

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

### *Disenchantment and Forms of Life*

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Disenchantment is much more than simple disillusionment with the superstitions of the past. It carries within it the promise of a rigorous affect against mystifications of all kinds (economic, political, mythological, epistemic, psychological, etc.); it also marks the apparently irremediable loss of the capacity to ‘spiritualize’ the world, and consequently it entails, in some sense, a permanent crisis of meaning.<sup>2</sup> If the problematic of disenchantment seems so pertinent again today—enveloping the misery and exhaustion of our own time, its peculiar travesty and stupidity, as well as the disgust and horror with which we are compelled to respond to it—it

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1 A preliminary note: the apparatus of the footnotes in this introduction can sometimes detract from the rhythm of the main text. Feel free to ignore it unless clarification is wanting.

2 Disenchantment as a crisis of meaning is always interpretable in multiple directions (e.g. simultaneously as loss and opportunity)—something which we hope to bring to light in the following, and which is investigated in many of the articles appearing in this volume. In debates about meaningfulness, science is often pitted against tradition. Against this tendency, Ray Brassier and other neo-rationalists have embarked on a program of understanding the crisis of meaning (which they do take to be a marker of scientific modernity) as a speculative opportunity without falling back on a facile, whiggish liberal-humanistic axiology, about science or tradition. Cf. in particular: Ray Brassier, *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Ray Brassier, “I Am a Nihilist Because I Still Believe in Truth: Ray Brassier interviewed by Marcin Rychter” in *Kronos* 16.1 (2011), <https://kronos.org.pl/numery/kronos-1-162011/>. As to the permanence of the crisis, I must thank Dylan Vaughan for pointing me to the use of a nearly identical phrase in Lyotard’s “Anima minima.” See Jean-François Lyotard, *Moralités postmodernes* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1993), 199.

is because this permanent crisis enforces its lack of meaning with ever more violence and ever less coherence. It seems that disenchantment, to say nothing of the hopelessness and anger which rightfully attend it, is currently the only *reasonable* response to the world—even if, in its reactive sense, it stands as mere *overture*.

None of us are allowed to live substantial or coherent lives. It goes without saying, I hope, such a life can only be lived in common—and it is precisely the *common* which is missing, despite the converging semblance of all modes of existence.<sup>3</sup> To be sure, the inchoateness of contemporary existence is **not at all** parcelled out evenly or with anything like the same existential and symbolic risks: the experience of the Indigenous or of the Black American, for instance, is not analogizable with my own as a white American man (even while sharing in this structural semblance).<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, what it seems is disallowed *bar none*—so long as capitalism remains the only operable mode of production—is the possibility of the construction of *forms of life*.<sup>5</sup> What we are given in recompense

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3 To take one clear example, the preponderance of the mediation of life through the interface of the screen and the platform of computation, its utter ubiquity and necessity for social reproduction on every level (from personal to infrastructural), although exacerbated by the current pandemic, only drives home this semblance of modes of existence as a basic condition of the current situation (despite the very real and extreme historical and material inequities persisting between groups, many of which are worsening). It is unquestionably the most thorough-going system of social administration, management, and manipulation ever implemented and we are all deeply entrenched within its generative affordances. It liberates the flows of capital by unmooring or modulating something approaching a maximum of relations of production while maintaining homeostasis, which represents at once our dehiscence and its effectiveness.

4 I use the definite article here (e.g. *the* Indigenous) to flag the generic or structural positionality of these experiences, not to generalize over or reduce the obvious particularity of the individuals who occupy such positions. Needless to say, these ‘positions’ are themselves dynamic and variegated along complex historical, political, geographic, and other lines.

