is how people are like." There's no such thing. And I think there is this kind of tentativeness to the whole book where I'm not trying to give you answers. I'm trying to give you my thinking in the hope that it helps people find answers for themselves.

AM: And now I'm thinking back to your way of grappling with messiness. So would you say that there is a distinct kind of carefulness that you need to bring towards writing about messiness? Because that is an interesting dynamic.

FA: Oh, yeah, 100 percent. You need to be very careful when you write about messiness. There is an irony in writing about and doing right by messiness—that if you want to do right by messiness, you can't be too messy! You *can* be messy. But then your relationship to writing about messiness is going to be very, very different. Because in part if you're very careless about engaging with messiness, then you're not necessarily showing this sort of loving attention and love and care that we want from a politics of messiness, and at the same time we need to leave ourselves space to be human and to be messy to a certain extent, right? There's no way of fully leaving behind the messiness when you're writing, and so there is a tension that you have to navigate. But I think all writing involves so many tensions that we have to navigate, and so in many ways this is just another example of the countless tensions that are involved in writing. But you're absolutely right that there is an element of being careful when writing about messiness and being thoughtful around certain claims that are made. One I think about is there's this quote from Porpentine, which is from "Hot Allostatic Load"—a fantastic essay for people who haven't read it—and there's a quote where she says, "When I look at a cis woman these days, the first thing I think is, I bet no one ever casually called her a rapist."[12] And, of course, this is not necessarily the most nuanced of thoughts. But also, it's just a feeling, it's a thought that is impressed upon Porpentine's mind. And I see that's just an expression of that messiness, right? Porpentine is not saying that nobody ever calls cis women rapists, but rather this is a thought and impression. So when I'm engaging with that, I have to be like, well, transfeminine bodies don't have a monopoly on demonization. And yet there is still a really important truth that lies within that statement about the way transfeminine bodies are framed as inherently predatory. And so it's about recognizing these truths and these feelings and the truth within the messiness, while also holding space for the fact that none of them are absolute truths. And there's no totalizing experience here.

AM: And another experience that you write about in the book is becoming the first openly transfeminine clerk at the Supreme Court of Canada. You go into detail about the deeper aspects of interviewing for the position that relates heavily with propriety and professionalism, so specifically views about sexuality and transfeminine embodiment when perceived as ill-fitting for the courtroom and the academy. So now that you're a law professor, I want to ask, what is it like to navigate these tensions? If you're willing to talk about this.

FA: Yeah. So it's interesting. I think, in many ways, being a law professor gives me a whole lot more freedom than I had as a clerk. For one, there are few places you're going to be as restricted in who you are as clerking for the Supreme Court because you're an extension of your judge. Anything you do will reflect upon them while you're clerking for them. This goes both ways, right? It does mean that part of the judge's judicial independence extends over to you, which does give you a measure of freedom. But the flip side is also that you're severely constrained by the fact that you have to maintain the honor of your judge and of the institution. And as much as I can be a person who's like, "Fuck institutions," it is something that I took very seriously while I was there, and I don't think I was wrong to do so. For many reasons, one of which being that I see what's happening in the United States, the politicization of the Supreme Court, and in Canada we haven't had that degree of polarization but some people are attempting to go down that road. It's something that is extremely detrimental to the entirety of law. And so the court's ability to rise above attempts at politicizing it in Canada has been part of its strengths, and it's a strength that, I think, is generally beneficial as much as I'm highly critical of the Supreme Court as an institution. Now that I'm no longer a clerk, I'm not at all shy of saying things that would have been absolutely impossible for me to say while I was there, and that I wouldn't have wanted to say while I was there. It's been years since I was there and it's a very, very different dynamic. And I get to have a very different relationship to the court because I don't have these role obligations that come with working there. But it's interesting writing about it, because then you're positioning yourself at a time where you did have these role obligations, while speaking from now where you don't have these role obligations. And this allows me to be a lot

more provocative in the things that I say. But now, being a law professor, because of academic freedom, there is actually so much more that I can do and say! And people aren't policing. I mean, some people attempt, but not at my university, and not my faculty, right? And none of my colleagues are trying to police what I do. They're just, you know, kind of letting me be. Of course, you know, if I went and did things that are highly inappropriate within the role obligations of a professor, that'd be a different thing. But as long as I do nothing that's going to seriously negatively impact the learning of my students, then I do have quite a lot of freedom, and it's something that I enjoy a lot, given how much the far right seems to hate me—especially now that I've become a professor they've come to hate me even more.

AM: I noticed that Alberta is doing some crackdowns on trans healthcare. Have you found that this is impacting your research or your teaching while you're there?

FA: I think I'm more impacted by the general atmosphere of attacks on trans people. Yes, of course, I'm more emotionally impacted by it happening in Alberta, because I'm here. And also, it's placing a load on my time because I'm in a good position to help. But that means, of course, it is a lot of work to help out, but I do feel like the anti-trans stuff overall has been so detrimental to my research, and I'm not the only one I know. A lot of people feel that way, because, I mean, I remember when I started in academia and where we had to fight against kind of liberal-ish gatekeepers in trans healthcare and pushing for moving more towards informed consent and less gatekeeping and stuff like that. Now we're completely in a different space, where we have to just try to justify not having our care taken away, which (1) is stressful and (2) is boring as fuck to argue. It's not a fun thing to argue. It's like being trapped in 101-level shit. And you're trying to write, you know, like graduate seminar-type stuff. And so it just kind of kills your soul academically. And I think that's perhaps part of why I'm turning a little bit more towards literature and meaning making. It's not just a kind of immediately practical intervention because it's the way of keeping my soul alive. And also, because I think we're moving to a place where, because of the degree of polarization, it's less and less clear to me as time goes on how much my writing is actually going to help. Because when it was liberals that were making the decision, I know how to appeal to liberals, and there are only so many ways I can appeal to liberals when it's conservatives making the decisions. They're not going to listen to what I say, no matter what I say, and so it moves towards, well, maybe the most impact I can make on people is by making them feel heard and making them find a sense of meaning and community and care within what's happening. And I guess that is changing the way I approach writing and being an academic. But it's rough, it's really disheartening. It's really hard to find the motivation to write papers. And I say that as somebody who famously pushes out, like, a gazillion papers a year. And I'm just really finding it hard to even find energy in topics that I'm enthused about anymore because of all that's happening.

AM: I'd like to know a bit more about what the climate in law is like. So I mainly know about philosophy. And I feel like law and philosophy have a bit of a kinship, you know—sometimes I've heard philosophers described as failed law professors and sometimes I've heard lawyers described as failed philosophers to some extent, but I was wondering, what is the climate like over there? Because in philosophy I feel like I'm in the center of the Transphobia Thunderdome, even if people pretend that isn't the case. Is it better over in law?

FA: You know, things are very different, from my understanding, in the US and Canada, but in Canada I think things are generally pretty good. I mean, we just had an open letter where thirty-six primarily law professors with a few staff lawyers at different academic institutes wrote an open letter opposing what was happening in Alberta, and just from two law schools.[13] So thirty-six people from just two law schools, of which over thirty are professors, is quite a lot of people writing in opposition to that and they are a lot of my colleagues. And that's just the people who signed too. You have to add the people who had reasons not to sign, even though they are supportive of the opposition. So it's been pretty good although you do, of course, have more hostile elements. But I don't feel like they have nearly as much power as they do in philosophy and disciplines like that. But you know, sometimes they're given political power because that's another thing in law. Professors end up being elected to offices or being given really high positions within governments. And so that's another thing about it. I had a colleague who was just appointed Deputy Minister of Justice in Alberta, which means that in likelihood he's going to be the one defending this law, right? And so there are feelings about that. But you know, first, I don't know his personal views on any of these things. But also, overall, I will say law is definitely in a much, much, much more comfortable position compared with philosophy when it comes to transphobia for sure. Again, *asterisk*—in Canada. Yes.

AM: I keep thinking maybe I should find my way over to the Tim Hortons side, but we'll see what ends up working! With your response to the previous question, you mentioned the difficulty of grappling with contemporary politics. The final chapter of your book, "Daydreams of an Apocalypse," took some turns that I didn't expect for your conclusion, but also resonated deeply with some of the bad feelings I've been grappling with lately. You ask the question, "How do you live in a world that will never be repaired?"[14] Then you turn to what you call palliative care, which is a care in the now and then, rather than yearning for a utopian future. When I reached the section I was thinking of McKenzie Wark's *Raving* where she emphasizes that the rave offers escape into an alternative time beyond the doom of the near future,[15] and also led me to think about the ending of Voltaire's *Candide* with the focus on tending one's garden.[16] So I wanted to ask, what do you think that palliative care looks like on the ground right now?

FA: Yeah. So first of all, I wanna ask, I'm curious. Why did it feel so unexpected?

AM: I think for me it was the turn you made. So you were writing about experiences with sex, of course, and with surgery, and with becoming a law clerk, that kind of stuff,

and I think that it felt so visceral to suddenly look at doom in the present. I think I wasn't expecting to suddenly also be called to grapple with my own emotions about how I'm going to keep going in the face of how bleak the future looks in this way. So that turn at the end was pretty heart-wrenching for me as well.

FA: That's fair, that's fair. Yeah. Also, another thing that you perhaps noticed is it's also one of the few chapters that actually has a long narrative, but that doesn't involve any sex at all. And that was very purposeful in a couple of different ways. One of the main ones being that when I was writing it, I was dating somebody who was asexual, and I wanted that relationship to be represented in the book. But also, it felt right for the theme, which is a bit more about coming down and laying in our difficult emotions. Not to use that word too seriously, but a little bit of a "post-nut clarity" vibes, and so it felt like the cuddlier aspect of the vignette was more in tune with the topic of just trying to find ourselves in the world. But it does, I guess, track it. A different tone would be to turn from just the sheer intensity of the topic. So then it's a very different kind of intensity for this last chapter. It's also very intense, but in such a different way. I don't know what it looks like in the world. That's an answer I'm still trying to grapple with this in terms of how it is activism. How do we do this activism? How do we craft these spaces of love and care that I see as partly escapist, but also more than escapist because there is something that's meant to be sustaining in the longer term there? And, you know, a lot of it is mutual aid. But a lot of the classic image is like, let's just get a fucking farm far away from the city and just live in a little commune. But of course, these things also get real messy and can turn south quite quickly, but it's part of what I was thinking of.

I was also thinking of Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson's Star House and other things, where people are just doing their best to care for one another and make life more livable, if not, hopefully, happy and sustainable. But I think what that looks like is just so different for everybody, and especially something I struggle with personally as somebody who's a little bit of a hermit and is not and doesn't necessarily have an easy time connecting with people in general, at least in a deeper manner. It's hard for me to know, but it's something I've been trying to figure out and trying to invite others into the conversation to help me figure out as well and also figure it out for themselves. But to me it's just so important, just because I feel like many of us are struggling with hopelessness. And we can be like, "Oh, no! Have hope!" but sometimes hopelessness is just reasonable. Like, in the chapter I talk about revolution and stuff like that. And given enough time, yeah, capitalism will collapse. And maybe we'll have a revolution for something better. But there's a bit of a doomsday clock like we're in *Majora's Mask*—you know, the moon is going to crash down and we have a time limit to stop it.[17] It's not clear exactly what the time limit is. But there's a time limit more or less because, realistically, we're not going to do well by climate change. And I don't think that climate change is probably going to fully kill off all of humanity. But certainly a lot of people are going to die from it, and the world will be hugely different afterwards. And so there is this sense of, well, we're not getting to the better place on earth in time to deal with a climate apocalypse. So there is a hopelessness that sets in. But the answer can't just be to turn inwards and not do anything. And so a lot of it is just trying to grapple with that and trying to find a motivation knowing that, yeah, maybe we're not going to be able to change the world. But if we can make life a little bit better and happier for a few people, maybe that's just enough.

AM: Speaking of the future, what can we look forward to seeing from you next? Is there anything that you wanted to mention that you're up to or things you're excited about other people being up to?

FA: So what *am* I doing next? Surviving my first year as a professor? Teaching is the first thing. Also, looking forward to getting a handle on my meds. In terms of what readers can look forward to, I am working on the third book, an academic one based on my doctorate research, on how courts approach science in family cases involving trans youth in Canada and especially when it comes to social gender, affirmation, and parental behavior towards trans youth. So it's a fun and interesting project about how science is a little bit of a double-edged sword! Even within the context of Canada, which has, you know, not yet fallen and the global courts which have not yet fallen into the whole anti-trans disinformation campaign, although we are starting to see it. So that's one thing. And then I'm excited for my "Genderfucking as Critical Legal Methodology" paper,[18] which, I guess, is a nice complement to the book. But for the law crowd! But, you know, I'll be honest right now, it's mostly about making it through the first year of teaching! It's such a black hole.

AM: It can be such a time sink! I feel like I'm in a moment where I've been teaching for a while, and I did a 3/3 of almost entirely prep courses for the past two years. And right now I only have a 1/2 teaching load, and this semester I'm just teaching two versions of a course that I've taught before several times. And I'm like, wow, this is so much easier now than it used to be!

FA: Yeah, I have a 1/2, and I'm dying! But, I mean, of course, I haven't taught these before. But like, holy shit, I mean, just my one criminal law class is so much—maybe I should stop going down all the rabbit holes. That would probably help. But the rabbit holes feel so worth it!

NOTES

1. Ashley, *Gender/Fucking*.
2. Ashley, *Banning Transgender Conversion Practices*.
3. Ashley, *Gender/Fucking*, 132.
4. Marx, *Theses on Feurbach*, 145.
5. Awkward-Rich and Malatino, The t4t Issue.
6. Ashley *Gender/Fucking*, 12.
7. hooks, "Eating the Other," 367-368.
8. Ashley, *Banning Transgender Conversion Practices*.
9. Ashley, "Genderfucking as a Critical Legal Methodology."
10. Borges, "On Exactitude in Science," 325.
11. Beckett, *Malone Muerte*.

12. Porpentine, "Hot Allostatic Load."
13. Canadian Press. "Legal Experts Raise Concerns about Alberta's Plans for Transgender Youth."
14. Ashley, *Gender/Fucking*, 143.
15. Wark, *Raving*.
16. Voltaire, *Candide*.
17. Miyamoto and Imamura, *The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask*.
18. Ashley, "Genderfucking as a Critical Legal Methodology."

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CALL FOR PAPERS

APA Studies on LGBTQ Philosophy invites members to submit papers, book reviews, and interviews, conversations, and more experimental writing formats for publication in the spring 2024 and fall 2024 editions. Submissions can address the areas of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, asexuality, gender, and sexuality studies, as well as issues of concern for LGBTQ people in the profession. The journal seeks quality paper submissions for review. Reviews and notes should address recent books, current events, or emerging trends. Members who give papers at APA divisional meetings, in particular, are encouraged to submit their work. Please pitch the editor before the deadline if you have an interview or more experimental proposal.

DEADLINE

The deadline for submission of manuscripts for a spring edition is December 15, 2024. The deadline for the fall edition is May 1, 2025. The editor may choose to move submissions from the spring edition to the fall edition depending on the number of submissions received.

FORMAT

Papers should be in the range of 5,000–6,000 words, with 7,500 words maximum permitted. Reviews and Notes should be in the range of 1,000–2,000 words, with 3,000 words maximum permitted. All submissions must use endnotes and should be prepared for anonymous review. Please contact the editor if you have plans for alternative formats such as interviews.

CONTACT

Submit all manuscripts electronically (.doc or .docx format), and direct inquiries to Amy Marvin, Editor, *APA Studies on LGBTQ Philosophy*, marvina@lafayette.edu. In the event of an editor change, Dr. Marvin will forward any submissions to the new editor.

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Florence Ashley is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Law and member of the John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre. Ashley is the author of *Gender/Fucking: The Pleasures and Politics of Living in a Gendered Body* (CLASH, 2024) and *Banning Transgender Conversion Practices: A Legal and Policy Analysis* (UBC Press, 2022). They have published over thirty refereed articles and chapters in journals including *MIND*. Their work has been cited by the Supreme Court of Canada, the United Nations Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health standards of care. Ashley is a founding fellow of the Centre for Applied Transgender Studies and sits on the editorial board of its flagship *Bulletin of Applied Transgender Studies*. Florence is a member of the Law Program Committee of the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) and of the National Council of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA).

Amy Marvin specializes in feminist philosophy and trans philosophy, with publications on laughter, violence, hope, oppression, curiosity, care, community, and subversive humor. She is a 2024 MSF Media Fellow, with publications in or forthcoming in *Philosophy Compass*, *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, *Hypatia*, *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*, *APA Studies on LGBTQ Philosophy*, *APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy*, *Contingent Magazine*, *Trans Philosophy*, *Curiosity Studies*, *Philosophy of Humour Handbook*, and *We Want it All: An Anthology of Radical Trans Poetics*. She is writing a book on social epistemology.

APA STUDIES ON

Philosophy and the Black Experience

ANTHONY SEAN NEAL AND BJÖRN FRETER, CO-EDITORS VOLUME 24 | NUMBER 1 | FALL 2024

FROM THE EDITORS

Anthony Sean Neal
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Björn Freter
GETTYSBURG COLLEGE

We begin this issue of *APA Studies on Philosophy and the Black Experience* with an editorial from Anthony Sean Neal. In the editorial, Neal reflects on the 1974 APA subcommittee report entitled "Crisis in Philosophy: The Black Presence." Neal's basic concern is that the current efforts of the profession in general, and the APA as a body specifically, may not be sufficient to address the actual state of affairs of Blacks in philosophy. Neal focuses on the number of Black philosophers in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) as a means of highlighting this state. After this editorial, we are delighted to have an article written by Kennth Uyi Abudu, entitled "An Afro-Relational Account of the Non-Human and Transhuman Entities." This article proposes a challenge to the dominant view regarding granting transhumanism and its emergent tech entities personhood. Abudu suggests that in recent times, there have been attempts by scholars in the Euro-American world to grant personhood to these tech entities such as robots, cyborgs, and humanoids. Abudu asserts that an African conception of the personhood of the non-human provides a moral framework, beyond the legal one. Abudu aserts further that we could assess the personhood of transhumanism and other tech non-human entities. The paper concludes by arguing for a re-imagination of the community and the non-human in Afro-relationality in ways that include tech non-human entities.

