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CHANGE; TOGETHER
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Acknowledgements

Editor's Introduction

We are beyond excited to present Volume 7 of the "To Be Decided" student-run graduate journal, themed and titled *"Change; Together."* This journal is presented on behalf of the master's program in Social and Political Thought at Acadia University. This journal extends the interdisciplinary spirit of our program to institutions and departments across the country for the purpose of providing a collaborative platform where change can be thought together. In an age of disinformation, anti-relational thought, and continued marginalization of vulnerable groups, it is more important than ever to form reciprocal relationships that resist tactics of division, domination, and violence that serve the colonial and capitalist interests of the past.

The speed of change toward political policies, health care, technological innovation, economic strategies and environmental strain, have all been exacerbated due to the global pandemic of COVID-19. Following the long awaited changes to health and safety guidelines which allowed for the world to begin opening its doors, a journal theme was needed which would embody the potential for new beginnings and opportunities that were taking place across the globe. Following the 6th volume's theme of "Isolation," we felt it was important to shift focus and address the collaboration which has been, and continues to be necessary for keeping our communities safe. This is how "Change; Together" came to be. We believed that this theme would allow students from all disciplines to come together to reflect on the ways in which we are seeing our world change, not only as academics but also as humans who have lived through unprecedented change over the last three years.

In the first essay *"Situating Ruptures: Indigenous Resurgence and the Frankfurt School as Non-Repressive Epistemological Alternatives to the Imperial Paradigm,"* Erin Chetwer contributes to our theme by connecting Horkheimer and Adorno's classic critique of instrumental rationality and enlightenment thinking to more recent indigenous critiques of western ways of knowing. These approaches commonly understand the concept of experience as essential in the creation of knowledge that does not seek to disrupt and dominate human and non-human relations. The synthesis she provides is a promising entry point for imagining non-repressive epistemological alternatives to the imperial paradigm.

In Noah Khan's paper, *Whose Trust? Anti-Asian Racism and the Technologic of Dis/Trust in the COVID-19 Pandemic,* the phenomenon of anti-Asian racism in the COVID-19 pandemic is examined as it pertains to the structure of trust. Following the pandemic, studies took place which examined the use of social media bots as well as an individual's anonymity in order to conduct and engage in racist hate speech. Khan examines the use of these networks and their effect on Asian American mental health and concludes with suggestions for how one might ethically engage with a network of trust.

Kawthar Fediki contributed to our theme with their paper *Multidimensional Autonomy: The Socio-Political and Temporal Dimensions of Autonomy* by examining the social, relational and temporal implications which must be considered when considering an individual's personal autonomy. These dimensions can inform the larger context of oppression faced by individuals, as their impact can be analyzed in both an individual and mutual manner. Shifting perspective to include both the internalist and externalist positions of relational autonomy, this work analyzes the extent of the effect of oppression. By contrasting examples of the "Retro Woman", with Marina Oshana's "Taliban Woman" this paper demonstrates how oppression faced by women can be observed from their socio-political identity and context alone the temporal axis, and may continue to exist even when removed from the context wherein the oppression originated.

In his paper *Creaturely Realism, the Critique of Property and the Climate Crisis,* Ishaan Selby puts forth an analytic he calls "creaturely realism." This concept engages with the intersections of critical animal studies and forms of minority discourse to explore new modes of being within the context of climate change. By grounding alternative modes of being in the crisis of the Anthropocene, he provides a theoretical analysis of how the intersections of marginalized subjects could provide an opportunity for reorienting experience away from the project of human domination. He ultimately argues to keep interspecies minority discourse central to move beyond the limitations of an impoverished and violent humanism that has led us to the predicament that we are currently in.

Tia Glista read and reviewed Elisabeth R. Anker's book *Ugly Freedoms* with their feminist theory reading group which she co-runs. Her review provides insight into how Anker rethinks and retools meanings of 'freedom' in American political theory, art, and popular culture, working closely with Black studies, postcolonial theory, gender studies, and ecocriticism.

We thank all of our contributors and readers as we celebrate this current volume and look ahead to the next.