5 I use the term ‘form of life’ in keeping with Wittgenstein’s use of the term ‘*Lebensform*’—that is to say, roughly, the collective practical nexus of a community through which the internal activity of language games and the relations between them (e.g. following a rule) become holistically significant and intelli-

are the compulsory, and seemingly ineluctable, modes of existence without form (but with structure)<sup>6</sup> that characterize the historical endowment of the present in advanced, world-integrated capitalism. Here, I treat the processes of modernization, colonization (including the transatlantic slave trade), and globalization—all underwritten by the preeminence of the capital relation with regard to all possible relations of production (or ‘non-relations’ in the case of the slave)—as *one and the same* endowment. They do not represent, as is sometimes thought, semi-autonomous but overlapping projects. One cannot make sense of any of them without understanding the historical transformation of the functional role of exchange value and its power of expansion, of binding and unbinding, etc.<sup>7</sup>

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gible. On my understanding, forms of life are material: the linguistico-practical nexus is another name for historical material, looked at from a different vantage. Accordingly, there are better and worse forms of life, and they must be available to criticism. In keeping with this latter idea, a non-Wittgensteinian use of the concept has also recently gained attention in political philosophy and critical theory, notably through the German philosopher Rahel Jaeggi, in her formidable *Critique of Forms of Life*, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge, USA: Belknap/Harvard Press, [2014] 2018). I mean to include certain dimensions of that work as well, in particular its relation to problem solving, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. *Ibid.*, 85-163.

6        Something like the distinction between structure:existence::form:life seems to be at issue in Agamben’s use of the term ‘form-of-life’ as inscribed in the difference between *zoé* and *bios*, that is, between so-called “simple life” and “politically qualified life” which he takes to be foundational for Western thought from fifth-century Athens on. While historically posed as either ethical or aesthetic, Agamben expresses the contemporary need of the problem of forms-of-life to be raised to its “ontological dimension.” See Giorgio Agamben, “Form-of-Life” in *The Use of Bodies*, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, [2014] 2015), 195-249, esp. 196, 232-233.

7        On this point, I remain a ‘vulgar’ Marxist: universal history is the history of political economy, the only field of study which accounts for our material-social reproduction. This, however, does not commit me to a linear or teleologically determinist view of social dynamics.

In the univocal characterization of historical process above, I diverge from the afro-pessimists and the scholars of what could be called the ‘ontological turn’ in the Black radical tradition (in particular Frank B. Wilderson III and Saidiya Hartman), *only* to the extent that the construction of the racial ontology

Many decades ago now, Adorno stipulated that, “there is no right life in the wrong one” (“Es gibt kein richtigs Leben im falschen”).<sup>8</sup> In response to Adorno’s pessimistic proverb about dwelling in capitalism—within which it is not life-activity itself

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of Blackness by the vested interests in the transatlantic slave trade, while not immediately economically and logistically the most efficient, was still motivated, in its symbolic register, by the class interest of the Masters to ensure the perpetual availability of the market (and *a fortiori* their economic hegemony) internationally and domestically by categorically guaranteeing their own indemnity from the consequences of the “natal alienation” of the chattel slave. It was the necessity of their finding a pseudo-natural legal principle of division which categorically divided their being from the being of the enslaved that vouchsafed their monopoly on the resource of the commodity and toil-power of slave and, in virtue of this primitive accumulation, the labour-power of the proletariat alike. Such a principle of division made it impossible for the system of chattel slavery to be overturned from within the paradigm of European class relations (since the chattel slaves had no kinship relations with the European working poor, and thus the latter had no direct class or familial incentive to abolish systematic African slavery). I agree, against Marxian orthodoxy, with Hartman and Wilderson that this process has more to do structurally with ‘accumulation’ and ‘fungibility’ than with ‘exploitation’ and ‘alienation,’ definitively marking the slave off from the worker. Exploitation and alienation—and indeed the whole category of the Human as the subject of an abstract sphere of rights from which the Slave, and subsequently Blackness (according to Wilderson) is excluded—are effects of a regime of what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘social subjection,’ whereas accumulation and fungibility—elements more proper to the base operations of capital—are constitutive of a regime of what they call ‘machinic enslavement’ through an ‘apparatus of capture.’ According to this model, the latter is the limit of the former, whose mixture is rigorously regulated in capitalism through topical applications of axioms regarding relations of production. Clearly though, in the case of the African chattel slave, this latter regime takes on a totally unprecedented form (comparing it, for example, to the wholesale public enslavement of the ancient despotic state, or to pre-modern, a-systematic forms of criminal or martial slavery). For the concepts of ‘social subjection’ and ‘machinic enslavement’ see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1980] 1987), 456-457 and throughout. For the relevant points in Wilderson, see Frank B. Wilderson III, “Unspeakable Ethics” in *Red, White, and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (Durham: Duke University Press), 1-34, esp. 14-15.