We conclude this issue with three book reviews by Björn Freter. They are as follows: "'Writing assures me I am.' A Review of Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Black and Female*"; "A Masterclass in Rewriting the History of African Philosophy: Some Remarks on Sophie Bọ̀sẹ́dé Olayemi Olúwọ́lé's Milestone *Socrates and Olúwọ́lés. Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy*"; and "An Ingenious Revolution of Epistemology: A Review of Abosede Priscilla Ipadeola's *Feminist African Philosophy Women and the Politics of Difference*." Each of these in-depth reviews place the importance of reading beyond borders squarely in of the "canonical reductionist." They also offer the opportunity to again restate the desire of the editors to include reviews and to this end request articles plus books to be reviewed and reviewers to review them.

EDITORIAL

Some Thoughts on William R. Jones's 1974 "Crisis in Philosophy: The Black Presence"

Anthony Sean Neal
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

In 1973, the American Philosophical Association's Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession initiated two subcommittees: the Subcommittee on the Status and Future of Blacks in Philosophy and the Subcommittee on Unionization and Collective Bargaining. The first was chaired by William R. Jones and the second by Gerald Massey. I will focus only on the matter of the first. By way of questionnaire, the subcommittees were tasked with gathering for three purposes. So that this editorial does not become a full-blown article, I will only point out the third purpose of this group. It was to give members of the profession some running information on the situation of the profession at the department level, on trends in the development of that situation, and on the responsiveness or non-responsiveness of departments and schools to some of the trends and to some of the demands currently being made in or on the profession. In consideration of this third purpose, one should only think that I am responding to the "a" clause of the statement, which is to give members of the profession some running information on the situation of the profession at the department level. Admittedly, my manner of doing so is not what one usually considers best practices in terms of a research-based and data-driven rigorous analysis. After all, this is only *some* thoughts on the matter. However, in the immediate sentence following the list of tasks, the chair of the committee, Gerald MacCallum, wrote an interesting statement, which I find continues to be interesting today. This is in light of what I take to be the purpose of any committee. I will give the statement first, and then discuss what I take to be the purpose of any committee. He simply wrote, "The Committee hopes all members of the Association will consider seriously whether this much enlarged enterprise is worth, or can be made worth, its now appreciable cost in time and money." This is a statement that on face value seems rather understandable in light of the burdens financial concerns place on any governing body. But it is also a statement that in the present moment allows for a type of assessment to be made upon the commitments and concerns of the Committee on the Status and Future of the Profession in particular and the American Philosophical Association in general.

Committees and especially subcommittees are commissioned for the purpose of performing special tasks and functions for the greater body of an organization. These tasks can range from investigatory work to service-oriented work. These tasks can also be ongoing or they can exist for a limited time period. However, the commissioning and existence of committees and subcommittees can and do inform the member as well as the outsider about the commitments and concerns of the greater body. This is why I believe it to be fair to make an assessment on the matter of commitments and concerns based on the existence of particular committees and subcommittees in light of the actual status of philosophy as a profession. In stating the previous for clarity's sake, and owing to recent conversations I have had with other philosophers, who seem to be clueless on the actual state of the profession, I decided to attempt to gain some sense of the departments within my vicinity. I am an associate professor at Mississippi State University, which is in the Southeastern Conference (SEC). This being the case, I decided that this block of schools would be easiest to perform my spontaneous analysis. I understand that because of the spontaneous nature of my study, I have opened myself to serious critique. So be it. . . . There are sixteen member schools in the SEC, each with a philosophy department. However, there are only four African American or Black philosophers. Alone, this may probably raise only a few eyebrows, but I would like to couple this information with demographic information of where Black Americans actually live. According to the Pew Charitable Trusts, 56 percent of Black people live in the South. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (OMH), "the ten states with the largest non-Hispanic black population in 2020 were Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia." However, I do realize that Delaware is not in the South and people from the DMV dispute Maryland's "southern-ness," but I simply wanted to quote the OMH accurately. Aside from matters such as SEC schools not being the only schools in the South and some of the states mentioned above do not have an SEC school, I found the numbers startling, to say the least. It is easy to see that the numbers of Black philosophers could be considered still in crisis, especially in the South. I realize that one position a person could take is that the location is the cause of the problem, but this negates the fact that currently that is where most Black people live and where they are typically educated. It seems probable that recruitment efforts could likely realize the greatest gains in this location.

This information brings about two questions for me: *Are we no longer committed to Blacks in philosophy? Do our actions follow our commitments?*

Other points can be raised about this matter such as this type of analysis seems fast and loose and says little about the actual state of affairs for Black philosophers in these places and elsewhere about the nation. Also, little is said here about the desire of Black philosophers in the discipline to actually take up the concerns of Black people, to know what the concerns are, or to be concerned about the concerns. This may also be a contributing factor in this matter. There may actually be more concern for the concern about the concerns than about the actual concerns of Black people. Lastly, professional commitments and other tasks may have reduced opportunities to form community and really tackle this issue in a serious manner. To this, I have a comment, which is . . . to be continued in the next issue.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

APA Studies on Philosophy and the Black Experience is published by the Committee on the Status of Black Philosophers. Authors are encouraged to submit original articles and book reviews on any topic in philosophy that makes a contribution to philosophy and the black experience broadly construed. The editors welcome submissions written from any philosophical tradition, as long as they make a contribution to philosophy and the black experience broadly construed. The editors especially welcome submissions dealing with philosophical issues and problems in African American and Africana philosophy.

All article submissions should be between ten and twenty pages (double spaced) in length, and book reviews should be between five and seven pages (double spaced) in length. All submissions must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language and *The Chicago Manual of Style* formatting. All submissions should be accompanied by a short biography of the author. Please send submissions electronically to apa.philbe.newsletter@gmail.com.

DEADLINES

Fall issues: May 1
Spring issues: December 1

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FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- The *APA Studies* adhere to *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
- Use as little formatting as possible. Details like page numbers, headers, footers, and columns will be added later. Use tabs instead of multiple spaces for indenting. Use *italics* instead of underlining. Use an "em dash" (—) instead of a double hyphen (--).
- Use endnotes instead of footnotes. Examples of proper endnote style:

  John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 90.

  See Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?" *Noûs* 34 (2000): 31–55.

ARTICLE

An Afro-Relational Account of the Non-Human and Transhuman Entities

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to challenge the dominant view regarding granting transhumanism and its emergent tech entities personhood. In recent times, there have been attempts by scholars in the Euro-American world to grant personhood to these tech entities such as robots, cyborgs, and humanoids. Evidently, the advocacy for the personhood of these entities has seen the rise of legal personhood, an attempt necessitated by their increasing roles in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, communications, transportation, to mention a few. In this paper, I challenge the dominance of the legal personhood by providing an Afro-relational account of the "non-human" for transhumanism and its emergent tech entities. I assert that an African conception of the personhood of the non-human provides a moral framework, beyond the legal one, for which we could assess the personhood of transhumanism and other tech non-human entities. Thus, the paper is an attempt to argue beyond the legal personhood that has dominated this discourse. It maintains the moral assessment of these transhuman tech entities in an African relational framework of the 'non-human' could be possible if these tech entities are considered alongside other non-human entities such as trees, plants, water bodies, forests, etc., entities whose personhood in an African community is determined by their fluidity, that is, their non-static nature, especially with respect to relationality. The paper concludes by arguing for a re-imagination of the community and the non-human in Afro-relationality in ways that include tech non-human entities.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I attempt to provide an Afro-relational account of the "non-human" as the basis for the assessment of the personhood of the tech non-human entities of transhumanism beyond the legal framework. The emergence of transhumanism in the mid-twentieth century gave rise to unprecedented scientific and technological advancements that have been able to blur the line between the biological, physical, and the digital. True to this, humanity has witnessed the long-lasting implications of transhumanism and its emergent technologies in several aspects. For instance, we can talk of some groundbreaking research in health care, sophisticated/mechanized agriculture, transportation, and communications—whereby people have testified that the age-long tradition of the difficulty in communication has now become a thing of the past, all thanks to transhumanism and its emergent technologies. Particularly, beyond bridging the gap in communication through some sophisticated gadgets and the ease of accessing quality health care, the services of these tech non-human entities are now being employed to address and improve upon, in some cases, shortage in the workforce, formation of friendship with people, especially the elderly, to carry out tasks that are considered difficult for humans. This was made possible by some aspects of transhumanism such as the creation of super-intelligent machines, self-driving cars, and bio-technologies that are considered necessary for well-being and longevity.

The above prospects of transhuman tech non-human entities, no doubt, have ensured a significant rise in the development of anti-aging technologies, bionic devices, human-machine interfaces, and the development of human-enhancement technologies for the sole purpose of improving the physical and mental capacities of humans. However, this is not to say that these tech non-human entities do not have their attendant problems. For instance, it has been reported several times that tech non-human entities such as robots have at one time or the other malfunctioned, thereby becoming lethal and endangering human lives, and in some cases, leading to death. For this reason, The United Nations General Assembly report on lethal autonomous robots (which could kill without human intervention),[1] and investment banks already employ so-called robot traders. Consequently, the increasing roles of tech non-human entities in human activities prompted the Committee on Legal Affairs of the European Parliament to assert in a 2017 report that "the civil liability for damage caused by robots is crucial and needs to be analyzed and addressed at the Union level."[2] Particularly, the Parliament called on the Commission to

> Explore, analyze and consider the implications of all possible legal solutions, such as . . . creating a specific legal status for robots in the long run, so that at least the most sophisticated autonomous robots could be established as having the status of electronic persons responsible for making good any damage they may cause, and possibly applying electronic personality to cases where robots make autonomous decisions or otherwise interact with third parties independently.[3]

The attempt to grant tech non-human entities personhood is gradually seeing the light of the day. In 2017, for instance, a humanoid robot named Sophia was granted citizenship by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, becoming the first humanoid robot to be granted the status of legal personhood in the history of humankind. The implication of this is that the attempt to grant tech non-human entities personhood has been done primarily from the legal perspective, leaving out the moral dimension. My intention in this paper, therefore, is to argue beyond the legal personhood of the tech non-human entities by providing a moral basis for assessing the personhood of tech non-human entities. In doing this, I employ the Afro-relational account of the "non-human." In Afro-relationality, it is believed that humans and non-humans are locked in a web of relationships, thereby making interactions among these beings possible. The point is captured by Polycarp Ikuenobe as follows:

> In traditional African view, reality or nature is a continuum and a harmonious composite of various elements and forces. Human beings are a harmonious part of this composite reality, which is fundamentally, a set of mobile life forces. . . . Because reality or nature is a continuum, there is no conceptual or interactive gap between the human self, community, the dead, spiritual or metaphysical entities and the phenomenal world; they are interrelated, they interact, and in some sense, one is an extension of the other.[4]

Having the above point in mind, I set out in this essay by briefly conceptualizing transhumanism, its emergent tech non-human entities, and the attempt to recognize these tech non-human entities as legal persons. Here, I examine some of the basic conditions necessary for the conferment of legal personhood on these entities, and I show whether the tech non-human entities fulfill these conditions or not. In what follows, I attempt an exposition of the personhood of the non-human in Afro-relational ontology, stating clearly their distinctive features: moral considerability, relationality, and fluidity. All this is followed by the thesis of this paper, which lies in the argument for a reimagination of the community and the non-human in Afro-relationality in ways that include the tech non-human entities.

TRANSHUMANISM, TECH NON-HUMAN ENTITIES, AND THE QUEST FOR LEGAL PERSONHOOD

Transhumanism has myriad definitions as scholars have made attempts over the years to conceptualize it. To begin with, however, transhumanism became popular during the mid-twentieth century as it was coined by Julian Huxley, the first Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the president of the British Eugenics Society from 1959 to 1962. In his article entitled "Transhumanism," he predicted a foreseeable future where the human person could be modified in ways that would contribute to his total well-being in the quest to surpass his physical and biological limitations. In his words,

> The human species can if it wishes, transcend itself—not just sporadically an individual here in one way, an individual there in another way, but in its entirety, as humanity. And once human beings finally take hold of their biological destiny, they will be "on the threshold" of a new kind of existence.[5]

Huxley goes further to state that: "'I believe in transhumanism': once there are enough people who can truly say that, the human species will be on the threshold of new kind of existence, as different from ours as ours is from that of the Peking man. It will at least be consciously fulfilling its real destiny."[6] What Huxley succeeded in doing with this transhuman movement was to show that the current humanity does not suggest finality to human nature, as modifications could be allowed in the attempt to address physical and biological limitations of humans. Prior to Huxley, the discourse surrounding human nature was primarily based on essences, especially in relation to other entities that make up the natural world. This explains why Nick Bostrom stated that transhumanism became popular as a result of humans' desires to "acquire new capacities," a tendency that is considered to be innate in man. What can be deduced from Huxley's and Bostrom's positions could further be understood within the context of the meaning of transhumanism as an ideology that seeks to promote human well-being through science and technology. In particular, Bostrom sees transhumanism as a movement that has developed gradually over the past two decades. It promotes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and evaluating the opportunities for enhancing the human condition and human organism opened up by the advancement of technology.[7] From another perspective, transhumanism can be defined as a movement that seeks to improve upon the human condition through the means of science and technology. In this sense, transhumanism should be understood purely from the period of the great advancements in technology. If this understanding of transhumanism is anything to go by, it simply suggests that the history of philosophy is saturated with thoughts and ideas that provide the basis for transhuman thinking. Here, reference can be made to René Descartes and his mechanistic composition of the human person and the Enlightenment period. In "Human Genetics Enhancement: A Transhumanist Perspective," Bostrom captures this position as he stated,

> Transhumanism has its roots in the secular humanist thinking, yet is more radical in that it promotes not only traditional means of improving human nature, such as education and cultural refinement, but also direct application of medicine and technology to overcome some of our basic biological limits.[8]

In a similar vein, Elaine Graham states,

> Transhumanism imagines a coming age in which particular dreams of immortality and omnipotence are pursued as the epitome of human perfectability. Such advocates of enhancement and the perfectability would regard themselves as the twenty-first century heirs to Enlightenment traditions of secular liberal humanism, in which humanity, having displaced the gods, achieves heights of wisdom and self-aggrandisement.[9]

True to the above excerpts, Ranisch and Sorgner pointed out that "transhumanism . . . is a contemporary renewal of humanism. It embraces and eventually amplifies central aspects of secular and Enlightenment humanist thought, such as belief in reason, individualism, science, progress, as well as self-perfection or cultivation."[10] The implication of this, says Amara Esther Chimakonam, is that transhumanism renews and revises the main ideas of Enlightenment in the light of new knowledge. The humanism strong emphasis on man, for instance, has been changed to include transhuman and posthuman.[11]

According to Max Moore, transhumanism is defined as the "philosophies of life (such as extropian perspectives) that seek the continuation and acceleration of the evolution of intelligent life beyond its currently human form and human limitations by means of science and technology guided by

life-promoting principles and values."[12] Thus, the beginning point for transhumanists is the rethinking of the current human nature, as to them, human nature is not static but evolving. Human nature therefore, to the transhumanists, is a work in progress. Bostrom poignantly reiterates this:

> Transhumanists view human nature as a work-in-progress, a half-baked beginning that we can learn to remold in desirable ways. Current humanity need not be the endpoint of evolution. Transhumanists hope that by responsible use of science, technology, and other rational means, we shall eventually manage to become posthuman, beings with vastly greater capacities than the present human beings have.[13]

In transhumanism, the modification and enhancement of human nature has several options, ranging from the "radical extension of human life span, to eradication of disease, elimination of unnecessary suffering, and augmentation of human intellectual, physical, and emotional capacities."[14] Other aspects of transhumanism and the modification of human nature include colonization and the possibility of creating super intelligent machines, along with other potential developments that could profound eliminate biological and physical limitations. Thus, modifying and enhancing human nature, for the transhumanists, could be made possible by a keen exploration of science and technology, and the attempt to do this has seen a rise in the creation of some tech non-human entities. I use the term "tech non-human entities" to refer to the super-intelligent machines and/or gadgets that are considered by-products of transhumanism, created by means of science and technology for the sole purpose of improving on and eradicating the physical or biological limitations encountered by humans. In these categories of tech non-human entities, we have robots, cyborgs (cybernetic organisms), humanoids, self-driving cars or robotic cars, and other anti-aging tools and devices.

The impact of these tech non-human entities, or as some people would call them, *techno homo sapiens*, is felt in almost all aspects of human endeavor. The services of humanoids and robots are being employed for the sake of reducing the workload on humans. In particular, it is believed that these entities possess a kind of intelligence that is capable of performing tasks that humans cannot. We have seen banks and other organizations employ the services of these tech non-human entities. In the aspect of nursing and health-care delivery, the services of robots are being employed to address the shortage of workforce and care for patients—especially aging ones. Robots in nursing were defined by the International Organization as "systems of mechanical, electrical, and control mechanisms used by trained operators in a professional health care setting that perform tasks in direct interaction with patients, nurses, doctors, and other health care professionals and which could modify their behaviour based on what they sense in their environment."[15] In the agricultural sector, tech non-human entities have a wide range of applications, performing tasks such as monitoring crops and PH levels. The application of these tech non-human entities in agriculture has become necessary for large-scale farming and by this, robots perform tasks such as harvesting, seeding, packing, palletizing, crop maintenance, and livestock applications. This has seen an increase in terms of productivity, waste reduction, guaranteed workers, precision, and cost-effectiveness.

Beyond the health care and agricultural sectors, the services of robots and other tech non-human entities are being employed in the education, communication, and transportation sectors, where we have witnessed super-intelligent machines such as ChatGPT, Duolingo, Amazon Alexa, Chatbots, Salesforce Einstein, and self-driving cars, to mention a few.