Managing Editors: Jordan Cassidy, Katie Fanning, Sahara Nasr
Department of Social and Political Thought
Acadia University

Situating Ruptures
Indigenous Resurgence and the Frankfurt School as Non-Repressive Epistemological Alternatives to the Imperial Paradigm

Erin Chewter
Cultural, Social, and Political Thought; Indigenous Nationhood
University of Victoria

As a result of a long history of Indigenous resistance against colonialism, Canadians are increasingly being forced to acknowledge both the extreme violence upon which our[1] occupation of these territories rests and the futility of any attempt to erase Indigenous presence from the land. Indigenous nations, as well as their legal and political orders, are here to stay; but as Michael Asch has pointed out, so too are the settlers.[2] The task now is to find some way of coexisting on these territories in a way that respects the Indigenous legal orders and diplomatic principles which govern them.[3] Anishinaabe writer Leanne Simpson emphasizes that Indigenous peoples "do not need the help of Canadians. We need Canadians to help themselves . . . to find a way of living in the world that is not based on violence and exploitation."[4] Settlers have been called upon to rediscover those aspects of our own heritage that might point the way towards a more accountable mode of relating. The present paper responds to such a task, arguing that the epistemological approach of first-generation Frankfurt School Critical Theory demonstrates several crucial points of compatibility with Indigenous epistemologies. The holistic, relational, self-reflexive, and negative theological inclinations demonstrated throughout their writings suggest that the Frankfurt School's approach to critique might be a well-suited and culturally appropriate theoretical launching point for Euro-American scholars seeking to work in tandem with Indigenous resurgence theorists in generatively refusing anti-relational, delocalized modes of knowing and being in the world. Key writings by the Frankfurt School's guiding theorists, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, will be interwoven with the insights of scholars from a wide range of Indigenous nations across North America towards elucidating the mechanisms of a deracinating imperial

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[1] I use "our" and "we" throughout, as I wish to make explicit my intended audience for this work is other Euro-descended settler Canadians.
[2] Michael Asch, On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).
[3] Taiaiake Alfred, Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 53.
[4] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance, Indigenous Americas (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 101.

paradigm, various tactics for refusing its violent mode of (anti)relation[5], and some core features of non-repressive epistemologies capable of responding to the dynamic flux of relational tensions without recourse to violence.

SITUATING THE RESEARCHER

According to both Horkheimer and the various Indigenous research paradigms consulted here, the first and most important step in any intellectual undertaking is to explicitly situate oneself relationally and identify how the task at hand emerges from and responds in service to that situation.[6] Deracination, the uprooting and dispersal of peoples from their places of belonging, and rupture, dramatic shifts in the relational matrix of existence, have played a major role in shaping the lands and relationships that inform my experience of the world. I am a settler of British descent, born on the traditional territories of the Ahondihronon people; although, by the time of my birth European colonization and warfare had largely eradicated this Iroquoian-speaking community. Through a complicated series of contact-fuelled relocations, the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples of the region were eventually squeezed onto a joint reservation in the Haldimand Tract as the settler cities of Hamilton and Toronto engulfed the western shores of Lake Ontario.[7] As settlers, my family was complicit in the colonial processes which displaced the Indigenous populations of this region. In exchange for the material benefits of such complicity, my great-grandparents also relinquished our own ancestral connections to any particular place, and today—like many second- and third-generation settlers—I cannot say for certain where we came from, nor can I provide any details about the specific land-based knowledges and traditions we might have practiced there. The settler-colonial culture that I was born into, therefore, rests upon an ongoing cycle of strategic disruptions in place-based relationships for personal material gain within an imperial-capitalist economic system.

