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Contents

Antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Racism in the Era of Donald Trump: The Relevance of Critical Theory

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Abstract: In the 1940s and later, the most important theorists of the Frankfurt School devoted sustained attention to the study of antisemitism. They developed a multi-faceted analysis designed not only to explicate the meaning of antisemitism, but also to underscore the ways in which totalitarian antisemitism illuminates the direction of society, "the reversion" as they once wrote, "of enlightened civilization to barbarism."[2] It is manifestly the case that a number of the specific components of the Frankfurt School's analysis of antisemitism are relevant primarily or exclusively to that phenomenon, and *not* to the study of other hatreds or prejudices. Nevertheless, the Critical Theorists believed that specific elements of their analysis of antisemitism did in fact illuminate racism and ethnic prejudice, in addition to helping us to understand totalitarian *Judenhass*. These components of their analysis, I intend to argue, shed light on the actions, techniques, and successes of Donald Trump and Trumpism.

Interchangeability of victims

The work of the Critical Theorists led them to assert that antisemitism "rests" not on actions taken by Jews but rather on the "personal insecurity of the anti-Semite".[3] Antisemitism, from the perspective of the

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2   Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments*, edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, and translated by Edmund Jephcott. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002, p. xix.

3   "Studies in Antisemitism. A Report on the cooperative project of antisemitism for the year ending March 15, 1944," p. 10, August 1944, Max-Horkheimer-Archiv [henceforth MHA], Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek,

Frankfurt School, has far more to do with the needs of antisemites than with the behavior of Jews individually or collectively.[4] The contemporary phenomenon of antisemitism *without* Jews -- manifest, to this day, for example, in some parts of Eastern Europe, such as Poland -- suggests that the approach taken by the Critical Theorists to antisemitism on this issue has continued resonance. Moreover: on this point, the lessons offered by Critical Theory were explicitly intended by them to apply not only to antisemitism, but also to racism and other forms of prejudice. Totalitarian antisemitism involves the discharge of anger on defenseless victims – and in other contexts, the Critical Theorists were well aware, altogether different peoples or races or ethnic groups could become victims (or perpetrators). Indeed: Horkheimer and Adorno underscore, in a draft of a passage which ultimately appeared in a somewhat different form in the chapter on "Elements of Antisemitism" in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* that "depending on the constellation, the victims are interchangeable: Negroes, Mexican wrestling clubs, Jews, Protestants, Catholics … each of them can replace the murderer, in the same blind lust for killing, as soon

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Frankfurt am Main, IX 121. Cf. The introduction to *The Authoritarian Personality*: "anti-Semitism is based more largely upon factors in the subject and in his total situation than upon actual characteristics of Jews, … one place to look for determinants of anti-Semitic opinions and attitudes is within the persons who express them" [T[heodor] W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, R. Nevitt Sanford in collaboration with Betty Aron, Maria Hertz Levinson and William Morrow, *The Authoritarian Personality*. Studies in Prejudice, edited by Max Horkheimer and Samuel H. Flowerman. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950, p. 2].

4   Martin Jay, author of a path-breaking work on the history of the Frankfurt School [*The Dialectical Imagination. A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*. Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1973], and of many other first-rate works on members of the School and on their thought, has also written on the "new antisemitism". According to Jay, who does not explicitly mention Critical Theory or any of its adherents in his piece on that subject, "an account of anti-Semitism that assumes the victims are in no way involved in unleashing the animosities they suffer cannot be historically persuasive" [Martin Jay, "Ariel Sharon and the Rise of the New Anti-Semitism," *Salmagundi*, 137-138, Winter-Spring, 2003, p. 17]. Is this meant as an implicit criticism of the Frankfurt School's approach to this issue?

as he feels the power of representing the norm".[5] In the era of Trump, Hispanic migrants to the United States, Latinos living in the USA, and American Muslims, are among the victims, or potential victims.

In June of 2015, Trump kicked off his campaign for the Presidency with a speech, delivered in New York, in which he charged that "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you… They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with [them]. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."[6] He has invoked the "the men-of-color-as-sexual-predator trope" on other occasions[7] – and has linked this trope to harsh policies intended to diminish the flow of Hispanic migrants to the United States. He has repeatedly attacked the so-called "caravan" made up primarily of refugees from Central America as containing criminals and "bad people" – without providing any supporting evidence.

Trump has made equally prejudiced comments about Muslims and Islam, and has also advocated anti-Muslim policies. In 2015, Trump stated that he would "strongly consider" closing mosques.[8] Several weeks later, his campaign issued a statement -- which Trump read aloud at a campaign rally -- proclaiming that "Donald J. Trump is calling for a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our

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5   The words "Negroes, Mexican wrestling clubs" were replaced in the final, published, version of "Elements of Antisemitism" by the word "vagrants" [Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, op. cit., pp. 140, 272].

6   "Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech," *Time*, June 16, 2015, http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/

7   Cindy Casares, "Trump's repeated use of the Mexican racist trope is as old (and as racist) as colonialism," NBC, April 7, 2018, https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/trump-s-repeated-use-mexican-rapist-trope-old-racist-colonialism-ncna863451

8   Jenna Johnson and Abigail Hauslohner, " 'I think Islam hates us': A timeline of Trump's comments about Islam and Muslims," *The Washington Post*, May 20, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/05/20/i-think-islam-hates-us-a-timeline-of-trumps-comments-about-islam-and-muslims/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.32ad3cd6a708

country's representatives can figure out what is going on."[9] Speaking on CNN in March of 2016, Trump bluntly stated "I think Islam hates us."[10] These statements strike me as archetypal manifestations of Islamophobia.

Trump's comments about Mexicans and Muslims appear to have fanned or unleashed prejudices in portions of the American population. Trump's words have been echoed in incidents in which individuals of Mexican descent living in the United States were victimized.[11] The number of anti-Muslim incidents in the United States increased markedly in the year following Trump's election.[12] In a significant portion of these incidents, the perpetrators explicitly referenced Trump, a Trump campaign slogan, or a policy of the Trump administration.

Mechanisms of agitators

Adorno and those theorists closest to him argued that "modern anti-Semitism is, to a very large extent, a matter of conditioned reflexes rather than of aboriginal and spontaneous behaviors".[13] Theodor Adorno and Leo Lowenthal, a core member of the Frankfurt School, studied American fascist agitators, and described the techniques which were used by these agitators in quite some detail.[14] In a piece entitled "Anti-Semitism and

9   Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Adam Gabbatt, " 'Rapists, animals, drug dealers': woman abuses US Latino man in echo of Trump," *The Guardian*, June 25, 2018.

12 South Asian Americans Leading Together, "Communities on Fire. Confronting Hate Violence and Xenophobic Political Rhetoric," 2018, http://saalt.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Communities-on-Fire.pdf

13 "Notes on Adorno's remarks," December 30, 1943, MHA, II 14 271a. The published version of these remarks [Max Horkheimer, *Gesammelte Schriften*, XVII, edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996, p.527] substitutes "conditional" for "conditioned" – but the latter makes more sense.

14 See, for example, Theodor W. Adorno, *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Fascist Propaganda" (based on a talk which Adorno delivered in 1944)[15] Adorno noted the ways in which fascist agitators in the United States made use of unconscious mechanisms rather than rational arguments in their efforts to attract supporters. Adorno stressed that "concrete political ideas play but a minor role compared with the psychological stimuli applied to the audience", and accented three characteristics of the approach used by the American fascist propagandists of that era.[16] The first was that the propagandists often engaged in personalization. They spoke about themselves, and identified themselves with those in their audiences. The second characteristic of the approach described by Adorno was that emphasis was placed on means, not on ends. The agitators whose works provided the data for Adorno's study rarely had anything concrete to say about the goals of their movement. The third and final characteristic noted by Adorno was that the propaganda of the American fascist antisemitic agitators functioned "as a kind of wish-fulfillment."[17] The audience is let in on a purported secret, often scandalous, which allegedly explains a great deal. Antisemitic propaganda, Adorno pointed out, was not irrational, but rather a "calculated effect", "consciously planned and organized."[18]

In *Prophets of Deceit*, co-authored by Leo Lowenthal and Norbert Guterman and published in 1949 as part of the American Jewish Committee-sponsored series Studies in Prejudice (of which Horkheimer was an overarching editor), an attempt is made to expand upon Adorno's insights by deciphering the techniques used by American agitators. Just as, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno sought to demonstrate the manipulative nature of the culture industry, so, in

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15 Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, translated by Michael Robertson. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1994, p. 358.

16 T[heodor] W. Adorno, "Anti-Semitism and Fascist Propaganda." *Anti-Semitism. A Social Disease*, edited by Ernst Simmel. New York: International Universities Press, 1946, pp. 125-126.

17 Ibid., p. 127.

18 Ibid., p. 130.

Prophets of Deceit, do Lowenthal and Guterman underscore the manipulation inherent in agitation. The authors of *Prophets of Deceit* describe the techniques of the American agitator as a "psychological Morse code tapped out by the agitator and picked up by the followers."[19]   A close reading is given to the speeches and writings of a number of agitators, and recurrent themes are identified – including, for example, the notion that Jews enjoy "forbidden fruits" that others do not, that "ordinary" (non-Jewish) Americans were the unwitting victims of a Jewish conspiracy, and that Jewish influence lay behind actions taken by governmental bodies.[20]   "The dupe" Lowenthal and Guterman point out in explaining the "conspiracy" theme, "is pictured" by the agitator "not merely as cheated, but as cheated systematically, consistently, and perpetually. Nor is his inability to overcome his bewilderment and helplessness surprising, for he is the [purported] victim of a [supposedly] '*comprehensive and carefully-planned political conspiracy*'. In nurturing the idea of a permanent conspiracy directed against the eternal dupes, the agitator plays upon and enlarges the tendency among people who suffer from a sense of failure to ascribe their misfortunes to secret enemy machinations."[21]

The notion of a Jewish conspiracy remains alive and well in the contemporary world. On October 16, 2003, the Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed, speaking before the Organization of the Islamic Conference, proclaimed that   «...today the Jews rule this world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them... They invented socialism, communism, human rights and democracy so that persecuting them would appear to be wrong, so that they can enjoy equal rights with others. With these they have gained control of the most powerful countries and they, this tiny community, have become a world power.»[22] Jewish conspiracy

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19 Leo Lowenthal and Norbert Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit. A Study of the Techniques of the American Agitator*. Studies in Prejudice, edited by Max Horkheimer and Samuel H. Flowerman. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949, p. 140.

20 Lowenthal and Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit*, op. cit., pp.20ff.

21 Lowenthal and Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit*, op. cit., p. 24.

22 "Mahathir attack on Jews condemned," CNN, October 17, 2003, http://edi-

theories also continue to exist in contemporary America. "If it were not for the strong support of the Jewish community for this war with Iraq, we would not be doing this," Congressman Jim Moran of Virginia proclaimed in 2003.[23] Purported conspiracies are often pinned by Donald Trump, however, not on Jews but on members of altogether different minority groups. A day after accepting the Republican Party's nomination for President, Trump suggested that Rafael Cruz, who was born in Cuba and who is the father of Senator Ted Cruz, had been in the company of Lee Harvey Oswald, the man responsible for the assassination of President John Kennedy, shortly before that assassination. According to Trump "nobody even brings it up. They don't even talk about that. That was reported, and nobody talks about it."[24] Trump thereby revivified a notion beloved by American conspiracy theorists (the notion that there was far more to the assassination of John Kennedy than was admitted by the Warren Commission, which thoroughly investigated Kennedy's murder). More generally: Trump has shown himself to be open to any number of conspiracy theories, on a disparate range of issues, some with a racist element others without. Indeed, Trump gained considerable attention, in the period leading up to his last campaign, by fanning the so-called "birther" conspiracy – the notion that Barack Obama, who was born in Hawaii, had actually been born outside the United States, and was lying to the American people about his background (including his religious background).

Trump and Antisemitism

Donald Trump has made use – almost certainly unknowingly -- of certain of the techniques described by Adorno in his study of agitators, in-

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tion.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/asiapcf/southeast/10/16/oic.mahathir/

23 "Lawmaker under fire for saying Jews support Iraq war," CNN, March 12, 2003, http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/03/11/moran.jews/

24 Nolan D. McCaskill, "Trump accuses Cruz's father of helping JFK's assassin," *Politico*, May 3, 2016, https://www.politico.com/blogs/2016-gop-primary-live-updates-and-results/2016/05/trump-ted-cruz-father-222730.

cluding personalization, but has directed his barbs not first and foremost at Jews, but rather at Muslims, Mexicans, and others. Tellingly, however, the techniques used by Trump have impacted negatively on Jews in America even though Jews have not been his primary target. This is evident, for example, by examination of the ways in which the election of Trump has fanned the rise of the antisemitic hard right in the United States. At the now infamous demonstration held in Charlottesville, Virginia in the summer of 2017 and endorsed by white nationalists and supremacists, slogans chanted by those participating included "Blood and soil," [manifestly echoing language used by Nazis against Jews in the years of the Third Reich] and "Jews will not replace us."[25] In the wake of that demonstration, Trump proclaimed that there were "very fine people on both sides" among those who had participated in it.[26] It is not an accident that the number of antisemitic incidents in the United States was allegedly almost 60% higher in 2017 than in 2016.[27] Trump's statements were apparently perceived as encouraging by those with antisemitic (and racist) inclinations.

Donald Trump is not *consciously* antisemitic. He insisted, not long ago, that "I am the least anti-Semitic person that you've ever seen in your entire life."[28] He has appointed Jews, such as Stephen Miller, to significant positions in his administration, and speaks admiringly about his daughter, Ivanka, who has converted to Judaism, and who is raising her children as Jews. It should be noted, however, that, as the Critical Theorists remind us, it is frequently the case in the post-Holocaust era that

25 Emma Green, "Why the Charlottesville Marchers were obsessed with Jews," *The Atlantic*, August 15, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/nazis-racism-charlottesville/536928/.

26 Timothy Snyder, "The Test of Nazism that Trump Failed," *The New York Times*, August 18, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/18/opinion/the-test-of-nazism-that-trump-failed.html.

27 "Anti-Semitic Incidents Surged Nearly 60% in 2017, According to New ADL Report," February 27, 2018, https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/anti-semitic-incidents-surged-nearly-60-in-2017-according-to-new-adl-report.

28 Snyder, "The Test of Nazism that Trump Failed," loc. cit.

antisemites deny their prejudices.[29] Moreover, Trump has made use of tropes and stereotypes which hearten or play into the hands of antisemites. Consider, for example, Trump's address at the Republican Jewish Coalition's Presidential Forum, delivered late in 2015. "I'm a negotiator like you folks, we are negotiators," Trump said during this speech. "Is there anybody that doesn't renegotiate deals in this room? This room negotiates them -- perhaps more than any other room I've ever spoken in."[30] Trump -- and some of those to whom he was speaking -- may well have thought he was being funny. I don't.

In "Elements of Antisemitism" the Critical Theorists suggested that antisemitism has many roots, and that these roots reinforce one another. Among these roots are a form of antisemitism stemming from a desire on the part of those in power to maintain at all costs the existing relation of production. Bourgeois antisemitism, Horkheimer and Adorno noted, scapegoats Jews for problems inherent in capitalism itself. Antisemitism is used as a way to conceal domination by a class, deflecting attention from that class to a (Jewish) subcategory.

The final major television advertisement used by the Trump campaign during the Presidential campaign of 2016, entitled "Argument for America," was one in which Trump is heard proclaiming: "The establishment has trillions of dollars at stake in this election… those who control the levers of power in Washington and … the global special interests. They partner with these people who don't have your good in mind… It's a global power structure that is responsible for the economic decisions that have robbed our working class, stripped our country of its wealth and put that money into the pockets of a handful of large corporations and political entities."[31] And while Trump speaks, the video portion of this

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29 Cf. Lars Rensmann, *The Politics of Unreason. The Frankfurt School and the Origins of Modern Antisemitism*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2017, p. 340.

30 Jeremy Diamond, "Trump to Republican Jewish Coalition: 'I'm a negotiator like you," CNN, December 3, 2015, https://www.cnn.com/2015/12/03/politics/donald-trump-rjc-negotiator/index.html.

31 "Donald Trump: Donald Trump's Argument for America," *The New Repub-*

advertisement flashes images of George Soros, Janet Yellen (head of the Federal Reserve Bank at that time), Lloyd Blankfein (who was the chief executive of Goldman Sachs when the advertisement was made) and, last but by no means least, Hillary Clinton. The ad does not explicitly label Soros, Yellen and Blankfein as Jews – and for a certain part of the attentive public it did not need to do so. The none-too-subtle albeit subliminal message of the ad which carried Trump over the threshold was that Jews were responsible for the problems of America, and that Clinton was in league with the Jews.[32] Donald Trump, a self-proclaimed billionaire, won the election, in part, by successfully deflecting blame for the state of America from the capitalist system as a whole to those members of the bourgeoisie who are in fact Jewish. He ends this ad -- as he is, I believe, obliged to do -- by noting "I'm Donald Trump and I approve this message." More recently, he has claimed that "a lot of people" say that George Soros funded the migrant "caravan" of 2018. Trump has not provided any credible evidence in support of his claim.

Trump's endorsement of antisemitic tropes can and does exist side by side with advocacy of policies Trump perceives as favorable to Israel. Playing to his strongly "pro-Israel" Evangelical Christian base, and to the desires of prominent financial supporters of his campaign such as Sheldon Adelson, Trump has consistently endorsed positions he believes are in accord with the interests of the current government of the State of Israel, including moving the embassy of the United States from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, working closely with individuals who provide financial support to Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and, more generally, greenlighting a Middle East policy which shifts attention away from the plight of the Palestinians and towards the attempt to form an anti-Iranian alliance. Trump's simultaneous embrace both of stereotyped attitudes

lic, November 4, 2016, https://newrepublic.com/political-ad-database/donald-trump-donald-trumps-argument-for-america/MTEvNC8xNjpEb25hb-GQgVHJ1bXAncyBBcmd1bWVudCBmb3IgQW1lcmljYQ

32 Daniel Politi, "Is Donald Trump's Closing Campaign Ad Anti-Semitic?" _Slate_, November 6, 2016, http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_slatest/2016/11/06/is_donald_trump_s_closing_campaign_ad_anti_semitic.html.

towards Jews and of policies advocated by Bibi Netanyahu is comparable to the stance taken by specific, right-wing, nationalist political figures in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe such as those in Hungary.

Correlations of racism, antisemitism, and hostility to other minorities

The authors of *The Authoritarian Personality* point out that "a man who is hostile toward one minority group is very likely to be hostile against a wide variety of others."[33] The empirical study on antisemitism among American workers conducted by the Institute of Social Research in 1944 and 1945 – the overwhelming bulk of which has never been published – corroborated this notion insofar as it provided evidence that those in the American working class who hated Jews regularly also hated Blacks, foreigners, and members of other minority groups. The authors of the empirical study, among who were not only Friedrich Pollock and Leo Lowenthal but also Arkady Gurland and Paul Massing, note that "Once an individual has accepted the stereotyped notion of one particular group, he judges all members of that group according to this preconceived notion. He loses the ability to see human beings as individuals instead of as members of this or that group."[34] More generally: "To an ever increasing degree pressure is brought to bear upon the individual within every group so as to make him abandon his independence and absorb the accepted pattern of group behavior… he voluntarily renounce[s] his personal quality as an individual by refusing to see and judge others as persons."[35] It was a core contention of the Critical Theorists that individuality had markedly diminished in contemporary societies, and that humans were increasingly manipulated. Under the impact of monopolization and standardization, Horkheimer tells us, individuals undergo

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33 Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, op. cit., p. 9.

34 Institute of Social Research, "Antisemitism among American Labor," p. 490, *Jewish Labor Committee Collection*, Wagner Archives, Tamiment Institute, New York.