8 Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (New York: Verso, [1951] 2005), §18, translation modified.

that is wrong, but the whole horizon of that activity—Ben Ware has asked, “is contemporary society so lacking in the right forms of institutions and social practices that we are deprived of even the framework within which a fully coherent moral life might be imagined?”<sup>9</sup> While in 2016, Ware’s answer was a tentative and philosophically erudite ‘no’ (not because society wasn’t indeed lacking, but because he sought a critical means through which it might be lived in rightly), today we can only respond with a flat-footed ‘yes’. In this, we must echo Frank B. Wilderson III’s ‘crazy’ Black woman outside the gates of Columbia University, demanding back the life of her people and her couch: “...the world—not its myriad discriminatory practices—but the world itself was unethical.”<sup>10</sup> In this, we have no choice but to be disenchanted with the bankruptcy of our institutional life as a whole; disenchanted not only with its instantiation and execution (as the liberal defenders of representative democracy maintain), but with the structural principles of axiological dissemblance and evaluative destitution barring the construction of valid forms of life in general.

Today, instead of forms of life, we are offered ‘lifestyles.’ The latter are ‘dictated’ by personal preference and only second-

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9 Ben Ware, “Living Wrong Life Rightly: Kant *avec* Marx” in *Key Words* 14.1 (2016), 54-68, 54-55. One must acknowledge in relation to Ware’s question, at bare minimum, that the State’s monopoly on the use of violence is today no longer legitimate (if it ever was), and in practice has already ceased to exist: one only needs to think of citizens’ militias, private security firms, and private, for-profit prisons, to say nothing of the ubiquity of surveillance technologies, to understand the latter point. The State’s illegitimacy, in this regard, has been born out by centuries of revolutionary activity, but it has also recently been etched into clear relief in the U.S. with the latest police murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Rayshard Brooks (as well as the ‘citizen’s arrest’ murder of Ahmaud Arbery) and the subsequent events in Minneapolis, Louisville, San Jose, New York, Washington D.C., Atlanta and many other cities across the country and the world. I would argue, in fact, that this acknowledgement is *below* the bare minimum regarding the institutional life of the current United States. The entire legislative, criminal justice, political party, primary, campaign, electoral, and media system of the United States is a failed enterprise, one deliberately organized to thwart the expression of the needs and aspirations of those who live within its borders and to protect the interests of those who benefit from it.

10 Wilderson, *Red, White, and Black*, 2.

arily (by virtue of that choice) are they determined through group identity, i.e. a 'community' of preferences. The terminus of the lifestyle is tantamount to its origin: it starts and ends in the ideological poverty of the 'person'. Not far underneath all this 'personality' flow immense impersonal streams of data and capital connecting ecumenical computational and economic sublimity with the pettiest emotional banality. No sooner are we inundated with 'choice' than we are starved of value; but what is remarkable is less its presence than its utter effectiveness, the all-but-compulsory entrenchment of the social technologies underriding the lifestyle.

Despite our intolerable present, disenchantment itself is not a purely negative or reactive phenomenon. When carried through to the end, it is also a thorough-going epistemic and metaphysical program of conceptual production.<sup>11</sup> Through such a program, disenchantment holds out the means, not only of unmasking falsehoods, i.e. of performing a merely negative critique of society (useless in a world where "everybody knows" and "everything lies open to view")<sup>12</sup> but also of fashioning a substantive but implicit collective evaluative canon capable of speculatively elaborating implementable kinds of politics, economy, science, philosophy, and art orthogonal to the prerogatives of *per se* surplus, and liberated from the entrenched histories of violence through which those prerogatives emerged in their modern forms. In this latter respect, disenchantment makes contact with desire, fantasy, fabulation, and utopia, not by virtue of an ideal re-mythologization of the world (here or hereafter), but in order to make good on Marx's aim of

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11 For an interrogation of the inadequacy of the negative or merely critical moment see Jean-François Lyotard, "Adorno as the Devil," trans. Robert Hurley, *TELOS* 19 (1974): 127-137, 127: "Have we ever thought the revolution other than negatively, as nihilists, that is to say, as disorder in a change of order, as passage? So long as we continue to think it that way, we will not know what to do. The same holds for 'art'."