SITUATING THE PROJECT

In all the writings by Indigenous scholars reviewed for this paper, there was a consistent emphasis on the non-inevitability of the imperial paradigm that fuels settler colonialism. They agree that there is nothing biologically inherent about Europeanness that necessitates a violent way of relating to the world. Lakota scholar Russel Means makes this very clear when he writes that "when I use the term 'European' I'm not referring to a skin color or a

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[5] I use "(anti)relation" throughout because the defining feature of this relational mode is precisely its disavowal of relationships.
[6] Max Horkheimer, "The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Task of an Institute for Social Research," in *Between Philosophy and Social Science: Selected Early Writings of Max Horkheimer*, trans. John Torpey (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 12–14.
[7] Susan M. Hill, *The Clay We Are Made of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River*, Critical Studies in Native History 20 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2017).

particular genetic structure. What I'm referring to is a mindset, a worldview which is a product of the development of European culture. People are not genetically encoded to hold this outlook; they are acculturated to hold it."[8] Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred agrees with Means on this point and stresses that the tendency to set up dichotomies based on racist essentialisms is, in fact, a central feature of the imperial paradigm that led Europeans to colonize Indigenous lands in the first place. Alfred argues that such dichotomous thinking is antithetical to an Indigenous worldview:

> It is more hopeful to listen to the way traditional teachings speak of the various human families: they consider each one to be gifted and powerful in its own way, each with something different to contribute to the achievement of peace and harmony. Far from condemning different cultures, this position challenges each one to discover its gift in itself and realize it fully, to the benefit of humanity as a whole. It is just as important for Europeans as it is for Native people to cultivate the values that promote peace and harmony. The value of the Indigenous critique of the Western worldview lies not in the creation of false dichotomies but in the insight that the colonial attitudes and structures imposed on the world by Europeans are not manifestations of an inherent evil: they are merely reflections of white society's understanding of its own power and relationship with nature.[9]

I have quoted this passage at length because I feel it perfectly articulates my rationale for the present research. If there is nothing inherently evil about Europeans, and if, according to an Indigenous worldview, all cultures ought to find a way to respect and acknowledge the gifts we can each contribute towards a common goal of peaceful co-existence, then it follows that European settlers ought to (re)search[10] within their own intellectual heritage for something true to that aim. Once (re)located, such insights might be leveraged towards what Leanne Simpson and Dene scholar Glen Coulthard call a "critical co-resistance against the convergence of forces that divide and conquer us and the Earth on which we depend."[11]

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[8] Russell Means, "The Same Old Song," in Marxism and Native Americans, ed. Ward Churchill (Boston: South End Press, 1982), 30.

[9] Alfred, Peace, Power, Righteousness, 21, emphasis added.

[10] The use of parentheses around "re" has emerged as a popular practice among decolonial and Indigenous scholars seeking to emphasize the cyclical nature of human knowledge and experience. I use "(re)search" and "(re)located" here to emphasize a process of searching again for something that can only be found by recovering its locality, that is, its situation within a nexus of temporal, spatial, interpersonal, and affective relationships that give it meaning.

[11] Glen Coulthard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Grounded Normativity / Place-Based Solidarity," American Quarterly 68, no. 2 (2016): 250, https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2016.0038.

(RE)LOCATING THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL

During my early research into Indigenous critiques of Euro-settler culture, I came across several references to "Frankfurt School Critical Theory." It was presented as one of few European intellectual traditions that, according to Yuchi scholar Daniel Wildcat, "saw in one respect or another [what] Indigenous peoples all over the world experienced."[12] I would suggest that we might attribute this alignment of insight and experience to the dramatic role played by the forces of rupture and deracination in the history and thought of both the Frankfurt School and Indigenous peoples. The Frankfurt School is the name given to a group of scholars associated with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, during the directorship of Max Horkheimer, from 1930 to 1953, and Theodor Adorno, from 1953 to his death in 1969. During this time, the Frankfurt School's predominantly German-Jewish members experienced the rise of fascism in Europe and were forced to flee to North America for the duration of the Nazi regime. During their time in the United States, they observed how capitalism was producing socio-cultural tendencies that were alarmingly reminiscent of those undergirding Nazism. Further still, the emergence of Stalinism in the Soviet Union had demonstrated that even the Left was not immune to authoritarian tendencies. The thinkers of the Frankfurt School were surrounded by totalitarianism on all sides, and yet each of these ideologies claimed to be operating in the name of freedom. In addition to these historical circumstances, the Frankfurt School was also responding to the productive tensions they saw between various major thinkers of the German intellectual tradition, namely Kant, Hegel, Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche. It is my contention that this unique positionality of the Frankfurt School enabled them to penetrate the veil of liberal rhetoric to see the dark side of the Enlightenment and its attendant myths at the core of European epistemology.