The continued role being played by these tech non-human entities in human affairs has generated lots of moral and legal questions. These questions have led to debates in recent times regarding the need to grant these tech non-human entities personhood. Two reasons could be advanced for this: on the one hand, this became necessary due to the fact that most of these entities are programmed in such a way that they exhibit some behavioral traits of humans such as the ability to speak, listen, and respond to questions. This has led to what is today known as the Human-Robot Interaction (HRI). On the other hand, there is the tendency of these tech non-human entities to malfunction, thereby causing harm to humans, or in some cases, death. Thus, the quest to address the latter became necessary, and this has led to the need to grant personhood to these tech non-human entities from the legal perspective. The next few paragraphs provide a brief account of conditions necessary for granting legal personhood to tech non-human entities.

In the history of philosophy, personhood remains one of the most contested concepts that have generated attention from philosophers. The question as to what constitutes the human person, or in some cases, personal identity, is not limited to philosophers; it is a question that has also generated attention from legal theorists and practitioners as well. Here, I attempt to show what constitutes the human person in the legal sense (legal personhood) to investigate if tech non-human entities fulfill the preconditions of being regarded as persons. To do this, however, some questions are important: What does it mean to be a legal person? Which entities are legal persons? Which entities should be legal persons?[16] According to Visa A. J. Kurki, these questions are limited to the understanding of legal personhood from the Western (Euro-American) systems that are divided on what entities should be considered as persons in the legal sense. For the first question, R. Van den Hoven van Genderen states that the idea of legal personhood involves the status of an entity as a person before the law, leading to the recognition of certain rights and obligations under the law. Thus, a person is considered a legal person on the basis of his duty to obey the law and to enjoy the benefit of protections to rights and privileges accorded to a legal person.[17] Regarding the second question, in the Euro-American systems, there are two categories: the natural persons, which are categorized further into active legal persons and passive legal persons. The active persons represent the human person born with sound mind and capacities, while the passive legal persons are natural persons such as infants who need others to

administer their rights and are not held responsible for their actions. The other category of legal persons is that of artificial (or *juristic*) person, comprising limited liability companies, states, and so on.[18]

In the quest to determine the legal personhood of transhuman technologies, Robert van den Hoven van Genderen argued that the degree of granting autonomy to tech non-human entities vary in function, as their function is contingent upon a social need to have them perform tasks as more or less autonomous tasks.[19] Consequently, granting legal personhood to tech non-human entities such as robots, for instance, suggests classifications such as the embodiment or nature of robots; the degree of autonomy; the function of the robot; the environment; the nature of interaction between human and robot.[20] One cannot deny that the current scientific and technological revolutions that gave rise to transhumanism and its emergent tech non-human entities have ensured increased discussions in the aspects of autonomy, the nature of robots, and the human-robot interaction. Hence, considering the continued role of robots and other tech non-human entities in human activities, it is safe to say that these tech non-human entities are "autonomously functioning artificial intelligent self-learning entities."[21] The classifications given suggest that robots and other tech non-human entities could fit within the status of legal persons. Tech non-human entities have a certain degree of autonomy, they perform functions by their programming and also interact with humans, a gesture which has led to the Human-Robot Interaction (HRI).

Kurki, in his attempt to fashion out the best legal personhood for artificial intelligence, could be considered from three contexts: the ultimate value contexts, the responsibility contexts, and the commercial contexts. For the ultimate value contexts, Kurki asks whether AI agents are of ultimate value to warrant them being granted the status of legal person. For the responsibility contexts, Kurki argued as to whether AI agents could be considered tortiously liable for their actions. Finally, Kurki pointed out that the commercial contexts have to do with whether or not AI agents could function as commercial actors—buying, selling, and so on.[22]

We have seen in recent times how tech non-human entities have been said to possess values, be held accountable, and perform commercial functions in factories and different organizations such as banks. As a result of this, we can argue that the tech non-human entities could be considered persons in the legal sense as the above contexts suggested by Kurki means that they could be accorded certain rights and obligations under the law; they are also accorded privileges and by this, they could be considered as legal (artificial persons).

THE NON-HUMAN IN AFRO-RELATIONAL ONTOLOGY

The general understanding of relationality in the African sense, as evident in the literature, is such that relationality is not limited to human entities. Put differently, humans are not the only entities in the chain of beings; there are various entities, alongside humans, that make up the ontological hierarchy. In this section, I attempt to provide a brief exposition of what is considered the "non-human" in Afro-relational ontology and its essential features: relationality, fluidity, and moral status.

The non-human in Afro-relational ontology is often categorized into two: the transcendental entities, that is, the entities above humans, and the sub-human entities (entities below human). It is instructive to note here that these entities are part of the makeup of African ontology, clearly defined by Imafidon as the "African way of perceiving, interpreting and making meaning out of interactions among beings and reality in general. It is the totality of the African's perception of reality."[23] Thus, one of the reasons why the non-human entities are considered important in maintaining a balanced ontology is the possession of what is generally referred to as the life force. In the opinion of Ama Mazama, "the energy of cosmic origin . . . permeates and lives within all that is—human beings, animals, plants, minerals, and objects, as well as events. This common energy shared by all confers a common essence to everything in the world and thus ensures the fundamental unity of all that exists. . . . This energy constitutes the active, dynamic principle that animates creation, and which can be identified as Life itself."[24] This force (life force) that permeate all entities, human and non-human, is further underscored by Augustine Shittle,

> The African conception of life includes both the physical and the spiritual. And it applies to everything. Stones are alive as well as animals. The difference is that animals have more life-force than stones, and we have more than animals. . . . So the universe can be seen as a graded system of life-force, emanating from the source of all force, God, and then going from the strongest, the ancestor who have died and the heads of clans and families, to the weakest animals and material objects.[25]

As stated earlier, the non-human in Afro-relational ontology consists of transcendental beings above humans. For these entities, God, the Supreme Being, is known to be at the apex. This is so because God is seen as the being which possesses everything to a superlative degree. Particularly, the superiority of God above other non-human entities in Afro-relational ontology is attested to by Bert Hamminga who asserts that

> The universe is a chain of forces "empowering" and "depowering" each other. God is the universal super-force, charging everything. God has important business, so he does not deal with humans directly. He leaves this to others: the young to the elders, the elders to the ancestors, and to the diviner, who is in contact not only with ancestors, but also with powerful spirits, people who died and who we know only as a force.[26]

God, in the non-human realm, is regarded as the temporal totality of existence. Next to God in the transcendental non-human category are the divinities which include the primordial and the deified. They are seen as ministers of the Supreme Being who are assigned portfolios. According to Imafidon, "primordial divinities are spiritual forces

brought into being with regard to the divine ordering of the universe and with derived powers."[27] The primordial divinities act as mediators between God and humans. Also, the primordial divinities are conceived in an object or nature-like manner. This explains why the Africans believe that primordial divinities reside in places like rivers, irons, sky, lagoons, hills, trees, forests, mountains, and so on. Thus, they discharge their powers from these places for the benefit of the community. Examples of primordial divinities particular to the Yoruba people of Southwestern Nigeria are *Orunmila*, *Ogun*, *Obatala*, *Esu*, which, respectively, are "god of wisdom," "god of iron," "god of creativity," and the "trickster god." These gods are assigned portfolios by the Supreme Being (*Olodumare*). In Esan traditional thought, the primordial deities are as follows: *Ayanto*, *Ojiuu*, *Ogun*, *Olokun*, and so on, which also represent "god of earth," "god of death," "god of iron," and "god of the river," respectively.

The deified divinities are heroes that are peculiar to certain communities. While alive, they contributed immensely to their communities, and it is believed that they are capable of influencing the community affairs; also, they are capable of relating the community's problems to the god. For instance, an individual who sacrificed his life to save his community is venerated after his/her death. For the deified divinities, one will not be surprised to see festivals being celebrated in honor of them; shrines and statues are also built to emphasize their significance in the community. For example, Moremi Ajasoro in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria; King Uda of Ekpoma, and also Ambrose Alli of Ekpoma, are all deified deities who made numerous contributions to their communities while on earth.

The ancestors are next in line in the transcendental non-human category. In the words of Lee M. Brown, ancestors are individuals who were once [physically] alive but are nonetheless still capable of agency. Having agency is to be understood as having the capacity to initiate, on one's own accord, actions that have intended consequences for oneself or others. It is believed that the awareness of the intention of ancestral spirits provides grounds for understanding physical occurrences.[28] The ancestors, thus, are seen as transcendental beings that once lived on earth and are also known as the living-dead. Ancestors are regarded as individuals who once lived in the physical world but died at an old age. Hence their death does not mean they do not partake in the affairs of the community as they are often seen as those capable of sustaining the moral life of the community. It is important to note that ancestors are not only seen as ghosts or dead heroes but, according to Parrinder, they "are felt to be still present, watching over the household, directly concerned in all the affairs of the family and property, giving abundant harvests and fertility."[29] The ancestors and those physically living on earth are capable of populating and depopulating each other's realm. This is evident, for instance, in the concept of reincarnation, which is seen as a gateway for populating the earthly realm by the ancestors. For those living physically on earth, death is a precondition by which they populate the ranks of the dead. Thus, in African cultures, it is strongly believed that the structural composition of the family in the physical world is also present in the spiritual world.

The inherent worth of the ancestors cannot be overemphasized, as they are closely knitted with the living. Their consent is often sought on issues that affect the family, especially when a member of the family commits an error that goes against the clan. With age comes prestige as it is important that an individual attains a certain age before he/she can be considered to be an ancestor at death. An attestation to this argument is the shrines that are found in typical African traditional homes where veneration such as the offering of kolanuts and drinks to the ancestors are done. Benezet Buzo captures this position by positing that the relationship between those living on earth and the ancestors is very close since the living owe their existence to the ancestors from whom they receive everything necessary for life. On the other hand, the living dead can "enjoy" their being ancestors only through the living clan community. In this way, a kind of "interaction"—hierarchically organized from top to bottom and vice versa—is created. The goal of this interaction is the increase of vitality within the clan.[30]

Last in the category of the non-human in Afro-relational ontology are objects or things, which are generally referred to as the sub-human entities; they consist of plants, animals, and minerals. These objects have low vitality compared to humans and other transcendental beings in the scheme of things, unless a human person acts on it. According to Imafidon: "a leaf, for example, lies inactive in the bush until someone gets it, acts on it and it emits its aura of healing. One thing is strikingly interesting about these things: their energy or force is hardly fixed or stable."[31] The reason for this is because evil forces can easily possess them due to their passive nature. They remain at the lowest rank of beings because their death presupposes the end of their existence. From another perspective, it explains why most medicine men who are experts in healing rely on these objects in the sub-human category in treating ailments that have defied scientific solutions.

One of the essential ingredients of granting these non-human entities personhood in an Afro-relational ontology is the ability to grant them moral status. According to Anne Warren,

> To have moral status is to be morally considerable, or to have a moral standing. It is to be an entity towards moral agents have, or can have, moral obligations. If an entity has moral status, then we may not treat it in just any way we please; we are morally obliged to give weight in our deliberations to its needs, interests, or well-being.[32]

Thus, the intrinsic or earned worth and/or granting moral considerability to the non-human in Afro-relational ontology is determined by their ability to promote the community and by extension, relationality. This is why in some African communities, there are practices of totems and taboos, some forests and water bodies are considered sacred, while ancestors are venerated. Thus, the issue of moral considerability granted to these non-human entities is not static; it is dynamic, as they may be considered as having moral worth today, and no moral worth in the next moment—depending on how the promote the general well-being and

harmony of the community. Put differently, the non-human nature is capable of increasing or decreasing almost to the point of extinction, depending on the fulfillment of their relational obligation to the community.

CONCLUSION: RE-IMAGINING THE COMMUNITY AND THE NON-HUMAN IN AFRO-RELATIONALITY

In Afro-relationality, community is seen as a combination and interaction of "forces," humans and non-human entities alike, such as trees, plans, animals, and water bodies. For both human and non-human entities, relationality and fluidity are important features as it is expected that the activities of both should be such that promote the community. However, one that is obvious in the way by which most African thinkers conceive the community is the community seems like a "narrow" entity. Elvis Imafidon describes a narrow community in an African sense as follows:

> By a narrow notion of community, I mean that African community is understood in a compact, restricted, sense, as primarily consisting of beings that are intrinsically connected, bonded together by shared, values, culture, religion, beliefs, language, ancestry, ethnicity, and philosophy. This narrow sense of community portrays a community as a closed entity, one that is uneasy about difference and anything that departs from the specific forms of being that it recognizes.[33]

He adds that:

> A community where its members are conscious of and rigid about its ontic and normative peculiarities, elevating such peculiarities over and above those of other communities. . . . These peculiar features such as religion, beliefs, language, modes of dressing, art, ancestry, ethnicity, kinship, genes, and culture become for this community the yardstick for admittance into the community and for assessing, evaluating, and judging non-community members.[34]

The understanding of the current African community is that it is saturated with human and non-human entities alike. God, ancestors, divinities, and other forces are considered to be above humans, while plants, trees, animals, and water bodies are considered below humans. The implication of this is that the non-human entities below humans serve different purposes depending on their fluid nature which determines their intrinsic or earned worth. Thus, an Afro-relational conception of the community in the narrow sense occludes tech non-human entities like robots. The question that readily comes to mind here is this: Can the tech non-human entities be regarded as one of the many entities that make up the African community? It is important to reiterate here that the acceptance or rejection of human or non-human entities in African communities is based on fluid and relational factors. For the fluid factor, it is the argument that personhood in the human or non-human sense is not static, that is, a person can be a person or a non-person. Imafidon captures this as follows: "Therefore, normatively speaking, one cannot be a person without a community. This also implies that personhood can be more or less, not the same at all times; it can be acquired and lost in time."[35] Thus, the fluid factor here is tied to the relational factor, as it is expected that the activities of both human and non-human entities in African community must be such that promote relationality. On this basis, it is important to make some claims here. First is that based on the fluid and relational feature, the tech non-human entities could be granted the status of the non-human in Afro-relationality. By this, we could think of tech non-human entities in terms of the intrinsic values that they possess. These intrinsic values should be adjudged on the basis of fluidity and relationality. In other words, do the tech non-human entities promote personhood, relationality, and the community? If yes, they could be accepted and granted the status of the non-human (sub-human) since they are nothing more than programmed machines. The second claim here is the need to reimagine and transcend the narrow conception of the community in an Afro-relational sense to what Imafidon calls the "broad." According to Imafidon,

> A broad sense of community, on the other hand, involves a more open and receptive form of communion among people, a communion that is grounded in general, flexible, and tolerant principles of humanity and solidarity that accommodate differences rather than based on very specific and rigid forms, features, or qualities of being. In this broad sense, an African community will promote communal living, sense of belonging, solidarity, and togetherness, through the recognition of other possibilities and understandings of the world different from its own. This broad sense does not require that a community reject or completely abandon its own collective understanding and theories of being and existence. Rather, this broad sense requires recognition of the limits of one's own perspectives, the willingness to develop other perspectives, and acknowledgment of the different perspectives of other people and other communities. In this way, a community of selves becomes less hostile to, more tolerant of, and more open to, differences in general.[36]

The importance of recognizing differences in the broad sense of the community as used by Imafidon should be understood beyond the human-to-human relationship; here, recognizing differences should also involve the human/non-human interaction. By this, we will come to realize that our understanding of the non-human could be broadened beyond the present understanding which limits the non-human to God, ancestors, divinities, trees, plants, animals, water bodies, inorganic minerals, to recognizing and accommodating the tech non-human entities as part of the non-human in Afro-relational ontology. It is within this broad sense of the community that tech non-human entities are able to thrive in their fullness as it promotes interdependence and inclusion. The uniqueness of the broad sense of the community lies in the argument that in Afro-relationality, they may be granted the status of the human person as they may not be capable of communitarianism.

However, the broad sense of the community provides a moral basis, beyond the legal one that has dominated the Euro-American world, and recognizes the tech non-human entities as part of the sub-humans in Afro-relational ontology. Thus, a broad sense of the community in African relationality for tech non-human entities could result in an ontological break from the longstanding relational conception of the non-human entities below humans. Rather than privileging plants, animals, trees, water bodies, and inorganic materials as non-human entities below humans, a broad sense of the community focuses on the possibility of interrelated and dynamic agents such as tech non-human entities as part of the "beings" that make up the biological, social, and ontological hierarchies in an African community. By virtue of this, a broad sense of the community promotes the locatedness and relationality of all beings, tech non-human entities included, on the basis of the degrees of their moral worth. One of the frameworks that could be embraced in the attempt to reimagine the current narrow sense of African community to a broad one is what I call an "Afrofuturistic relational ontology." An Afrofuturistic relational ontology is a kind of relational ontology that is grounded on Afrofuturism, a term described by Ademola Kazeem Fayemi as a "critical African imaginations of a posthuman future taking cognizance African history, culture, religion, and philosophy in the light of shifting dynamics in scientific, technological and power relations in the evolving world order.[37] Thus, an Afrofuturistic relational ontology recognizes the interconnectedness of humans and non-human entities. However, it tends to break away from the current reduction of the sub-non-human to only animals, plants, water bodies, etc., to be more inclusive of tech non-human entities. Put differently, an Afrofuturistic relational ontology recognizes the normativity and ontological basis of the personhood of the non-human in Afro-relationality but is not limited by the rigid conception of the narrow community that occludes tech non-human entities. With an Afrofuturistic understanding of the community, humans could therefore "share their communal spaces with machines, which indicates a basic connectivity characterized by the instrumentality of machines to humans. What is important here is that tech non-human entities are often designed for the inconvenience of humans."[38] Viewed in this way, tech non-human entities are the tools that erase the inconveniences that disrupt or slow down human productivity. As a result, the acceptance of the tech non-human entities in a reimagined African community should be based on their promotion of relationality; just as the sub-humans whose inherent worth is determined by their contribution to the community, the inherent value of tech non-human entities could also be assessed on this basis.