35 Ibid.

very profound changes. The changes which had rendered Jews power-less in Germany were linked by Horkheimer and his circle to changes transforming (other) individuals into members of masses – more easily swayed by antisemitic agitators, and more open to accepting other components of mass behavior, such as racism. Those conducting the Institute's labor study noted that 29.3% of the white American workers who they had interviewed and who answered the relevant questions reported that they would object to working with Jews "under any conditions" and that 30.3% said they would object to working with Blacks.[36] If one included workers who *might* be willing to work with Jews or Blacks under certain circumstances the overall reluctance to work with Jews was *more* pronounced than that to work with Blacks. But a difference was noted in the kinds of objections made by American workers to Jews and to Blacks. "Objections to Jews" the Institute associates tell us "are rationalized with all kinds of quasi factual justifications," such as "specific situations in which Jews become [purportedly] 'insufferable'."[37] On the other hand, the authors continue, "Discrimination against the Negro … requires *less* rationalization" because of longstanding traditions in society of discriminating against them. This, however, has an unexpected effect: "Once the prejudice against 'the Negro' as inferior, subhuman, etc., is abandoned, objections to the individual Negro, to 'certain types' of Negros, or to Negros in specific situations, tend to break down too."[38] In the case of Jews, on the other hand, rationalizations galore continue to be used to justify prejudiced attitudes. The so-called "menace of the Jew" has "some secret mystic quality" which is not easily uprooted.[39] The counterpart "menace of the Negro" is more concrete. Anti-Black attitudes were regularly linked to fear on the part of white workers in the United States that Blacks would compete for jobs held at that time by whites. But "anti-Jewishness [was] not based on the workers' fear of

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36   Ibid., p. 493.

37   Ibid., p. 495.

38   Ibid.

39   Ibid., p. 496.

competition. It feeds in the first place on complex rationalizations and inherited 'images' of the Jews as [for example] the 'money-grabber, rapacious businessman, parasitical non-worker … While the Negro worker is a concrete competitor," the Jew "… is an abstract 'threat' religiously believed in." That said: a substantial number of those American workers interviewed for the Labor Study held both Blacks and Jews "in equally low esteem" and advocated "discrimination against both groups with equal ardor."[40] Here, once again, the Frankfurt School's research into antisemitism sheds light on racism – both past, and, I very much suspect, present.

  There were certainly major elements of the Frankfurt School's analysis of antisemitism which were not transferable to other groups, or to our era. The Critical Theorists were not prophets, and, of course, not infallible. Specific claims made by Horkheimer or other members of his Institute with regard to antisemitism have subsequently proven to be wildly off base. In June of 1944, for example, Horkheimer naively proclaimed -- the fact that he did not generally share the blinders concerning the Soviet Union held by many Marxist-influenced Western leftists of that era notwithstanding -- that "at present the only country where there does not seem to be any kind of anti-Semitism is Russia".[41] This assertion, scholarly work on Jews in the Soviet Union conducted after Horkheimer made this proclamation demonstrates, was simply wrong.

  The members of the Institute also tended to believe during the course of the Second World War that the "spread of anti-Jewish sentiment" might "find less resistance" in a post-War America" than in Europe precisely because the USA had not undergone the European experience.[42]

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40 Ibid., pp. 510-511.

41 Max Horkheimer, "Anti-Semitism as a Social Phenomenon," June 17, 1944, MHA, IX 46 1A, p. 3. Horkheimer published a revised version of his paper two years later – but this comment remained unaltered [Max Horkheimer, "Sociological Background of the Psychoanalytic Approach," in *Anti-Semitism. A Social Disease*, op. cit., p. 3].

42 "The Political Function of Anti-Semitism. Supplementary Statement to the Research Project on Anti-Semitism of the Institute of Social Research (Co-

The prognostications of the Frankfurt School on this significant point were off base. The United States did not become a hotbed of antisemitism in the post-War decades, the early fears of the Critical Theorists notwithstanding.

More generally: Serious questions have been raised about a number of the Frankfurt School's underlying assumptions, and about its methodology. Lars Rensmann, who has written extensively about these matters, once proclaimed (and I agree) that the ideas of the Critical Theorists in re antisemitism are in need today of "supplementation, revision, and actualization."[43]

But I am confident Rensmann would also agree that neither specific inaccurate predictions by the Critical Theorists, nor possible methodological issues in certain of the studies with which they were involved, should lead us to throw out the baby with the bathwater. It was the intent of this article, in part, to demonstrate that insights in the writings of the Frankfurt School may well help us not only to understand antisemitism as it existed in an earlier day, but also antisemitism in the USA in the twenty first century.   And it was also part of my intent to demonstrate that though antisemitism per se certainly has distinct components and causes, the analysis of antisemitism provided by the first generation of Critical Theorists sheds light on present day racism, Islamophobia, and ethnic prejudice in the era of Donald Trump. The constellation of forces that constitute the elements of antisemitism is unique. But some of the stars in *that* constellation are doubtless also in others.

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lumbia University)," December 15, 1942, MHA, IX 92 [7a] 17-18.

43   Lars Rensmann, *Kritische Theorie über den Antisemitismus. Studien zu Struktur, Erklärungspotential und Aktualität*. Edition Philosophie und Sozialwissenschaften, 42. Berlin and Hamburg: Argument Verlag, 1998, p. 362. Cf. Rensmann, *The Politics of Unreason*, op. cit., p. 396: "[T]he Frankfurt School's work on antisemitism is riddled with inner tensions, and it is certainly not short of problems. Some assumptions also appear outdated from a contemporary perspective."

Feminism as a Critical Theory:
Notes on Architectonics and Heuristics

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Abstract: Feminism as critical theory requires both metaphysical and architectonic analysis. The subjects of feminism are women and women do not have a shared essence but a shared relation. Unlike Philosophy of Race, for feminists, gender is the substantive thing, instead of race. This results in incommensurabilities between the two critical theories. Feminism is more flexible than Philosophy of Race and generally allows for creative thought in its many applications. There are advantages to considering feminism as a critical theory, but to conceive of this with clarity requires prior thought about what feminism is and who feminism is about, what a critical theory is, how feminism relates to other critical theories, and the heuristic benefits of feminism as a critical theory within its wider theoretical context. In what follows, I briefly take up these topics, in that order.

What feminism is and who feminism is about

Feminism is a discourse and related practices that have the general goal of increasing the well-being of women and correcting both instant and ongoing societal injustice against women. Usually, the societal treatment of women is compared to that of men. However, some women have needs related to bodily integrity and reproduction, which men do not have and in those cases, injustice and oppression can be identified by comparison with the circumstances of those women who are treated

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1   **Naomi Zack,** PhD, Columbia University, is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Oregon. Just published is *Reviving the Social Compact: Inclusive Citizenship in an Age of Extreme Politics*. Zack's recent books are her edited 51-essay *Oxford Handbook on Philosophy and Race* (2017) and *Philosophy of Race, An Introduction* (2018). Her monographs include: *The Theory of Applicative Justice: An Empirical Pragmatic Approach to Correcting Racial Injustice* (2016), *White Privilege and Black Rights: The Injustice of US Police Racial Profiling and Homicide* (April 2015), *The Ethics and Mores of Race: Equality after the History of Philosophy* (2011/2015) and *Ethics for Disaster,* (2009, 2010-11), *Inclusive Feminism: A Third Wave Theory of Women's Commonality* (2005), and *Philosophy of Science and Race* (2002).

better. Feminism has not so far been a revolutionary theory (it could be if rule by women and their dominance over men were ultimate goals). Rather, feminism has so far consisted of analyses and practical projects that have sought degrees of equality with men in social respect, earning capacity, and political representation of the interests of women as they are in society, as well as equality among women across differences in class and race.

Feminism has thus been a theory and projects of *applicative justice*: Apply the principles of justice already enjoyed by most men and some women in human societies, to all women.[2] In societies that are formally gender egalitarian, applicative justice for women is a more straight-forward goal than within societies without formal gender equality.[3] In the latter case, equality with men may not be a goal accepted by local feminists,[4] but there are usually social norms protecting and supporting women in their traditional roles as wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters, so that injustice against women can be addressed as harm to them in those roles.[5] In extreme cases, where rape victims are considered devalued in their traditional roles and face death, the work of on-the-ground feminism may involve attempts to shift cultural norms or circumvent brutality. But there,

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2　See Naomi Zack, *Applicative Justice:* A *Pragmatic Empirical Approach to Racial Injustice*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. While the focus of this work is on correcting racial injustice, the notion of applying what is already normally accorded to whites to nonwhites, in racist society, has a parallel application in misogynistic society: apply the principles of justice now applied to men, to women.

3　For instance, the justification for the 1963 US Equal Pay Act was prior legal presumptions against gender discrimination. See NOLO , "The Equal Pay Act: Equal Pay for Women," https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/equal-pay-act-women-30153.html

4　I am calling all who protest or complain for the well-being of women, "feminists," even in cases where local actors may vigorously reject the labels of "feminism" for their actions or their own identities as "feminists."

5　For instance, Mothers of Plaza de Mayo have continued their vigil and protests against their relatives who were "disappeared" in Argentina, decades ago. See Uki Goñi, "40 years later, the mothers of Argentina's 'disappeared' refuse to be silent," *The Guardian*, April 28, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/28/mothers-plaza-de-mayo-argentina-anniversary.

the principle of applicative justice still holds in a broad sense, because women are being treated unjustly, compared to men. If there are no positive laws or norms of gender equality, then feminists have to appeal to some version of natural law, humanitarian law, or even religion, in order to justify their goals.[6]

Writing about feminism from within the United States can lead to certain 'fallacies of composition' (mistaking a part of something for the whole) in thinking that what is true here is true throughout the entire world. There are also fallacies of composition concerning feminism in US history. For instance, US feminism briefly stalled in the 1970s when women of color and advocates for poor women accused leadership of the "Second Wave" of a narrow focus on the problems of middle class heterosexual white women. But then Feminist Theory reconstituted itself through recognition of multiple identities, in which race, sexual preference, and economic class, "intersect" with generic female gender (if there is such a thing). Feminism as academic discourse has been very flexible and inclusive in welcoming such intersections. Indeed, US Feminism is now completely 'intersected'[7] and difference feminism on the one hand, or essentialism on the other, have both been surpassed as viable theories. On that basis, 'feminism' should be reconceived as 'feminism*s*.'

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6   Elif Shafak, "After years of silence, Turkey's women are going into battle against oppression," *The Guardian*, February 17, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/17/turkey-women-battle-oppression-protest

7   See: Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (Jul., 1991), pp. 1241-1299, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1229039; Kimberlé Crenshaw, "The Urgency of Intersectionality," TEDWomen 2016 | October 2016, https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?utm_campaign=eNewsletter&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-_cB60iI-c17XG7iWMBaj-ZuOml67xYap5Wn5AgHSwHk7yb-4u_1VaY9Llk7tv3IQpki-Gs_; Patricia Hill Collins, and Sirma Bilge. *Intersectionality*, Malden, MA, Polity Press, 2016; Elizabeth Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought,* Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1988.

This leaves us with the question of who women, the subjects of feminism, are. The answer is that women are real human beings but they do not have inherent shared characteristics as the subjects of feminism. Women are those who share the following relational identity: *Women identify as or with those who in reality are birth-designated females, mothers, or the primary heterosexual choices of men* (FMP).[8] Some women, perhaps most, are some of the FMP disjuncts. But women do not have to *be* all or any of the realities constituting the disjunction of FMP. Thus, male to female transsexuals, lesbians, and childless women are all women, provided that they identify as or with any of the terms of the FMP disjunction.[9]

Women's identity is relational in at least two ways. First, distinct individuals are identified by others or self-identify as women, so that, especially in the latter case, in the moment of identification, any individual woman, as a single individual, is apart from and has some distance from the group of women—the individual is related to women. Second, women are aware of the group "women," apart from the moment of individual women's identification and they have thoughts and feelings about

8   I have been working with this definition of women for a while. Please see earlier versions within: *Inclusive Feminism: A Third Wave Theory of Women's Commonality*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2005; *Reviving the Social Compact: Inclusive Citizenship in an Age of Extreme Politics*, Rowman & Littlefield, October 2018; "Can Third Wave Feminism be Inclusive?: Intersectionality, Its Problems and New Directions," in Eva Kittay and Linda M. Alcoff, eds., *Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy*, Blackwell, 2007.

9   This FMP dysjunctional, relational definition does not allow for non-binary individuals who deliberately do not identify as either men or women. Indeed, that is the point of their identity and strictly speaking, it does not fit into feminism, unless feminism becomes gender theory, which at this time, some might think is too broad. However, if and as non-binary identities gain traction among theorists and their public recognition increases, feminism will need to expand to gender theory to preserve its relevance and inclusivity. See: Stephen Linstead, and Alison Pullen. "Gender as Multiplicity: Desire, Displacement, Difference and Dispersion." Human Relations 59, no. 9 (September 2006): 1287–1310. doi:10.1177/0018726706069772; Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 519-31. doi:10.2307/3207893.

this group, as well as they may interact with members of it, in the knowledge that they too are women. However, it is important to remember that these are external relations, which do not come from any shared trait that all women have. To revise Simone de Beauvoir, one is neither born nor becomes a woman, but rather identifies and/or is identified as one.[10]

This description of the relational aspects of the FMP definition of women captures the development of women's gender for children who are assigned to the group of women, based on female birth designation. Female children do not begin with "seeds" of their eventual womanhood according to deterministic biological factors. Rather, they learn and imitate what the culture in which they are growing up to become women, expects and demands of them. Most comply with these expectations and demands.[11] Those who do not may become transsexuals—who should be called transgenders—and transsexuality reveals the norms for the gender development of women in a given culture. The child's body, tastes, interests, and presentation are regulated throughout development.[12] And although progressive and transgressive scholars and activists focus on the punitive and obligatory measures supporting gender development, it is important to recognize that appealing and attractive tools for preferred development are also used, especially in a consumer-based society, where the gender-specific choices of advertised products are often made by children themselves.

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10 "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." - Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1949-2011, pp. xv, 212, 283.

11 See: Naomi Zack: *Inclusive Feminism: A Third Wave Theory of Women's Commonality*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2005; *Reviving the Social Compact: Inclusive Citizenship in an Age of Extreme Politics*, Rowman & Littlefield, October 2018; "Can Third Wave Feminism be Inclusive?: Intersectionality, Its Problems and New Directions," in *Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy*, Eva Kittay and Linda M. Alcoff, eds., Blackwell, 2007

12 Judith Butler's analyses of the *materiality* of gender 'signifiers' is highly relevant here, because far more is involved in incorporating the prevailing norms for one's gender than simply accepting the right verbal label. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York, NY: Routledge, 1990, pp. 35, 112, 212, ff.

When women are defined as FMP, feminism as advocacy for women becomes a nearly universal method of advocacy for the well-being and correction of injustice against over more than half of humanity. This is the sense in which feminism is a critical theory. But to say that is to frame a blank canvas. Ideally, women as feminists are able to imagine their membership in a moral community that includes all women, not only those like them or those to whom they are partial. As Gilles Deleuze interprets David Hume, sympathy for those to whom we are already partial is natural, but the creation of a moral world, or in this case, inclusive feminism, requires an extension of that partiality to all in the moral world, that is, to all women. Deleuze wrote in his 1953 *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature:*

> The problem of society, in this sense, is not a problem of limitation, but rather a problem of integration. To integrate sympathies is to make sympathy transcend its contradiction and natural partiality. Such an integration implies a positive moral world, and is brought about by the positive invention of such a world.[13]

Of course, Deleuze was not writing about what unifies feminism, but there is a parallel structure. Given the FMP definition of women, feminism allows for multiplicities of individual identities and circumstances. For women to be able to advocate for those with identities and circumstances vastly different from their own, the integration of sympathies and imagination of a moral world of women is required.

What is a critical theory and how is feminism a critical theory?

A critical theory (indefinite article), broadly understood, is a theory with the goal of liberating some category of human beings, which can describe the injustice or oppression that limits their liberty, in terms of social con-

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13   Gilles Deleuze, Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1991/from 1953, pp. 40-41.

ditions, systems, or institutions that serve the perceived interests of dominant agents in society.[14] Critical theorists may define and analyze injustice and oppression in ways that those suffering from it do not recognize, because they have accepted ideologies that normalize their positions in society. Such ideologies maintain the status quo of the most powerful groups in society and present structures of dominance and hierarchy in anodyne or even inspirational terms. The methodology of critical theory tends toward analyses of factual findings from both the social and physical sciences, in order to support a coherent account of why ideologies that maintain oppression are false. Phenomenology and standpoint theory, literature, autobiography, and much narrative are not obviously parts of critical theory. When projects in these fields are compatible with critical theoretical analyses, the discrepancy may not be evident and when they are incompatible to the extent of incommensurability, each methodology retains the last word for its practitioners. [15]

To claim Feminism as critical theory does not mean it is the only or final critical theory. Feminism can itself be viewed as a sub-category of Intersection Theory in its function as an umbrella theory for oppression and injustice that also covers Philosophy of Race, Theories of Social Class, Disability Studies, Animal Rights, and age-related subjects of oppression (e.g., children and elderly people).

The Heuristic Benefits of FMP Feminist Theory as Critical Theory

The heuristic benefits of Feminist Theory as Critical Theory are often taken for granted by feminists and resented by specific groups of women who experience Western Feminists as arrogantly appropriative of their experience and judgmental about their culture. The interference of Feminism (now capitalized in reference to its theoretical origins) in a status

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14 James Bohman, "Critical Theory," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Mar 8, 2005 (https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/critical-theory/)

15 Thus, in terms of literary criticism, which she always contextualizes, Gayatri Spivak defines women as "not-men," a definition referring to traits that men presumably have. See: Gayatri Spivak, "Feminism and Critical Theory," *Women's Studies International Quarterly 1*, no. 3 (*1978*): 241—6.

quo where men dominate women also incurs hostility in its cultures of origin. But Feminists are always on stronger ground in critiques applying to their own culture and to some extent, this entails that non-Western feminism is thereby encouraged by the broader theory, insofar as women speak in their own voices.

In terms of the broader theory, the advantage of Feminism as a critical theory, in which women are understood to be FMP, is that it allows for maximal intellectual power to be exercised by women, about themselves and others (to the extent permitted) without confining them to essentialist ideas about themselves that have been contested when universalized. Also, as noted, we should view FMP Feminisms as Critical Theory in the plural, with an indefinite number of overlapping, distinct, progressive, and even regressive theoretical advocacies for women. This critical theory of FMP Feminism*s* is inherently pluralistic and thereby allows women to construct their own feminisms and even feminisms offered to others, through creative projects that are grounded in knowledge about the real lives of women.

What would Foucault do with the Ring of Gyges? Or How we Should be Saved from Neoliberal Freedom

Eduardo Mendieta[1]

Abstract: This article aims to contribute to an elucidation of the rise of what Wendy Brown has called "authoritarian freedom" and I call "neoliberal freedom" by returning to Plato's dramatic staging of two ways of thinking about freedom. The challenge was also articulated by Byung-Chul Han in his book *Psychopolitik: Neoliberalismus und die neuen Matchtechniken* (2016), in terms of a perceived deficit in Foucault's discussions of freedom. I return to Thrasymachus's putative Machiavellian conception of Justice, and how Plato's brothers expand and urbanize the Sophist's less than desirable conception. The point of departure, however, is a re-reading of the allegory of the Ring of Gyges, which is here read as an allegory for complete impunity and complete powerlessness, i.e., as a thought experiment about who would want to be just in the absence of either retribution or sanction. Then, the discussion turns to book VIII of Plato's *Politeia* to see how two conceptions of freedom are at play in the debate on the virtues and vices of different *Politeie*, namely *exousia* and *eleutheria*. These two conceptions in turn are read in terms of their entanglements with *parrêsia*, *isegoria* and *isonomia*. The essay closes with a consideration of how Foucault's conception of freedom as a practice of ethics contributes to an understanding of communicative freedom and the care of the democratic world as part and parcel of the care of the self.