RUPTURED KNOWLEDGE

One of the crowning achievements of the Frankfurt School was a book co-authored by Horkheimer and Adorno, titled Dialectic of Enlightenment.[13] In this work Horkheimer and Adorno identify a thread of self-serving instrumentality in the Western[14] intellectual tradition that can be traced back as far the writings of Homer and

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[12] Vine Deloria and Daniel R. Wildcat, Power and Place: Indian Education in America (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2001), 38.
[13] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).
[14] I will, in following common usage, resort to the shorthand "the West" in reference to the imperial paradigm from time to time; however, I want to highlight that I am aware of the imprecise and amorphous nature of this catch-all term, especially once one moves beyond the continent of Europe to map its imperial manifestations in the colonies.

beyond. This form of rationality, they argue, was driven by a fear response to that which is incomprehensible in nature, those great forces of change (which I have named here "ruptures") that can be as destructive as they are creative. While it is perfectly rational for the fragile human body to react with fear to its potential annihilation by these forces, the particular form of rationality that came to dominate Western thought, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, is marked by a willful denial of this vulnerability, a delusion of complete control that can only be maintained through the devouring of any and all information about the source of fear: nature—or, as Russel Means would put it, the despiritualized "other."[15] This information can enable one to harness the objectified other—be it dehumanized people (slavery), despiritualized lands (resource extraction), or decontextualized knowledge (positivist science)—for personal economic gain, but the control is never complete, and so the quest is endless. Horkheimer and Adorno also highlight how such an approach to knowledge denies that we[16] are ourselves part of the very nature we seek to dominate. Given the amount of denial at the heart of such an epistemology, it can hardly be said to constitute "true knowledge" at all; rather, it is an elaborate and calculating story told in the name of self-preservation, a narrative that is clung to despite every new atrocity it engenders—even as it brings about real, existing situations of self-annihilation.

Horkheimer and Adorno's insights into the epistemological foundations of a European tendency towards dominating (anti)relational modes resonates exceedingly well with Indigenous critiques of colonial logic. In my review of the literature for this paper, Enlightenment rationalism was consistently identified by Indigenous scholars as a highly problematic framework informing the (anti)relational mode of the European imperial paradigm. Indigenous authors have repeatedly pointed to the contradiction between Eurocentric claims to progress and the depravity of the violence leveraged towards that goal. Compare, for example, the Lenape scholar Jack Forbes's observation that "what we have actually seen in the past 2000 years is not the rise of civilization, but the rise of brutality and barbarism"[17] to Horkheimer and Adorno's frank assessment that "the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity."[18] Richard Atleo, of the Nuu-chah-nulth peoples, has also commented on this apparent contradiction in the mythology informing the Western self-conception: "People who consider themselves

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[15] Means writes, "the European materialist tradition of despiritualizing the universe is very similar to the mental process which goes into dehumanizing another person." See Means, "The Same Old Song," 22.

[16] Again, the "we" here refers specifically to individuals, inclusive of myself, that have been acculturated within such a framework.

[17] Jack D. Forbes, Columbus and Other Cannibals: The Wétiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism (1979; repr., New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008), 47.

[18] Adorno and Horkheimer, Dialectic of Enlightenment, 1.