NOTES

1. The United Nations General Assembly, as quoted in Visa A. J. Kurki, *A Theory of Legal Personhood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 175.
2. The United Nations General Assembly, as quoted in Visa A. J. Kurki, *A Theory of Legal Personhood*, 175.
3. The United Nations General Assembly, as quoted in Visa A. J. Kurki, *A Theory of Legal Personhood*, 176.
4. Polycarp Ikuenobe, *Philosophical Perspectives on Community and Morality in African Traditions* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 63–64.
5. Julian Huxley as quoted in Robert Ranisch and Stefan Lorenz Sorgner, "Introducing Post- and Transhumanism," *Post- and Transhumanism: An Introduction*, ed. R. Ranisch and S. L. Sorgner (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 7–28.
6. Julian Huxley as quoted in Robert Ranisch and Stefan Lorenz Sorgner, "Introducing Post- and Transhumanism," 7–28.
7. Nick Bostrom, "Human Genetic Enhancements: A Transhumanist Perspective," *Journal of Value Inquiry* 37, no. 4 (2003): 493–506.
8. Bostrom, "Human Genetic Enhancements," 493–506.
9. Elaine Graham, "'Nietzsche Gets a Modem': Transhumanism and the Technological Sublime," *Literature and Theology* 16, no. 1 (2002): 65–80.
10. Ranisch and Sorgner, "Introducing Post- and Transhumanism," 7–28.
11. Esther Amara Chimakonam, "Afrocommunitarianism and Transhumanism," *Handbook of African Philosophy*, ed. E. Imafidon et al. (Switzerland: Springer Nature), 49–68.
12. Max Moore, "The Philosophy of Transhumanism," *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and the Philosophy of the Human Future*, ed. M. More and N. Vita-More (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013) 1–17.
13. Nick Bostrom, "Transhumanist Values," *Ethical Issues for the Twenty-first Century* (Michigan: Philosophy Documentation Center, 2005), 3–14.
14. Bostrom, "Transhumanist Values," 3–14.
15. The International Organization for Standardization 8373 as quoted in Gil P. Spriano et al., "Robots and Robotics in Nursing," *Healthcare* 10, no. 8 (2022): 1571.
16. Caludio Novelli quoted in Visa A. J. Kurki, *A Theory of Legal Personhood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 179.
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24. Ama Mazama, "Afrocentricity and African Spirituality," *Journal of Black Studies* 33, no. 3 (2002): 218–34.
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26. Bert Hamminga, "Epistemology from the African Point of View," in *Knowledge Cultures: Comparative Western and African Epistemology*, ed. B. Hamminga, 57–84. Amsterdam; New York, NY: Rodopi, 2005.
27. Elvis Imafidon, "The Ontological Foundations of Social Ethics in African Traditions," *Ontologized Ethics: New Essays in African Meta-Ethics*, ed. Elvis Imafidon and J. A. I. Bewaji (New York: Lexington Books, 2014), 37–54.
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32. Mary Anne Warren, *Moral Status: Obligations to Persons and Other Living Things* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 199.

33. Elvis Imafidon, "African Communitarian Philosophy of Personhood and Disability: The Asymmetry of Value and Power in Access to Healthcare," *International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies* 4, no. 1 (2021): 46–57.

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37. Ademola Kazeem Fayemi, Personhood in a Transhumanist Context: An African Perspective," *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 7, no. 1 (2018): 53–78.

38. Mpho Tshivhase, "Social Robots as Persons in Community," *Handbook of African Philosophy*, ed. E. Imafidon, M. Tshivhase, and B. Freter (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2023), 69–85.

BOOK REVIEWS

"Writing assures me I am." A Review of Tsitsi Dangarembga's Black and Female

Tsitsi Dangarembga (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2022). ISBN 978-1-64445-211-0 (cloth). ISBN 978-1-64445-212-7 (ebook).

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EMPIRE

"The first wound for all of us who are classified as 'black' is empire," writes Tsitsi Dangarembga in her first essay of the collection, entitled "Writing while Black and Female" (19). An "early objective of empire is what it called 'trade'" (19). Trade, Dangarembga explains, is premised on a loveless desire. A loveless desire "dwindles into lust," into an "impersonal desire that demands satisfaction" (19). It is the nature of the Empire to lust for more and more; its very nature is nothing but pleonexia. The "imperial lust has "wounded every part of the world that empire touched" (19–20). Those who have been mutilated were subjugated, and those—as Albert Memmi pointed out in a similar way[1]—who subjugated, mutilated themselves. Empire is a foul pestilence that no one can be close to without getting sick. The imperial lust disguised itself, the "wounds of empire to my part of the world—Southern Africa—are peculiar because they came clothed as presents" (25). "Melanated people," continues Dangarembga, "were offered the gift of modesty through clothing, the gift of knowledge through education, the gift of salvation through religion" (25). All these gifts did was to take away the "local ideas of modesty, local knowledge systems, metaphysical and legal systems, and language" (25). The Empire never intended to give; however, it preferred the robe of the giver during its violent raids. It was and is of fundamental importance that the Empire clearly recognizes who was and is Empire and who was and is not Empire during its pillage: "The melanin concentration in the skin of black people was and is a convenience" (26). And it gets even worse, explains Dangarembga, since this melanin concentration is not only used to justify colonial violence: "The effect of . . . colonization and human rights discourse is similar. Both make black people recipients of an imperial discourse that categorises us as wanting, and thus requiring punishment and disparagement" (26). Again, in "its execution, the punishment is disguised as saving." And Dangarembga adds one of the most important sentences of her book: "We are being punished, essentially for existing and having land and resources that less melanated people would like to have, but we are not silent" (26–27). It seemed (and perhaps still seems) completely absurd, even irrational, to the imperial lust that the Other, whose crime is to be the Other, should own something. First, the continent was used as a "source of unpaid labour," but later the "idea that the land itself was valuable developed slowly" (26). "These," writes Dangarembga, "are the wounds that burst open as I write" (28). What propels her work "is the hope not to be consumed, not to have my being rotted away, by trauma" (28). Dangarembga "had no inkling" that she "was just a black body brought into the world only to be . . . useful to [the empire]" (29). When she realized this predestination, as she presents in the depiction of her childhood in England with her foster parents, she began to discover "a terrible yet gratifying ease in annihilation. I was given food. It ate without tasting it. I was carried upstairs and put to bed" (33). Soon enough, her black body was understood as "difficult" even though this very difficulty was "imposed on me, so that I was in a constant state of fear and tension" (33).

WORDS

In this state of powerlessness Dangarembga eventually discovered a source of power, her words: "With words I could do things" (33). "Writing," she notes, "assures me I am" (59). The necessity of this fundamental ontological self-affirmation *that one exists as the particular human being one is* shows the depth of the imperial wound. Imperial lust has torn apart the unity of human and being and it has dehumanized the less melanated human being into a less melanated being, a "humanoid entity,"[2] a black—and female—entity, a, as she says in the third essay, "non-person, almost a non-thing" (117). Dangarembga's proverb *writing assures me that I am* allows us to witness the *reunification of human and being* of Tsitsi Dangarembga. She repeats her proverb of ontological reunification and adds a most important clarification when she notes: "Writing assures me that I am more than merely blackness and femaleness. Writing assures me I am" (59). The reunified human and being is a human being in the fullest sense—not just femaleness, not just blackness. Dangarembga's essay can indeed be read as an "extensive declaration of selfhood."[3] Existence cannot be expressed by the disappointing categories of the world (45). Existence is neither blackness, nor femaleness. Blackness and femaleness are no proper existential qualifiers, but, in this context, inferiorizing categories of those who rule to be able to identify those who should be ruled: the black being and the female being. Dangarembga leaves the reader (from the first essay) with these most powerful words: "Even though writing while

black and female does not constrain my writing process, it does position my writing's content. I write from my personhood, scattered as it is across continents and within voids. Through words I raise the guillotine [of empire], reach for the dismembered parts, and rejoin them to the rest of my being, whole the monster of empire practiced through patriarchy snaps at my heels" (64).

PATRIARCHY

It is this patriarchy, Dangarembga explains in the second essay, "Black, Female and the Superwoman Black Feminist," against which she "needed a superhero," to be able "to manage anxiety about a relentlessly terrifying humanity. Patriarchy was my first handmade terror, following the existential problem of being on the planet at all" (67). This is an astonishing twist to the existential claim that existence precedes essence. The very first existential problem is *not* that we are necessitated to determine an essence to solve the "problem of being on the planet at all," no, existence is preceded by oppression, i.e., by patriarchy, by the fact that Dangarembga had to be an "infant adversary of toxic masculinity at the age of three" (68). This continues to shape her life: "By the time I was in my teens, I had taken up an existence framed by a double negative: not male, not white" (70). It is the empire where Dangarembga finds the origin toxic masculinity, it was the "effect of the colonial legislation . . . to lump African women together as undifferentiated adjuncts to humanity" (73). This is, however, where Dangarembga's political history of the suppression of women in Zimbabwe, which is the guiding topic of the second essay, gets somewhat problematic as she makes a differentiation between imperial male toxicity and "pre-colonial patriarchy" (77) in Africa. In this patriarchy "women were kinspeople whose power was to be valued" (77) and they "were not absolutely deprived of power as kinship systems of privacy ensured that everyone had power in some capacity" (78). There might be some truth to this, but, as Masiyaleti Mbewe has noted, "the idea of a more accommodating sort of patriarchy jars a little nonetheless."[4] Of course, it has to be admitted that this problem is not yet solved despite ingenious work by, for instance, Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí[5] or Ifa Amadiume.[6] But let us return to Dangarembga's line of thought. "Women," she notes, "experience gendered and sexualized trauma every day" (85)—in Zimbabwe and so many other spaces in the world. What is required in the fight against this male supremacy is not "external agency" (108) as this agency produces nothing but "the mirror image of the agency-proving entity" (108). What is required is what Dangarembga calls internal agency. This agency "is the result of battles with conscience and difficult choices where an inner morality triumphs" (108); it is the result of a self-transcending "unrelenting fight for survival and dignity," reminding us "that other realities are possible beyond the one that obtains" (108).

UNFINISHED DECOLONIZATION

The third essay of the collection, "Decolonisation as Revolutionary Imaging," presents an analysis of Zimbabwe's ongoing project of decolonization. We will only briefly comment on this final essay. Certainly, one of the most important points is that Zimbabwe's project of decolonization has not been finished—despite the political declaration of independence.[7] This is not all that decolonization has to achieve. The empire is still alive, albeit it not in its initial colonial iteration. "We will simply take destructive white supremacist ideology with us if we do not make different choices first" (150) and that means, we must reevaluate—and abandon!—what has contributed so significantly to paving the way for the superiorist mess we live in, i.e., the "logic of the Enlightenment," the logic of "racism, slavery, genocide and colonization" (151; see 138–42). We need a "[d]ecolonisation that frees all [!] from fear" and that requires "a new revolution of the imagery and its products" (151). This revolution "can only be affected by bringing into consciousness the discursive products of those who have been relegated to the subjective status of 'not-I', in spite of the anxiety and fear that this 'not-I' may induce for most of us" (152). This suggestion is not surprising; in fact, it is not even a new suggestion.

It is difficult not to despair of our own times when the immediately obvious need for a revolution is still so rarely heard, or, to be more precise, is *so rarely practiced*. It will be hard work to get there, a "half a millennium old practice is hard to uproot, whatever one's melanin concentration. Yet the trajectory of current and future generations depends on that uprooting" (151). We must be grateful to Tsitsi Dangarembga for giving us (or rather: for giving all those who feel addressed) a lesson about what it means to defy the lifelong questioning of one's own human existence with her unbroken, unbreakable work toward a revolution that shall finally make the existential work of the *reunification of human and being* superfluous.

NOTES

1. See Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (London: Earthscan, 2003 [1974]).
2. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 56.
3. Emily Bernard, "The Guillotine Never Misses," *Times Literary Supplement*, November 25, 2022, 24.
4. Masiyaleti Mbewe, "Traces of Resistance," *The World Today* (August/September 2022): 48.
5. Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí, *The Invention of Women. Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourse* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
6. Ifa Amadiume, "Theorizing Matriarchy in Africa. Kinship Ideologies and Systems in Africa and Europe," Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí (ed.): *African Gender Studies. A Reader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, 83–98). The controversies are expertly and critically discussed in Abosede Priscilla Ipadeola, *Feminist African Philosophy. Women and the Politics of Difference* (New York, Routledge, 2023), 50–68. See also Björn Freter, "An Ingenious Revolution of Epistemology: A Review of Abosede Priscilla Ipadeola's *Feminist African Philosophy Women and the Politics of Difference*," *APA Studies on Philosophy and the Black Experience* 24, no. 1 (2024): 14–17 [this volume].
7. Olúfémi Táíwò is probably the most prominent representative of the exact opposite view, i.e., that decolonization is finished with the achievement of political independence. See Olúfémi Táíwò, *Against Decolonisation: Taking African Agency Seriously* (London: Hurst & Company, 2022). See also Björn Freter, "Some Thoughts on Olúfémi Táíwò's Against Decolonisation," *APA Studies on Philosophy and the Black Experience* 23, no. 1 (2023): 12–15.

A Masterclass in Rewriting the History of African Philosophy

Some Remarks on Sophie Bọ̀ṣẹ́dé Olayemi Olúwọ́lé's Milestone Socrates and Ọ̀rúnmìlà. Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy

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Sophie Bọ̀ṣẹ́dé Olayemi Olúwọ́lé (1935–2018) was a revolutionary Nigerian philosopher who taught philosophy as a professor at the University of Lagos. "She was a formidable defender of the view that indigenous oral traditions legitimately are considered philosophy."[1] Her works in comparative philosophy, for gender equality and women's rights, are groundbreaking.[2] Her book *Socrates and Ọ̀rúnmìlà. Two Patron Saints of Classical Philosophy* is so full of creativity, ingenuity, wisdom, and optimism, that this short note cannot be a comprehensive assessment. The comments below only seek to bring awareness and broaden the readership of this fantastic scholar.

COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Olúwọ́lé's work is a comparative study.[3] This "comparison of Socrates and *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*," she writes, "must definitely sound strange to the ears of most contemporary Western-trained scholars. This is so given the fact that Socrates is well known as the "Father of Philosophy," whereas only a handful of theologians and anthropologists are familiar with *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* as [*Yorùbá*] god of wisdom" (19). However, there are quite a few characteristics these two share (11–15, 42–43, 83). One is of exceptional importance: Neither of them wrote down any of their teachings and thus we can claim as "uncontested fact [i.e.] that both Socrates and *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* discussed their ideas, beliefs views and taught in oral language. The verbal forms and literary styles in which they did this, therefore, share some distinctive literary similarities" (12). We know about Socrates through the testimonies we find in Plato, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Diogenes Laertius, and others.[4] The Platonic Socrates[5] is, unsurprisingly, the main reference for Olúwọ́lé.

SOCRATES

We would like to make a brief remark about Olúwọ́lé and her use of Socrates as we find him in Plato. It could be considered a problem that Olúwọ́lé does not make a difference between Socrates in the earlier dialogues, which are rather close to the historical Socrates, and the middle dialogues in which Socrates becomes an actual Platonic philosopher. This could be problematic as the important comparison of these two philosophers as oral philosophers would no longer be applicable. Further research on this is certainly needed, but we can already point out that even though the Socrates of the middle dialogues might be the mouthpiece of the philosopher Plato, he still would be the mouthpiece of a philosopher who was deeply skeptical of written philosophy. Writings, Plato's Socrates says in the *Phaedrus*, one would think, have "intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing. And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself."[6] This is why eminent scholars (like Joachim Krämer, Giovanni Reale, or Thomas Alexander Szlezák) have assumed that Plato taught his most important insights, the so-called unwritten doctrines, orally only.[7] Thus, even though the philosopher Olúwọ́lé is referencing might be at times the historical Socrates and at other times the Platonic Socrates, her observation of the importance of oral traditions still stands.[8]

But let us return to Olúwọ́lé's argumentation.

ỌRÚNMÌLÀ

Ọ̀rúnmìlà, she notes, is known through "the expansive Yorùbá oral tradition popularly known as Ifá, an edifice conventionally treated as Yorùbá's religious divination system. Unlike in the case of Socrates, the transcription of these oral verses into the written form began only towards the tail end of the twentieth century—several thousands of years after the death of *Ọ̀rúnmìlà*" (13). In both cases, there are no "objective or inviolable ways of determining who Socrates and *Ọ̀rúnmìlà* actually were" (13). Olúwọ́lé presents a solid understanding of Socrates, following largely what (Western) research has established (23–33); therefore, we will focus on Ọ̀rúnmìlà.

Ọ̀rúnmìlà is *not* a God as "most Western educated ethnologists" assume (39). The Ifá (the divination system of the Yorùbá) explicitly states that Ọ̀rúnmìlà is an Orisa, that is, a *deified human being* (40). Ọ̀rúnmìlà "was the leader of a religious cult which established a school structured like Plato's Academy, in which various themes and subjects, including religion, science, morality, mathematics, the social sciences, etc., were taught" (40). He developed an Ifá-divination technique to understand God's will arriving at predictions "through the use [of] mathematical laws of probability" (41). All this does not necessarily indicate comparability with Socrates, but let us take a look at the consensuses Olúwọ́lé found:

ỌRÚNMÌLÀ AND SOCRATES IN AGREEMENT

1. EXPRESSION

Ọ̀rúnmìlà and (the Platonic) Socrates do not limit themselves to "statements demonstrable as rationally undeniable as many contemporary Western trained philosophers require scholars to do" (75).

2. VIRTUE

Ọ̀rúnmìlà and (the Platonic) Socrates insist that the virtuous life is the only life worth living, even though they do arrive at this understanding through different ways (76).

3. ANALYSIS
Ọrúnmìlà and (the Platonic) Socrates insist that whatever we believe in, whatever ideals we live by, they require scrutiny and critical investigation (76–77).

4. IGNORANCE
Both Ọrúnmìlà and (the Platonic) Socrates recognize that human beings always are and always should seek knowledge even though absolute knowledge is unobtainable. Both give an "explicit confession of their ignorance" (77).

5. DEATH
Ọrúnmìlà and (the Platonic) Socrates declare "the fear of death as based on ignorance" (77). Even though they disagreed on the purpose of death, they both believed in reincarnation as "an ordeal human beings inflict upon themselves when they fail to live a virtuous life" (78).