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Introduction

Korean-German philosopher Byung-Chul Han in his 2016 book titled *Psychopolitik: Neoliberalismus und die neuen Matchtechniken*[2] begins by arguing that the contemporary neoliberal techniques of power have brought about a "crisis of freedom." Han argues that "through individual freedom the freedom of capital is actualized."[3] In fact, and more emphatically, "Individual freedom, which today has assumed an excessive form, is in the end nothing else than the *excess of capital itself.*"[4] It is for this reason that according to Han we have become slaves of freedom, or at least a certain version of freedom, to wit neoliberal freedom. This slavery to a capitalistic construed version of freedom leads Han to identify what he calls "Foucault's dilemma." The dilemma consists in that in analyzing the technologies of the self as forms of governmentality Foucault failed to recognize that these very technologies would not be vehicles of liberation, but rather of means of exorbitant subjection. In fact, "the techniques of power of the neoliberal regime configure the blind spot in the Foucauldian analytics of Power. Foucault did not recognize that the *neoliberal regime of domination completely assimilated the technology of the self*, that the permanent self-optimization as a neoliberal technique of the self is nothing else than an efficient form of domination and exploitation."[5] Foucault's analytic of power, which had as one of its tools the analysis of the different pragmatics of the self, failed, according to Han, to recognize that neoliberalism has lead to the situation in which "self-optimization and subjection, freedom and exploitation become one. The assimilation of freedom and exploitation brought about by the techniques of power in

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2   Byung-Chul Han, *Psychopolitik: Neoliberalismus und die neuen Machttechniken* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 2016)

3   Ibid. 12. Henceforth all my translations.

4   Ibid. 13.

5   Ibid. 42.

the form of self exploitation remained hidden to Foucault."[6] What Han is in putting on the table is important: on the one hand, there is the critique of Foucault's so called "blind spot," that Foucault failed to recognize how the technologies of the self would be co-opted by neoliberalism for its own purposes. But, most acutely, Han's critique is that insofar as we live in a new age in which we become the products of our projects of self-hood, the quest for freedom has become a vehicle of subjugation. Han opens his book with a terse quote from conceptual artist Jenny Holzer, which reads: "Protect me from what I want." Han is warning us that: "we should protect ourselves from our hunger for more Freedom."

What is at stake in Han's critique of Foucault, in fact, is what Wendy Brown in a recent brilliant essay, diagnosed as the problem of authoritarian and neoliberal conceptions of freedom. This is how Brown articulates the problematic:

> …what generates the antipolitical yet libertarian *and* authoritarian dimensions of popular right-wing reaction today? What novel iterations and expressions of freedom have wrought from the conjuncture of neoliberal reason, aggrieved white male power, nationalism, and unavowed nihilism? How has freedom become the calling card and energizing force of a formation so manifestly unemancipatory, routinely characterized as heralding "illiberal democracy" in its attacks on equal rights, civil liberties, constitutionalism, and basic norms of tolerance and inclusion, and in its affirmations of white nationalism, strong statism, and authoritarian leadership? How and why have freedom and illiberalism, freedom and authoritarianism, freedom and legitimized social exclusion and social violence, become fused in our time?[7]

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6   Ibid. 42.

7   Wendy Brown, "Neoliberalism's Frankenstein: Authoritarian Freedom in Twenty-First Century "Democracies"" in Wendy Brown, Peter E. Gordon, and Max Pensky, *Authoritarianism: Three Inquiries in Critical Theory* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), 7-44, quote at 11.

The question of how we conceive freedom, then, is indispensable for our understanding the possibilities of a truly democratic freedom. Brown, who used Foucault very judiciously and productively, then, is right to urge us to think through Foucauldian inflected reflections on the *ethopoiesis* of freedom in the context of a neoliberal rationality that reduces everything to an economic calculus.

In the following I want to take up Han's and Brown's challenge and ask whether in fact Foucault faced the dilemma imputed on him, but most importantly, whether we should be afraid of "freedom," by going back to Plato, and working our way back to the late Foucault by way of Orland Patterson, Peter Bieri, Peter Sloterdijk and Julianne Rebentisch, space permitting.

Staging Freedom

We know Foucault was a close reader of Plato, especially towards the end of his life. In the courses at the Collège de France from 1982-1983, for instance, we have close and extensive readings of parts of the *Republic*, but also of Plato's *Letters*, the *Gorgia*s, and of course, *The Apology*. I want to take up the first two books of the *Republic* and then briefly focus on sections of book VIII, as a way to illuminate what I would call Plato's staging of the problem of freedom.

Some preliminaries. Plato can be read in many ways, each way being generative and illuminating, but there is one specific way of reading Plato that can illuminate the corpus in specifically instructive ways. It can be argue that we can read Plato's work as a sustained, intensive and ever maturing diatribe or polemic against the sophists. We also know that Plato wrote his dialogues aiming to emulate the great playwrights of his time, and this meant at the very least that he wrote his dialogues as tetralogies. Thus, the so-called death of Socrates is made up of the *Euthryphro*, the *Apology*, the *Crito* and the *Phaedo*. Following Giorgio Colli, the great Nietzsche scholar, I would argue that we have a tetralogy that we could call *contra sophistas* and it would be made up of the *Protagoras, the Gorgia*, the *Sophists*, and, I would argue, *Thrasymachus*. Colli has argued that

book one of the *Republic* was in fact a separate and self-standing dialogue that later was used to stage the question of justice and morality, and the good *politeia*. It would be revealing to read these four dialogues in tandem, as a polemic against the sophists. We shall return to this point later.

The *Republic* (*Politeia*) opens with Socrates returning from the Piraeus, where he had gone to offer a prayer to the Goddess Bendis, and to see the newly established rituals to her[8]. Plato places Socrates outside the city, which we know Socrates left very rarely, as he is returning from a sacred ritual. The Piraeus is the port of Athens and for a while, the road from the city to it was walled in order to protect the lines of supply between the city and the port. The Piraeus, I want to argue is metonymic of both commerce, but also of plurality, heterogeneity, of what we can call *mestizaje*. At the same time, Socrates is returning after a religious event. Socrates is detained by a slave of Polemarchus, the son of Cephalus. Once Polemarchus catches up with Socrates, he beseeches him to visit him and his father at their house. Cephalus was a famous and wealthy Metic, the patriarch of an immigrant family, who is alleged to have been invited to move his business to Athens by Pericles[9]. Cephalus was in the business of shields, swords, etc. He was in the business of war, so to say.

The dialogue, then, takes place in the house of a resident alien, a Metic, who has benefited from the hospitality of Athens[10]. Following Leo Strauss

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8   Throughout I will insist on using the proper Greek title of Plato's *Politeia* in part because Plato was placing himself within a specific tradition of commenting on constitutions or *Politeia* in the Hellene world. See Stephen Menn, "On Plato's Πολιτεία," in J.J. Cleary and G.M. Gurtler, S.J., eds. *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, Volume XXI, 2005 (Leiden and Boson: Brill, 2006), 1-55. See also *Aristotle and Xenophon on Democracy and Oligarchy*, translations with introductions and commentary by J. M. Moore (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975). I thank my colleague Christopher Moore for bringing to my attention Stephen Menn's extensive and thorough treatment of the tradition of commentaries on *Politeia*.

9   See Peter J. Steinberger, "Who is Cephalus?" in *Political Theory*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (May, 1996), 172-199.

10 For analyses of the status of Metics in Athens see Kurt Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece*, translated by Renate Franciscono, revised

and Alan Bloom, we can notice three distinct axes to the staging of the dialogue, even before the dialogue has got going: it takes place outside the city, after a sacred ceremony, and at the house of a patriarch, who in fact, is going to leave the conversation to return to the sacred rituals and religious duties. Contra Strauss and Bloom, however, I would argue that this Platonic staging is meant to suggest, or more emphatically, problematize that the question of both ethics and justice can be only properly asked outside the ruling ethos, after or beyond religious piety, and of course, with the hospitality but also scrutiny of the foreigner. Justice is not just for us, but also for the other.

Once Socrates is seated for the feast, as it is a feast that is being hosted by Cephalus, the dialogue is launched with Socrates engaging in his famous elenchus with Cephalus. Cephalus argues that justice is doing what the laws of the city command and fulfilling one's duties. Socrates then asks whether wealth is important for justice. Cephalus replies that indeed it is useful to be wealthy as it allows one to fulfill ones responsibilities and to leave no religious duty unfulfilled. This opening dialogue is interesting in that Socrates wants to know if there is a connection between material well being, i.e. wealth, and moral well being. For the moment, let me bracket the important part of the dialogue that concerns old age and desire, but let us flag it as part of the subtext of the entire *Politeia*, namely on whether desire can come in the way of our quest for the good life, *eudaimonia*. In any event, Socrates interrogation of Cephalus' conventional and traditional view of justice makes it evident that this is not a very sophisticated or thoughtful view. It is based on material ease, and a conventionalism that leaves everything as it is, even when evident injustices have been committed. Cephalus retires and hands over the conversation to his son Polemarchus, who is going to argue for the benefits of doing good to your friends and harming your enemies, a view that Socrates is going to challenge.

It is at this moment that Thrasymachus enters, or rather, leaps like a fierce beast, into the discussion. The way Plato portrays the sophist

by the author (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004)

from Chalcedon is particularly unflattering, to say the least. Thrasymachus is not only going to attack Socrates mode of engaging in dialogue, his elenchus, but also his coyness about putting forward his own theory of justice. The exchange with Thrasymachus is pivotal for the entire *Politeia*, as it is him who is going to voice what we can call anachronistically the Machiavellian or cynical view of justice. Thrasymachus offers four different arguments, each one a variation of the same theme. The first argument is that justice is to the advantage of the powerful; the second, that justice is the convention of the polis, or what is acceptable for a given society; the third, is that those who rule always rule wisely as they rule in accordance with their own advantage, and the fourth is that injustice is both more favorable and wise than justice, as whoever is unjust can always benefit and has all reason to break the law, if they can get away with it; while those who are just do so out of foolishness and powerlessness. Socrates forces Thrasymachus through his elenchus into the argumentative cul de sac in which he is almost forced to admit that justice is a vice and injustice is a virtue, which is patently absurd, even to a sophist like Thrasymachus. In fact, Plato writes that at this moment in the interrogation Thrasymachus blushes at the fact that he has been brought to a check mate in the conversation, and from here on, he agrees to respond by affirming or nodding with his head. This rhetorical victory for Socrates is decisive. Be that as it may, I want to foreground that Thrasymachus argument is based on the concept of justice as an economy of power: if one is powerful and can get away with anything, so be it; if one can't one resist the injustice of others without recourse to anything, as the law, or justice, is always on the side of the powerful, so the worst for those who cling to justice. I also want to note how the conversation has been handed down from Cephalus to Polemarchus to Thrasymachus, all non-natives of Athens. Book one of the *Politeia* ends with the shaming of Thrasymachus and a kind of aporia: is there an intrinsic worth to justice beyond its evident utility to the powerful and to society in general?

Book two opens with Adeimantus and Glaucon re-stating the question of justice by summarizing the arguments that have been articulated in

book one. It bears noting that the main interlocutors of book two are the elder brothers of Plato. Now, it is Glaucon, who will take up Thrasymachus's attributed 'cynical' view of justice and give it a more 'sophisticated' or 'thoughtful' view of justice. I want to quote at length a passage that in my estimation is key in the history of the political philosophy. It reads:

> "And now listen to what I said I would talk about first: what justice is and where it comes from. You see, people do say that to commit an injustice is naturally good [This was Thrasymachus' argument], while to be the victim of it is bad. Yet being wronged is much more of a bad thing than committing wrong is a good thing [this is the reversal of an argument Socrates makes against Gorgias]. The result of this is that whenever people wrong each other and are also victims of wrong and have a test of both sides, those who are unable to avoid the one or achieve the other believe that is in their interest to make a *mutual agreement* with each other not do anything wrong to each other. From this basis they begin to make laws and *covenants* with each other, and they give the terms legal and just to what is laid won by the law. This is indeed the origin and essence of justice, lying between what is best: to commit wrong with impunity, and what is worst: not being able to get revenge when wronged. Justice, being midway between these two, is welcome not as a good thing, but is valued through our being too week to commit an injustice. For anyone who had the power to do wrong and was a real man would never make a compact with anybody not to inflict injustice on each other: he would be mad to do so. Therefore, Socrates, the nature of justice is just such as this and this is how it originated, as the argument goes." (358e-359b)

The passage is remarkable as it offers what we can call the contractarian theory of justice, and it explicitly alludes to the views held by sophists, but now in a less polemical and derisive way. Plato in the *Protagoras*, in-

cidentally, had already been rehearsed this contractarian argument. Yet, as if this passage were not dramatic, and even scandalous, enough, Plato is going to raise the stakes by introducing one of Plato's most neglected allegories. After Glaucon, remember that this is one of Plato's older brothers, argues that the just do not willingly, deliberately, or avowedly do justice, but do so only out of a lack of power to commit "injustice." The just person is just out of powerlessness (359c). In order to underscore this point, Glaucon introduces the story of the ring of Gyges. This is a ring that allows its wearer to turn invisible, and thus commit all kinds of injustices, while being able to get away with them. Glaucon then invites us to imagine that there are two such rings of Gyges, and that one is given to the unjust person and the other to the just person. Glaucon hypothesizes that both persons would turn to injustice, again showing that the just person is just out of necessity and not out of conviction. The ring of Gyges is in fact an allegory for absolute impunity.

Let me take stock of where we have arrived, and what we have traversed, thus far. I want to do so by arguing that in the first two books of the *Politeia* Plato has articulated at the very least three different conceptions of justice, which are reducible to three forms of calculation. The first conception, voiced by Cephalus, is the view of justice as a "calculus of convention": do what the established *nomos* commands. The second conception is that voiced by Thrasymachus, and it is the view of justice as a "calculus of power": do as much as you can get away with or submit those who are powerful to a nomos that will constrain them. The third conception is that voiced by Glaucon, which takes up the views of Cepahlus and Thrasymachus, and which says that justice is a "calculus of contractual utility": create *nomoi* that will make sure that no one is absolutely unassailable and lord of over a sovereignty hoisted on impunity and that no one will be without recourse to the law, or find themselves absolutely powerless in the face of the injustices they have suffered.

Yet, it must be asked, why then introduced the allegory of the ring of Gyges? What do the two rings of Gyges add to Plato's analytics of the conceptions of justice up to this point? I just claimed that the ring of

Gyges is an allegory for absolute impunity. But perhaps it is more than that. When Glaucon wants to illustrate how the "crooked timber of humanity" is held in check by the law by showing that given the power of absolute impunity, we would all resort to injustice, in the text Plato used the word "exousia" (ἔξεστι) to refer to what the ring offers its wearer. This term has been translated as "ability" but also as "license," as "what is permitted," but also as liberty. *The ring of Gyges turns out to be an allegory for unfettered, licentious, undirected freedom*. Here, it could be argued that Plato is arguing that the problem of justice has to do with how we live, practice, and exercise freedom in such a way that it is not license, permissiveness, licentiousness; if you will, the challenge here is of how to think of a moral freedom.

The Democratic Soul

Let us now jump to book VIII, specifically to those sections of this book where Plato discusses both the democratic polis and its corresponding type of soul: the democratic character or persona. The immediate justification for this abrupt leap ahead is that Foucault in his 1982-83 lectures is going to spend several sessions analyzing Plato's criticism of democracy and the democratic character. The philosophical reason, however, for this shift is that there is some continuity between the story of the ring of Gyges and the way in which Plato articulated the descent of one type of faulty polis into another an even more decadent form. For Plato, the democratic polis stands between oligarchy and tyranny. Let me quote directly the passage that is relevant for Foucault and for my purposes here.

> "First of all, aren't people free, and doesn't the state abound in freedom and freedom of speech, and isn't there the means to do whatever one wishes?" (557b) –this is from the recent Loeb edition of Plato's *Republic* by Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Freddy[11].

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11   Plato, *Republic,* trans. Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Freddy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 2013)

But here is another translation:

> "In the first place, then, aren't they free? And isn't the city full of freedom and free speech? And isn't license in it to do whatever one wants?" –this is from the Allan Bloom translation[12]

Or let us look at another translation:

> "First of all, then, aren't they free? And isn't the city full of freedom and freedom of speech? And doesn't everyone in it have the license to do what he wants? –from the Grube translation and extensively revised by C.D.c. Reeve[13].

Here is yet another translation:

> "Would you agree, first, that people will be free? There is liberty and freedom of speech in plenty, and every individual is free to do as he likes." This is from the Desmond Lee translation[14].

Now, I hope I am not being fastidious. However, there is a very important point being made here. In fact, in the original Greek text, Plato alternates and or wavers between using two key terms: "exousia" (ἔξεστι), and one that Foucault would comment on extensively, "eleutheria" (ἐλευθερία). It is this same passage that Plato uses the word "parrhesia" (παρρησία) as well. Now, "eleutheria" is translated either as liberty or freedom. We have a triad here: freedom, frank or free speech, and license[15].

Let me introduce here a philological note. Of all the books I consulted on Plato's conceptions of freedom, especially those that are part of the

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12 Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (Philadelphia: Perseus Books Group, 2016)

13 Plato, *Republic*, translated by C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004)

14 Plato, *Republic*, trans. Desmond Lee (New York and London: Penguin Classics, 2007)

15 For studies of the term "eleutheria" see Max Pohlenz, *Freedom in Greek Life and Thought: The History of an Ideal* (New York: The Humanities Press;

"Plato" scholarship, almost none note the linguistic/philological distinction between "exousia" and "eleutheria." This is a remarkable oversight, or neglect. Only Orlando Patterson, in his masterful *Freedom. Volume One: Freedom in the Making of Western Culture*[16], relying on scholarship produced some sixty years ago, distinguishes between what he calls an "internal" and an "external" view of freedom in Plato. In fact, Patterson shows that there are three periods in the evolution of Plato's conceptualization of freedom, which align more or less with the chronology of the writing of the dialogues.

Thus, returning to Plato, the democratic polis is one in which liberty, free speech and license abound, giving rise to what one may take to be the most "attractive of all *Politeia*"(societies, constitutions). In fact, Plato/ Socrates offers a backhanded encomium to democracy that I think today we would all endorse:

> "'I dare say that a democracy is the most attractive of all societies, I said. 'The diversity of its characters, like the different colors in a patterned dress, make it look very attractive. Indeed,' I added, 'perhaps most people would, for this reason, judge it to be the best form of society, like women and children when they see gaily coloured things." (556c -Lee translation)

The encomium does not last long, however. Democratic societies don't care about the truth and don't about the character of their politicians, so long as they flattered the people, or avowed themselves to be their friends. Plato closes the discussion of the democratic *politeia* with the following words:

> "These, then, and similar characteristics are those of democra-

Dordrecht-Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1966) and Kurt Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece*, translation by Renate Franciscono, revised by the Author (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004)

16 Orlando Patterson, *Freedom. Volume One: Freedom in the Making of Western Culture* (New York: BasicBooks, 1991)

cy. It is an agreeable anarchic form of society, with plenty of variety, which treats all men as equals, whether they are equal or not." (558c-Lee translation)

Democracy is a faulty form of *politeia* because its lacks the power of discrimination. It is easily seduced by variety and in its haste to grant everyone equality of speech, *isegoria*, and *parrhesia*, it disallows the ability to challenge between the true and virtuous[17].

Before I turn to Foucault, let me briefly go over Plato's discussion of the democratic character. Here is a key passage:

> "'In fact,' I said, 'he lives from day to day, indulging the pleasure of the moment. One day it's wine, women and song,' the next water to drink and a strict diet; one day its hard physical training, the next indolence and careless ease, and then a period of philosophic study. Often he takes to politics and keeps jumping to his feet and saying or doing whatever comes into his head. Sometimes all his ambitions and efforts are military, sometimes they are all directed to success in business. There is no order or restrain in his life, and he reckons his way of living is pleasant, free and happy, and sticks to it through thick and thin."