the most advanced and most progressive have brought the earth to its most advanced state of peril."[19] Indeed, even Norman Davies, a Welsh-Polish historian and author of Europe: A History, begins his chapter on the twentieth century with an acknowledgment that, "At a time when the instruments of constructive change had outstripped anything previously known, Europeans acquiesced in a string of conflicts which destroyed more human beings than all past convulsions put together."[20] Tellingly for our purposes here, Davies frames the period as a sort of anomaly, "the era when Europe took leave of its senses"[21]; he continues to state that only with the end of the Cold War "could the people of Europe resume the natural course of their development so rudely interrupted in that beautiful summer of 1914."[22] This move is a rather common one in contemporary European and Euro-American historiography and popular opinion, and yet many Indigenous scholars do not view the violence of twentieth-century Europe as a radical departure from the logic that had propelled the preceding century. In 1955, Martinique author Aimé Césaire argued forcefully that Nazism cannot be understood apart from Europe's colonial history and is, in fact, the homecoming of violent tendencies cultivated and honed in practice against non-Europeans.[23] Césaire's point can be reinforced by noting the admiration Adolf Hitler held for the British Empire, which inspired his settler-colonial schemes for German lebensraum ("living space") in the Slavic territories of Eastern Europe.[24] A further connection can be observed in Heinrich Himmler's suggestion for segregating the Roma population on reserves modelled after the reservation systems in North America.[25] While it is important to acknowledge the historical specificity of Nazism in Germany and European colonialism in North America, a striking resonance between the Frankfurt School's analysis of fascism and Indigenous critiques of colonial logic strongly suggests that these forms of violence are not unrelated, nor are they mere anomalies in an otherwise glorious history of liberal progress. Both, I would argue, arise from the dominating epistemic practices at the heart of the imperial paradigm they share.

As pointed out by both the Frankfurt School and the Indigenous scholars cited, one of the principal features of Enlightenment/colonial logic is a cyclical pattern of relational disruptions fuelled by an instrumentalizing response to fear. In Power and Place, a text oriented towards the resurgence of Indigenous pedagogies, co-authors

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[19] Richard E. Atleo, Tsawalk: A Nuu-Chah-Nulth Worldview (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), xix.
[20] Norman Davies, Europe: A History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 897.
[21] Davies, 897.
[22] Davies, 900, emphasis added.
[23] Aimé Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism, trans. Joan Pinkham, 2nd ed. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000).
[24] John Toland, Adolf Hitler (New York: Anchor Books, 1992).
[25] Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, The Racial State: Germany, 1933-1945 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Vine Deloria and Daniel Wildcat describe how the dominant Western approach to science is "reduced to essentially taking things apart—dissection."[26] The theme of epistemic deracination, the removal of knowledge from its context, is echoed by Horkheimer's observation that the disciplinary tendencies of the Western academy can only lead to a chaotic, partial, and destructive form of knowledge. By contrast, he argues that a critical philosophy must seek to uncover, maintain, and strengthen the relationships which provide meaning to isolated facts: "Reason exists in the whole system of ideas, in the progression from one idea to another, so that every idea is understood and applied in its true meaning, that is to say, in its meaning within the whole of knowledge. Only such thought is rational thought."[27] It is important to clarify a crucial distinction between the holistic methodologies advocated for here and the dominating concept of "totality." Holistic knowledge practices seek to emphasize relational connections without sacrificing the importance of that which is individual and distinct; indeed, heterogeneity is understood to be a vital source of the dynamic tensions that animate any holistic relational framework.[28] Furthermore, holistic insights are understood to be the product of a collaborative effort between many situated (and therefore limited) individual perspectives. By contrast, a totalizing paradigm isolates and scrutinizes a particular and then attempts to extrapolate a grand theory that is articulated from a falsely omniscient and singular vantage point. In the process of converting the particular to the universal, heterogeneity (and the dynamism it fuels) is sacrificed on the altar of the total system. Such systems are often rigid and non-responsive towards any new information that might undermine their pretense to totality. Horkheimer and Adorno were, for their part, attempting to carve out an alternative to a totalizing Hegelian-Marxist paradigm which they felt had failed to adequately respond to the historical realities of the twentieth century, in particular, the popularity of fascism among the working class in Germany and the non-inevitability of socialist revolution.[29] As such, an integral component of the holistic—that is, the relationally-focused—method they proposed was its commitment to remain open and responsive to the particularities of changing and diverse experiences. This commitment accounts for the dynamism and ongoing relevance of Critical

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[26] Deloria and Wildcat, Power and Place, 11.

[27] Max Horkheimer, Critical Theory: Selected Essays (New York: Continuum, 2002), 266.