6. POLITICS
Ọrúnmìlà and (the Platonic) Socrates were primarily concerned with identifying "the central principle of ideal life and show people how to adhere to it in the management of personal affairs and those of the state" (78). They condemn (even though for different reasons) wrongdoing, they advocate the rights of women, and they insist on the importance of education. All these truths were unveiled through their thought, nothing was "directly handed down to them by some deity" (79).

Let us look now at the dissents Olúwọlé found.

ỌRÚNMÌLÀ AND SOCRATES IN DISAGREEMENT

1. REALITY
Ọrúnmìlà and (the Platonic) Socrates foundationally disagree about the ontological structure of reality. While Ọrúnmìlà finds the world to be created by God, (the Platonic) Socrates develops a metaphysics of forms (at least in the middle dialogues).

2. KNOWLEDGE
Ọrúnmìlà and Socrates (in this case, this applies more to the historical, and less to the Platonic Socrates) declare that the "absolute Truth belongs to God [thus] the knowledge sought by philosophers must be different unless they, regard themselves as gods" (80). Ọrúnmìlà, however, "stressed that there are, at least, two types of truth" (80). The mentioned godly truth and then the human truth. "This type of truth differs from the knowledge and wisdom human beings seek to have. They are varied and irreconcilable because they are eclectic. [These] types of truth cannot be eternal, unchanging and everlasting; yet they are the highest ones human beings can have through sense experience, discussion and critical analysis" (80).

However, it should be noted here that this difference is not convincing. On the contrary, it seems that Ọrúnmìlà and (Platonic and historical) Socrates would rather agree on this. Just think of the epistemological-ontological implications of the analogy of the divided line and the distinction between *eikasia* (belief/conjecture), *pistis* (belief), *dianoia* (discursive thinking), and *noesis* (dialectical thinking).[9]

3. NORMATIVITY
Ọrúnmìlà understands normative values as complementary; something can be good and bad at the same time. Socrates would certainly not agree to that.

4. POLITICS
Ọrúnmìlà and (the Platonic) Socrates agreed on some political ideas. However, Ọrúnmìlà, for instance, advocated equal rights for all human beings or that experienced foreigners should also be allowed "to run the affairs of state" (81).

THE PURPOSES OF THE COMPARISON
We want to highlight here just two of the many significant results Olúwọlé's comparative study has produced:

1. PROOF OF THE LEGITIMACY OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

Olúwọlé's analysis has convincingly shown an intellectual kinship between Ọrúnmìlà and Socrates. This is important because it forces us to either take Ọrúnmìlà seriously as a philosopher or to deny Socrates this very title. This allows Olúwọlé to disprove all those Eurocentric philosophers who have denied and to this day deny that the African continent has a philosophical tradition of intellectual rigor that cannot be considered inferior to Western philosophy. And at the same time, she disproves those African colleagues who doubted (for different reasons) the intellectual quality of traditional African philosophy, like, for instance, Kwasi Wiredu or Peter O. Bodurin.

2. BINARY COMPLEMENTARITY
Olúwọlé explains that both Socrates and Ọrúnmìlà make binary distinctions in their understanding of reality. However, "rather than explain each of the two features of reality as having a distinct and independent existence the way Socrates and many of his Western descendants did, Ọrúnmìlà conceived them as inseparable and complementary in nature and function. For him, one is not in opposition to the other" (144). This indicates one of the most prominent ideas in African thought—while (the Platonic) Socrates found himself as citizen of two worlds, Ọrúnmìlà finds himself in one world, in one world where everything is connected to one another. This could be understood—Kimmerle has pointed in a similar direction[10]—as evidence that Ọrúnmìlà has already developed a thought that would, since the twentieth century, become famous as ubuntu.

This idea of complementarity has immense consequences. It allows us to think philosophy from a non-exclusionary point of view. Olúwọlé writes:

> If scholars have remained intellectually unbiased, if they have recognized Western doctrines of empiricism, rationalism and dualistic monism as viable but not absolute assumptions, they would have realized that the Either/Or continuum read in the exclusive sense, is the logic of only monistic oppositional views of reality; they would have been poised to investigate the possibility of an alternative scientific basic assumption, different but intellectually cogent conceptual scheme, they

> would have realized that Either/Or postulate, read in the inclusive sense, is not an illogical mode of reasoning, Western educated scholars would have removed the blinkers which prevent them from appreciating the fundamental error in insisting that human kind is given to thinking in the oppositional form in which there is no other rational option between two apparently opposing existence. (191)

How I wish I had learned about this book earlier, preferably during my student days. I could have saved myself the hard (and still ongoing) work of getting rid of all my Eurocentric prejudices. This book deserves to be read and our colleagues and especially our students deserve that we tell them about it! All the wisdom that can be found here is far from being adequately recognized and appreciated.

NOTES

1. Louise Müller, "Sophie Olúwolé of Nigeria 1935–2018," in *Women Philosophers from Non-western Traditions: The First Four Thousand Years*, ed. Mary Ellen Waithe and Therese Boos Dykeman (Cham: Springer Verlag, 2023), 455–68.

   See also Ademola Kazeem Fayemi, "Remembering the African Philosopher, Abosede Sophie Oluwole: A Biographical Essay," *Filosofia Theoretica. Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* 7, no. 3 (2018): 118–31.

2. See Gail Presbey, "Sophie Oluwole's Major Contributions to African Philosophy," *Hypatia* 35 (2020): 231–42.

3. We must comment on the, unfortunately, very poor editorial quality. The book shows a significant number of typographical, bibliographical, and other errata. This is neither the fault of Sophie Olúwọlé nor does it dimmish the quality of her philosophical thought. We have to mention it as it might be distracting to the reader and, as I have personally witnessed it multiple times, there is a tendency of Western scholars to disregard and disqualify the philosophy of a scholar for these silly reasons that are completely insignificant in content.

4. See, for instance, the contributions in Christopher Moore, ed., *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Socrates* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2019), 1–170.

5. See Sandra Petterson, *Socrates and Philosophy in the Dialogues of Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

6. Plato, *Phaedrus* 274e–d. Translation taken from: Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, ed. Harold Noth Fowler, (London; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

7. Thomas Alexander Szlezák, *Platon und die Schriftlichkeit der Philosophie. Interpretationen zu den frühen und mittleren Dialogen* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1985), 327–410.

8. See Sophie Olúwọlé, *Philosophy and Oral Tradition* (Ikeja/Lagos: Arican Research Konsultancy, 1999).

9. See Plato, *Politeia* 509d-511e.

10. Heinz Kimmerle, "An Amazing Piece of Comparative Philosophy," *Confluence. Journal of World Philosophies* 1 (2014): 223.

An Ingenious Revolution of Epistemology A Review of Abosede Priscilla Ipadeola's Feminist African Philosophy: Women and the Politics of Difference

Abosede Priscilla Ipadeola (New York: Routledge, 2023). ISBN 978-1-03213-130-6 (hardcover). ISBN 978-1-03213-131-3 (paperback).

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Abosede Priscilla Ipadeola, Senior Lecturer at the University of Ibadan, presents in her book *Feminist African Philosophy: Women and the Politics of Difference* "a philosophical critique and reconstruction of African philosophy using gender as a parameter to do so" (ix). This is done in two parts. The "first part which contains four chapters, sets the background for the discourse through both conceptual and critical analyses of African philosophy" (10) and the "second part which contains . . . five chapters examines the specific components of African philosophy concerning particular feminist themes and concepts" (10). The project has its theoretical foundation in the "feminist African philosophical approach" (ix), which advocates the clearly formulated and hardly disputed principle that "while male or men's issues are important subjects to be explored by African philosophers, female and women's issues are equally worthy of attention in African philosophy" (xi).

THE PROBLEM OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

After providing an excellent critical commentary on the "Necessity of Philosophy on the Continent" (1) in the Introduction, Ipadeola discusses, in great detail in her first chapter, the notorious question, "What Is This Thing Called African Philosophy?" (17). She concludes her considerations with a well-founded understanding of African philosophy when she "define[s] African philosophy as a branch of human knowledge that critically examines the nature and problems of knowledge, morality, reality, and existence, beauty, art, law, and politics from the standpoint of the African and for the purpose of giving the African a voice(s) to speak for themselves" (46). Of course, she is "aware that this definition does not absolutely capture all that African philosophy stands for or does" and "that the question of who the African is, is still looming large in extant discourse" (46). It is therefore necessary "to bring to the fore the imperativeness of critiquing and reexamining what is presented to the world as African philosophy, especially in relation to gender inclusiveness and fair representation of all African peoples" (46).

THE PROBLEM OF AFRICAN FEMINIST PHILOSOPHY: THE GENDER OF POWER

The next chapter, "Feminist Scholarship in Africa," provides such a reexamining. Ipadeola suggests we should refer to African feminist scholarship in the plural form as "*African feminisms*" as the research is too "diverse, heterogenous, and vast" (52) to be summarized under a singular. One important point of contention is the question of the origin

of the oppression of women. Ipadeola does, of course, acknowledge the undeniable fact that "the Transatlantic slave trade and colonialism did great damage to existing socio-political, economic, moral, and epistemic structures in Africa before the continent's contact with the West. This undoubtedly includes gender relations and the status of women" (66). However, she adds that it would be "inaccurate to lay the entire blame for unequal gender relations in contemporary Africa at the doorsteps of Europeans. It is apparent that in pre-colonial Africa, there were practices that imply unequal gender relations, which did not directly emerge from Africans' ancestors' contact with the West" (66). It will be important, "regardless of the origin of the oppressor" (66) to condemn subjugation "because it is inherently evil and demeaning" (66). Unsurprisingly, Ipadeola favors bell hooks's understanding of feminism as "a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression."[1] These evils have to be overcome, and this is where Ipadeola finds the most important practical heart of feminism: "Contemporary Africans must reassess their beliefs and practices in relation to how close, or far away they are from gender justice" (67). It is "at the heart of feminist philosophy" to "go beyond the facts of gender inequality" and to find out the "fundamental ideas that underlie the disparity" (71).

In chapter 3, "African Philosophy and the Shackles of Androcentrism," Ipadeola recognizes this fundamental idea. In Western philosophy, it is the "reason-emotion difference" (72). that has allowed us to interpret reason as male and thus to weaponize reason to exclude women from the philosophical discourse.[2] In African philosophy, claims Ipadeola, the "basis of African women's oppression is much deeper" as the reason for the marginalization and oppression of African women "is not only reason but power" (72). She explains that "women's oppression is justified and perpetuated because of their lack of power. Power, privilege, and prominence are associated with the male gender both in the family and in the political sphere. The subject of the man of power is the underlying philosophy of gender relations in Africa. The philosophy of the man of power places the man at the center as the cynosure, both in the family and in society" (73). Ipadeola therefore explains that African male supremacy does not come via the detour of understanding the mind as male and *therefore* men have to be in power. In other words, the problem of African feminist research is not the "man of reason," (72) but the "gender of power" (73). The oppression of women "is justified and perpetuated because of their lack of power" (73). Ipadeola goes on to discuss this problem and the way it affects marriage and politics and how it appears in the different trends of African philosophy to eventually conclude that the feminist African approach "aims to ensure that African philosophy does not perpetuate women's marginalization and that issues that are important to women find a place within the mainstream of African philosophy" (89). Part of this effort has to be decolonization, i.e., the active engagement to rid philosophy "of its Eurocentric contents that serve the purpose of the perpetuation of colonization and its influences" (103).

In the fourth chapter, "Mainstreaming Gender Issues in African Philosophy," Ipadeola elucidates that African philosophy "as a subject is larger than decoloniality, yet without decoloniality, African philosophy is incomplete" (93). The "marginalization of African women under colonial rule was unprecedented" (98) and this problem persisted in post-colonial times, as "women have been consistently excluded from the process of decolonization, the male-centered approach of confrontation has been the dominant approach to decolonization in Africa" (100). However, decolonization must be supplemented by African philosophers "call[ing] out their indigenous cultures regarding the oppression of women which are concealed in some of their sayings, beliefs, and practices" (104). Without this dual "Feminist African Philosophical approach" that "requires all persons be viewed and treated as equals" (104), African philosophy cannot be relevant for the continent and, therefore, "mainstreaming feminine, feminist, and women's issues, . . . is what contemporary African philosophers cannot but effect" (105–06).

EPISTEMIC TYRANNY

Part 2 of the book begins with the chapter, "African Women, Illogicality, and Epistemic Tyranny"—we will focus mostly on this chapter in our remarks. Ipadeola explains that epistemology is not just a branch of philosophy invested in understanding (human) knowledge, it has "been employed as an instrument of power and marginalization from time immemorial," it has "always been a tool employed by oppressors to control the narrative" (109), and, unsurprisingly, it has "grossly disadvantaged women" (110). Following the famous distinction of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice by Miranda Fricker[3] and Paul Feyerabend's concept of tyranny of science,[4] she develops the concept of epistemic tyranny: "Epistemic tyranny is a form of epistemic injustice or oppression that emanates from a patriarchal structure" (112). In cases of epistemic tyranny, "evidence means nothing because patriarchy sets the standards of epistemic justification" (112), and it occurs when epistemic and hermeneutical injustice "do not just exist but are employed against an epistemically oppressed group at two levels" (112).[5] Ipadeola picks up the example by Fricker that the police will not believe someone because they are racialized as black.[6] This is just the "first layer of epistemic oppression" (112). In cases of epistemic tyranny, a second layer must be found—making the term somewhat related to the concept of intersectionality[7]—for instance, "when a woman suffers epistemic injustice from a fellow African" (112). This woman, since she suffers from epistemic (or internal) *and* hermeneutical (or external) injustice at the same time, experiences epistemic tyranny.

Ipadeola has done truly impressive, primarily reconstructive work, so far. However, this work pales in comparison with her critical-constructive work on epistemic tyranny, specifically, her work on the internal component of epistemic tyranny by introducing a rather ingenious and revolutionary epistemological thought.

EPISTEMIC FREEDOM AND WHAT KNOWLEDGE IS NOT

The antidote to epistemic tyranny is epistemic freedom. Epistemic freedom "means giving [women] the right to judge and justify their epistemic ideas from the perspective

as knowers" (114), and Ipadeola adds, developing an idea of Feyerabend further, that there "should be no epistemic rules aimed at excluding people in the epistemic sphere" (114). African women "must be able to defend their own epistemic rules . . . and determine what is knowledge to them" (115). Of course, this was (in Feyerabend's version) and remains (in Ipadeola's version) a highly controversial idea. To abandon the epistemic standards—i.e., the epistemic tyranny—of Western science is, especially in Western cultures, rarely a very well-received idea. Western science is, particularly in its practical applications, undoubtedly very successful, but it seems to also have produced a significant number of problems, and its success does not rule out that it was used, consciously or not, as a tool of domination. It seems to remain an open question whether Western science can be done without exerting epistemic domination and whether its creations can outweigh the negative effects of epistemic oppression. Certainly, it is important not to forget that if "science *is* 'tyrannical', part of the reason is that scientists reject the dictum that anything goes."[8] But we should also not forget that the rejection of the dictum anything goes does not imply that only Western science "goes." It seems rather reasonable to reject the radial autocracy of science. Mogobe Ramose puts it like this:

> I propose to write and speak freed from the religion called "science." So far, this religion imposes discipline with regard to what may be asked, how that which can be said or written should be done, and why it should be done or said, as well as where and when things may be said. Although beneficial to some extent, the discipline of the religion of "science" permits the questionable disregard of some truths, and by so doing, encourages the avoidance of discerning connections within and among phenomena outside the sphere of the particular scientific discipline. The result is that it often allows the presentation of partial truths as whole truths. Obedience to this religion without protesting is tantamount to slavery.[9]

This is close to Ipadeola's argumentation. She writes that "if epistemic rules are considered to be relevant at all, they must be guiding principles only and must be subject to the peculiarities of the particular epistemic situation" and goes on to point out that "reason alone . . . does not suffice to characterize, or justify a knowledge claim" (115).

We can extract at least two anti-superiorist principles from their next considerations.

1. FREEDOM AS THE GOAL

Freedom is posited as "goal of knowledge and knowing" (115). And she adds the rather brilliant idea that, therefore, "what is *not* knowledge is whatever engenders or perpetuates subjugation, marginalization, and oppression" (115; my emphasis) Whatever causes exclusion should no longer be qualified as knowledge. Male supremacy, in fact, all forms of superiorism are not only moral issues, they are at the same time epistemological issues. Superiorisms introduce quasi-knowledge, not-knowledge, something that appears to be knowledge and is misunderstood as knowledge, while its only function is to create and/or establish a power differential. Knowledge must create and expand freedom. In fact, the "focus of a knower and the epistemic community should be to maximize freedom and if epistemic rules held and promoted all the while by traditional epistemology sanctioned by the culture and ancestors must be violated or set aside to achieve this, so be it" (115). Epistemic freedom, Ipadeola requires a democratization of the "epistemic sphere [and should] not be validated by some cultural rules that inhibit the epistemic freedom of the individual, especially the epistemic freedom of African women" (116).

As we have already pointed out above: There is still a considerable amount of work to be done to make this idea robust against abuse and attempts to secretly re-introduce structures of domination—be it in the form of, for instance, a dishonest and unserious laissez-faire epistemology ("anything goes"). Just to be clear: This would be an abuse of Ipadeola's theory, it would mean to use the theory against its very core intention if someone, for instance, would claim that the epistemic knowledge of white supremacy must be taken into account. Ipadeola's approach to identify something like this a not-knowledge as it only intends to dominate the other is, we have to repeat it, an ingenious first step. And that there is work still to be done, does, of course, not diminish the value of this very promising and ingenious idea—that is the usual consequence of a new idea. Ipadeola is, of course, aware of all this. In fact, the next two principles already (even though she does not say that explicitly) address these issues.