12 Leonard Cohen, "Everybody Knows," on *I'm Your Man* (New York: Columbia Records, 1988); Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (London: Wiley Blackwell, [1953] 2010), §192: "[...] Since everything lies open to view, there is nothing to explain."

philosophy to change it.<sup>13</sup> However, any materially justified transformation of things will only ever occur by virtue of the power of disenchanted, immanent thought to first of all ‘believe in the world as it is.’<sup>14</sup> Such is the terrible task ahead. It is the only original and implacable conceit of all philosophy—the only ‘belief’ that cannot be revoked in failure. This ‘belief’—disenchantment’s final cause—is also the clarion call of the historical materialist and the kernel of the Enlightenment (its *sapere aude!*) that cannot be corrupted by its own history or dialectic (however much we must also acknowledge its historical complicity in the destitution bequeathed to the present).

‘Belief,’ in this sense, is allied with that given to it by Peirce’s ‘pragmatic maxim,’ according to which a genuine belief is nothing but a disposition to act in some determinable way on some condition.<sup>15</sup> A belief from which no deed would ever follow is

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13 Karl Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach” *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker (New York: Norton, [1845] 1978), 143-5. Available at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/theses.htm>.

14 ‘Belief in the world’ is a theme developed by Deleuze in both *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1985] 1989), as well as in Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (New York: Verso [1991] 1994). Its political dimensions are explored in Kathrin Thiele, “‘To Believe In This World, As It Is’: Immanence and the Quest for Political Activism” *Deleuze Studies* 4 (2010), 28-45, against the claims of Badiou and Hallward that Deleuze is not a political thinker. However we don’t share the optimism and sentiment Thiele borrows from the early American tradition of Emerson. For us instead, in essence, Badiou and Hallward confuse Deleuze’s ‘involuntarism’ with quietism and apoliticism because their conception of political agency is borrowed from the Enlightenment, i.e. political agency, for them, acts always according to the will of the subject to truth. Thus they still think that truth licences individual attitudes in a natural or cosmo-theological rather than normative manner (e.g. Badiou’s ‘event’), which puts them on the side of the ‘righteous’. This is what Deleuze, in an epistemic context, has diagnosed as the ‘good will’ of philosophy. Truth’s gift and its curse—e.g. its doxastic weakness in relation to rhetoric—lies precisely in its normativity. Belief, by contrast, is of a holistic order, integrating the causal and the normative without invoking the political or epistemic metaphysical moralism of the ‘good’ will.

15 The earliest English formulation of the pragmatic maxim (one of

not a genuine belief. A belief, then, is not simply a state of mind about a state of affairs: a propositional attitude. The vocabulary of propositional attitudes offers a synchronic, idealist, and algebraic account of a phenomenon—thinking—which in reality integrates and differentiates the whole of the being of the thing which thinks with its context. The Peircean account, against the cognitivism of the propositional attitude, places the greatest part of the field of inferential intentionality well below the level of conscious articulation: at the level of habitus, and through it, the social, practical, linguistic nexus that comprises forms of life.