And then, Socrates adds:

> "…I think the versatility of the individual, and the attractiveness of his combination of a wide variety of characteristics, match the variety of democratic society. It's a life which many men and women would envy, it contains patterns of so many constitutions and ways of life." (561d-e. Lee translation)

Later, in Book IX of the *Republic*, the democratic character will be evoked with the imagery of the "monstrous multiform creature" within us (590a). Let me, however, close this section by summarizing: demo-

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17 See Raaflaubs' *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece* for a close analysis of the entwinement of eleutheria with '*isegoria, isonomia,* and *parrhesia.*

cratic society would appear to the most attractive form of organizing a society, for it allows for a plurality of characters, in which everyone has the liberty to pursue their happiness and enjoys freedom of speech and political liberty. The democratic character, however, like the democratic society is anarchic, unstable, quick to succumb to the rhetoric and flattery of unscrupulous politicians. To quote Patterson, and summarizing, "Mob rule, demagoguery, and a chronic tendency towards anarchy are the essential weaknesses of democracy; while the fundamental problem of personal liberty is its tendency to become personal license and selfishness."[18] The democratic character, most importantly, because of its being seduced by diversity and the right to free speech of all, does not open itself to the persuasion of the true discourse (*logos alêthês*).

The paradoxes of democracy: or how not to be free

Let me hastily arrive at the point in which Foucault's work links Plato's critique of democracy, with Han's critique of Foucault. What lies in common between Plato and Han is a critique of a certain conception of freedom. For Plato' it is freedom as license and the inability, or in fact, unwillingness to listen to the voice of the true discourse of reason. Freedom as license, as that which turns us into a "monstrous multiform creature" (590a) is the inability to subordinate ourselves to a reason that is external to our selves, to our character. For Han, the problem with neoliberalism, as the latest form of capitalism, is that now the self itself is a slave to a version of freedom, the freedom to turn ourselves into our investments, our hedge funds. Neoliberal freedom is the excess of capital, and in this sense, it is freedom as both economic access and economic excess.

My argument is that we can find resources for meeting these two objections in Foucault's Collège de France from 1982-83, which have been published under the title of *The Government of Self and Others*[19]. I think most specifically that we find such resources in the lectures from Febru-

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18 Patterson, *Freedom*, 158.

19 Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others. Lectures at the Collège de France 1982-1983*, translated by Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2010)

ary 83, when Foucault offers some of the most detailed readings of Pla-
to's most political texts that we can find in his oeuvre: *The Republic*, *The
Laws*, and some of the *Letters*. In the lecture from February 2nd, Foucault
introduces what he calls the "constitutive rectangle of *parrêsia*"[20]. In one
corner of this rectangle we find the formal condition of democracy; in
the second, is what Foucault calls the "game of ascendency;" in the third
corner, we find truth-telling; in the fourth corner we find a "discourse
of truth" that is truly a joust, an agonistic game of persuasion, which
Foucault calls the "moral corner." Foucault summarizes the circuit of the
"constitutive rectangle of *parrêsia*" in the following way:

> "Formal condition: democracy. De facto condition: the ascen-
> dancy and superiority of some. Truth condition: the need for a
> rational *logos.* And finally, a moral condition: courage, courage
> in the struggle. I think this rectangle –with a constitutional cor-
> ner, the corner of the political game, the corner of truth, and
> the corner of courage—is what constitutes *parrêsia*"[21]

Later in the same lecture, Foucault will make the important claim that
in fact this is what democracy turns out to be, namely the connection and
co-determination between *politeia and parrêsia*, the formation of a certain
type of social order that requires some formal conditions (equality under
the law), the ascendancy game (the agonistic of democratic contestation),
true discourse, (speaking truth to power), and the courage to both speak
the truth and to speak one's mind. Most importantly, Foucault will note
that it is the co-determination of *politeia* and *parrêsia* that will give rise to
at least two democratic paradoxes. The ***first*** is that there can only be true
discourse, healthy *parrêsia*, through democracy, through its constitutive
isegoria and *isonomia*, and yet, this very constitutive need introduces into
democracy something that is antithetical to democracy's egalitarian con-
stitution. The **second** paradox is that while there is no democracy with-
out *parrêsia* as true discourse, for without it democracy would perish,

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20   Ibid. 173.

21   Ibid. 174.

nonetheless the possibility of its censure and silencing, is inchoate within democracy. In short: "No true discourse without democracy, but true discourse introduces difference into democracy. No democracy without true discourse, but democracy threatens the very existence of true discourse."[22]

How are these paradoxes resolved, or turned into knots to be undone? For Foucault, the pivot of the paradoxes of democracy is *parrêsia*. It is the misuse of *parrêsia* that makes democracy vulnerable to the demagogue, to the seduction of the sophists and the unscrupulous politicians. Yet, *parrêsia* is tied to *eleutheria*, liberty as a dimension of a democratic *politeia*. *No fearless speech without liberty, not liberty with freedom of speech.*

Here is where Foucault's generative reading allows us to read Plato not simply as a critic of democracy, but possibly as a covert celebrator of it[23]. What Foucault will foreground from Plato is that there are two forms of *parrêsia*, one that is addressed to the polis, the other to oneself. This is what Foucault calls the "double layering of *parrêsia*."[24] One can only speak truth to power and be fearless in one's speech in the polis, if one also has been fearless in speaking to oneself. But, to speak to oneself, to be truthful to oneself, entails being ready to have the courage to speak to others. This is why there is no "government of others" without "government of oneself." But to govern oneself, to come to oneself, to fashion oneself, to practice oneself can only be done in the space of others, the agora of political ascendancy and moral courage. To be oneself takes moral courage. This is how license (*exousia*), turns into liberty (*eleutheria*). It is within the circuit of the constitutive rectangle of *parrêsia* that we sustain democracy, but also within which we can engage in the *poiesis* (ποίησις) of freedom.

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22 Ibid. 194.

23 As Pohlenz notes in his *Freedom in Greek Life and Thought*, Plato's views on democracy as they are expressed in the *Politeia* are very different from those we find in his later *The Laws*, where in fact, Plato argues that democracy is the best possible of all feasible *Politeia*.

24 Ibid. 201.

What the contrast between *exousia* and *eleutheria*, and the latter's entanglement with *parrêsia*, *isegoria* and *isonomia*, yield philosophically is that there is a freedom that is a practice, a technology of the self that puts one in a relationship of care to a specific world. Here we could speak of freedom as "situated" or "circumstantial" freedom[25]. And, on the other hand, that there is a freedom that is parasitic on that world of freedom but that withdraws from its relationality, its interdependence, its being a practice of care of the world in which it is enabled. This latter freedom is what Brown has called authoritarian freedom, and that I called neoliberal freedom. If we extend Isaiah Berlin's two conceptions of freedom to include the work of Habermas and Honneth, we could speak of a third freedom, i.e. communicative freedom. Neoliberal freedom, in short, is the pure and unadulterated distillation of 'negative freedom' that conceals its Machiavellian uses of extant 'positive freedom,' resulting in the occlusion of 'communicative freedom.' Neoliberal freedom, to quote Brown again, is freedom that "is submitted to market meanings, it is stripped of the political valances that attach it to popular sovereignty and thus to democracy. Instead, freedom is equated wholly with the pursuit of private ends, is appropriately unregulated, and is largely exercised to enhance the value, competitive positioning, or market share of a person or a firm."[26] This is a freedom that has been entirely reduced to an economic calculus, the maximization of the accumulation of wealth, with a minimization of socio-political input, a minimization of the caring for democracy. This is neoliberal freedom: the freedom to turn oneself into one's own hedge fund, as one withdraws from the *agon* of democratic freedom making.

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25 For analysis of freedom as care, see Robert Nichols's *The World of Freedom: Heidegger, Foucault and the Politics of Historical Ontology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014). This is an outstanding text that came to my attention after the present essay had been written; otherwise it would have been more present in the argument here elaborated.

26 Wendy Brown, "Neoliberalism's Frankenstein" 12-13.

Regrets, but not a conclusion

I would have wanted to extend this paper by discussing the works of Peter Bieri[27], Juliane Rebentish[28], Orlando Patterson, and Peter Sloterdijk[29], but I have taxed the reader's patience already too long and too heavily. Still, I can not close without trying to answer the title of my paper: What would Foucault do with the ring of Gyges? My hypothesis is that Foucault may have answered with four formulations, but the key one would have been that if the ring makes you invisible to yourself, it should be buried again in a clay pot and thrown into the sands of Death Valley.

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27 Peter Bieri, *Das Handwerk der Freiheit: Über die Entdeckung des eigenen Willens* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2013)

28 Juliane Rebentisch, *The Art of Freedom: On the Dialectics of Democratic Existence*, trans. by Joseph Ganahl (Cambridge: Polity, 2016)

29 Peter Sloterdijk, *Stress and Freedom*, trans. Wieland Hoban (Cambridge: Polity, 2016)

Redefining Rhetoric: Why Matter Matters

Brian L. Ott[1,] and *Greg Dickinson*[2]

Abstract: This essay redefines rhetoric in a manner that takes seriously the suasory character of matter-energy. Specifically, rhetoric is defined as *the capacity of the thing-symbol—via its aesthetic qualities and signifying practices—to generate affect and discourse, whose intertwined sensory and cognitive processing elicit presence and meaning effects in a particular space-time*. After charting and explaining the key relations among the constituent elements that comprise this conception of rhetoric, the advantages of studying rhetoric's materiality in critical practice are discussed.

> *Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every "thing"—even materiality—is turned into a matter of language or some other form of cultural representation. The ubiquitous puns on "matter" do not, alas, mark a rethinking of the key concepts (materiality and signification) and the relationship between them. . . . Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters. There is an important sense in which the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter.*
>
> —Karen Barad[3]

In his 1950 *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Kenneth Burke identifies the "basic function of rhetoric [as] the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents."[4] Elaborating on this perspective, he subsequently defines rhetoric as "*the use of language*

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3   Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 3 (2003): 801.

4   Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 41.

as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols."[5] As definitions go, Burke's probably did more to shape the scope and trajectory of rhetorical studies in the twentieth century than any other. Anticipating both the linguistic turn in philosophy and the development of symbolic interactionism in sociology, Burke's definition established symbolicity generally, and linguistic symbols more specifically, as the basis of rhetoric.[6] By the 1970s, the focus on language had diminished somewhat as scholars increasingly began studying visual modes of communication,[7] but rhetoric continued to be understood almost exclusively in terms of its symbolicity. In 1971, for instance, the "Committee on the Scope of Rhetoric and the Place of Rhetorical Studies in Higher Education," which was commissioned as a part of the National Developmental Project on Rhetoric, began its report by noting: "Rhetor-

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5   Burke, *A Rhetoric* 43. Though Burke emphasized linguistic symbols in his definition of rhetoric, he was acutely aware that "symbolicity" included "all other human symbol systems, such as mathematics, music, sculpture, painting, dance, architectural styles, and so on." Kenneth Burke, "Poetics in Particular; Language in General," in *Language as Symbolic Action: Essay on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 28.

6   Kenneth Burke, "Definition of Man," in *Language as Symbolic Action: Essay on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 3-24. There is a certain irony in the fact that Burke played a central role establishing symbolicity as the basis of rhetoric when he, perhaps more so than any other rhetorician of his time, recognized the importance of materiality. See Richard A. Engnell, "Materiality, Symbolicity, and the Rhetoric of Order: 'Dialectical Biologism' as Motive in Burke," *Western Journal of Communication* 62, no. 1 (1998): 2-3.

7   See, for instance, Sonja K. Foss, "Rhetoric and the Visual Image: A Resource Unit," *Communication Education* 31, no. 1 (1982): 55-66. For a historical overview of the scholarship on visual rhetoric, especially as indebted to Burke, see Lester C. Olson, "Intellectual and Conceptual Resources for Visual Rhetoric: A Re-examination of Scholarship Since 1950," *Review of Communication* 7, no. 1 (2007): 1-20. One notable exception to a primarily symbolic-based view of rhetoric was George Kennedy's. In 1992, he wrote, "Rhetoric may perhaps be identified with the energy inherent in a communication: the emotional energy that impels the speaker to speak, the physical energy expended in the utterance . . . and the energy experienced by the recipient." George A. Kennedy, "A Hoot in The Dark: The Evolution of General Rhetoric," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 25, no. 1 (1992): 2.

ical studies are properly concerned with the process by which symbols and systems of symbols have influence upon beliefs and values."[8] In sum, throughout much of the twentieth century, rhetoric was, concludes Carole Blair, "defined by, and theorized according to, its most ephemeral quality: its symbolicity."[9]

In the past few years, there has been a notable shift in thinking, however, a growing awareness that, "All rhetorical forms are, at once, symbolic and material."[10] There has, in short, been a "material turn" of sorts (part of what is sometimes referred to as "new materialism") in rhetorical studies,[11] as evidenced by the proliferation of interest in questions of affect, aesthetics, sensation, embodiment, and the built environment. Indeed, it has become almost cliché to claim that materiality is a crucial facet of rhetoric. Despite the ever-expanding acceptance of this claim, critics nevertheless continue to struggle to articulate *how* matter matters to rhetoric as well as to take seriously rhetoric's materiality in critical practice. In fact, much of the work concerned with rhetoric's materiality still focuses largely on discursivity and meaning. So, even as materiality is increasingly acknowledged as an important issue within rhetorical studies, the actual efforts to engage with and analyze matter *qua* matter have been rather uneven.

This essay seeks to bring some clarity to this difficult terrain by reviewing, synthesizing, and commenting upon a series of relevant literatures. The goal in doing so is to equip practicing critics with a work-

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8   Douglas Ehninger et al., "Report on the Committee on the Scope of Rhetoric and the Place of Rhetorical Studies in Higher Education," in *The Prospect of Rhetoric: Report of the National Developmental Project*, ed. Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), 208.

9   Carole Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric's Materiality," in *Rhetorical Bodies*, ed. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 18.

10   Brian L. Ott and Diane Marie Keeling, "Cinema and Choric Connection: *Lost in Translation* as Sensual Experience," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 4 (2011): 367.

11   Ehren Helmut Pflugfelder, "Rhetoric's New Materialism: From Micro-Rhetoric to Microbrew," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 45, no. 5 (2015): 441-461.

ing vocabulary, a conceptual map, and a set of critical tools for more fully and carefully attending to rhetoric's materiality in their criticism. In the service of this aim, our essay proceeds in three stages. First, we explore what is meant by rhetoric's materiality, distinguishing it from the scholarship on rhetorical materialism. Second, we proffer a definition of rhetoric that takes into account the importance of matter, unpacking the complex interrelations among aesthetics, affect, sensation, and presence effects. Third, we explore the implications of our redefinition for the practice of rhetorical criticism. But before we begin, we wish to reflect briefly on what is at stake in such an undertaking.

In the first chapter of *Defining Reality*, Edward Schiappa argues that, "Definitions put into practice a special sort of social knowledge—a shared understanding among people about themselves, [and] the objects of their world."[12] In other words, definitions are not merely philosophical or scientific statements about what something "is"; rather, they are rhetorically induced social knowledge and, thus, consequential. How we define rhetoric, for instance, shapes the practice of rhetorical criticism by suggesting both what constitutes legitimate objects of study as well as how to go about studying those objects. Attempts to redefine rhetoric in the past, especially those efforts aimed at broadening the scope of rhetoric, have regularly been met with resistance.[13] In short, we recognize that such efforts can be disruptive and unsettling. Our intent is not to suggest that prior accounts of rhetoric were mistaken, so much as they were incomplete. The near exclusive focus on symbolicity has drastically restricted the efforts of critics to account for the multifaceted ways that rhetoric moves and sways us.

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12   Edward Schiappa, *Defining Reality: Definitions and the Politics of Meaning* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003), 3.

13   The position that virtually everything can be understood as "rhetorical" is sometimes referred to as "Big Rhetoric." For a summary and rebuttal of subsequent critiques of Big Rhetoric, see Edward Schiappa, "Second Thoughts on the Critiques of Big Rhetoric," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 34, no. 3 (2001): 260-274.

Materialist Rhetoric vs. Rhetoric's Materiality

One of the greatest impediments to theorizing and studying rhetoric's materiality has been confusion over what that term "materiality" means. Part of the difficulty, explains Carole Blair, is that materiality (or materialism) has been employed in at least two senses in rhetorical studies, "a traditional one that insists upon considering the material conditions of discourse . . . [and] another that understands rhetoric as itself material."[14] Throughout this section, we refer to the former as a *materialist rhetoric* and the latter as *rhetoric's materiality*.[15] In an effort to clarify the distinction, it is useful to consider the lineage of both uses within the field. We begin with the older usage, materialist rhetoric, which while less central to our purposes provides a counterpoint for better understanding what is meant by rhetoric's materiality.

The notion of a materialist rhetoric is rooted in the philosophical concept of materialism. In contrast to idealist philosophies, which according to Raymond Williams posit that "ideas are held to underlie or to form all reality,"[16] materialism is a realist philosophy that asserts the primacy of the physical world and holds that the material conditions of our existence give rise to our ideas about the world. The philosophy of materialism is often traced all the way back to the fifth century BCE and Democritus, who suggested that the world was composed entirely of atoms or physical bits of matter.[17] Despite its ancient origins, the philosophy of

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14 Carole Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places," *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 3 (2001): 288.

15 The distinction we are making between rhetoric's materiality and rhetorical materialism has also been framed in terms of "primary materiality" (or physical materiality) and "secondary materiality" (or social materiality). See Engnell 3-5.

16 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 124.

17 Much later, in the first century BCE, Lucretius wrote that all of life is composed only of matter and void in his epic poem *De rerum natura* about Epicurean philosophy. Stephen Greenblatt, a literary historian, argues that the recovery of Lucretius' poem in the Renaissance was of central importance for

materialism in the field of rhetorical studies is most famously associated with Karl Marx, who argued that, "It is not the consciousness of men [sic] that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness."[18] In the field of rhetoric, then, materialism typically describes a Marxist-inspired philosophy that reflects Marx's famous base/superstructure model. For Marx, the mode of production in society (i.e., the economic base) determines the social realm of ideas and its institutions (i.e., the cultural superstructure).

In 1982, drawing upon a Marxist view of materialism, Michael Calvin McGee wrote, "A Materialist's Conception of Rhetoric." The aim of that chapter, which appeared in *Explorations in Rhetoric*, a volume honoring Douglas Ehninger, was to "advance a material theory of rhetoric" that conceives of rhetoric as "*a natural social phenomenon in the context of which symbolic claims are made on the behavior and/or belief of one or more persons.*"[19] Ultimately, McGee's approach insisted that all rhetorical theory ought to be derived from material practice, but it did not depart ways with conceptions of rhetoric as essentially symbolic. Since the publication of McGee's chapter, a number of other rhetorical scholars have explored the possibilities of a materialist rhetoric. Critiquing both idealism and relativism in post-Marxist theories of rhetoric, Dana Cloud, for instance, argues for a materialist ideology criticism as an alternative to Raymie McKerrow's conception of "critical rhetoric," which she contends supports the mistaken view that discourse itself is "constitutive of social and material reality" or, at least, constitutive "of social consensus about what is real."[20] For Cloud, critical rhetoric favors a relativist worldview "that

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making the modern world and its turn to realism in science and enlightenment thinking more broadly. Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

18   Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed. L. H. Simon (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), 211.

19   Michal Calvin McGee, "A Materialist's Conception of Rhetoric," in *Explorations in Rhetoric: Studies in Honor of Douglas Ehninger*, ed. Ray E. McKerrow (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1982), 25, 38.

20   Dana L. Cloud, "The Materiality of Discourse: A Challenge to Critical Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Communication* 58 (1994): 141, 155.

loses sight of the material realm and threatens to render critical judgment inconsequential."[21]

Another key intervention in the discussion of materialist rhetoric is Ronald Walter Greene's Foucault-inspired view of rhetoric as "a technology of deliberation." Drawing upon Foucault's study of the art of government, Greene advocates for a materialist rhetoric that abandons the logic of representation in favor of the logic of articulation, thereby, shifting the emphasis from "how rhetoric represents" to "how rhetoric distributes different elements on a terrain of a governing apparatus."[22] This shift, Greene argues, makes the distinction between discursive and nondiscursive (i.e., "institutions, political events, economic" phenomena, etc.[23]) practices irrelevant.[24] Inasmuch as Greene's materialism, like Foucault's, fails "to theorize the relationship between discursive and nondiscursive practices,"[25] it potentially obscures precisely the ways in which matter matters to rhetorical critics.[26] According to Karan Barad,

21 Cloud 157-158.

22 Ronald Walter Greene, "Another Materialist Rhetoric," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15 (1998): 38.