[28] For a clear articulation of how Anishinaabe politics and pedagogy, for example, balance the interests of the individual and the collective, see Simpson, As We Have Always Done.

[29] For a fascinating and thorough treatment of how the Frankfurt School came to rebel against "totality" as a motivating concept in Marxist methodology, see Martin Jay, Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

Theory; it also provides the methodological imperative for contemporary critical theorists to engage with Indigenous perspectives and collaboratively theorize the connections between capitalism, fascism, and colonialism.

RUPTURED EXPERIENCE

Horkheimer's insistence upon a holistic, relational approach to knowledge is consistent with the intervention posed by Sioux author and theologian Vine Deloria. Deloria describes the Indigenous epistemological principle of correlation as "searching for the linkages that experience had taught them existed in these situations."[30] The importance of experience emerges as a major theme across the writing of both the Frankfurt School and Indigenous authors, and Deloria offers an excellent clue as to why: "experience is the undeveloped and untheorized site where the divisions between subjective and objective, material and spiritual, and an entire series of dichotomies disappear."[31] Experience cannot be integrated within the imperial paradigm precisely because it threatens to bring relationships, and all their attendant tensions, to the fore. For this reason, speaking about one's experience of deracination has emerged as a powerful tactic for challenging and disrupting the (anti)relational mode of imperialism.

Indigenous experiences of colonialism are consistently described in terms of broken relationships. The diplomatic agreements set out in treaties with European newcomers were broken. In Canada, Indigenous peoples' relationships to place were broken through forced relocations, reserves, and the pass system[32]. Kinship relations were broken as Indigenous children were forced to attend Indian Residential Schools.[33] Anishinaabe scholar Kathleen Absolon uses the term "dismemberment" to describe the effects of these schools and "to evoke an image and meaning of a forced disconnection."[34] Haida scholar Sara Davidson describes how the Canadian government's 1884 to 1951 potlatch ban was "an attempt to sever authentic connections to our history, as well as the genuine expressions of our Indigenous identities."[35] Blackfoot scholar Leroy Little Bear describes the epistemic effects of colonization as "a heritage of jagged worldviews . . . a site of overlapping, contentious, fragmented, competing

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[30] Deloria and Wildcat, Power and Place, 27.
[31] Deloria and Wildcat, 34.
[32] This policy, enforced from 1885 to 1951, ensured Indigenous people could not leave reserves without the express approval of the local Indian agent, thereby limiting access to their traditional territories.
[33] Indian Residential Schools operated from 1894 to 1997 and intentionally sought to "kill the Indian in the child" by isolating them from their families and the cultural knowledge they possessed.
[34] Kathleen E. Absolon, Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2011), 21.
[35] Sara Florence Davidson and Robert Davidson, Potlatch as Pedagogy: Learning Through Ceremony (Winnipeg: Portage and Main Press, 2018), 27.

desires and values."[36] The language of illness and pathology was another common thread across descriptions of both deracinating behaviour and its impact. Both Forbes and Friedland describe colonizers as having caught and spread the wetiko illness among their victims.[37] Alfred writes, "the celebration and defence of imperialism and its intellectual underpinnings is the worst sickness of the colonial mind."[38] Césaire declares, "a civilization which justifies colonization—and therefore force—is already a sick civilization" and "calls for its Hitler."[39] Adorno also observes how "collective delusions such as anti-Semitism confirm the pathology of the individual who shows that he is psychologically no longer able to cope with this world and is thrown back upon a purely illusionary inner kingdom."[40] These observations offered by both the Frankfurt School and Indigenous scholars seem to suggest that the imperial paradigm itself arises out of an original relational disruption (either inflicted by others or self-induced) that establishes deracination as a normative framework for relating to the world.