If so much pseudo-activity happens in the name of politics today (in representative institutions, on social media, in the Academy...), it is precisely due to a *failure of belief* in all who are too comfortable with being right or who think they have too much to risk. In that failure, they wager that to which they have no right: the destitution of the entire world, the only thing responsible for their 'righteousness' or 'good fortune.' It is they who surround themselves everywhere with what Benjamin called capitalism's deep 'phantasmagoria' in lieu of its reality, even while they claim to hunt reality down.<sup>16</sup> It is they who fail to believe in the world as it is, in its horror as much as its contingency. It is they who are quietists, however noisy they may be. Ideology, whatever the word amounts to, lurks everywhere in the true proposition uttered in the false belief. Our *belief*—if that word can hold this weight—cannot be lost to its context lest *we* be irremediably lost. This belief alone makes us capable of the formulation of forms of life which do not stubbornly cling to the mystifications of the past (among them so many notions of transcendence, sovereignty, spirit, subject, will,

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many) is as follows: "Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." C. S. Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" in *The Essential Peirce: Vol. 1 (1867–1893)*, eds. Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992 [1878]), 124-141.

<sup>16</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Paris: Capital of the Nineteenth Century" in *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, USA: Belknap/Harvard Press, 1999 [1939]), 14-26.



autonomy, etc.) or the phantasmagoria of the economic order as to a bad habit on which our self-conceptions are welded—a habit whose practical virtues in either case have been swept away with their historical conditions. It is this essential failure of belief that has long characterized the left in Europe and North America, one that can today no longer be ignored: such is the purchase of real disenchantment apart from all political faith or theological grief.

By relieving itself of its mourning, disenchantment does not abandon its history any more than it forgoes the ‘spiritualization’ of the world in view of its ‘rationalization.’ Truthfully, one earns the title of ‘form of life’ at all only by reinvesting the socially axiological ground of all thought toward the in-itself of life (a point from which the ‘rational’ cannot be counterposed to the ‘irrational’ since this ground is the very abductive wellspring of reason)—its absolute praxis or radical pragmatism. The monoculture of value (which is also its ‘multiculturalism,’ its ‘heirloom’ cultural varieties) is the value form of capital that today reputedly subsumes all others. Absolute valuation (rather than the ‘*absolute*’ value of the capital *relation*) interminably remains in spite of all, as it must, even after all the ghosts of the dead, their transcendent ‘meanings,’ linger enthusiastically only as vapours of the old age, disguised as the new. To be able to ‘believe in the world as it is,’ to see the world with an ‘uncaptive eye’ (the true gaze of resistance), then, would be the sole point at which the absence of ‘meaning’—always-already laden with an anemoiac, never-was pre-scientific humanism—is no longer considered a loss.<sup>17</sup> In the final analysis, we have no ‘meaning,’ no ‘spirit’ to lose and all sense and mind and common life to gain. As the saying once went: all we have to lose is our chains—our material and ‘mind-forged manacles’ alike.<sup>18</sup>

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17 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Notebooks: 1914-1916*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (London: Blackwell, 1969), 5e. See also, Juliette Floyd, “The Uncaptive Eye: Solipsism in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*” in *Loneliness*, eds. L. Rouner (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 1998), 109-14.

18 William Blake, “London” in *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (New York: Penguin, [1789] 2018).



It is all these valences of disenchantment—from spiritual privation to production of the new—that come under theoretical scrutiny in *Chiasma*'s sixth issue. Inaugurating the issue is “Disenchantment Redux: Marx, the Frankfurt School, and the Critique of Ideology” by Elizabeth Portella and Óscar Ralda. In this work, rich in its detail as well as accessibility, the authors elaborate at length the relationship between the concepts of disenchantment, ideology, and ideology critique, offering in-depth investigations of the theoretical relationship between Marx's and Weber's positions, as well as Adornian and Marxian rejoinders to the Althusserian understanding of ideology. Through these lucid, explanatory forays, the inherent ideological risks and as well as the critical promise of disenchantment are brought into focus—providing a well-needed and general introduction to the indissoluble links binding these concepts together—pointing the way toward fertile future work drawing on the German tradition of Marxist critical theory. Fundamentally, they argue that, “...rather than tracking disenchantment at the level of the concept, we will demonstrate that the fundamental contradictions of [the present social order] warrant disenchantment as the appropriate critical attitude in the face of increasingly pervasive ‘socially necessary semblance.’”