23 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 162.

24 Ronald Walter Greene, "More Materialist Rhetoric," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 12 (2015): 414.

25 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 63. Later in the book, Barad reiterates this point, writing, "Foucault's theories fail to provide an adequate account of the relationship between discursive practices and material phenomena" (146).

26 In a series of essays analyzing "Y films" (i.e., YMCA films), for instance, Greene ignores the material dimension of film itself. Indeed, nowhere does he take up the vitality of matter, which is the very basis of rhetoric's materiality and, consequently, the basis of affect. While Greene's materialism is helpful for understanding how power works, it is less helpful for understanding how rhetoric works. In his "rhetorical criticism" of Y films, Greene assiduously avoids the form and matter of the films themselves. See Ronald Water Greene, "Lessons from the YMCA: The Material Rhetoric of Criticism, Rhetorical Interpretation, and Pastoral Power," in *Communication Matters: Materialist Approaches to Media, Mobility and Networks*, ed. Jeremy Packer and Stephen B. Crofts Wiley (New York: Routledge, 2012), 219-230. For more on

this approach "restages matter's passivity," making it all but "impossible to engage with matter in a substantive way."[27] The difficulty of taking matter seriously is why it is important to augment conceptions of materialist rhetoric with a concern for rhetoric's materiality.

Whereas a *materialist rhetoric* is rooted in the Marxist philosophy of materialism and the attendant critique of German idealism (or, alternatively, Foucault's notion of governmentality and the critique of a hermeneutics of suspicion), *rhetoric's materiality* is rooted in the posthumanist philosophy of new materialism and the attendant critique of linguistic/symbolic constructionism. The new materialism is "posthumanist in the sense that it conceives of matter itself as lively or as exhibiting agency."[28] In other words, it challenges the idea that the human subject is at the center of the physical world and that "the world is a passive resource for use by active humans."[29] The view of matter as agential or vitalist and the corresponding decentering of the humanist subject emerges, at least in part, out of a critique of linguistic constructionism.

Linguistic constructionism is the idea that "Language [and other symbols] . . . constitutes the reality that we as humans inhabit. It constitutes our social world and the structures that define it. It also constitutes the natural world by providing us with concepts that structure that world."[30]

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how materialist rhetoric differs from the study of rhetoric's materiality, see Thomas Rickert, *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), 21.

27 See Thomas Lemke, "New Materialisms: Foucault and the 'Government of Things'," *Theory, Culture & Society* 32, no. 4 (2015): 3-25. Paul Rutherford makes a similar point, noting that Foucault did not consider how the operations of biopower consist in the '"making-up" of both people and things. Paul Rutherford, "The Entry of Life into History," in *Discourses of the Environment*, ed. Eric Darier (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 44.

28 Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, "Introducing the New Materialisms," in *New Materialism: Ontology, Agency, and* Politics, ed. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 7.

29 Barbara Bolt, "Toward a 'New Materialism' Through the Arts," in *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a 'New Materialism' through the Arts*, ed. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 3.

30 Susan Hekman, *The Material of Knowledge: Feminist Disclosures* (Bloomington,

A key limitation of this view is that it ignores the role of matter in experience and, thus, struggles with embodied forms of knowing. Scholars interested in rhetoric's materiality recognize that symbolicity, while significant, does not adequately account for embodied experience and the ways that rhetoric's nonrepresentational (asignifying) elements elicit affect, activate sensation, and induce presence effects. One of the first rhetoricians to pursue rhetoric's materiality, i.e., its essential thingness, was Carole Blair, whose studies of public memorials highlighted how "the material character of rhetoric . . . implicates us in issues of consequence and partisanship."[31] A few of the scholars who have extended Blair's work into other arenas include: Thomas Rickert and his work on ambient rhetoric, Debra Hawhee and her work on the human sensorium, Brian Ott and his work of the sensual dimensions of cinema, and Greg Dickinson and his work on place and the built environment.[32] This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of rhetorical scholars working in this area, but a select sample of the types of work being done.

Another useful way of framing the distinction between materialist rhetoric and rhetoric's materiality is through reference to what Richard A. Engnell identifies as the difference between "primary materiality" and "secondary materiality."[33] For Engnell, secondary materiality, which he explains, "consists of the pervasive technical/economic/political structures that govern the production and distribution of material goods in any actual human society and are of interest to rhetorical scholars because of their ethical consequences,"[34] aligns with the notion of materi-

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IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 1.

31 Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites" 23.

32 See, for instance, Rickert, *Ambient Rhetoric*; Debra Hawhee, "Rhetoric's Sensorium," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 101, no. 1 (2015): 2-17; Greg Dickinson, "Joe's Rhetoric: Finding Authenticity at Starbucks," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (2002): 5-27; and Brian L. Ott, "The Visceral Politics of *V for Vendetta*: On Political Affect in Cinema," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 27, no.1 (2010): 32-47; Ott and Keeling, "Cinema and Choric Connection."

33 Engnell, 1-25.

34 Engnell, 4-5.

alist rhetoric. Primary materiality, which Engnell maintains entails the natural, biological, and physical dimensions and properties of our world, by contrast, speaks to rhetoric's materiality. Table 1 summarizes several key differences between the traditions of materialist rhetoric and rhetoric's materiality.

	Philosophical Underpinnings	Responds to or Critiques	Central Concern
Materialist Rhetoric (secondary materiality)	materialism (Marxist)	German idealism	the material modes of production
	governmentality (Foucauldian)	hermeneutics of suspicion	governing apparatus
Rhetoric's Materiality (primary materiality)	new materialism (posthumanist)	linguistic/ symbolic constructionism	the agential quality of matter

Table 1. Comparison of Materialist Rhetoric and Rhetoric's Materiality

A Definition of Rhetoric

Having outlined the philosophical tradition that informs the study of rhetoric's materiality and distinguished it from the tradition of rhetorical materialism in the field, we turn our attention to definitional matters. Our central aim in this portion of the essay is to present and explicate a definition of rhetoric that takes seriously its material dimension without ignoring the valuable insights that have been made about its symbolic dimension. Toward that end, we hazard the following definition: *Rhetoric is the capacity of the thing-symbol—via its aesthetic qualities and signifying practices—to generate affect and discourse, whose intertwined sensory and cognitive processing elicit presence and meaning effects in a particular space-time.* Figure 1 furnishes a graphic representation of this definition, which we elaborate upon by unpacking the definition's five key clauses. The arrows are not intended to suggest causality or exclusivity of relations, but to highlight the most direct relations among constituent elements. While rhetorical processes are dynamic and fluid, there is heuristic value in attempting to map key relations.

First Clause: rhetoric is the capacity of the thing-symbol

The concept of the thing-symbol reflects a deliberate attempt on our part to signal right from the outset that rhetoric is always, at once, material and symbolic. It is comprised of both physical matter and cultural signs, two elements that while conceptually distinct are never fully separable.[35] If a speaker were to utter the phrase, "Houston, we have a problem," a listener would necessarily experience both the material dimensions of the message (i.e., the sound—rhythm, tone, grain, etc.—of the speaker's voice) and the symbolic dimensions of the message (i.e., the individual words, their syntax and grammar, intertextual associations, etc.). While particular instances of rhetoric may privilege either materiality or symbolicity, the concept of the thing-symbol insists that both are always present in some manner or degree in the realm of rhetoric.
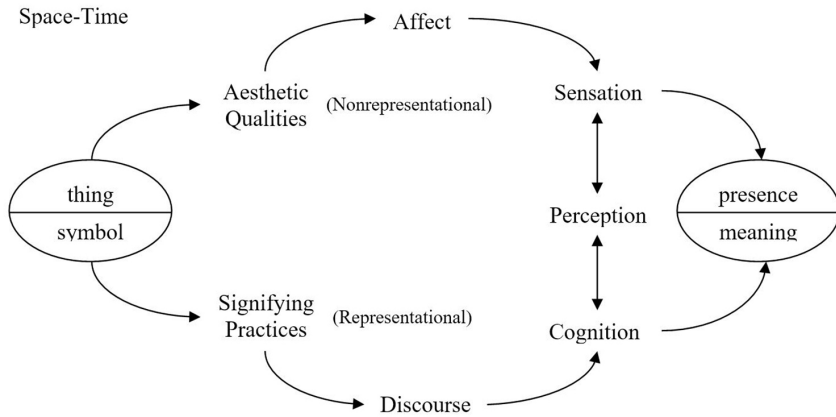
Figure 1. A Graphic Representation of Rhetoric

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35 In Barad's words, "Discursive practices and material phenomena do not stand in a relationship of externality to one another; rather, the material and the discursive are mutually implicated in the dynamics of intra-activity. But nor are they reducible to one another. The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither is articulated/articulable in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated" ("Posthumanist Performativity" 822).

In selecting the term "thing" to designate the material dimension of rhetoric, we are drawing upon Jane Bennett's concept of *thing-power*, "which figures materiality as a protean flow of matter-energy and figures the thing as a relatively composed form of that flow." It is worth emphasizing two points here. First, it is important to think materiality in terms of matter-energy, rather than simply matter, since matter can be converted into energy and vice versa. Light, which plays an important role in cinematic rhetoric, for instance, falls on the energy side of the equation, as it lacks mass and does not take up space. Second, identifying a thing as a "relatively composed form" allows one to isolate particular forms of matter-energy from the seemingly infinite flow of matter-energy that surrounds us. Returning to the example of cinema, we might say that a film, in addition to being a symbolic construction, is a relatively composed form of matter-energy and, hence, distinguishable from the matter-energy of the chair one is seated in while watching the film.

If "thing" stresses the material quality of rhetoric, then "symbol" highlights—somewhat obviously—its symbolic character, its capacity to gesture to something beyond itself. Given that this dimension of rhetoric is already well known to rhetoricians, we will take this opportunity to remind readers that symbolicity cannot exist without materiality or flows of matter-energy. This is a basic Burkean insight, though his terminology differs. For Burke, the world can be divided into the realms of (nonsymbolic) motion and (symbolic) action. Whereas motion refers to brute matter, action "involve[s] modes of behavior made possible by the acquiring of a conventional, arbitrary symbol system, a definition that would apply to modes of symbolicity as different as primitive speech, styles of music, painting, sculpture, dance, highly developed mathematical nomenclatures, traffic signals, road maps, or mere dreams."[36] But, as Burke elaborates, "Though symbolic action is a realm of its own, a realm not reducible to terms of sheer motion, empirically it cannot exist

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36   Kenneth Burke, "(Nonsymbolic) Motion/(Symbolic) Action," *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1978): 809.

without a grounding in the realm of motion."[37] Simply put, where there is symbol, there is thing. So, thing-symbol.

Before turning from the concept of the thing-symbol to the ways the thing-symbol works rhetorically, it is worth introducing one more conceptual distinction: that between naturally-occurring matter and human-manipulated matter. By naturally-occurring matter, we mean forms of matter-energy untouched and unaltered by human beings; this would include trees in a forest, rocks on a mountain, etc. By human-manipulated matter, we mean those forms of matter-energy altered by human beings; this would include all the forms of matter-energy that have ever been invented or used by humans. The distinction is an admittedly fragile and somewhat fluid one since a rock that exists as naturally-occurring matter can be transformed into human-manipulated matter simply by picking it up and throwing it at something. We make this distinction only because it allows us to further distinguish between what might be termed naturally-occurring rhetorics, like a flower that attracts a bee (we are thinking of George Kennedy's "A Hoot in the Dark" here), and human-engendered rhetorics, like a painting that prompts a sense of alienation. Our chief concern, going forward, is with human-engendered rhetorics, not because we do not acknowledge the presence of nonhuman rhetorics, but because we appreciate the very real possibility that they may operate differently.[38] So, while sunsets or even rocks may be rhetorical, such phenomena are simply beyond the scope of this essay.

Second Clause: via its aesthetic qualities and signifying practices

While the first clause in our definition concerns *what* the thing-symbol is, the second clause begins to address *how* the thing-symbol functions, that

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37 Kenneth Burke, "Formalist Criticism: Its Principles and Limits," in *Language as Symbolic Action: Essay on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 482.

38 This is a profoundly imperfect and perhaps even troubling move on our part. While we are inspired by posthumanist philosophy and think much can be learned by challenging the animal/human (nonhuman/human) divide, in this particular essay we are interested in how human-engendered rhetorics such as built spaces and films move and influence humans.

is, how it moves us. We maintain that the thing-symbol operates on two registers, an asignifying or nonrepresentational register and a signifying or representational register.[39] The former register corresponds to the lively flow of matter-energy (the thing aspect) and the latter corresponds to culturally-specific signs (the symbol aspect). Both registers are available to human perception.[40] In this section, we argue that the *aesthetic qualities* of a thing-symbol shape the experience of its nonrepresentational register, while *signifying practices* modulate the experience of its representational register. Since the line between these two registers is fuzzy, it is worth exploring both in greater depth.

Matter-energy is the basis of aesthetics. In fact, the aesthetic is, according to Estelle Barrett, "a result of the flow of material forces that occur through the organism's interaction and intra-action with the world."[41] As we move through and interact with the physical world, we continuously encounter relatively composed forms of human-engendered matter-energy. These "things" activate and engage our senses; the precise manner in which they do this is related to a thing's unique aesthetic qualities, qualities such as proportion, symmetry, contrast, unity, etc. Sensation, or more accurately, "the sensuous," therefore, is matter-energy experienced/perceived aesthetically.[42] How we experience a thing's aesthetic qualities depends to a large extent upon which of our senses the thing

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39   Felix Guattari makes a similar observation about art, noting that it operates according to both signifying and asignifying regimes, the latter of which is not reducible to signification or representation. See Simon O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 19.

40   We do not intend to suggest that aesthetics and signification do not have a role to play in nonhuman communication. It is simply beyond the scope of our essay to comment upon the matter.

41   Estelle Barrett, "Materiality, Affect, and the Aesthetic Image," in *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a 'New Materialism' through the Arts*, ed. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 65.

42   Edward S. Casey, "Translator's Preface," in *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, by Mikel Dufrenne (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), xxiv.

most actively engages. So, while a glass of wine, which appeals chiefly to the senses of taste and smell, has body and bouquet, a rock, which more obviously activates the senses of sight and touch, has shape and texture. Table 2 highlights a partial list of aesthetic qualities based upon the primary sense that is activated.[43]

Flow of Matter-Energy	Primary Sense	Aesthetic Qualities
Sound (auditory stimuli)	Hearing	Loudness, pitch, timbre, rhythm, melody, harmony, dissonance
Feel (haptic stimuli)	Touch	Texture, shape, weight, pliancy, temperature, vibration
Light (visual stimuli)	Sight	Color, shape, pattern, line, scale, balance, depth, movement
Flavor (gustatory stimuli)	Taste	Complexity, pungency, richness, sour, sweet, bitter, salty, umami
Aroma (olfactory stimuli)	Smell	Fragrance, sweetness, intensity, character, profile, pleasantness

Table 2. Select Aesthetic Qualities Associated with the Primary Senses

The link between aesthetics and the senses is an ancient one and, in fact, the modern word "aesthetics" derives from the Greek word *aisthētikos* (αἰσθητικός), which means sensory perception.[44] The term "aesthetics" was first used in 1750 by the German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten to designate sensory faculties, as it "focuses on sensation, rather than

43 We recognize that contemporary understandings of the body challenge the view that humans have only five senses. Though there is no single agreed upon number of senses, most scholars now include proprioception, kinesthetics, and balance. We also wish to be clear that the senses interinanimate one another and are made up of widely varying biological components. Balance, for instance, depends upon the workings of vestibular reflex, proprioceptive sensations, and sight, while taste depends upon on touch, hearing, and in particular smell. On balance and movement, see Alan Berthoz, *The Brain's Sense of Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 25-56. On taste, see Gordon M. Shepherd, *Neurogastronomy: How the Brain Creates Flavor and Why It Matters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012). These complexities are partially addressed later in our essay.

44 Richard Shusterman, "Aesthetic Experience: From Analysis to Eros," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64, no. 2 (2006): 217.

cognition."[45] Strictly speaking, the aesthetic qualities of things do not signify. Unlike signs, such as words and images, which refer to something other than themselves (e.g., the word "tree" refers to the concept of tree-ness), aesthetic qualities like rhythm, temperature, scale, pungency, and intensity do not operate referentially; they do not directly signify or "stand in" for something else. While the aesthetic is nonrepresentational, it is, nevertheless, according to Debra Hawhee, "always and everywhere rhetorical—that is, productive of effects—and crucially, these effects are produced on and through the live and lively bodies of audiences."[46]

Though Hawhee's work, following Burke, reflects a renewed interest in aesthetics among rhetoricians, it is not the only effort by rhetorical scholars to insist upon the importance of aesthetics. In the 1990s, for instance, drawing upon the aestheticism of Nietzsche, Steve Whitson and John Poulakos critiqued the view of rhetoric as epistemic and advocated for an "aesthetic rhetoric." To capture their argument, we quote them at length:

> Aesthetic rhetoric focuses on the human body as an excitable entity, an entity aroused by language. Inasmuch as the ears can be bribed, the nose infiltrated, the skin raised, the tongue stimulated, the eyes stopped at the surface of things, the task of an aesthetic rhetoric is to speak words appealing to the bodily senses. In carrying out this task, it substitutes the sounds, the smells, the textures, the flavors, and the sights of the world with a sensual language that surpasses them. By contrast, epistemic rhetoric concentrates on one part of the body, the brain, as an entity capable of thoughts and calculations when prompted by language.[47]

45   Daniel Smith, "Preface: The Intensive Sensorium of Life," in *Sensorium: Aesthetics, Art, Life*, ed. Barbara Bolt, Felicity Colman, Graham Jones, and Ashley Woodard (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), xv.

46   Debra Hawhee, *Moving Bodies: Kenneth Burke At the Edges of Language* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 13.

47   Steve Whitson and John Poulakos, "Nietzsche and the Aesthetics of Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 79, no. 2 (1993): 141.

While we concur with Whitson and Poulakos that an aesthetic rhetoric "focuses on the human body" and "the bodily senses," their discussion potentially obfuscates the most crucial dimension of an aesthetic rhetoric, namely its materiality. Notice that in their account, an aesthetic rhetoric entails "*words* appealing to the bodily senses" or "sensual *language*." But what makes language sensual? We argue it is the rhythm and tone—what Roland Barthes has called the *grain*—of the human voice and not the words themselves.[48] The aesthetic is crucial to the study of rhetoric precisely because, as Daniel Smith observes, "[it] calls us back to the neglected but intractable material dimension of life."[49]

Working in conjunction, though not necessarily cooperation, with the aesthetic qualities of the thing-symbol are its signifying practices. Just as matter-energy is the basis of aesthetics, the symbol is the basis of signification, i.e., the process by which something, such as a word or image, represents or stands for something else. The process of signification is frequently explained in accordance with one of two theories of signs: semiology and the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure or semiotics and the American pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce. As the particulars of these two theories have been explicated many times and in many places,[50] we will not rehearse them here. But we do wish to highlight

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48   Roland Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice," in *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 267-277. One of the few rhetorical scholars to attend to the materiality (i.e., grain) of voice is Eric King Watts. Eric King Watts, *Hearing the Hurt: Rhetoric, Aesthetics, and Politics of the New Negro Movement* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012). In fairness to Whitson and Poulakos, they do acknowledge that, "Aesthetic rhetoric puts on its best face in oral performance. Its charm and impact cannot be greater than what the human voice, in all its resonances, its tempi and rhythms, allows." But they do not explicate why this is the case or attend to the vitality of matter. Whitson and Poulakos 141.