2. RELEVANCE

We can identify a second heuristic epistemological principle when Ipadeola writes that "if epistemic rules are considered to be relevant at all, they must be guiding principles only and must be subject to the peculiarities of the particular epistemic situation" (115). Reason, unsurprisingly, continues to be an important property of epistemic judgments; however, "there are so many other important properties of validating or grounding knowledge, which are ignored" (115). Epistemology is an ongoing, unfinishable process; the "body of knowledge that guides or which underlies people's activities must be constantly reassessed, especially if it is inherited from the ancestors" (115).

A SURVEY OF WOMEN'S MARGINALIZATION

Chapter 6 ("African Women as Moral Agents and Judges"), chapter 7 ("Women as Metaphysical Figures in Traditional and Contemporary Africa"), and chapter 8 ("Women, Marginalization and African Political Theories") investigate, after the analysis of epistemology, further specific cases of marginalization of women in metaphysics, ethics, or politics. These chapters are "an exercise in the critique of African philosophy stressing how its components fare in relation to the maleness of the discipline" (11). Ipadeola can, unfortunately, convincingly show that many areas of African philosophy are still overtly masculinized. She provides a plethora of well-founded examples often including profound remarks of their pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial development (144–46).

EPISTEME AND DOXA

"From Episteme to Doxa: The Imperative of a Gender-Balanced Discourse in Contemporary Africa"concludes Ipadeola's book. The importance of mainstreaming issues of gender is repeated. "Without gender egalitarianism, there cannot be gender justice" (158). This, however, can only be done when African philosophy is critically appraised, "because philosophy forms the bedrock of idea called episteme upon which ideas called doxa, which shape people's behavior and practices are built" (158). At first, it seems rather surprising that Ipadeola refers to this, not unproblematic,[10] Platonic distinction. She defines episteme as "the knowledge generated in academia, which is produced under strict and controlled laws, theories, methods, and supervision" (159). Doxa is defined as "every day, non-specialized knowledge that is readily available to people as they lead their day-to-day affairs, or as people's shared beliefs and opinions" (159). Again, this seems surprising as this seems to reintroduce an epistemological hierarchy, as it was indeed Plato's intention. Ipadeola points this out herself when she mentions that Plato "not only canonized epistemic and metaphysical binaries but institutionalized a hierarchical perception of cognitive or intellectual categories" (159). And this is precisely what she wants to undo. "The arrogance of episteme," she explains, "is grounded in the arrogance of reason" (159). Academia is only invested in episteme while the "opinions of non-intellectual people or those called "ordinary people on the street" are . . . not considered relevant or crucial to the development of a wholesome epistemic system" (159). However, and this is the crucial point, very reminiscent of Sophie Olúwọlé's thoughts on oral philosophy,[11] "*doxa* is as valid and crucial in shaping behavior as *episteme*" (159). As long as *doxa* is not valued and seen in the way *episteme* is valued and seen, gender egalitarianism cannot be achieved. Ipadeola recommends, following Raji-Oyelade[12] and Oyelele,[13] creating "*feminist postproverbials* as a serious engagement with traditional African proverbs from a feminist standpoint and to correct the deep-seated dehumanization and oppression in the proverbs" (161). This creative revision of the African proverbial philosophy, the "deconstructing and reconstructing some of the African cultural elements," (161) would allow to move forward towards egalitarianism. And this, Ipadeola concludes her masterpiece, is not only of highest importance for women "but for all Africans. This is because unless women are emancipated from subjugation and marginalization, a great percentage of Africans are not emancipated, and this means that all effort toward the liberation of Africa from neocolonialism and marginalization is still far from being successful. African states' development is strongly tied to the liberation of the continent from foreign control and subjugation, and this cannot be achieved unless women are emancipated" (161).

The reader of this review will have noticed the deep appreciation for Ipadeola's work. We hope that this book, and especially its revolutionary fifth chapter, will find a wide readership. It is not often that intellectual creativity, thoroughness of research, and optimism for the future are combined like this. Colleagues, read this book, cite it, use it in class—we cannot fall back behind what has been unfolded here.

NOTES

1. bell hooks, *Feminism Is for Everybody. Passionate Politics* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2000), vii. Cited by Ipadeola on page 69.
2. See, for instance, Susan Bordo, "The Masculinization of Thought," *Signs. Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 11 (1986): 439–56; Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy. Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 37, 48, 52; and Björn Freter, "Andro*-Superiorism. Anti-Female* Thought and the Superhuman Fallacy in Western Canonical Philosophy," *Aṛụmaṛụka: Journal of Conversational Thinking* 4, no. 1 (2024), forthcoming.
3. See Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). Fricker explains: "*Testimonial injustice* occurs when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word; *hermeneutical injustice* occurs at a prior stage, when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences. An example of the first might be that the police do not believe you because you are black; an example of the second might be that you suffer sexual harassment in a culture that still lacks that critical concept. We might say that *testimonial injustice is caused by prejudice in the economy of credibility*; and that *hermeneutical injustice is caused by structural prejudice in the economy of collective hermeneutical resources*" (Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 1 [emphasis mine]).
4. See Paul Feyerabend, *The Tyranny of Science*, ed. Eric Oberheim (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).
5. See Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Black and Female* (London: Faber & Faber, 2022), 19. See also Björn Freter, "'Writing assures me I am.' A Review of Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Black and Female*," *APA Studies on Philosophy and the Black Experience* 24, no. 1 (2024): 9–11 [this volume].
6. See Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 1–8.
7. See Patricia Hill Collins, "Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 568 (2000): 41–53.
8. Robert Deltete, "Paul Feyerabend. The Tyranny of Science," *Philosophy in Review* 31, no. 4 (2011): 273.
9. Mogobe Ramose, "A Philosophy without Memory Cannot Abolish Slavery. On Epistemic Justice in South Africa," in *Debating African Philosophy: Perspectives on Identity, Decolonial Ethics and Comparative Philosophy*, ed. George Hull (London/New York: Routledge, 2019), 60.
10. See, for instance, Gail Fine, "Epistêmê and Doxa, Knowledge and Belief, in the Phaedo," in *Essays in Ancient Epistemology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 109–33.
11. See, for instance, Sophie Olúwọlé, *Philosophy and Oral Tradition* (Ikeja/Lagos: Arican Research Konsultancy, 1999); and *Socrates and Ọrúnmìlà. Two Patrons of Classical Philosophy (*Revised Edition. Lagos: Ark Publishers, 2015).
12. See Aderemi Raji-Oyelade, "Postproverbials in Yoruba Culture: A Playful Blasphemy," *Research in African Literatures* 30, no. 1 (2000): 74–82.
13. See Olayinka Oyeleye, "The Language Game and the Inequality of Gender: Feminist Postproverbials and the Yoruba Language," in *Identities, Histories and Values in Postcolonial Nigeria*, ed. Adeshina Afolayan (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021) 47–68.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

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We welcome our readers to the fall 2024 edition of the *APA Studies on Teaching Philosophy*. In this issue, we offer one article, a book review, and a couple of poems.

Our article is entitled "Paley Before Hume: How Not to Teach the Design Argument," by Mark T. Nelson of Westmont College. The paper argues that most teachers of the philosophy of religion, and the texts and anthologies they use, tend to fall into error when they teach the Argument from Design for the existence of God. Teachers usually take Paley's statement of the argument in his *Natural Theology* with its famous "watch analogy" as a model statement of the argument. They then proceed to travel back in time to Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, where the argument is presented by Hume's character Cleanthes and then refuted by his characters Philo and Demea. But Professor Nelson attempts to show by a careful reading of the relevant texts that this procedure misrepresents the nature of the apparent conflict between Hume and Paley, and more subtle statements of their arguments—which Nelson presents in some detail—are lost. Nelson shows that Paley was quite familiar with Hume's *Dialogues* and must therefore have wished to present the argument in a way that avoids the objections to it of Philo and Demea. Moreover, Cleanthes's design argument is a true analogical argument (in a sense that the author defines) and is deductive, whereas Paley's argument is deductive but not a true analogical argument. We teachers of these materials must, Nelson concludes, treat the arguments of Philo and Demea as responding to Cleanthes's arguments and Paley's argument as responding to the arguments of Philo and Demea. Nelson's purpose in this paper is to wean teachers of the philosophy of religion from the all-too-simple model, "here is the design argument" (Paley) and "here is the refutation of it" (Hume).

The book review is by Tziporah Kasachkoff of the Graduate Center, CUNY, and the book she reviews is *The Road Travelled and Other Essays* by Steven M. Cahn. Professor Cahn has written extensively on matters of interest to philosophers, to teachers of philosophy, and to students of philosophy. Two other books by Cahn that will be reviewed in subsequent issues of this publication are books that, together with the book reviewed in this current issue, are referred to by Cahn as constituting a "trilogy." They are *Essays from Six Decades* and *Philosophical Debates*.

We welcome again to our pages Professor Felicia Nimue Ackerman of Brown University. In this issue she offers us two poetic reflections on teaching.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We encourage our readers to suggest themselves as reviewers of books and other material (including technological innovations) that they think may be especially good for classroom use. Reviewers are welcome to suggest material for review that they have used in the classroom and found useful. However, please remember that our publication is devoted to pedagogy and not to theoretical discussions of philosophical issues. This should be borne in mind not only when writing articles for our publication but also when reviewing material for our publication.

Those of our readers to would like to write of their experience as teachers for our publication are welcome to do so. We are also glad to consider articles that respond, comment on, or take issue with any of the material that appears within our pages.

The following guidelines for submissions should be followed:

All papers should be sent to the editors electronically. The author's name, the title of the paper and full mailing address should appear on a separate page. Nothing that identifies the author or his or her institution should appear in the body or the footnotes of the paper. The title of the paper should appear on the top of the paper itself.

Authors should adhere to the production guidelines that are available from the APA. For example, in writing your paper to disk, please do not use your word processor's footnote or endnote function; all notes must be added manually at the end of the paper. This rule is extremely important, for it makes formatting the papers for publication much easier.

All articles submitted to the *Studies in Teaching* undergo anonymous review by the editorial committee:

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ARTICLE

Paley Before Hume: How Not to Teach the Design Argument

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INTRODUCTION

One of Gary Larson's "Far Side" cartoons shows a man who has just woken up in the morning, sitting in his pajamas, looking at the huge handwritten reminder on the wall next to his bed: "First pants, THEN your shoes."

The order in which we do things matters. It matters in dressing; it matters in teaching. In teaching about the design arguments for theism, I used to cover Paley's *Natural Theology* before Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, but I now think that is a mistake and leads to a distorted interpretation of both philosophers. And this is not just a point about pedagogy; it is also about how to understand these two thinkers.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT I USED TO DO

In my introductory classes on the design argument for the existence of God, I used to teach Paley before Hume. I did this because the readings by Paley came before the readings by Hume in the reputable and widely used anthologies I assigned for those classes.[1] That order made dialectical sense, too. Everyone knows that Hume is an important critic of the design argument, so no explanation is needed for assigning his *Dialogues*. But we don't criticize an idea until after the idea has been presented, and who has the best-known version of the design argument in modern philosophy? William Paley, of course, with his celebrated story of the watchmaker! So it makes sense: read Paley for the design argument, then read Hume for criticisms of the design argument.

I would assign the excerpt from Paley, which was chapters I–II of his *Natural Theology*, and discuss it for a couple of days, extracting a Simple Design Argument, and examining Paley's case for it. Then I would assign the excerpt from Hume, which included parts II–IV of *Dialogues*, focusing on what I took to be Hume's most important criticisms of this Simple Argument. I would point out the vulnerability of Paley's argument to Hume's criticisms, then move on.

Here is the argument I attributed to Paley. Some may interpret him differently, but interpretation is unavoidable, because, as readers of Paley will know, chapters I–II of *Natural Theology* present an extended thought experiment, and not an explicit logical argument.[2]

Simple Design Argument

1. The natural world has design.

2. If the natural world has design, the natural world has (or had) a designer.

Therefore,

3. The natural world has (or had) a designer.[3]

COMMENTARY

I would go on to give the usual sorts of disclaimers about the conclusion (e.g., a mere designer of the natural world need not be the God of theism), but I would note that even that is a substantial claim, so it is still worth asking whether this argument for it is sound. The argument is valid, of course, so this amounts to asking whether the premises are true.

On premise (1) "The natural world has design":

I proposed that by "design," Paley means something like *the property of having parts whose shape and arrangement combine to achieve some useful purpose*. This is suggested in several places, e.g, in his observation that "[the watch's] several parts are formed and put together for a purpose, that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day."[4] On this definition, design is an empirical, "history-neutral" property of things, such that we can tell by looking whether an object has it, whether or not we know that object's origins.[5] Moreover, on this definition of design, Paley thinks he has abundant evidence for the truth of (1), based on his observations of the natural world. (He doesn't actually give any examples of this evidence in Chapters I–II, and later chapters are not included in my students' anthologies, so I would summarize for them Paley's account in Chapter III of the design in the eyes of various animals: the parts of the eye are just the right size and shape and made of just the right materials, and arranged in just the right way to allow animals to see well in their particular environments.)

On premise (2) "If the natural world has design, the natural world has (or had) a designer":

I told my students that premise (2)—or something like it—is indispensable for Paley's argument, and he clearly believes it to be true, but it is less clear *why* he believes it to be true. Given his empirical, history-neutral conception of design, this premise is not a tautology, so Paley must think he has some sort of argument for it. Because of the importance of analogy to the design argument in general, we might expect analogy to play a role in his case for premise (2) in particular.

Here, I told them, is one way such a case could go: Paley takes it for granted that every watch (indeed, every complex machine) has a designer; that is, he would happily endorse something like

> 2*. Every machine has (or had) an intelligent designer.

But (2*) implies (2) only if the natural world is relevantly similar to a machine. That is, we would need to adduce some premise such as

> 4. The natural world is similar to a machine in the relevant respects.

So we now had to consider whether the natural world is in fact relevantly similar to a machine. The dialectic here was a bit complicated and tenuous, but at least we now had a bridge to Hume, who has much to say about such things.

At first, Hume seems like the ideal interlocutor for Paley, for early in the *Dialogues* he has his character Cleanthes give an argument strikingly reminiscent of Paley's argument, and then he has his other characters, Demea and (especially) Philo, criticize it:

> Look round the world: contemplate the whole and every part of it: you will find it to be nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace and explain. All these various machines, and even their most minute parts, are adjusted to each other with an accuracy which ravishes into admiration all men who have ever contemplated them. The curious adapting of means to ends, throughout all nature, resembles exactly, though it much exceeds, the productions of human contrivance; of human designs, thought, wisdom, and intelligence. Since, therefore, the effects resemble each other, we are led to infer, by all the rules of analogy, that the causes also resemble; and that the Author of Nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man, though possessed of much larger faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work which he has executed. By this argument a posteriori, and by this argument alone, do we prove at once the existence of a Deity, and his similarity to human mind and intelligence.[6]

I told my students that Hume published *Dialogues* some twenty-five years before Paley wrote *Natural Theology*.[7] Even so, I said, Hume anticipated Paley's argument with eerie prescience.[8]

WHY THIS WAS WRONG

That is what I used to tell my students, and it should have been a clue that I was doing things in the wrong order: anachronistic readings of philosophical ideas are not always wrong-headed, but this one should at least have given me pause.[9] But not only is it unlikely on chronological grounds that Hume was responding to Paley; it is likely on textual grounds that the reverse was true: Paley was responding to Hume. First, there is (as far as I know) no mention of Paley in the entire Humean corpus, and certainly no mention of Paley in *Dialogues*.[10] Paley, on the other hand, was demonstrably familiar with Hume's *Dialogues*.[11] More importantly, the argument Hume criticizes in *Dialogues* simply is not the argument that Paley gives; it is the argument that Hume's literary creation, *Cleanthes*, gives.[12] Although Cleanthes's argument and Paley's argument may superficially appear to be similar, they are at bottom very different in at least two important ways. First, Cleanthes's design argument is a true analogical argument; Paley's isn't. Second, Cleanthes's argument rests on a premise about the whole world; Paley's doesn't.[13]

CLEANTHES'S ARGUMENT BY ANALOGY

Before I explain the sense in which Cleanthes's design argument is a true analogical argument, let me briefly explain why this matters. It matters because some of Philo's most incisive criticisms against that argument concern its analogical character. Every Intro to Philosophy of Religion student (in Anglophone philosophy) is taught that Philo and Demea deliver an ingenious one-two punch, arguing that Cleanthes faces one problem if his analogy is weak, and another problem if it is strong. If Cleanthes's analogy is weak, then his argument doesn't even get off the ground, and Philo argues that the analogy is indeed weak: the world (considered as a whole) is not very similar to a machine, nor is our relation to the world very similar to our relation to any machine. At a minimum, we are not in a good epistemological position to assert that they are similar.[14] If, on the other hand, the analogy *were* strong enough for the argument to go through, it would yield a theologically unacceptable anthropomorphism about God, diminishing His perfection, eternality, infinity, incorporeality, etc.[15] In sum, given the amount of critical firepower that Hume spends on matters of analogy, it is clear that he conceives of Cleanthes's argument as an argument by analogy, and that this is a crucial fact about it. Now I shall explain what an analogical argument is, and how Cleanthes's design argument is one.

I propose that the design argument that Hume has Cleanthes give in Part II of *Dialogues* is best interpreted as a classic analogical argument, i.e., one that makes use of a precise concept of analogy having roots in Greek mathematics.[16] While we sometimes use the word "analogy" loosely to mean any claim that two things, A and B, are similar in some way or other, Book V of Euclid's *Geometry* defines it more precisely: "Analogy or proportion is the similitude between two ratios."[17] Since ratios normally have two

terms, this entails that classic analogy is better thought of as a four-term relation, of the pattern "A is to B as C is to D"; for example: "3 is to 6 as 5 is to 10."[18] By extension, an argument by analogy is a way of reasoning that allows us to infer a value for D, given the claim that "A is to B as C is to D," and given specific values for A, B, and C.

