

## ‡ EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

What ought philosophy do with science? This question is actually several questions, collapsing under the term “science” the scientific method, the actual practices of scientists, the array of scientific theories, and the material production of those theories. To say that one is “philosophizing” about science could include things as disparate as an excursion into the formal logic of Baysean inference, a sociological critique of a particular methodological practice, a discourse analysis of environmentalist rhetoric, a Marxist critique of Silicon Valley ideology, or any number of other approaches differing as much in method as in topic. This is precisely the problem that we faced when composing our latest call for papers on the recent renaissance of interest in science and materialism in Continental Philosophy – an upsurge obviously linked to the rise of Speculative Realism and yet also in many important respects independent from it. For a humanities scholar, grappling with science means grappling with the multiplicity of sciences, with the decentred mesh of tendrils encompassing the grounded and the abstract, the real and the ideal.

This issue of *Chiasma* embodies this multiplicity with a series of articles that consider in turns the multitudinous ways that science and materialism can function as both the subjects and objects of consideration. As is so commonly the case, the first (and perhaps eternal) task of critique is to turn its eyes upon itself and question the very terms of its inception: what science? what sciences? what material? what materiality? And what is the role of the

critic, of the philosopher, who at once imposes and responds, reads and writes, produces the critique even as the terms of criticism lie outside of their control? In pursuing these questions, the works collected here analyze the mosaic of relations between science and materiality at different points and with diverse methods, representing collectively the divergence of approaches that the problems of science and philosophy, in their very nature, call for and demand.

We open this issue with an essay by Austin Lillywhite, entitled “Relational Matters: A Critique of Speculative Realism and a Defence of Non-Reductive Materialism”. In the article Lillywhite performs a broad critique of Speculative Realism and in particular the work of Quentin Meillassoux, for whom correlationism, “is a conflation of two hundred and thirty-five years of philosophy into one master error.” Lillywhite points to the many convergences between Speculative Realist thought and the earlier poststructuralist philosophy that it attempts to dethrone – such as the convergence between Bruno Latour’s notion of “bad transcendence” and Deleuze’s concept of “molarity,” and doubles back on the latter, offering a political rejoinder to Object Oriented Ontology’s emphasis on the “autonomy” of objects paralleled in the atomism that Foucault sees in neoliberal ideology. The critique then seeks to undermine not only the terms and logic of Speculative Realist thought, but its claim to novelty as well.

The issue’s second article is Phillip Lobo’s “0. < an intervention into the critical discourse around Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* >,” which presents an analysis of the apocalypticism of Atwood’s novel in relation to its depiction of ecological disaster and the effects of the onset of the anthropocene. Lobo takes great care to emphasize the novel’s attention to ontology, writing that “[t]he question of what things *are*, and how the collapse of certain social structures undermine the very terms by which beings can be described, plays out in numerous passages,” and that “*Oryx and Crake* offers up its ontological mysteries but provides no such closure: its distinctly apocalyptic (and apocalyptically distinct) tone emerges from its refusal to do so.” The ontology of the apocalypse is integral to the logic of the novel’s ecology, evacuating the ten-

dency toward “pastoral” depictions of ecology and nature, thus undermining attempts to “domesticate” the novel by reading it as a simple attack on the hubris of science in relation to the classical dualisms counterposed to “Nature.”

The third article, “‘Zero, Zero, and Zero’: Beckett’s *Endgame*, Automation, and Zero-Player Games” by Andrew Wenaus, reads Beckett’s play as a “zero player game,” an autonomous system proceeding automatically, producing in reading and performance a state of “readerly non-involvement, diminution of agency, and, ultimately our exclusion from interpretive agency” which “encourages speculation on the rapid shift from human involvement with language as alphanumeric to that of code that proceeds according to its own logic indifferent to humanism.” This state of indifference is not merely present in the content of the play itself – in the bleakness for which it is known – but also in its structure, and in particular its metaphorical use of chess. It is a game without players, an assault on the human agency that the term “game” usually implies, and thereby “reveals itself in the thought experiment as radically unchangeable.”

The issue concludes with an interview between the Italian political theorist Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi, our interview editor Thomas Szwedska, and Dillon Douglas on the topic of technology and the subjectivity of capitalism. In their extensive discussion – touching on the philosophies of Baudrillard, and Deleuze and Guattari, the role of futurity in production, and the relationship between desire, idolation, and capitalism – Bifo, Douglas and Szwedska interrogate the material and psychological underpinnings of contemporary life. At the fore across the discussion is the social and political role of technology, how it shapes and then is shaped by the larger, if less tangible, social forces with which it interfaces.

Rounding out the issue are reviews of Jacques Rancière’s recently translated *The Lost Thread: The Democracy of Modern Fiction* by Anthony Christopher Coughlin; Michael Ruse’s critical monograph on Darwinism, *Darwinism as Religion: What Literature Tells Us about Evolution*, reviewed by Jennifer Komorowski; and Terry Eagleton’s recent introductory volume, *Materialism*, reviewed by Jeff Ray.

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–Jeremy Colangelo, Chief Editor

✚ ARTICLES