TRAUMATIC RUPTURES

In trying to understand the psychology behind totalizing[41] paradigms, I look to the trauma theory of psychologist Judith Herman. Herman argues that situations of extreme vulnerability (wherein one feels helpless in the face of an overwhelming force) can induce predictable psychological reactions: namely, denial and repression.[42] I want to argue that "rupture" can be perceived as just such a force. Within a totalizing paradigm even benign ruptures trigger a trauma response because they underline the vulnerabilities inherent to being-in-relationship as part of a dynamic whole marked by plurality. Such a paradigm is ill-prepared to confront these vulnerabilities because of its rigid dependence on control. Herman posits that all forms of trauma share one commonality: they arise from and produce disrupted connections. She writes that the repression of trauma is an ambiguous mechanism. On one hand, it is a merciful self-preservation reflex in response to an experience that one is not psychologically prepared to confront. On the other hand, psychological repression can lead to dysfunctional ways of relating, such as obsessions

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[36] Leroy Little Bear, "Jagged Worldviews Colliding," in Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision, ed. Marie Battiste (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 85.

[37] Forbes, Columbus and Other Cannibals; Hadley Louise Friedland, The Wetiko Legal Principles: Cree and Anishinabek Responses to Violence and Victimization (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018).

[38] Taiaiake Alfred, Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom (2005; repr., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 102.

[39] Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism, 39.

[40] Theodor Adorno, "What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?," in Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 124.

[41] "totalizing" in that it must annihilate anything which cannot or will not be incorporated into—or which challenges—its ossified and delusional self-conception as a unified and homogenous totality (for example, a pure Aryan German race or a "great" nation of hardworking white settlers).

[42] Judith Herman, Trauma and Recovery (1992; repr., New York: Basic Books, 2015).

with control or the severing of relational ties in an effort to secure some sense of safety through isolation. Building on this observation from Herman, I suggest that totalizing paradigms seek to re-establish a sense of control and safety by disavowing relational accountability to anything perceived as a threat to the current order. The potential source of rupture is marked as "other," and those who cling to the totalizing paradigm are deluded into a false sense of security and belonging within a perfectly frictionless and united totality of their own artifice.

Having articulated the proposition that we might trace the (anti)relational, deracinating tendencies of the imperial paradigm to a repressive trauma response, I feel compelled to offer several clarifications on what this does not include, namely the willful denial and obscuration of reprehensible social realities and acts of violence for which one is responsible or from which one benefits. As Tuck and Yang have acutely noted in their writing on what they call "settler moves to innocence," there are numerous mechanisms through which settlers seek to absolve themselves of complicity in the settler-colonial enterprise and the attendant burden of guilt that this might impose on their conscience.[43] Although not discussed explicitly by Tuck and Yang, one such mechanism is the downplaying or outright denial of both historical and contemporary situations of blatant violence. Such obscurantism has been and continues to be a pervasive phenomenon within Canada, from the insidious claim to "good intentions" that inevitably surfaces following every public forum on Indian Residential Schools, to the cultivated obliviousness which pervades everyday settler life, enabling Canadians to "forget" the coloniality of their state and thereby naturalize their presence on Indigenous territories. Alfred writes:

> I am convinced that most settlers are in denial. They know that the foundations of their countries are corrupt, and they know that their countries are "colonial" in historical terms, but still they refuse to see and accept the fact that there can be no rhetorical transcendence and retelling of the past to make it right without making fundamental changes to their government, society, and the way they live. For no other reason than a selfish attachment to the economic and political privileges they have collectively inherited as the dominant people in a colonial relationship, they, by cultural instinct and imperative, deny the truth.[44]

This "need to deny" is acutely distinct from the involuntary repression of a traumatizing memory in the mind of a victim or witness to atrocity (for example, the violent disruption of a life-sustaining relational nexus) or the

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[43] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.
[44] Alfred, Wasa'se, 107.