Second in our volume is a translation of Gaston Bachelard's “Dialogued Philosophy: Rationalism and Scientific Dialectics” by Dylan Vaughan. Although still little known in the world of Anglophone scholarship, Bachelard's early work was undertaken as a committed philosopher of science.<sup>19</sup> Through this work, Bache-

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19 Despite the relative paucity of English translation, there is an increasing appreciation for this period of Bachelard's thought in English scholarship. See for example: Mary Tiles, *Bachelard: Science and Objectivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) and “What Does Bachelard Mean by Rationalisme Appliqué?” *Radical Philosophy* 173 (2012), 24-26; Sean Bowden, “An Anti-Positivist Conception of Problems: Deleuze, Bergson and The French Epistemological Tradition” *Angelaki* 23.2 (2018): 45-63; and most recently Anna Longo, “Gaston Bachelard: from Mathematical Structures to Reality” *Glass Bead: Research Platform* (2018). <https://www.glass-bead.org/research-platform/gaston-bachelard->

lard stakes out a careful position between mathematical Platonism and hard-nosed empiricism, one which was directed against the rigid logicism of their synthesis in the project of the logical positivists, taking instead a dynamical approach entailing a complex dialectic between theory and experiment (two sides of a philosophical method which he called Applied Rationalism and Technical Materialism)—exemplified, in this essay, by the physics of the day. Besides having philosophical and historical importance which has not yet received its due (at least in English), with ideational depths yet to be plumbed, Bachelard's work here also foreshadows and precedes the anti-foundationalism in analytic philosophy of science which was to follow in the wake of Carnap and the inability of positivism to fix the grounds on which meaningful epistemic results could be generated and adjudicated (from Goodman, Sellars, and Quine, to Kuhn, Popper, and Putnam). Despite these latter thinkers reaching similar conclusions about what constitutes sound scientific practice and results, Bachelard also offers us a different “philosophical topology” of science and a method through which we can understand at once the historical and technical construction of knowledge without falling into the “imperialism of the subject.” Suggestively, Bachelard intimates—with regard to the scientific progress of ideas and their understanding—“it is necessary here to participate in an *emergence*.” Such an emergence is nothing other than the creativity proper to scientific inquiry itself, entailing not only the correlating of new facts and the updating of old models, but the development of entirely new modes of philosophical and scientific thought, modes of thought that are constructive of the world and whose consequences extend beyond the reaches of our current apprehension of them.

Following next in the issue is Hannu Poutiainen's “Anachment: An Essay on the Ontology of Moods.” In it the author seeks a middle road between disenchantment and re-enchantment in the impersonal relation of ‘mood’—connecting the experiencer with its outside in a manner that cannot be reduced to either subjective feeling or inert or brute exteriority. In re-tooling Sartre's

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early work on the theory of the emotions (within which the 'magical' declension of human experience is foregrounded) for use in a complex elucidation of the role of language through a reading of the novel *Little Big*, the parameters of Poutiainen's 'anachantment' come to express the now godless (but perhaps still divine) allure of our emotional and literary lives.

Fourth in our issue is "Non-Correlational Phenomenology: Badiou, the Logic of Appearance, and Ideology" by Sterling Hall. Hall embarks on an extended investigation and critique of the commitments of the nascent field of critical phenomenology, in which thinkers deploy the tools of phenomenology to problematize the Eurocentric, non-situated, transcendental perspective of traditional phenomenology, as well as to articulate the phenomenological dimensions of other situated groups (for example by utilizing concepts and approaches from feminist epistemology and intersectional feminist theory). At stake in the article is the relation between the fact of situated experience (as, by definition, having a particular perspective) and its constitutive role in the objective existence of a social totality. Between the two, in the 'logic of appearance,' a framework of Badiou's is introduced to allow for the development of a phenomenology that is no longer dependent on the subjectivity of 'standpoints'—as relativizing factors—which often deny the possibility of a rigorously demonstrable objective situational truth about the social totality it makes up. Without this, phenomenology (in its purely descriptive, first-personal mode) falls short of the critical tradition through which it must politicize the phenomenon without thereby subsuming it into merely subjective attitudes. Instead a critical phenomenology, of the kind Hall recommends, aims at a non-correlational politics of the situation.