49   Smith xvi.

50   Brian L. Ott and Mary Domenico, "Conceptualizing Meaning in Communication Studies," in *A Century of Communication Studies: The Unfinished Conversation*, ed. Pat J. Gehrke and William M. Keith (New York: Routledge, 2015), 234-260.

three core assumptions about signifying practices in general. Signifying practices are complex, culturally coded, and cognitively rendered.

Individual signs and symbols are rarely encountered in isolation. Rather, they exist in complex combinations that involve different devices (objects, pictures, words, sounds, etc.), reflect different poetic categories (tragedy, comedy, satire, elegy, allegory, etc.), and employ different organizational structures (i.e., narration, exposition, definition, classification, description, etc.), reasoning patterns (deduction and induction), tropes (metaphor, metonymy, personification, synecdoche, hyperbole, irony, etc.), and schemas (antithesis, chiasmus, ellipsis, parallelism, etc.), as well as countless other rhetorical strategies and devices. There is also a special class of sonic-based schemas (alliteration, assonance, cacophony, onomatopoeia, etc.) whose aesthetic use of sound reminds us that the line between materiality, on the one hand, and symbolicity, on the other, is coextensive and co-constitutive. Traditionally, the practice of rhetorical criticism has involved identifying, explaining, and assessing the specific signifying practices at play in a particular discourse, object, event, or performance.

The complex signifying practices at work in the thing-symbol operate according to codes, the conventions that govern the use of signs within a symbolic system. Because codes establish rules of combination and collocation such as syntactic, paradigmatic, and lexical relations, they make meaningful communication possible. Imagine if someone opened a book and just started reading the words on the page in a random order. Even if you recognized all of the individual words (signs), it would still sound like gibberish because it does not abide by a shared code. In addition to establishing meaningful relations among signs, codes are cultural, meaning they are historically contingent, unique to particular groups, and must be learned. Since all signifying practices—whether linguistic, imagistic, sonorous, etc.—are governed by culturally-specific codes, the process of meaning-making or decoding depends upon access to appropriate codes. The use of codes to make sense of signs and signifying practices is rooted in cognition. We will have more to say about cognition

(and its embodiedness) shortly, but first we turn to the dynamic interplay of affect and discourse.

Third Clause: to generate affect and discourse

The third clause of our definition seeks to account for the ways that the aesthetic qualities and signifying practices of the thing-symbol manifest themselves in and to human experience. *Affect* is our term for matter-energy acting upon a body by means of the sensory processing of a thing-symbol's aesthetic qualities.[51] It is the matter-energy in us responding to and resonating with the matter-energy in bodies around us.[52] *Discourse* is our term for historically-contingent systems of representation that govern meaning and knowledge and render a thing-symbol's signifying practices intelligible. Since we are employing both terms in rather idiosyncratic ways, we elaborate upon each of these conceptions in this section. But before doing so, we wish to stress that the relation between affect and discourse is complex. Though they are borne out of different dimensions of the thing-symbol, they modify one another or, perhaps more accurately, they mediate the experience of one another.

There are many competing understandings of affect. Our conception is inspired in large measure by Brian Massumi's reading of Gilles Deleuze, which, in turn, is inspired by Deleuze's reading of Baruch Spinoza. So, in explicating how we understand affect, we begin with Spinoza, whose theory of affect is grounded in two interrelated concepts: *affectus* and *affectio*. In Part III of the *Ethics*, Spinoza describes *affectus* in terms of the "a body's continuous, intensive variation (as increase-diminution) in its capacity for acting."[53] "The human body," he expounds, "can be affected in

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51 From a Deleuzian perspective, it would be more accurate to define affect as, "*the singularities immanent to matter* acting directly upon the body in an unmediated way." Such singularities, however, generate the aesthetic qualities of a thing when it enters into a particular field of forces.

52 O'Sullivan 50.

53 Gregory G. Seigworth, "From Affection to Soul," in *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*, 2nd ed., ed. Charles J. Stivale (Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 184.

many ways by which its power of activity is increased or diminished."[54] *Affectio* is the state of a body's reaction to another body's affecting it.[55] Spinoza identifies three basic such states: desire, pleasure, and pain or sorrow.[56] Thus, for Spinoza, affect entails both the general capacity of the body to affect and to be affected (*affectus*) and the specific state generated by an encounter between bodies (*affectio*).[57]

In Deleuze's account of affect, he retains two terms, affect and affection, but deploys them a bit differently. The former term, affect, which roughly aligns with Spinoza's *affectus*, describes a "prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act."[58] The latter term, affection, which roughly corresponds to Spinoza's *affectio*, describes the "state of a body insofar as it is subject to the action of another body"[59] or "'the state of a thing,' that is, affect turned [into] 'effect'."[60] The advantage for Deleuze in maintaining two terms but treating only one of them (*affectus*) as affect proper is twofold. First, it allows him to draw a sharper distinction between affect and emotion than Spinoza, whose dual conception blurs this distinction. Second,

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54   Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics: Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect and Selected Letters*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), 103.

55   Seigworth 184.

56   Spinoza 141.

57   The dual character of affect in Spinoza is evident in his definition of affect as: "affection of (in other words an impingement upon) the body, *and at the same time the idea of the affection.*" Quoted in Brian Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect," *Cultural Critique* 31 (1995): 92.

58   Brian Massumi, "Notes on Translation and Acknowledgements," in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), xvi.

59   Gilles Deleuze, "Transcripts on Spinoza's Concept of Affect, 24/01/1978," trans. Timothy S. Murphy, *Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze*, http://www.web-deleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=14&groupe=Spinoza&langue=2 (accessed g, 23, 2014).

60   Seigworth 189.

it allows him to decouple affect from representational modes of thought (i.e., ideas), viewing "affect [as] any mode of thought which doesn't represent anything."[61] Thus, for Deleuze, "Affects are sensible experiences in their *singularity*, liberated from organizing systems of representation."[62]

Building upon Deleuze, Massumi elaborates on both the distinction between affect and emotion and the nonrepresentational character of affect in his oft-cited essay, "The Autonomy of Affect." According to Massumi,

> An emotion is a subjective content, the socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal. Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized.[63]

By way of contrast, affect describes an unqualified intensity, an autonomic reaction of one body to another body occurring on an extra-cognitive, asignifying register,[64] wherein bodies are broadly conceived of as "individual things distinguished from one another in respect of motion and rest."[65] From this perspective, a work of art is a body and affect is the intensive response of a viewer's body to the matter-energy of the art-

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61   Deleuze, "Transcripts on Spinoza's Concept of Affect."

62   Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 22.

63   Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect" 88. Put another way, "emotion is . . . the subjective capture of affects." Will Schrimshaw, "Non-Cochlear Sound: On Affect and Exteriority," in *Sound, Music, Affect: Theorizing Sonic Experience*, ed. Marie Thompson and Ian Biddle (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 31.

64   Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect" 85. See also Jo Labanyi, "Doing Things: Emotion, Affect, and Materiality," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 11, nos. 3-4 (2010): 224 and Simon O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 43.

65   Spinoza 73. For a closely related definition of bodies, see Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 260.

work. With all kinds of bodies all around us, affect is rather common and, indeed, as Steven Shaviro notes, "Our existence is always bound up with affective and aesthetic flows that elude cognitive definition or capture."[66]

Conceiving of affect as distinct from emotion and as asignifying in character is crucial for rhetorical studies, as it helps us to build a working vocabulary and set of conceptual tools for taking seriously the material dimension of rhetoric. Thus, our view of affect is consistent with Simon O'Sullivan, who writes, "Affects can be described as extradiscursive and extra-textual. Affects are moments of *intensity*, a reaction in/on the body at the level of matter. We might even say that affects are *immanent* to matter. They are certainly immanent to experience."[67] Consequently, we are wary of the scholarship on affect in rhetorical studies that engages it through the lens of symbolicity, as it seems to us an effort to tame it, to constrain it, to discipline it. In the case of rhetoric, disciplining affect means forcing it to submit to the economy of representation and side-stepping, yet again, the matter of matter.

Experienced by the body as fluctuating intensities, affects are a mode of becoming and, hence, a way of knowing. They promote a visceral or carnal knowledge, one that escapes, but runs "parallel to signification."[68] In the remainder of this section, we explore a second type of knowledge, one grounded in signifying practices. This other, more traditional way of knowing, is related to discourse. Like culture, discourse is a term frequently used by scholars, but rarely defined. So, our approach will be to offer a few basic definitions that we, subsequently, attempt to complicate. In common parlance, discourse refers simply to written or spoken utter-

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66　Steven Shaviro, *Post-Cinematic Affect* (Washington: 0-books, 2010), 4.

67　Simon O'Sullivan, "The Aesthetics of Affect: Thinking Art Beyond Representation," *Angeliki* 6, no. 3 (2001): 126. "Affects," elaborates Elizabeth Grosz, "attest to the body's immersion and participation in nature, chaos, and materiality." Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 3.

68　O'Sullivan, "The Aesthetics of Affect" 126.

ances. But in rhetorical studies and related fields, discourse is employed in a more philosophical manner to describe "the forms of representation, conventions and habits of language use producing specific fields of culturally and historically located meanings."[69]

The notion of discourse should not be confused with *a* discourse, which designates a text that "is thematically or situationally unified as a coherent formation."[70] Since our concern is with discourse, not with "texts," we intend it in the broader sense. Discourse came into academic fashion in conjunction with the structuralist movement, which was interested in systems and the rules and conventions that govern them. In keeping with the structuralist tradition, Bill Readings defines discourse as:

> The condition of representation to consciousness by a rational order or structure of concepts. Concepts or terms function as units operationally defined by their position and relation within the virtual space of a system or network . . . The calculation of such relational positions is the work of *ratio*, or reason. The condition of discourse apprehends things solely in terms of its representability by or within its systems, as *meanings* or significations that discourse may *speak*.[71]

This definition suggests an understanding of discourse as a closed, structured, and rational system of representation, whose signifying elements are meaningful only in relation to other elements within the system.[72] In large measure, this definition captures what we mean by the

69 Peter Brooker, *A Glossary of Cultural Theory*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 78.

70 John Frow, "Discourse," in *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, ed. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg, and Meaghan Morris (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), 91.

71 Bill Readings, *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1991), xxxi.

72 Put another way, "*Discourse* is defined as a relational ensemble of signifying sequences." Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1999), 91.

term discourse. But we would like to nuance it in a couple of ways.

While Readings's definition stresses the importance of system and structure to discourse, it does not adequately emphasize the contingent and historical character of such structures, which are "continuously changed by empirical events."[73] The idea that discursive structures change over time can largely be credited to Michel Foucault, who insisted that discourse "develops and generates meaning under specific material and historical conditions."[74] In his study of mental illness, for instance, Foucault observed that the meaning of "madness" and, therefore, its subject (i.e., the "madman") is always the product of a historically contingent discursive formation. For Foucault, *discursive formations* produce meanings, objects of knowledge, social practices, and regimes of truth specific to particular times and places. Discourse, then, is not an isolated text or utterance, but a regularized way of speaking and knowing that restricts what can meaningfully be said, by whom, and under what circumstances.

In addition to radically historicizing discourse as constitutive, Foucault demonstrated that discourse concerns social practice, subjectivity, and configurations of power as well as meaning. Foucault was concerned not just with what discourse says (meaning), but also with what it does (practice) to whom (subjects) and by what means (power/knowledge). In Stuart Hall's words, "since all social practices entail *meaning*, and meanings shape and influence what we do—our conduct—all practices have a discursive aspect."[75] For Foucault, the capacity of discourse to influence social practice, constitute subjects, and configure relations of power is related to the fact that it produces and organizes knowledge about objects in relation to specific institutions such as the asylum, the clinic, or prison. In sum, discourse makes the world and its objects intelligible (or

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73 Torfing 84.

74 Chris Barker, *The SAGE Dictionary of Cultural Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004), 54.

75 Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997), 29.

unintelligible) by restricting "which meanings can or cannot be deployed under [historically] determinate circumstances by speaking subjects."[76]

Fourth Clause: whose intertwined sensory and cognitive processing

Together, affect and discourse speak to the dual nature of experience, to our capacity to be moved and influenced by the entwined character of matter-energy (thing) and cultural signs (symbol).[77] In addition to concretizing material (aesthetic) and symbolic (representational) induce-ments, affect and discourse highlight different ways of knowing, of pro-cessing our ubiquitous thing-symbol environment. The fourth clause in our definition specifically attends to this "processing" by gesturing to the deeply entangled and embodied activities of sensation and cogni-tion. Sensory and cognitive processes are topics that rhetoricians rarely concern themselves with, but they are crucial to the ways that affect and discourse produce presence and meaning effects. So, in this section, we briefly reflect on the role of these processes in rhetoric.

Neuroscience regards sensation and cognition as closely related pro-cesses mediated by—or produced through—perception.[78] To under-stand their complex interconnectedness, it is useful to examine them more closely. Our environment is teeming with rhetorical stimuli, i.e., thing-symbols that induce reactions in and evoke responses from us. *Sensation* describes the process by which flows of matter-energy stim-ulate our sense organs (through sensory receptor cells) and transform those flows into neural energy.[79] It is a two-stage process: stimulus and transduction. The first stage, according to Deleuze, occurs at the level of the body "prior to when a subject discovers the meaning of something

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76 Barker 55.

77 Though symbolic, cultural signs, of course, have a material basis. Before a sign can be interpreted, it must be perceived by the senses. This is made possible by the materiality of the signifier.

78 Clark, *Being There*, 170-175.

79 Sensation is, according to Barrett, "the living organism's response to encoun-ters with objects and material forces." Barrett 65.

or enters into the process of cognition."[80] Deleuze describes this stage as "the logic of sensation;" it is a moment of force acting directly on and through the body (its nervous system) in waves and rhythms. This is affect, not affection (feeling or emotion); it is the material force of one body registered by another body, but not yet transduced, transformed, and "qualified" by perception and, hence, personalized.[81]

The affective intensities produced by the contact or collision of bodies initiates sensation or compounds of sensations that ripple through (the surface of) the body (without organs). What "*happens* through the sensation"[82] (i.e., the amplification or attenuation of the body's capacity to act) involves a number of factors such as the material properties of the initiating force (affecting body) and the emplaced character of the event (affected body). Despite these mitigating factors, Deleuze and Guattari point to three "great monumental types, or 'varieties' . . . of sensations": *vibration*, a simple sensation that establishes a rise or fall in the body, *resonance*, the coupling or embrace of two sensations, creating a clinch, and *distension*, the drawing apart of two sensations, leading to a void or hollowing out.[83]

The second stage of sensation involves transduction, wherein sensory data is interpreted and organized by *perception*. Perception, drawing upon memory and emotion, is what makes the sensations received by our senses meaningful. In referring to the senses, we intend not only the basic senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste), but also kinesthetic

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80   Tom Conley, "Sensation," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, rev. ed., ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 247.

81   As Barrett explains, "raw sensation is *affect* experienced first as fluctuating intensities." Barrett 65.

82   Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 31.

83   Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 169. For an elaboration of these three varieties of sensation, see Barbara M. Kennedy, *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 113-14.

sense (proprioception),[84] which involves the relative position and move-
ment of different parts of the body, and vestibular sense, which involves
direction, acceleration, and movement in space, as well as balance.[85]
Nor do the senses function in structurally independent and functionally
distinct ways. Recent work in anthropology and neuroscience indicates
that the senses operate in a more synaesthetic manner, emphasizing "the
multisensoriality embedded in the materiality of human existence."[86]
Thus, rhetorical scholars interested in how the thing-symbol appeals to
the human sensorium would be well advised to attend to how flows of
matter-energy activate intersensoriality.

   In light of the preceding discussion, it is tempting to view sensation
(and affect) as prior to perception (and emotion) and perhaps even cogni-
tion. But as tempting as it might be, it is also mistaken. While a particular
affect may precede a particular emotion in a specific context, this is not
so in general. Humans are always already *both* bodies capable of affect-
ing and being affected by other bodies *and* perceiving-emotive-thinking
subjects. Sensation, perception, and cognition are, at least temporally
speaking, coextensive processes that modulate one another.[87] We deem
this point worth mentioning because it is one place where our view on
materiality and affect departs company with others' views. We regard

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84 Barbara Montero specifically contends proprioception is an aesthetic sense.
    See Barbara Montero, "Proprioception as an Aesthetic Sense," *The Journal of
    Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64, no. 2 (2006): 232-242.

85 Phillip Vannini, Dennis Waskul, and Simon Gottschalk, *The Senses in Self, So-
    ciety, and Culture: A Sociology of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 25-6;
    and Berthoz, 9-24.

86 David Howes, "Scent, Sound and Synaesthesia: Intersensoriality and Mate-
    rial Cultural Theory," in *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Christopher Til-
    ley, Webb Keane, Susanne Küchler, Michael Rowlands, and Patricia Spyer
    (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006), 161. See also Chapter 6 in Da-
    vid Howes and Constance Classen, *Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses
    in Society* (New York: Routledge, 2014) and Shepherd, *Neurogastronomy*.

87 Alva Nöe, *Varieties of Presence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012):
    23-27.

affect as asignifying, but not pre-signifying;[88] we regard it as extra-conscious, but not pre-conscious or pre-cognitive. In our view, affect operates alongside, but not before, discursive practices involving signification and cognition.

Cognition, like sensation, has a bodily basis; it begins with data collected by the senses through interaction with the material world. While cognitive scientists agree that the processing of this data, i.e., *cognition*, is what makes meaning possible, they disagree over precisely how that "processing" occurs. The two prevailing paradigms are traditional and embodied cognition. The traditional paradigm, sometimes termed the computational perspective, views the mind like a computer. Information is input through the sense organs and travels along neural pathways to mental structures with representational capacities, where it is translated "into a syntactic code that the nervous system can then manipulate according to various rules that are either innate or learned."[89] The computational perspective is often critiqued for being insular because once data is input, the body and external world are no longer relevant to its work.

A second common criticism of the traditional paradigm is that it has difficulty explaining the origin of mental representations, that is, how mental structures acquire their syntactic and semantic structure. One response to this critique is the language of thought (LOT) hypothesis, which posits that thinking itself involves an innate mental language of sorts (often referred to as *mentalese*) and, thus, possesses syntax and semantics. But this just begs the question of where LOT gets its meaning, creating an infinite deferment known as the homunculus regress. In many respects, the development of embodied mind or embodied cognition as an alternative paradigm was motivated by these concerns. The

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88   Latham and McCormack, for instance, suggest that the "pre-signifying affective materiality [of images] is *felt* in bodies." Alan Latham and Derek P. McCormack, "Thinking with Images in Non-Representational Cities: Vignettes from Berlin," *Royal Geographical Society* 41, no. 3 (2009): 253.

89   Larry Shaviro, "The Embodied Cognition Research Programme," *Philosophy Compass* 2, no. 2 (2007): 339.

embodied mind weaves together philosophical understandings of human experience from the phenomenology and cognitive linguistics with cognitive science.[90] Drawing on these intersecting traditions, the embodied mind rejects the computational view of cognition, suggesting that the body plays an important role in cognitive processes. Andy Clark writes that, "The biological mind is, first and foremost, an organ for controlling a biological body. Minds make motions, and they must make them fast — before the predator catches you, or before your prey gets away from you. Minds are *not* disembodied logical reasoning devices."[91] Essentially, the embodiment paradigm suggests that "the brain is not the sole cognitive resource we have available to us to solve problems. Our bodies and their perceptually guided motions through the world do much of the work required to achieve our goals, *replacing* the need for complex internal mental representations."[92] Indeed, the body processes, decides, and acts far more quickly and efficiently than can possibly be explained by higher order brain functions.