It is worth noting that, on this understanding, analogical arguments are actually deductive arguments. The inference from the premises that A is to B as C is to D, and that A = 3, B = 6 and C = 5, to the conclusion that D = 10, is not at all inductive or probabilistic. Of course, there is another understanding of arguments by analogy, according to which they are inductive and probabilistic, but Hume does not appear to have this alternative conception in mind. According to Roger White, the source of this other (and chronologically later) conception

> appears to be Thomas Reid (see *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, Essay I, Chapter IV). For Reid, an argument by analogy meant an argument that proceeded along the lines: A has a number of properties in common with B (FA & GA & HA & … & FB & GB & HB & …). In addition, A has the property K. This gives us reason to believe that B will probably also have the property K. Whatever can be said for or against such an argument, it has nothing to do with the concept of analogy as it had hitherto been understood, and this version of an "argument by analogy" could only have arisen at a time when people were losing sight of how the concept of analogy had been understood, and when it was understood as little more than a near synonym for similarity.[19]

Cleanthes's analogical argument, on the other hand, is straightforwardly an instance of deductive reasoning that aims to infer claims about the designer of the world from a four-term proposition such as "A watch is to the world as a designer of the watch is to the designer of the world," along with specific information about watches, the world, and human designers of watches. On this reading, Cleanthes makes the following sort of argument, which is very different from the Simple Design Argument I attributed to Paley:

Cleanthes's Analogical Argument

1. Like effects have like causes. [Here "like" means or entails "proportional."]

2. The whole world is like a machine, only vastly greater.

3. The cause of the design in a machine is a human mind.

Therefore,

4. The cause of the design in the whole world is like a human mind, only vastly greater.

Therefore,

5. There exists (or existed) something similar to a human mind, only vastly greater, that is the cause of the design in the whole world.

The operative sort of analogy here is Euclid's "analogy of proportionality," which is indispensable given Cleanthes's purposes. Cleanthes's conclusion, after all, is explicitly comparative or proportional: "the Author of Nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man, though *possessed of much larger faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work which he has executed*,"[20] and argument by the analogy of proportionality is much the easiest way to reach it. By contrast, it is hard to see how one could reach any sort of comparative or proportional conclusion via Reid's inductive conception of analogical arguments mentioned above.

A further reason for interpreting Cleanthes's argument in this way is that it makes it easy to understand Philo's criticisms of it and to see how they apply.

On premise (3) "The cause of the design in a machine is a human mind": Philo is willing to concede this, at least if it is taken as an empirical generalization. He states: "If we see a house, Cleanthes, we conclude, with the greatest certainty, that it had an architect or builder, because this is precisely that species of effect which we have experienced to proceed from that species of cause."[21]

On premise (1) "Like effects have like causes": As noted above, this premise expresses a basic rule of analogical reasoning, and Cleanthes simply takes it for granted. And apart from its supposed tendency to yield theological anthropomorphism, neither Philo nor Demea mounts any very strong criticism of the general principle. In fact, Philo appears ready to concede something like premise (1) as a plausible but qualified empirical generalization:

> That a stone will fall, that fire will burn, that the earth has solidity, we have observed a thousand and a thousand times; and *when any new instance of this nature is presented, we draw without hesitation the accustomed inference*. The exact similarity of the cases gives us a perfect assurance of a similar event; and a stronger evidence is never desired nor sought after.[22]

On premise (2) "The whole world is like a machine, only vastly greater": This is one of Philo's main targets. He repeatedly argues that the world does *not* resemble a vast machine, or at least that Cleanthes is not entitled to make such a sweeping generalization about the world as a whole:

> But, allowing that we were to take the operations of one part of nature upon another, for the foundation of our judgment concerning the origin of the whole, (which never can be admitted,) yet why select so minute, so weak, so bounded a principle, as the reason and design of animals is found to be upon this planet? What peculiar privilege has this little agitation of the brain which we call thought, that we must thus make it the model of the whole universe?[23]

(This is important because, given the structure of Cleanthes's argument, and the conclusion he hopes to reach, Cleanthes needs this premise to be about the whole world.)

The other main target for Philo's (and Demea's) critical attacks, of course, is Cleanthes's anthropomorphism, so it is worth asking how the above argument is supposed to yield it. Taken individually, none of its premises is anthropomorphic. Even taken together they do not entail anything very troubling. The problem is that there are lots of other true propositions which, when conjoined with (1) and (2), *do* yield troubling conclusions. Consider, e.g., (3*) The cause of the design in a machine is morally imperfect; (3**) The cause of the design in a machine has a body with eyes, nose, mouth and ears; (3***) The cause of the design in a machine is mortal; and so on.[24]

But to return to my point here, it is clear that the argument that Hume has Philo and Demea criticize is not Paley's but Cleanthes's. This (and the problem of anachronism) is evidence enough that Hume was not responding to Paley. But there is also evidence that the reverse is the case: Paley was responding to Hume, or at least developing his own version of the design argument in the full knowledge of the criticisms that Hume had mounted a generation earlier.

PALEY WAS RESPONDING TO HUME

I believe that Paley's design argument is not really an analogical argument at all. Indeed, I suspect that Paley deliberately avoided formulating it as one because he saw how damaging Hume's criticisms of Cleanthes's analogical argument were and responded by devising a non-analogical version. And this shouldn't be surprising since we know that Paley was familiar with Hume's *Dialogues*—he actually refers to it by name.[25] And even though Paley was not the philosophical genius that Hume was, it is hard to believe that even a moderately intelligent philosopher (and Paley was at least that) could be aware of Philo's criticisms of Cleanthes, and then just offer Cleanthes's argument all over again, without correction or explanation, a generation later.

This is not to say, of course, that Paley's version of the argument is wholly novel or original to him. As already noted, machine-based design arguments had a long history, stretching from antiquity to the "golden age" of natural theology of which Paley was very much a part. William Derham (1657–1735) and Dutch mathematician Bernard Nieuwentyt (1654–1735) had already published versions to which Paley's argument in *Natural Theology* was strikingly similar.[26] The similarities with Nieuwentyt's argument (which also begins with an analogy about finding a watch in a "desert or solitary place") are so striking that in 1848 Paley was posthumously accused of plagiarism in the *Athenaeum*, one of the leading intellectual journals of the day.[27] Whether Paley was trying to pass Nieuwentyt's argument off as his own or was merely reworking it for a new generation of readers—we need not take a position here—he clearly saw the merits of the argument and that it would escape some of Hume's most powerful objections.

In any case, Paley does make use of an analogy in the opening chapters of *Natural Theology*, but as I shall go on to argue, there is a difference between a true analogical argument (as described above) and an argument that merely makes use of an analogy. In Chapter 1, Paley gestures at the analogy implicit in his extended thought experiment in order, first, to prime his readers and make them receptive to his overall approach, and, second, to disarm a number of objections to this approach, almost all of which are *Hume's* objections. I cannot list them all here, so let me mention just one:

Having presented this thought experiment about finding a watch and naturally concluding that it was made by humans, Paley begins by observing:

> Nor would it, I apprehend, weaken the conclusion, that we had never seen a watch made; that we had never known an artist capable of making one; that we were altogether incapable of executing such a piece of workmanship ourselves, or of understanding in what manner it was performed; etc.[28]

If we have read Hume first, that looks like as a direct reply to this challenge of Philo's:

> And will any man tell me with a serious countenance, that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art like the human, because we have experience of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were requisite that we had experience of the origin of worlds; and it is not sufficient, surely, that we have seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance.[29]

Likewise, in chapter II when Paley modifies the thought experiment so that the watch is capable of mechanical reproduction, this is obviously meant to address the challenge of naturally inherited design and in so doing elaborates upon a point made by Cleanthes (and left unanswered by Philo):

> It sometimes happens, I own, that the religious arguments have not their due influence on an ignorant savage and barbarian; not because they are obscure and difficult, but because he never asks himself any question with regard to them. Whence arises the curious structure of an animal? From the copulation of its parents. And these whence? From their parents? A few removes set the objects at such a distance, that to him they are lost in darkness and confusion. . . .[30]

And Paley's claim, "Nor . . . would it yield [the observer's] inquiry more satisfaction, to be answered that there existed in things a principle of order, which had disposed the parts of the watch into their present form and situation"[31] neatly counters Philo's claim that "For ought we know a priori, matter may contain the source or spring of order within itself as well as the mind does; and there is no more difficulty in conceiving, that the several elements, from an internal unknown cause, fall into that arrangement."[32]

PALEY'S ARGUMENT IS NOT AN ARGUMENT BY ANALOGY

On points such as these, Paley adapts his argument directly to answer problems raised by Hume. On two major points, however, he adapts his argument so that those problems never arise in the first place: these are, as noted, Philo's objections to argument by analogy and to assertions about the world as a whole. These problems do not arise for Paley because he does not give an argument by analogy, and he never asserts that the whole world is like a machine. This might be surprising if we are already accustomed to reading Paley before Hume, but it should not be surprising in view of the chronology and Paley's actual dialectical relation to Hume. And it fits well with a close reading of the text.

First, and most obvious, is the fact that Paley doesn't explicitly formulate his design argument as an analogical argument.[33] Of course, as noted, he doesn't explicitly formulate it at all, yet there is nothing to suggest that his argument has the "A is to B as C is to D" structure that is essential to the analogy of proportionality.[34] I suggest that Paley's design argument is better understood as a simple modus ponens:

1. The natural world has design.

2. If the natural world has design, the natural world has (or had) an intelligent designer.

Therefore,

3. The natural world has (or had) an intelligent designer.

To repeat: Paley *does* make use of analogy (or at least a sort of running comparison) while making his case, but it functions mainly to illustrate and make us receptive to the above implicit premises and to rebut anticipated criticisms. My interpretation here is further supported by an often-overlooked feature of the dialectical structure of the first two chapters. Ask most students to say (without looking at the book) how Paley begins his thought experiment, and they will almost always reply—especially if they've read Hume after Paley—that it begins with Paley finding a *watch*. But it doesn't. It begins with Paley finding a *stone*. The opening sentence is, "In crossing a heath, suppose I pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there."[35] Only *after* we have been invited to conclude that the stone's presence would not require much explanation does he introduce the watch. When Paley *does* introduce the watch, his point is not that the universe is like a watch; it is rather that the *stone* is *unlike* the watch, in that unintelligent (natural) forces could explain the former but not the latter. And this difference is not itself some brute fact about the two objects. Paley asks:

> why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as for the stone? why is it not admissible in the second case as in the first? For this reason, and for no other, viz. that, when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive (what we could not discover in the stone) that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, *e.g.* that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day.[36]

It is because the watch has the objective properties that constitute design, and the stone doesn't. That is, Paley's argument is, if anything, more an argument from *disanalogy* than an argument from analogy!

Further support for the idea that Paley's argument is not an analogical argument like Cleanthes's comes from the observation that Paley seems utterly unconcerned about one of the things that most exercises Philo about Cleanthes's use of analogy, namely, its supposedly inevitable tendency to anthropomorphism.[37] If argument by analogy entails theologically worrying anthropomorphism but theologically upright Paley is unworried about it, perhaps this is because he is not giving an argument by analogy. Anyway, in these early chapters, Paley is more concerned to prove God's existence than to prove his greatness (where proportionality would have been argumentatively useful). For example, when anticipating the objection that some things in nature work badly, Paley does not worry that this would yield a second-rate designer; still less does he scramble to deny that nature works badly after all. He nonchalantly replies, "It is not necessary that a machine be perfect to show with what design it was made: still less, whether it were made with any design at all."[38] Only much later in the book, long after the case for the designer's existence is made, does Paley take up the issue of the designer's personality, unity, and goodness.

Hume's other major problem with Cleanthes's design argument is that it requires him to make a claim about the whole universe: "Look round the world: contemplate the whole and every part of it: you will find it to be nothing but one great machine."[39] Against this idea, Hume has Philo hammer away on two points: no one (including Cleanthes) has experience of the whole, and it is illicit to draw inferences about the whole from experience of a few, small parts. The design that Paley invokes, on the other hand, is not a property of the whole natural world, but only of individual parts of it. And even if design appears to be lacking in some parts, there are abundant individual examples of design in *other* parts, at least in the tiny corner of the world of which we have experience. Having sketched his general argument in chapters I–II, Paley goes on in later chapters to substantiate his premise (1) by piling up example after example, especially from the anatomy of plants and animals. In chapter III, e.g., Paley explains in detail how the eye, in its material and construction, is perfectly adapted for sight in diverse species, ranging from bird to fish to seal to human.[40] One implication of my argument here is this: not only is it a mistake to read Paley before Hume, it is also a mistake to read only chapters I and II of Paley (as most anthologies do) and to leave out the particular examples of design that Paley actually offers.

Another implication is that the argument I initially attributed to Paley now needs to be revised:

Paley's Revised Design Argument

1. Some things in the natural world [such as the eye] have design.

2. If these things in the natural world have design, then they have (or had) an intelligent designer.

Therefore,

3. Some things in the natural world have (or had) an intelligent designer.

A final bit of indirect evidence that Paley is responding to Hume (and not vice versa) is that this revised version of the design argument would be largely immune from Hume's criticisms. It is exactly what one would expect if Paley had read Hume, saw what happened to Cleanthes, and made mental notes about what not to do. In case this is not clear, suppose Paley were to concede that the analogy between machine and world is weak, or that theistic arguments by analogy lead to unacceptable anthropomorphism. What would follow from that concerning Paley's Revised Design Argument? Nothing. Neither of these claims directly contradicts either of the premises or the conclusion of Paley's revised argument, so if they are to have any critical force at all, it must be that they somehow undermine one or both premises. But the connection between these ideas and Paley's premises is tenuous at best, as I argued earlier. As far as I can see (at least in the opening chapters), nowhere does Paley argue that natural things such as eyes must have a designer because they resemble watches or telescopes, which we have discovered (via inductive, empirical generalization) usually to have intelligent designers. Rather, he seems to regard it as following from a general metaphysical principle such as "Everything that has design must have a designer," which principle he regards as self-evident and necessary. He asserts just such as principle in chapter II:

> *There cannot be design without a designer; contrivance without a contriver*; order without choice; arrangement, without any thing capable of arranging; subserviency and relation to a purpose, without that which could intend a purpose.[41]

If he did regard it as a contingent empirical generalization, we would expect him to qualify it accordingly: "In our experience, for the most part, etc.," but he doesn't do this. And if he didn't regard it as self-evident, we might expect him to argue for it some place, but he doesn't do this either.[42] In particular, he does not do it via an analogy with watches or other machines. In the initial thought experiment, when asked why the watch (unlike the stone) cannot be explained in purely naturalistic, impersonal terms, his is answer is *not* "Because we have learned by empirical observation that all watches happen to have been designed by humans." Indeed, as Benjamin Jantzen points out, Paley seems to reject the empirical inductive account of this principle later in the book, when he states,

> If we had never in our lives seen any but one single kind of hydraulic machine; yet if of that one kind we understood the mechanism and use, we should be as perfectly assured that it proceeded from the hand, and thought, and skill of a workman, as if we visited a museum of the arts and saw collected there twenty different kinds of machines for drawing water, or a thousand different kinds for other purposes.[43]

His answer is simply to open the watch and point out that (unlike the stone), "its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose; e.g., that they are so formed and adjusted so as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day."[44] If anything, reflection on the watch and other machines is just an occasion on which the self-evidence of the claim that "Everything that has a design must have a designer" is made especially vivid.[45] I conclude that Paley's design argument does not appeal to analogical argument, even to justify premise (2), "If things in the natural world [such as the eye] have design, then they have (or had) an intelligent designer." And since it doesn't, Hume's criticisms of analogy do not touch it.

Let me head off one possible misunderstanding here: my goal in arguing that Hume's criticisms of analogy do not touch Paley's design argument is not primarily defensive or apologetic. I do think that Paley's argument is less bad than it is often made out to be, but still I think it faces a powerful (and familiar) objection based on evolution via natural selection. That is, the proper interlocutor for Paley is not Hume, but Darwin. And this highlights a further advantage to my interpretation of Paley's argument: my interpretation makes it plain where and how the Darwinian critique touches it. In arguing for premise (2), Paley says, in effect, "It is impossible for design to occur without a designer," to which the Darwinian may reply, "Wrong! Given genetic inheritability of traits, random genetic mutation, natural selection, and millions of years, it is not impossible at all." Maybe there are other versions of the design argument that are less vulnerable to this Darwinian critique, but they will have to be developed differently from either Cleanthes's or Paley's version. Even this points up one final advantage of my interpretation: philosophical ideas often have various forms and complex histories; they are proposed, critiqued, refined, and proposed and critiqued again. This is surely true of that sprawling family of philosophical ideas that we call "the design argument," but reading Paley before Hume may fool the beginning student into thinking that there is just one design argument, and that Paley proposed it, Hume refuted it, and that is the end of it.[46]

CONCLUSION

For all these reasons (and despite how things are presented in leading textbooks), it is a mistake to teach (or even read) Paley before Hume. The remedy is simple: pants before shoes; Hume before Paley.

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ENDNOTES

1. Feinberg and Shafer-Landau, *Reason and Responsibility*; Pojman and Rea, *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*. But the same order can also be found in many other leading anthologies, including Cahn, *Exploring Philosophy of Religion: An Introductory Anthology*; Davies, *Philosophy of Religion: A Guide and Anthology*; Edwards, *Reason and Religion: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*; Meister, *The Philosophy of Religion Reader*; and Peterson et al., *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings*.

2. Not only does Paley *not* explicitly lay out an argument, he does not even let on that it is an *argument for theism* until the last sentence of chapter II. There he asks, "Can this [the claim that a complex, reproducing watch does not have a designer] be maintained without absurdity? Yet this is atheism." See Paley, *Natural Theology*, 15.

3. Bruce Jantzen offers a similar interpretation of Paley's argument but in terms of "purpose" instead of "design." See Jantzen, *An Introduction to Design Arguments*.

4. Paley, *Natural Theology*, 7. It is also suggested by his claim that his hypothetical observer "knows enough for his argument: he knows the subserviency and adaptation of the means to the end" (Paley, *Natural Theology*, 10).

5. Hume, on the other hand, appears to have his characters use an "historical" conception of design, such that a thing has design only if its parts *were arranged* in a certain way on "purpose." Philo says of Cleanthes's argument: "Now, according to this method of reasoning, Demea, it follows . . . that order, arrangement, or the adjustment of final causes, is not of itself any proof of design; but only so far as it has been experienced to proceed from that principle" (Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 146).

6. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 143.

7. Hume (1711–1776) started writing *Dialogues* in 1750, completed it until 1776, and published it posthumously in 1779. Paley (1743–1805) wrote *Natural Theology* in the last decade of his life and published it in 1802.

8. Wikipedia ("Watchmaker Analogy") says the same thing: "David Hume . . . offered a number of the most memorable philosophical criticisms to Paley's watch analogy."

9. As a referee for this journal points out, critics who, say, invoke Kant to explain what's wrong with Peter Singer's utilitarianism are not necessarily wrong-headed. My point here is that this particular anachronistic ordering can easily lead us into distorted readings of both Paley and Hume. Moreover, in the present case an anachronistic ordering makes for a curious pedagogical redundancy: if Hume really *were* responding to Paley's argument, and really *had* put an argument just like Paley's into the mouth of Cleanthes, why should I bother to assign Paley at all? My students are already going to read Cleanthes' version of the design argument, which is much more succinct than Paley's and philosophically interesting in its own right.

10. And why should there be? Machine-analogy design arguments were already well-known in Hume's day, and had a history that stretched back as far as Cicero: "When you look at a picture or a statue, you recognize that it is a work of art. When you follow from afar the course of a ship, upon the sea, you do not question that its movement is guided by a skilled intelligence. When you see a sundial or a water-clock, you see that it tells the time by design and not by chance. How then can you imagine that the universe as a whole is devoid of purpose and intelligence, when it embraces everything, including these artefacts themselves and their artificers? Our friend Posidonius as you know has recently made a globe which in its revolution shows the movements of the sun and stars and planets, by day and night, just as they appear in the sky. Now if someone were to take this globe and show it to the people of Britain or Scythia would a single one of those barbarians fail to see that it was the product of a conscious intelligence?" From Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods*, 158–59. In short, the fact that Hume has Cleanthes invoke a watchmaker analogy is no evidence at all that he writes with Paley in mind.

11. See Paley, *Natural Theology*, 10.

12. Jantzen goes even further: "While Hume did in fact devastate the argument by analogy, it was largely an argument of his own creation." See Jantzen, *An Introduction to Design Arguments*, 99.

13. This misconception has also found its way into the popular press. Julian Baggini, e.g., in an article on Hume's criticisms of religious belief claims, "Hume was here anticipating the argument of William Paley, who argued that it is as rational to infer the existence of a divine creator from the existence of the marvellous, complex universe as it is the infer the existence of a watchmaker from the discovery of a watch." See Baggini, "Hume on Religion, Part 3: How He Skewered Intelligent Design," 23.

14. See, e.g., Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 148.

15. See Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 156, 158, 166, and especially 168.

16. My discussion in this section is based largely on Roger M. White, *Talking about God: The Concept of Analogy and the Problem of Religious Language*.

17. Quoted in White, *Talking about God*, 14.

18. The concept of analogy in play here is the analogy of proportionality, as distinct from the analogy of "focal meaning." For a helpful discussion of this distinction, see White, *Talking about God*, chapters 1–2.

19. White, *Talking about God*, 22. This is strikingly similar to how the editors of one of my anthologies characterized Cleanthes's and Paley's arguments as well: "A standard reading of the argument from design interprets it as an inductive argument. More precisely, it is an argument by analogy, with the following form:

    1. a, b, c, and d all have properties P and Q.
    2. a, b, and c all have properties R as well.
    3. Therefore, d has property R too (probably).
    4. The more similar d is to a, b, and c, the more probable is the conclusion.

    Cleanthes's argument can be rendered as follows:

    1. Boats, houses, watches and the whole experienced world have such properties as "mutual adjustment of parts to whole" and "curious adapting of means to ends."
    2. Boats, houses, and watches have the further property of having been produced by design.
    3. Therefore, it is probable that the universe also has this further property—that it, too, was produced by design."

    From Feinberg and Shafer-Landau, *Reason and Responsibility*, 28.

20. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 143, my emphasis.

21. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 144.

22. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 144, emphasis mine.

23. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 148. Again, in the next paragraph: "So far from admitting, continued Philo, that the operations of a part can afford us any just conclusion concerning the origin of the whole, I will not allow any one part to form a rule for another part, if the latter be very remote from the former" (Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 148).

24. These are precisely the criticisms that Philo repeatedly presses at Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 166–69.

25. He mentions Hume once by name in a later chapter. In his discussion of God's goodness, Paley rejects Philo's claim at Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 208, which he takes to express Hume's own opinion, that idleness "lies at the root of a considerable part of the evils which mankind suffer." See Paley, *Natural Theology*, 265.

26. See Derham, *Physico and Astro Theology; or, a Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*; and Nieuwentyt, *The Religious Philosopher; or the Right Use of Contemplating the Works of the Creator*.

27. See "Verax," "Dr. Paley's 'Natural Theology'," 803. For a fascinating introduction to the controversy, see Jantzen, *An Introduction to*

Design Arguments, 168–69. For further critical discussion, see Branch, "Paley the Plagiarist."

28. Paley, *Natural Theology*, 8.
29. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 149. Hume apparently considers this such an important criticism that he has Philo repeat it a few pages later: "Have you ever seen nature in any such situation as resembles the first arrangement of the elements? Have worlds ever been formed under your eye; and have you had leisure to observe the whole progress of the phenomenon, from the first appearance of order to its final consummation? If you have, then cite your experience, and deliver your theory" (Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 151).
30. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 151.
31. Paley, *Natural Theology*, 9.
32. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 146.
33. For a similar interpretation of Paley's argument, see Jantzen, *An Introduction to Design Arguments*, 131–35. For a rather different interpretation of Paley's argument still as deductive and non-analogical, see Oppy, "Paley's Argument for Design." For an interpretation of Paley's argument as an inference to the best explanation, see Schupbach, "Paley's Inductive Inference to Design: A Response to Graham Oppy." As noted, I read Paley as offering a deductive argument, but even if I am wrong about that, and Paley is in fact offering an inductive inference to the best explanation, that does not weaken my two main claims that Paley's argument in chapters I-III is not a classical argument from the analogy of proportionality and does not rest on claims about the whole world.
34. It is telling that Paley does not use the words "analogy," "analogous," or "similarity" anywhere in chapters I or II. He uses the word "similar" once, when, in the thought experiment, the watch is "found in the course of its movement to produce another watch similar to itself." He does use the word "analogy" elsewhere in the book—some twenty-four times—but never to describe the kind of argument he is making. Generally, he uses it to refer to structural or functional similarities between different kinds of natural objects, such as seeds and eggs. See, e.g., Paley, *Natural Theology*, 188. Occasionally, he uses it to refer to ways of learning or modes of inference that connect two very different objects, but this is always within natural history and never theology. For example, he marvels at the instincts of butterflies that know to lay their eggs on the right plants for their caterpillars to eat, even though the adults do not eat those same plants. This is marvelous, he says, because the adult butterfly cannot know this via memory or "analogy." See, e.g., Paley, *Natural Theology*, 163.
35. Paley, *Natural Theology*, 7.
36. Paley, *Natural Theology*, 7.
37. It probably isn't inevitable if we distinguish (as mathematicians since Euclid have done) between properties that are invariant under analogy and properties that are not. See White, *Talking about God*, 22.
38. See Paley, *Natural Theology*, 8. Paley expands on this point in chapter V: "When we are inquiring simply after the *existence* of an intelligent Creator, imperfection, inaccuracy, liability to disorder, occasional irregularities, may subsist in a considerable degree, without inducing any doubt into the question: just as a watch may frequently go wrong, seldom perhaps exactly right, may be faulty in some parts, defective in some, without the smallest ground of suspicion from thence arising that it was not a watch; not made; or not made for the purpose ascribed to it" (Paley, *Natural Theology*, 35).
39. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 143. Also, Cleanthes happens to use the "world" in this passage, but he clearly does not mean just planet Earth, and he and the other characters use the word "universe" dozens of times elsewhere.
40. Why does Paley start there? Partly, perhaps, because Nieuwentyt, whom he follows, starts there, and partly because the eye is such an effective example on its own, but partly also (I conjecture) for rhetorical reasons: Hume has Cleanthes give a spirited discourse on animal anatomy, beginning with the eye, arguing that it is blind dogmatism to reject such natural and convincing arguments. At the end of this speech, the narrator reports that Philo was "embarrassed and confounded." This is one of the few places in the whole dialogue where Cleanthes' arguments carry the day, which may be why Hume has Demea barge in and change the subject to anthropomorphism. See Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 154–55.
41. Paley, *Natural Theology*, 12, my emphasis.
42. The closest Paley comes to offering evidence for (2) is his assertion that "in no assignable instance hath such a thing [i.e., something that exhibits design or purpose] existed without intention somewhere." See Paley, *Natural Theology*, 68. Here, he seems to be saying that there is no clear, empirical disproof of the claim—but that is a far cry from an empirical *proof* of it.
43. Paley, *Natural Theology*, 45, quoted in Jantzen, *An Introduction to Design Arguments*, 125.
44. Paley, *Natural Theology*, 7.
45. That is, it looks less like analogy than like "intuitive induction," in which, according to White, "the induction 'exhibits the universal as implicit in the clearly known particular'" (Aristotle, *PostA*, 71a8). If by contemplating a particular case A, I can see that from the fact that A is F, it follows that A is G, then I am entitled to infer the universal truth that anything that is F is G. One can put the induction here in the form: 'When you see in the particular case why A's being F implies that A is also G, you will recognize why anything that is F is G.'" From White, *Talking about God*, 46.
46. Interestingly, Hume does have Philo raise the possibility of design without a designer, not because he has any positive counter-explanation of the Darwinian sort, but as an instance of the negative (and characteristically Humean) point that "Experience alone can point out to [a man] the true cause of any phenomena" (Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 145).

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BOOK REVIEW

The Road Travelled and Other Essays

Steven M. Cahn (Resource Publications/Wipf and Stock: Eugene Oregon, 2019). ISBN: 978-1532664519.

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Steven M. Cahn has written extensively on matters of interest to philosophers, to teachers of philosophy, and to students of philosophy. The three books by Cahn that will be reviewed in this publication—books that Cahn has referred to as a "trilogy"—are *The Road Travelled and Other Essays*, *A Philosopher's Journey: Essays from Six Decades*, and *Philosophical Debates*. Each book is, for the most part, a compilation of articles previously published.

In this issue I present a review of the first book of the trilogy. Reviews of the other two books will be published in subsequent issues.

The Road Traveled and Other Essays consists of essays published between the years 2014 and 2019 and is divided into six parts. The first part, entitled *Well-Being*, deals with what it means to live a life that one can consider worthwhile; the second part, entitled *Religious Belief*, looks at the reasonableness of religious belief; the third part, *Academic Life*, presents some issues that arise for those who work in academia; the fourth part, *Doctoral Education*, presents issues one may encounter in one's pursuit of a doctoral education, and the fifth part, *Puzzles*, deals with five particular ethical questions. The sixth part, entitled *Reminiscences*, is a detailed account of Cahn's educational and professional history.

I

The first section of Part I, **Well-Being**, is titled "Living Well" and looks at Ronald Dworkin's view regarding what is to be considered a "successful" as opposed to a "wasted" life. He raises the question whether, as Dworkin maintains, there is indeed a single metric that is appropriate for the assessment of the worth of all lives no matter how different those lives are or how different are the persons leading those lives. Helpfully, here as elsewhere, Cahn encourages the reader to engage with theoretical issues (in this case, the positive worth of a life) by directing attention to the empirical details of two very different individuals whose happiness and sense of fulfillment is sustained by activities and pursuits that are very different from those that sustain and animate the other. Cahn also draws attention to several other philosophers' views about what it is to lead a worthwhile life, and asks critical questions regarding those views. Cahn offers his own criteria for what he considers both necessary and sufficient for leading a good life, presents a possible criticism of his view, and offers an answer to that criticism. Finally, Cahn (with Christine Vitrano) looks at Robert Nozick's claims regarding the "experience machine"—a machine that simulates real-life experiences so well that one cannot tell the difference between the machine-induced experiences and what one would experience in real life. Nozick claimed that *no one* would choose the experience machine over lived experience, a view endorsed by many philosophers since it was first presented in 1974. Cahn thinks otherwise and offers reasons for a person turning to such a machine not only for a particular experience at a particular time but also for a lifetime. The issues that this discussion raises—psychological, ethical, philosophical, and perhaps also religious—are both interesting and thought-provoking not merely for philosophy students (or students generally) but for *all* readers.

II

In Part II, **Religious Belief**, Cahn examines (what are known as) "theodicies"—arguments that the existence of evil in the world is compatible with the existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent God (and for this reason the presence of evil in the world cannot be used to disprove the existence of such a God). Cahn begins by stating that a successful theodicy must offer a reason to view evils that occur in the world as not merely compatible with God's existence, but as truly justified. But, Cahn asks, if this were the case, how could belief in God afford any comfort? Perhaps it would not, though a believer *might* be comforted by the thought that (as some have argued) human evildoers are at least not automatons but rather free agents capable of choosing otherwise than in fact they do. (It is worth noting that although Cahn is probably correct in claiming that an account of God as *not* being omnipotent would likely appeal to few theists, some well-known theists have claimed exactly that.[1]) Students might also question the view, put forth by Cahn, that an omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly benevolent God must consider all evils as *enhancements* to life. Given that an omnipotent, omniscient, and totally benevolent God might allow a person to intentionally murder another so as to permit that person the exercise of his or her free will, students will have to determine which of the following constitutes an *enhancement* to life: a world in which the exercise of free will does not rule out the occasional murder followed by divine condemnation and punishment of the murderer (as God has issued a commandment not to murder) or a world in which no murders are ever committed because no humans ever act with free agency.

In this section there is also some discussion of what it means to worship and what counts as being deserving of worship. This is a welcome addition to the literature as there is relatively little discussion of this topic elsewhere.

Whether or not students agree with Cahn's conclusion that God—at least as presented in the Old Testament—is not worthy of worship, this reading should lead to worthwhile discussion of both how one is to interpret the biblical passage that Cahn appeals to in support of his claim that God is not worthy of worship as well as the meaning of worship generally.[2]

The final part of this section is devoted to a discussion of Heaven, resurrection, the meaning of having a "soul," and the reasonableness of believing some things rather than others regarding a spiritual "afterlife."

III

Part III, **Academic Life**, contains discussions of a) Faculty Appointments, b) Academic Voting, and c) the Ambiguities of Affirmative Action. From his own experience as a teaching member of philosophy departments at various universities, Cahn gives an account of what takes place during faculty meetings that have as their focus the appointment of a new faculty member to the department.

Against this background he gives advice to readers about what to avoid in such meetings so that "unfortunate appointments" do not result. This discussion is followed by suggestions regarding the voting procedure to use in choosing an academic colleague. Cahn ends this section with a discussion of the ambiguity of the notion of "affirmative action" given the different policies the expression refers to, the different efforts recommended to achieve whatever are claimed to be its goals, and the different justifications appealed to for adopting it as a policy.

IV

Part IV, **Doctoral Education**, contains three short pieces. The first deals with the orientation meeting that is often conducted for incoming doctoral students followed by Cahn's advice to students in the pursuit of their doctoral studies. The second piece deals with the standards that philosophy departments should (but sometimes fail to) maintain to ensure that students who emerge from those departments have a comprehensive knowledge of the essential concepts and issues in the field, as well of its important figures and readings. The third piece is a list of unfortunate professional attitudes that students might be exposed to by their professors and so come to see as acceptable when in fact they should be denounced and eschewed.

V

Part V, **Puzzles**, is a section in which Cahn raises specific ethical questions concerning three very different situations. They are as follows:

1) The use—and advertisement thereof—of an affirmative action policy by one's department in its consideration of candidates for a position in that department.

2) The action one is to take with found items on a bus given that the owner is unknown and (therefore) not contactable. Does one give these items to the bus driver without knowing whether the driver will himself follow whatever established protocol exists for items found on his bus?

3) The extent to which we are obligated to act altruistically for the sake of others even when acting in this way will involve considerable cost to us. Of course, there are some circumstances in which the cost of our *not* acting altruistically will have dire consequences for others. Cahn asks *for the reasons* one should or should not choose self-interest over morality both in cases where acting out of self-interest will have consequences that are extremely grave for others and in cases where not acting out of self-interest will involve grave consequences for oneself.

All the questions raised here should engage student interest and promote spirited discussion. The raising of these questions in the context of discussion of the ethical theories that students have encountered in their ethics classes will prove helpful to their understanding—and perhaps also to the re-evaluation—of those theories.

VI

Part VI, **Reminiscences**, is a recounting by Cahn of his history as a student, graduate student, and later as a teacher of philosophy at the various academic institutions in which he taught—Dartmouth, Vassar, New York University, University of Vermont, and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He also notes the administrative positions he has held (at Exxon Education Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and as dean and then provost at the Graduate Center of City University of New York). Finally, Cahn writes of his vast publication enterprises, many of whose volumes will be familiar to students of philosophy.

NOTES

1. Genesis 18: 23–32.
2. See, for example, Thomas Jay Oord, *The Death of Omnipotence and Birth of Amipotence* (Grasmere, ID: SacraSage Press, 2023) and references therein.

POEMS*

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Plus Ça Change

(This poem appeared in *Light*, https://lightpoetrymagazine.com/)

Right and left can't seem to see
There's a way that they agree:
From the classroom to the dorm,
All opinion must conform.

Content Warning

(This poem appeared in *Lighten Up Online*.)

Save our youth from open speech.
That's the safest way to teach.
Don't suppose their minds are agile;
Be aware their souls are fragile.
If you go against their mode,
Whoops—their psyches might implode!

*Though readers are aware of the academic context to which Professor Ackerman's poems respond, Professor Ackerman has noted that *The Wall Street Journal* reported that "There was very little free speech at Harvard—the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression ranked it last of all colleges last year." And, according to *Axios*, "A Florida school district is pulling nearly 2,000 books from its shelves—including some dictionaries and encyclopedias."

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