Following on is Sabeen Chaudhry's "'Ghosting': Contemporary Media Technologies and 'Millennial' Temporalities." Taking on Zigmunt Bauman's, Kitler's, and Deleuze and Guattari's ideas about new post-human realities, in combination with an extended look at the *a propos* 'hauntology' of the later Derrida, Chaudhry brings to the fore the relation between the ostensibly jejune millennial social practice of 'ghosting' and the immense me-

diatic forces at work structuring the kind of subjectivation within which the temporality of ‘ghosting’ becomes diffuse. In this temporality, ‘ghosting’ signals not only the typically banal differences between generations (between ‘boomers’ and ‘millennials’) but, more importantly, it points to a discursive lacuna between the familiar relationships of ‘human’ sociality, and the de-familiarized network of ‘posthuman’ intercourse—whether romantic or otherwise.

Next, Gregor Schiemann brings us his essay, “The Transparency of Disenchantment.” In wonderfully systematic, concise, and exacting prose, Schiemann elaborates the relationship between the history and meaning of the concepts of disenchantment and transparency (from Max Weber to Byung-Chul Han), paying particular heed to the relationship between the shifting social sands of both categories and the way each has contributed to our understanding of modernity, whether in the spheres of politics, science, or communication. He concludes on the question of the future deployment of transparency, the question of whether such a future society, unlike its modern past, will be able to construct an ethics of disenchanted transparency which is not a betrayal of its own ends.

Concluding our Contributions Section is an interview, conducted by Colby Chubbs, with leading psychoanalytic and film theorist Joan Copjec. In the interview, Copjec addresses the distorted popular image of Freud, one in which the primacy of sexuality in the human psyche is often confused with the obsession with sex and the erotics of familial drama—a picture to which more than a few first-rate intellectuals after Lacan have nonetheless fallen prey. Copjec uses this clarification of the subject and object of psychoanalytic study to further elucidate Lacan’s relationship to Freud and his contributions to the tradition beyond Freud. In relation to Lacan’s understanding of the structure of desire, Copjec also details the deployment of the ‘plural subject’ of identity politics which, for Copjec as for psychoanalysis, misses the essential negativity of the subject, its ‘non-relationship,’ or the ‘extimacy’ with which desire, and consequently identity as its symptom, is

originally invested. Lastly she concludes by relaying her current work: the relations it entertains between the cinematic imaginary of Iran, the psychoanalytic theory of desire, and the medieval Islamic philosophical concept of the cloud.

In our Reviews Section, Laurence Kent begins with a review of Cecile Malaspina's *An Epistemology of Noise*, a philosophical survey of the interdisciplinary connections between the concept of noise in scientific (information theoretic), humanistic, and artistic discourse. For Malaspina, according to Kent, the role of the concept of noise represents something of a transcendental stumbling block for the endeavour of a perfect knowledge, but it also points to the ways in which it is—as a name for the unintelligible—a generative aesthetic and epistemic factum in the adventure of thought. Next is Hager Weslati's double review of the recent translation (of *Atheism*) and intellectual biography of the infamous Russo-French Hegelian, Alexandre Kojève, both by Jeff Love. There Weslati problematizes a host of themes in both Kojève and Love's work—especially Kojève's Russianness and understanding of religion—to highlight what the author sees as a pernicious and persistent scholarly caricature of the philosopher. Jeremy R. Smith follows, in like manner, in his review of François Laruelle's *Biography of Ordinary Man*. There he tackles the overdetermination by Anglophone scholarship of Laruelle as an ethical thinker, bringing into focus instead a Laruellean politics of the ordinary human through *Biography*. Lastly, we are pleased to close out the issue with Ekin Erkan's review of Catherine Malabou's recent *Morphing Intelligence: From IQ Measurement to Artificial Brains*. In their review Erkan situates the book in relation to Malabou's *oeuvre* in addition to contextualizing Malabou's thought within the several intellectual horizons it crosses: from transcendental philosophy, to cognitive and computer science, to the sociology and medicalization of brain function.