Since it would require far more space than is available to us to explain the particulars of the embodied cognition paradigm, we wish simply to comment upon the relevance of this work to rhetorical studies. The latest research in cognitive science, psychology, and phenomenology indicates that meaning arises not from some disembodied mental structure, but from our fully embodied interactions with the physical, social, and cultural environments around us. Hence, any attempt by rhetorical scholars to interpret rhetoric in the world must take account of the situated character and bodily experiences of that rhetoric. Long gone are the days that we can interpret political speeches by looking exclusively at printed texts, evaluate films by attending solely to narrative and dialogue, or as-

90   Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993). 1-12. Andy Clark, *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997): 170-173.

91   Clark, *Being There*, 1.

92   Andrew D. Wilson and Sabrina Golonka, "Embodied Cognition is Not What You Think It Is," *Frontiers in Psychology* 4 (2013): 1.

sess places of public memory by reading only placards, brochures, and ancillary literatures. The thing-symbol necessitates that rhetoric be treated as an embodied experience, one that makes material and symbolic demands upon us.

   Fifth Clause: elicit presence and meaning effects in a particular space-time

Clauses two, three, and four of our definition provide an account of *how* rhetoric does its work in the world, i.e., how it sways our *sense* of things. By "sense" we mean both affect and understanding. At this point, it should be clear that our "sense" of the world and everything in it is a product of the intersecting processes of sensation and cognition, that the aesthetic qualities and signifying practices of a thing-symbol can alter both our bodily states and mental attitudes. We have taken the time to elaborate on the workings—the functioning of—rhetoric because we believe these operations are too often left unexplored and taken-for-granted. And we can only answer the question of what rhetoric is doing if we first understand the means and mechanisms by which it is doing it. Having mapped the workings of rhetoric, the fifth clause brings us to issue of consequentiality, of what rhetoric *does*. In this section, we suggest that rhetoric broadly has two types of effects: presence and meaning.[93]

   We recognize that the word "effects" is often associated, at least in the social scientific tradition, with strict causal relationships. But we intend something far less deterministic. Our understanding of rhetorical effects conceives of them as potentialities. Potentialities should not be confused with actualities, which are concrete outcomes; a potentiality refers to the tendency or capacity of a thing-symbol to induce particular, though not-yet-actualized, outcomes. Indeed, this is why we begin our definition with the phrase, "Rhetoric is the capacity of the thing-symbol . . ." That something has the *capacity* to do something (in this case, to elicit particular presence and meaning effects) does not ensure that it will do so. With rhetoric, there is no guarantee that a thing-symbol will, in actuality, elicit

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93   These categories come from Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

a particular sense (affect and understanding), only that it possesses the tendency to do so. It is the task of critics, then, to interrogate the aesthetic qualities and signifying practices of a thing-symbol as "structured invitations" (as tendencies) to realize its material and symbolic potentialities.[94]

Within this framework, presence is an effect of aesthetics or, in Gumbrecht's words, "aesthetic experience,"[95] and "meaning is an effect of signification."[96] While presence and meaning effects are arrived at by different means, they are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, by virtue of the thing-symbol's dual status as matter-energy and culturally-specific signs, it inevitably generates both a sense of presence and a sense of meaning. That having been said, as Keith Moxey explains, "our tendency in the past was to ignore and forget 'presence' in favor of 'meaning'."[97] Historically, the erasure of presence was due, at least in part, to the linguistic turn and the corresponding belief that experience is filtered through language. In short, "The 'life' of the world, materially manifest, [was] exorcised in the name of readability and rationality."[98] An agential understanding of "things" fueled by the new materialism, however, has led to a renewed interest in the production of presence, or the immediate impact of relatively composed forms of matter-energy on bodies and the human sensorium.[99]

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94 Our perspective is deeply indebted to Benson and Anderson's conception of film criticism. "Films," they write, "are social constructions and as such invite shared experiences. The rhetorical critic inquires into that shared experience, not by surveying audience response, and not simply by reporting the critic's subjective, impressionistic responses, but by interrogating the film itself, regarding the film as a constructed invitation to a complex experience of thoughts and feeling." Thomas W. Benson and Carolyn Anderson, *Reality Fictions: The Films of Frederick Wiseman* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 3.

95 Gumbrecht, *Production* 99.

96 John Hartley, *Communication, Cultural and Media Studies: The Key Concepts*, 4th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 100.

97 Keith Moxey, "Visual Studies and the Iconic Turn," *Journal of Visual Culture* 7, no. 2 (2008): 132.

98 Moxey 131.

99 Gumbrecht, *Production* xiiv.

But what does presence entail? Whereas meaning entails *representation* and, thus, the cognitive "interpretation" of the thing-symbol, presence entails *presentation* and, therefore, the sensate "immediacy" of the thing-symbol. Something is immediate if it is directly available to touch (or another sense). Indeed, Eelco Runia defines presence as:

> "being in touch"—either literally or figuratively—with people, things, events, and feelings that made you into the person you are. It is having a whisper of life breathed into what has become routine and clichéd—it is fully realizing things instead of taking them for granted.[100]

Because it entails propinquity, Gumbrecht observes that "'presence' does not refer (at least does not mainly refer) to a temporal but to a spatial relationship to the world and its objects."[101] Simply put, the production of presence "refers to the physical and spatial conditions of tangibility which, knowingly or not, we develop with each object that we encounter."[102]

Presence effects, then, are material inducements to altered bodily states activated by spatially proximate forms of matter-energy. They arise from a sensitivity to matter, to the aesthetic qualities of the thing-symbol. The tingling of the skin at the sound of a lover's voice, the rush of warmth at the taste of chocolate, the increase in respiration at the sight of pulsating light, and the convulsion of the body at the smell of rotting food are all possible instances of rhetoric's presence effects. But rhetoricians rarely attend to such material forces, relegating them to the realm of pure motion and, thus, beyond the scope of rhetoric. Such a conception recenters the human (or animal) subject, treating objects as passive and inert and ignoring "the other side of experience, what comes to meet us rather than

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100 Eelco Runia, "Presence," *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (2006): 5.

101 Gumbrecht, *Production* xiiv.

102 Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "Why Intermediality—If at All?," *Intermédialitiés* 2 (2003): 176.

what we bring to the encounter" with the material world.[103] Part of the difficulty in attending to rhetoric's presence effects is that they are fleeting. They are fleeting both because experience is constantly unfolding (and bodies are continuously becoming)[104] and because presence effects "are necessarily surrounded by, wrapped into, and perhaps even mediated by clouds and cushions of meaning."[105]

The clouds and cushions of meaning that filter much (though certainly not all) of human experience sway us in a very different manner than that of presence. While presence is grounded in aesthetic experience and the direct sensory processing of matter-energy, meaning is grounded in representation and the indirect cognitive processing of culturally-contingent signs. Unlike presence, which demands immediacy, meaning eschews it. Representation works, after all, by gesturing precisely to that which is *absent* from the senses. The word "tree" does not expose the listener to an actual tree, but conjures a sense (understanding) of the thing to which it refers. Hearing the word "tree" and touching an actual tree, then, produce quantifiably different types of experience. This is not to say that spoken language is devoid of materiality. But in this example, matter-energy is present in the sound (aesthetic qualities) of the human voice speaking the word "tree." What is immediately present to the senses is a voice, not a tree.

That having been said, when we are in the presence of an actual tree, meaning is still at play. While sensory experience of the scale, colors, textures, and odors of the tree may elicit one type of effect (i.e., presence), our past experiences with trees—our cultural understanding of them, as well as our personal memories, emotions, and thoughts regarding them—elicit another. This other type of effect is meaning, which Ron-

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103 Moxey 133.

104 The constant unfolding of experience is why Jean-Luc Nancy associates presence with a double movement: a "birth to presence" and a "vanishing of presence." Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Birth to Presence*, trans. Brian Holmes and others (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993). On the continuous unfolding of experience, see also Labanyi 229.

105 Gumbrecht, *Production* 106.

ald Schleifer suggests, involves "comprehension, the signifying whole beyond the individual elements of a sentence, or the logic of an argument, the genre of an extended discourse, the moral of a tale."[106] "But the phenomena of meaning-effects," he adds, "also include other felt senses discourse provokes, such as sadness, anxiety, fear, joy."[107] Schleifer's explication rightly places emotion on the side of discourse and meaning effects rather than on the side of presence effects, which properly speaking are unqualified, non-conscious, and presubjective. *Meaning effects*, then, are symbolic inducements to attitudes and actions activated by reason, emotion, memory, and perception.

The complexity of rhetoric's presence and meaning effects is succinctly captured in S. I. Hayakawa's account of "Bessie" the cow. He writes:

> Bessie is a living organism, constantly changing, constantly ingesting food and air, transforming it, getting rid of it again. . . . What she is in her entirety, we can never know; even if we could at any precise moment say what she was, at the next moment she would have changed . . . We experience only a small fraction of the total Bessie: the lights and shadows of her exterior, her motions, her general configuration, the noises she makes, and the sensations she presents to our sense of touch. And because of our previous experience, we observe resemblances in her to certain other animals to which, in the past, we have applied the word "cow."[108]

Hayakawa's description of an imagined encounter with Bessie illuminates our actual encounters with thing-symbols in the world. It highlights that thing-symbols are in a constant state of flux, that they—like us—are lively and becoming. It suggests that our encounters with thing-symbols are shaped both by our sensory experience of their aesthetic qualities

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106 Ronald Schleifer, *Intangible Materialism: The Body, Scientific Knowledge, and the Power of Language* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 85.

107 Schleifer 85.

108 S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Thought and Action* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1939), 166.

and by what they represent to us based upon previous experience. And since experience itself is endlessly unfolding, both presence and meaning effects are radically contextual (i.e., space-time contingent).

Rhetoric's Materiality and the Practice of Criticism

To recognize that rhetoric continually creates presence and meaning effects is to affirm that the thing-symbol both *affectively modulates sensory experience* via its aesthetic qualities and *discursively renders experience sensible* via its signifying practices. Experience, in other words, is fundamentally rhetorical,[109] a product of our combined sensory and cognitive processing of rhetoric's twined material and symbolic dimensions, of the inherent suasory potential of the thing-symbol. Thus, in summing up, we may define rhetoric simply as *thing-symbol potentiality*. The fuller definition of rhetoric explored in the preceding pages reflects a provisional attempt on our part to chart the key relations among the constituent elements that animate the dynamic inner workings of thing-symbol potentiality. Having identified and explained those relations, we close by reflecting on the advantages of taking rhetoric's materiality seriously.

Conceiving of rhetoric as, at once, material and symbolic affords at least four advantages over an exclusively symbolic understanding of rhetoric. First, it serves as an important reminder of Kenneth Burke's concession "that the distinction between *things moving* and *persons acting* is but an illusion."[110] Though not intended as a posthumanist maxim, Burke's statement troubles the subject/object (person/thing) dichotomy and succinctly captures the notion that humans have no special providence over the natural world. Taking seriously rhetoric's materiality is

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109 Drawing upon the work of John Dewey, Gregory Clark argues "that experience always does rhetorical work." Gregory Clark, "Rhetorical Experience and the National Jazz Museum in Harlem," in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, ed. Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 115.

110 Kenneth Burke, "Terministic Screens," in *Language as Symbolic Action: Essay on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 53.

a repudiation of humanism and strict linguistic/social constructionism, which locate the symbol-using animal (human) squarely at the center of worldmaking. So, while our concern in this essay was with human-engendered rhetorics, it is crucial that we investigate the full range of rhetorical possibilities. Second, an understanding of rhetoric as material as well as symbolic recognizes that flows of matter-energy are suasory and consequential. There is perhaps no better example of this than non-lyrical music, which while primarily asignifying, often powerfully sways bodies.[111] Matter-energy is a lively force in the world, a force that acts directly upon bodies, predisposing, inviting, or impelling those bodies to move/act in particular ways.

Granting the agential character of matter-energy is closely linked to the two remaining advantages associated with a thing-symbol view of rhetoric. From a vitalist perspective, affect is what imbues matter-energy with its lively quality. This is why it is so important that affect not be subsumed to the realm of the symbol and the logic of signification. When affect is disciplined in this manner, matter is stripped of its vitality, the human (subject) is recentered, and rhetoric again becomes an exclusively symbolic affair. In short, taking seriously rhetoric's materiality allows us to also take seriously the matter of affect (as animate matter). But, why, one might wonder, is it important to take seriously affect? The short answer, and this is the forth advantage to a thing-symbol view of rhetoric, is that it privileges the body as a site of knowing. Carnal knowledge is that which is known at a visceral level. It is the stirrings, movements, and orientation of the body in space generated by sensory experience but not yet catalogued, classified, and codified into meaning. Bodies (and we do not mean just human bodies here) continuously respond and adapt to their material environments in an endless process of becoming. This is a type of knowing for which rhetoric's symbolicity is ill equipped to account. For scholars interested in rhetoric's materiality, there is much work to be

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111 For an excellent analysis of the material inducements of music, see D. Robert DeChaine, "Affect and Embodied Understanding in Musical Experience," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (2002): 79-98.

done mapping how various forms of matter-energy and their attendant aesthetic qualities elicit sensations and generate presence effects.

Dematerialization and Rematerialization: Mediatic Flip/Flop and the Anthropocene

Richard Cavell[1]

Abstract: The art-historical concept of "dematerialization," used to contextualize conceptualist art, raises questions about materiality: what constitutes the materiality of a concept? This essay argues that the materiality of a concept exists relationally with its rematerialization. In terms of media theory, this relationship is expressed via McLuhan's notions of "environment"—the encompassing effect of a medium—and "counter-environment"—the remediation of that medium. On the macro level, this process can be observed in the concept of the anthropocene, whereby the earthly environment is remediated by satellite data—nature by culture. Congruent with the shift to an information paradigm, this process enacts the activity of the flip/flop switch in a microprocessor. The essay reads this computational process as a critical epistemology that counters Bruno Latour's position that critique has run out of steam—it has, but that steam has been rematerialized as data.

1.

In January of 1970, the American artist Robert Smithson proposed to create an environmental artwork by dumping 90 tonnes of glass on Miami Islet, near Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, on Canada's Pacific coast. Smithson had recently made a number of visits to the city of Vancouver in conjunction with a forthcoming exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery curated by the New York critic, Lucy Lippard, and had created "Glue Pour" in December of 1969, which involved him overturning a large container of glue on Vancouver's University of British Columbia campus. The glass dump was set for early February 1970; Smithson planned to ship the glass to Vancouver from Stockton California and then transport it by barge to the island, where he would set to work with hammer and

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1 Richard Cavell is co-founder of the Media Studies Program at the University of British Columbia, where he teaches. He has published extensively on McLuhan and on media theory.

crowbar. But within one week, the provincial government had cancelled the operation. "'We checked carefully to ensure there would be no ecological disturbance'"[2] said Smithson, but conservationists in the province were outraged, and convinced the Minister of Lands and Forests to issue an embargo. It would have been a "'thing of beauty'"[3] said Smithson, who had planned to smash the glass such that it would cover the entire island, presenting a glinting surface in even minimal sunlight. Subsequently it was suggested that the environmentalists had been aided in their opposition by one of the most famous of Vancouver's radio "hotliners,"[4] who had fomented public opposition through his radio program. As Kevin Griffin wrote in the *Vancouver Sun*, "Before the Internet, radio hotline shows like his could manufacture outrage almost as quickly as Facebook and Twitter."[5]

Smithson's environmental forays eventually became part of an art exhibition on conceptualism at the Vancouver Art Gallery, curated by Lucy Lippard, and titled *955,000,*[6] which was then the population of Vancouver. Rather than submit artworks, the 70 artists in the exhibition were asked to send index cards to Lippard that contained descriptions of the artworks that she and others then executed for the exhibition—a classic conceptualist scenario, in which the concept of the art work takes precedence over its material instantiation, thereby raising questions about the role of the artist as a creator of material objects. Three years later Lippard

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2   Kevin Griffin, "Art Seen: From Approval to Rejection: Before Spiral Jetty, Robert Smithson proposed Glass Island by Nanaimo," *The Vancouver Sun* (5 May 2016): https://vancouversun.com/news/staff-blogs/from-approval-to-rejection. See also Adam Lauder, "Robert Smithson's Vancouver Sojourn: *Glass Pour*, 1970," *Canadian Art* (Summer 2015*)*: https://canadianart.ca/features/robert-smithsons-vancouver-sojourn-glue-pour-1970/

3   Quoted by Ron Graziani in *Robert Smithson and the American Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004) 108.

4   A hotliner was a radio personality who fielded telephone comments live on radio.

5   Griffin, op.cit.

6   *955,000, An Exhibition Organized by Lucy Lippard, the Vancouver Art Gallery, January 13 to February 8, 1970* (exhibition catalogue)

reflected on this process, and conceptualism generally, in her book titled *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*.[7] As I have written in *McLuhan in Space*,[8] Lippard's notion of dematerialization represented a paradox, because the dematerialization of the art object posed by conceptualism was inevitably accompanied, as in her own exhibition, by a rematerialization, although the reverse could also be argued: that the executed artwork was a dematerialisation of the concept. This reading, enabled by media theory, counters the tendency to view conceptualism as a language-based artform. In the media theoretical understanding, the artwork would be the *relation* between the concept on the index card and the executed work. Edward A. Shanken has argued in fact that there are significant crossovers between conceptualism and the media-based notion of art as technology, noting that Lippard's *Six Years* cites on its dedication page British artist Roy Ascott's 1964 essay on cybernetics and art,[9] suggesting thereby the various interfaces between conceptualism, dematerialisation, and the understanding of the artwork through media theory as argued in a number of Marshall McLuhan's works but most pertinently in *Through the Vanishing Point: Space in Poetry and Painting*,[10] published in 1968.

Many of the art works included in Lippard's conceptualist exhibition played on these distinctions via installation art, artworks that dematerialize the gallery space in order to rematerialize it as the artwork itself. As Duchamp had suggested, the bride of art was being stripped bare by her bachelors.[11] During the 60s and 70s, these installations were known

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7   Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (N.Y.: Praeger, 1973).

8   Richard Cavell, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* (Toronto: U Toronto P, 2002) 177.

9   Edward A. Shanken, "Formalism and Conceptual Art," introduction to Xtine Burrough, *Net Works: Case Studies in Web Art and Design* (N.Y.: Routledge, 2012) 1-4.

10 McLuhan and Harley Parker, *Through the Vanishing Point: Space in Poetry and Painting* (N. Y.: Harper & Row, 1968).

11 Marcel Duchamp, *La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (*The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*), otherwise known as "The Large Glass,"

as "environments," a term that was subsequently appropriated by Mc-Luhan to describe the encompassing effect of a given medium. Because all mediation is remediation, in McLuhan's theoretical account, the environment existed relationally with a previous medium, which McLuhan termed the counter-environment (or anti-environment), and this counter-environment had both critical and creative aspects—it was at once inside and outside the dominant medium.

The relationship of environment and counter-environment extended beyond the art gallery in McLuhan's understanding. In 1957, with the launch of Sputnik, McLuhan argued that the earth itself had been remediated by satellite technology. "The planet," he wrote in 1966, "is now the content of … technology, … an anti-environment, an art form."[12] As radical as this statement may sound to us even today, it has been cited as one of the first articulations of the anthropocene by Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz in their 2016 book *The Shock of the Anthropocene.* The authors write that McLuhan's statement forecasts the present moment in which "the electromagnetic waves of satellites now envelop the globe in a second atmosphere, a technosphere. The dense network of data gleaned from satellite observations," they continue, "and the heavy computer infrastructure enabling this to be processed, are both part of the solution … and part of the problem"[13] represented by the anthropocene.

McLuhan had arrived at this anticipatory notion of the anthropocene via a number of strands, one of the major ones being John Cage's groundbreaking 1952 musical composition, *4' 33"* (four minutes thirty-three seconds), in which he pianist sits in front of a piano score marked *tacet* and doesn't play a note. This was a classic proto-conceptualist move: at a stroke, Cage dematerialized the performer and rematerialized him as

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produced between 1915 and 1923.

12   McLuhan, "The Emperor's Old Clothes," in Gyorgy Kepes, ed., *The Man-Made Object* (N.Y.: Braziller, 1966) 90-95; this quote 90.

13   Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History and Us*, trans. David Fernbach (London: Verso, 2016) 62. See also Richard Cavell, "Marshall McLuhan's Echo-Criticism," *Remediating McLuhan* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2016) 109-114.

the audience, while at the same time reversing the roles of piano and concert hall—it was not the piano but the audience that produced the auditory experience. The performance also made a sideways jab at the Shannon-Weaver communication model, which posited noise as the resistance to a message sent from sender to receiver. In the Cage performance, noise was rematerialized as the medium, while the message of the score was dematerialized—the medium was now the message in a mediated feedback loop.[14] Frances Dyson has written compellingly of Cage's compositions that they "position the aural within a continually shifting 'field' where sound fluctuates between the acoustic and the electronic, the object and the meta-object, the produced and the reproduced [such that] technology becomes a process within the overall metamorphosis of the cultural into the natural, the entelechy of the 'natural' … becoming dependent upon and almost overshadowed by technology's 'liberating' force"[15] (62). This was the aspect of Cage's work that struck McLuhan most compellingly.

In proposing that the earth had become a collection of data samples with the launch of Sputnik, McLuhan's revisited the notion of dematerialization at the very moment when that term began to enter into ecological discourse, where it took on the meaning of "doing more with less," thereby reducing the climatological footprint of a given society. Dematerialization in this context becomes a version of anthropogenic metabolism, which articulates the material and energy turnover of the human environment, a concept emerging from the application of systems analysis to industrial and other human-made activities and a central concept of sus-

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14   As McLuhan put it in a 1976 letter, "[w]hat they call 'NOISE,' I call the *medium*." He goes on to add that "[r]ecently, while debating the Alaska oil pipeline here in Canada, it was brought out vividly that it would destroy the indigenous peoples. … The Shannon/Weaver model of communication is merely a transportation model which has no place for the side-effects of the service environments." Quoted by Graeme Patterson, *History and Communications: Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, the Interpretation of History* (Toronto: U Toronto P, 1990) 100.

15   Frances Dyson, *Sounding New Media: Immersion and Embodiment in the Arts and Culture* (Berkeley: U California P, 2009) 62.

tainable development. As such, it is one of the markers of the shift from Fordist to post-Fordist society, a shift which is directly related to the digital turn that characterized the post WW2 economy. As Armin Medosch puts it in *New Tendencies: Art at the Threshold of the Information Revolution (1961-1978)*, "the conceptual turn and the dematerializing tendencies in art were connected with the transition to the information paradigm."[16] The art practices associated with this tendency aligned themselves with a cultural ideology of social progress, and hence the turn to environmental art, with the implicit proviso that the earth itself had now to be understood as a technology, as in Smithson's proposed artwork for Miami Islet.

Dematerialization, thus, moves *counter* to Lippard's notion of the conceptualist artwork's lack of materiality, which was in part intended by Lippard to be a critique of consumerism, including artistic consumerism of the artwork as object. But the object, here, was the process (as the medium was the message), and these artworks quickly became prized and attained prices as high as other, more traditional works. As Alexander Alberro has stated, '"the idea that the political economy of conceptual art sought to eliminate the commodity status of the art object … is mythical."'[17] Rather, as Medosch notes, "conceptual artists were among the first to invent and rehearse the new skill sets necessary in the information economy"in a move parallel to the shift from Fordism to "informational capitalism."[18] This shift coincided with and was very much facilitated by the production of the microprocessor. As the computer was dematerialized from behemoths the size of the well-named Colossus (1943), they were rematerialized as ubiquitous computation, thanks in large part to the microprocessor. The microprocessor enacts the dynamics of dematerialization and rematerialization instantaneously in that it functions via the operation of the flip flop switch. A flip flop switch stores a single bit of information, but in two states, representing a one and a zero, and it

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16   Armin Medosch, *New Tendencies: Art at the Threshold of the Information Revolution (1961-1978)* (Cambridge MA: MIT P, 2016) 199.

17   Quoted by Medosch, 222.

18   Medosch, 222.

is these switches that are interconnected to form the logic gates for the digitally integrated circuits used in microprocessors.

The importance of these digital processors, however, extends beyond their technological status: they have fundamental epistemological implications. If the medium is the message, if the medium is an epistemological arbiter, then digital media are fundamentally altering the way in which knowledge is being produced. As such, digital media constitute a counter-statement to current humanistic inquiry, including inquiry into the anthropocene. To put it another way, if the environment is now *cultural*, as the concept of the anthropocene proposes, then the anthropocene can be understood as a test case for the sustainability of cultural critique, since the anthropocene overturns our assumptions about what is material and what is not.

As Julia Adeney Thomas has recently written, humanists' attempts to understand a phenomenon such as the anthropocene are confronted by a phenomenon that is "weirdly spectral, its meaning obtuse, and the proper response uncertain."[19] Reviewing Amitav Ghosh's *The Great Derangement*, Thomas states that Ghosh's

> examination of modern literature, history and politics … show[s] that all three cultural modes share assumptions that render climate change unthinkable, occluding our view of its dangers rather than aiding our understanding. These assumptions include the belief that the world behaves according to the rules of probability, that we have agency over considerable areas of our lives, and that individual authenticity and self-actualization should be our central concerns. These assumptions may have made some sense on a calmer Earth before feedback loops started bouncing off each other erratically, but now the Anthropocene's wild shifts render these tropes of modernity utterly fantastic. And yet, argues Ghosh, we cling to them.[20]

19 Julia Adeney Thomas, "Sinister yet invisible," *TLS* 3 February 20 17 (digital edition).

20 Thomas, op. cit.

Today, argues Ghosh, '"the Anthropocene has reversed the temporal order of modernity: those at the margins are now the first to experience the future that awaits all of us."'[21] "The beginning of history," writes Thomas, "has become its end, and the ethical valences of forces like imperialism are turned on their heads."[22] Thus, writes Thomas, "the humanities and human sciences confront their greatest challenge armed only with rusting tools forged for another age."[23] The climate crisis, as Ghosh suggests, "is also a crisis of culture, and thus of the imagination."[24]

2.

Bruno Latour has addressed this crisis of cultural critique in his much-cited 2004 *Critical Inquiry* article, "Why has critique run out of steam?" in which he begins by responding to the critical crisis posed by the anthropocene:

> What has become of critique, I wonder, when an editorial in the *New York Times* contains the following quote?

> 'Most scientists believe that [global] warming is caused largely by manmade pollutants that require strict regulation. Mr. Luntz [a Republican strategist] seems to acknowledge as much when he says that 'the scientific debate is closing against us.' His advice, however, is to emphasize that the evidence is not complete.

> 'Should the public come to believe that the scientific issues are settled,' he writes, 'their views about global warming will change accordingly. Therefore, you need to continue to make the lack of scientific certainty a primary issue.'[25]

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21   Ghosh, as quoted by Thomas, op. cit.

22   Thomas, op. cit.

23   Thomas, op. cit.

24   Thomas, op. cit.

25   Bruno Latour, "Why has critique run out of steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern" *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2004) 225-248; this quote 226. The

Latour laments the current critical moment in which "we spent years trying to detect the real prejudices hidden behind the appearance of objective statements" only now "to have to reveal the real objective and incontrovertible facts hidden behind the illusion of prejudices."[26] The problem, says Latour, is that "entire Ph.D. programs are still running to make sure that good American kids are learning the hard way that facts are made up, that there is no such thing as natural, *unmediated* [my emphasis], unbiased access to truth, that we are always prisoners of language, that we always speak from a particular standpoint, and so on, while dangerous extremists are using the very same argument of social construction to destroy hard-won evidence that could save our lives."[27] Why, he asks, "does it burn my tongue to say that global warming is a fact whether you like it or not? Why can't I simply say that the argument is closed for good?"[28]

In effect, argues Latour, *critique* has become unsustainable through its dematerialisation of the factual ground of critique, producing thus "an excessive distrust of … matters of fact disguised as bad ideological biases!"[29] The question was never to get away from facts, argues Latour, but closer to them, not fighting empiricism but, on the contrary, renewing empiricism. The problem, he states, is that "critique has been miniaturized like computers have. I have always fancied that what took great effort, occupied huge rooms, cost a lot of sweat and money, for people like Nietzsche and Benjamin, can be had for nothing, much like the supercomputers of the 1950s, which used to fill large halls and expend a vast amount of electricity and heat, but now are accessible for a dime and no bigger than a fingernail."[30] To suggest that the increasing miniaturization of the com-

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appearance of the word "matters" twice in this title is significant to the argument I am making.

26 Latour, 227.

27 Latour 227.

28 Latour 227.

29 Latour 227.

30 Latour 230.

puter leads likewise to tiny thoughts is trite,[31] however, and treats fact in precisely the way that Latour seeks to critique. What is significant in his comment, however, is his focus on dematerialization. If deconstruction (Latour's major target[32]) dematerialized the medium, what has been re-materialized is mediation itself. Latour's reference to "unmediated" facts thus misses the point. It is not the fact that is significant but precisely its mediation, its dematerialization and rematerialization, its "making and unmaking."[33] Nietzsche, with his reflections on philosophy and the type-writer, and Benjamin, with his essay on mechanical reproduction, were both media theorists. What Latour's comment gestures toward is a gen-eral flattening of critical discourse, which, as Latour notes, has now been "lumped with the baggage train,"[34] and thus we find Latour discussing global warming in the same breath as conspiracy theories about the Twin Towers' collapse. It is here that the challenge arises that his article seeks to address, not a putative decline in the cultural purchase of critique. Every-thing is now interrelated; there are no longer hierarchies of knowledge. *YouTube* is the greatest pedagogical site on earth, where one can learn in equal measure how to clean a toilet bowl and how to play the *C Minor Partita* of Bach. [35] As Latour suggests, the choice today is not between a piece of dolomite and a Coke can; the "dichotomy between *Gegenstand* and Thing"[36] has collapsed into the Internet of Things.

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31   Latour's ambivalence about computers and computation, and media gener-ally, leads him into stating that "Macluhan's" [sic] electronic "revolution" was achieved by the printing press. See "Visualization and Cognition: Think-ing with Eyes and Hands," in *Knowledge and Society: Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present* 6, ed. Henrika Kuklick and Elizabeth Long (London: JAI P, 1986) 1-40; this quote 13.

32   "Is it really the task of the humanities to add deconstruction to destruction?" (225).

33   Latour 235.

34   Latour 226.

35   "As if critique should be reserved for the elite and remain difficult and stren-uous, like mountain climbing or yachting, and is no longer worth the trouble if everyone can do it for a nickel?" (230).

36   Latour 234.

Mediation has become environmental—our epistemic frame of reference—precisely through the dematerialization of the computer, which has been rematerialized as a process—ubiquitous computation. It is thus no surprise that the metaphors of computation and information technology are very much at the heart of Latour's response to the crisis of critique, as becomes evident in his discussion of Alan Turing's 1950 paper on "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," in which Turing pursues the question of whether a computer can act like a human who is thinking. Latour finds the paper to be "baroque" and " kitsch"[37] (qualities that I assume would have pleased a gay man), with "an astounding number of metaphors, beings, hypotheses, allusions," all of which suggest to Latour that "you get much more out of [the computer] than you put into it,"[38] the key point being that "we don't master what we, ourselves, have fabricated."[39] In the passage from Turing's article that Latour quotes, Turing makes a case for the supercritical mind, one that, when presented with an idea, '"will give rise to a whole 'theory' consisting of secondary, tertiary and even more remote ideas.'"[40] This in fact describes Turing's procedure in his paper, which begins with the question of whether an interrogator could determine via a series of questions whether he is communicating with a man or a woman who are in another room, the only connection between the interrogator and the other room being a teleprinter. Turing then flips this question into another, whereby a computer takes the place of the man, and the question becomes comparative: "will the interrogator decide wrongly as often when the game is played like this as he does when the game is played between a man and a woman?"[41] Turing then flops the question such that the man and the woman have been replaced by a discrete state machine and digital computer. But Turing flips the

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37   Latour 247.

38   Latour 247.

39   Latour 247.

40   Latour (248), quoting from Alan Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," *Mind* 59 (Oct. 1950): 433–60; this quote 454.

41   Turing, 434.

question again, asking whether we can tell a person from a computer, rather than a man from a woman.

Latour comments that "[i]n the most dramatic way, Turing … demonstrates, … that … all matters of fact require, in order to exist, a bewildering variety of matters of concern. … What would critique do if it could be associated with more, not with less, with multiplication, not subtraction. Critical theory died away long ago; can we become critical again, in the sense here offered by Turing? That is, generating more ideas than we have received, inheriting from a prestigious critical tradition but not letting it die away, or 'dropping into quiescence' like a piano no longer struck."[42] As Cage demonstrated in *4′ 33″*, the piano no longer struck rematerialises the ground of performance; in critical terms, Latour suggests, "[t]his would require that all entities, including computers, cease to be objects defined simply by their inputs and outputs and become again things, mediating, assembling, gathering."[43] The key word here is "mediating." In this context, the diagrams that Latour produces to support his contention that the process of critique is one that inevitably seeks to dematerialize fact and rematerialize it as an invisible but incredibly powerful ideology look very much like flip flop switches, except that, as Latour puts it, "there is never any *crossover*" (241; italics infra) between the two lists of objects, unlike in Turing's article on the crossover of mind and computer (or in the flip-flop switch itself). Crossover is necessary in order that "[t]hings [can] become things again,"[44] not so that their thingness can be celebrated but to enable critique to become *processual*, or, more precisely, so that things can be understood materially as media, which is what McLuhan proposed in his 1964 *Sachphilologie*,[45] *Understanding Media*. This is the trajectory of Latour's subtitle, "From Matters

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42   Latour 248.

43   Latour 248.

44   Latour 236.

45   *Understanding Media* (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1964). A *Sachphilologie* is a material philology—a philology of fact. The term is associated with August Boeckh (1785-1867).

of Fact to Matters of Concern," where matter as product is rematerialized in the form of matter as process—"concern" being etymologically associated with "relation."[46] But for Latour, computation exists only as a technology, not as a theory, as ancillary to critique and not as constitutive of it—"digitally mediated text analysis"[47] as opposed to an understanding of the ways in which the digital mediates. If for Latour "mediation is a condition of all knowledge making"[48] then theorising mediation is critically imperative. The object that deconstruction dematerialized was the medium itself. For Latour, however, media remain instrumental, ways of doing things, rather than things themselves; he can propose that enzymes are "a list of written answers to trials,"[49] without reflecting on this process as one of mediation. If Latour's understanding of the anthropocene is that it comprises "an unbounded network of attachments and connections"[50] and immense sets of data, then that network and those data must be understood mediatically.

At the end of his career, McLuhan made a critique similar to that of Latour, but ascribed it to a massive shift in cognitive function occasioned by our increasing reliance on computation. Casting his comments in terms of left brain and right brain thinking, he stated that with computers increasingly doing our left brain ("uniform, connected, stable") thinking for us, "knowing is itself being recast and retrieved" in right brain ("simultane-

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46 The meaning of "concern" as "relation" or "connection" goes back to 1589; *OED* s.v. "concern" (noun). As Latour suggests, this understanding of relation provokes " a philosophical question much more interesting than the tired old one of the relation between words and worlds" (236 n.19).

47 Caspar Bruun Jensen, "Disciplinary Translations: Remarks on Latour in Literary Studies and Anthopology," *Academia*, at http://www.academia.edu/33190428/Disciplinary_Translations_Remarks_on_Latour_in_Literary_Studies_and_Anthropology

48 Jensen, op. cit.

49   Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1987) 87.

50 Bruno Latour, "Anthropology at the Time of the Anthropocene: A Personal View of What is to be Studied," T*he Anthropology of Sustainability: Beyond Development and Progress*, ed. Marc Brightman and Jerome Lewis (London: Palgrave, 2017) 35-49; this quote 48. The essay confirms the view that Latour's understanding of media is that they are instruments.

ous, discontinuous, and dynamic") form.[51] Given that left brain thinking and right brain thinking are not independent but mutually supportive, the interface between them is of crucial importance. McLuhan argues that the mode of critique most suited to understanding the relationship between left brain thinking and right brain thinking is tetradic, rather than syllogistic, since the syllogism tends to eliminate ground (context), whereas the dynamic he is theorising functions chiasmically, via crossover, as environmental ground to figure. This understanding is crucial at a historical moment when the superfluity of information makes imperative a methodology characterized by what McLuhan termed "pattern recognition."[52] For McLuhan, the critical and theoretical problem posed by right brain thinking was "to discover a model that is congenial to our culture and its residua of left-hemisphere orientation." This dialogical approach to critique is evident in Katherine Hayles' *How We think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis*.[53] As Hayles remarks, "techniques, knowledges, and theories developed within print traditions can synergistically combine with digital productions to produce and catalyse new kinds of knowledge."[54] Hayles calls for a "theoretical framework in which objects are seen not as static entities that … remain the same throughout time but rather are understood as constantly changing assemblages that are enmeshed in networks of social, economic and technological relations."[55]

This need to bring together concepts that have traditionally been con-

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51 McLuhan with Bruce Powers, *The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21ˢᵗ Century* (N.Y.: Oxford UP, 1989) all quotes 14. This trajectory of McLuhan's thought is echoed in books such as Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers will Rule the Future* (N.Y.: Riverhead Books, 2006).

52 McLuhan, "Environment: The Future of an Erosion," in *On the Nature of Media: Essays, 1952-1978*, ed. Richard Cavell (Berkeley / Hamburg: Gingko P, 2016) 106-124; this quote 111. Originally published in *Perspecta*, the Yale architectural journal.

53 Katherine Hayles, *How We think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 2012).

54 Hayles 8.

55 Hayles 13.

sidered separate is inescapable in the era of the anthropocene, when nature has collapsed into culture.[56] Our hypermediated environment has rematerialized the medium as an epistemology of interconnection, as opposed to the infinite regress of critique that Latour laments. As McLuhan suggested, we have gone through the vanishing point. The single point of view is no longer operable. Critique has "run out of steam" because the mechanical model of transmission alluded to by that metaphor is no longer operant in a hypermediated environment. With the rematerialization of the computer as computation we enter into the anthropocene, when nature itself has become a cultural calculation.

3.

In 1970, the year of his failed artwork in B.C., Robert Smithson returned to the U.S. and produced the most compelling of his environmental artworks, *Spiral Jetty*, in Great Salt Lake, Utah. Dematerializing the traditional jetty via a spiral form that made it impracticable, he rematerialized the jetty as an artwork. Almost as soon as it was completed, the work was submerged for 20 years, Great Salt Lake being a terminal basin, and thus having no output. As a result of global warming, however, *Spiral Jetty* has recently re-appeared, and is now isolated from the water remaining in the lake, its preservation further complicated by exploratory oil drilling in the vicinity, and by Smithson himself, who intended the jetty to be a work in process.

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56 See Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 2007).

The lively voice of Critical Theory

Berlin Journal of Critical Theory (BJCT) is a peer-reviewed journal which is published in both electronic and print formats by Xenomoi Verlag in Berlin. The goal is to focus on the critical theory of the first generation of the Frankfurt School and to extend their theories to our age. Unfortunately, it seems that most of the concerns and theories of the first generation of the Frankfurt School are neglected in its second and third generations.

We believe that the theories of the first generation of the Frankfurt School are still capable of explaining many social, cultural, and political problems of our time. However, in some cases, we need to revise those theories. For example, the culture industry in our time can also work with a different mechanism from that described by Adorno and Horkheimer. In our age, the majorities can access the media and even respond to the messages which they receive – this is something which was not possible in Adorno and Horkheimer's time. But this doesn't mean that the culture industry's domination is over. Thus, we may need to revise the theory of the culture industry to explain the new forms of cultural domination in our age.

Therefore, we are planning to link the theories of the first generation of the Frankfurt school to the problems of our age. This means that we are looking for original and high-quality articles in the field of critical theory. To reach our goals, we gathered some of the leading scholars of critical theory in our editorial board to select the best articles for this journal.