repression of a traumatizing fear one is not prepared to confront (which is the epistemological core of the totalizing paradigms that I am concerned with here), and in no way is this paper to be interpreted as collapsing the distinction between the repression of trauma and the suppression of guilt. In 1959, Adorno wrote an essay reflecting on the notion of "coming to terms with the past," a phrase which had been enthusiastically taken up in post-war Germany and leveraged to facilitate a studied amnesia amongst Germans who had been complicit with Nazism. He firmly asserts, "the forgetting of National Socialism should be understood far more in terms of a general social situation than in terms of psychopathology . . . The effacement of memory is more the achievement of an all-too-wakeful consciousness than it is the result of its weakness in the face of the superiority of unconscious processes."[45] Accordingly, I want to emphasize that although the anti-relational modes of the imperialist paradigm may arise from repressive reactions to trauma, the repressive move does not include the denial of self-incriminating facts, nor does it excuse the violence of deracinating behaviours. Such a framework does, however, provide useful insights as to how one might interrupt the cycles of deracination and thus force a generative rupture within the imperial paradigm. Repression is not the only possible response to fear, and even if a traumatic response has been induced, the traumatic episode can be worked through and integrated, thereby re-establishing healthy relational modes.[46] Based on her clinical practice as a psychologist working with patients suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, Hermann notes that healing is achieved through a radical acceptance of vulnerability, the extension of good faith to others, and the instigation of one's own life-affirming ruptures[47] where necessary, all of which, are characteristics shared by the Frankfurt School and the Indigenous epistemologies researched for this paper. These are intellectual traditions committed to relationality, self-reflexivity, and epistemic humility.

SITUATING RUPTURES

As noted previously, the Frankfurt School's willingness to interrogate its own conceptual foundations and uncover the contradiction at the heart of "Enlightenment" led them to not only see that truth, which Indigenous people experienced[48], it also led to a methodological approach that meaningfully integrates and acknowledges the

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[45] Adorno, "What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?," 117.
[46] Herman, Trauma and Recovery.
[47] For example, leaving an abusive relationship or disrupting patterns of self-harming behaviour. Audra Simpson's notion of generative refusal is an excellent example of a more explicitly political manifestation. See Audra Simpson, Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life across the Borders of Settler States (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 11, 22.
[48] My emphasis here is intended to recall the earlier quote by Wildcat, but it also gestures towards the crucial role played by vision and experience.

subjectivity of the knower. Amy Allen has argued convincingly that the call for such self-reflexivity was, in fact, the primary argument of the Dialectic of Enlightenment. According to Allen,

> On [Horkheimer and Adorno's] understanding, the concept of enlightenment is not in itself barbaric or totalitarian; rather, it is deeply ambivalent, in the sense that it contains the potential to descend into barbarism and totalitarianism. But it contains other potentials as well, including the potential to reflect on its own regressive tendencies, to hold up a mirror to itself, and to break through its own limits.[49]

In other words, without self-reflexivity and epistemic humility, the quest to confront fear through the acquisition of knowledge will be doomed to continually recreate the very conditions of fear it sought to overcome through blind domination. This brings to mind Atleo's telling of the Nuu-chah-nulth story about Son of Raven, who sought to acquire light for his community from the sacred box in which the Creator kept it.[50] Atleo tells us that this light is "a symbolic representation of a way of life, embodying the supreme constitution for all life forms."[51] After several failed attempts, spoilt by Son of Raven's tendency to act brazenly on account of his strong desire to do great deeds, he is finally able to succeed by becoming "a tiny, insignificant leaf."[52] Atleo writes that this story is an illustration of how to best approach knowledge acquisition using the oosumich method, which he translates as "'careful seeking' in the context of a 'fearsome environment'."[53] Once Son of Raven brought this light back to his community, "they found that this light enabled and illuminated as many lifeways and points of view as there are life forms."[54] Through this story, one can see how epistemic humility leads to forms of knowledge which are intimately bound to a respect for ontological plurality, inclusive of spirituality. Building off the insights offered by Indigenous scholars and the Frankfurt School, we might suggest that it is precisely such plurality which a totalizing paradigm, like that which drives imperialism, cannot tolerate because it has no sublimating epistemic mechanisms for coping with the fear engendered by encounters with that which is unknowable to the paradigm in its extant form. A totalizing paradigm refuses to accept the attendant rupture that such encounters demand of it, and instead seeks to violently suppress its fear through posturing as a self-sufficient, all-knowing unity apart from and superior to whatever stokes its fears.

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[49] Amy Allen, The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 21.
[50] Atleo, Tsawalk: A Nuu-Chah-Nulth Worldview, 7–10.
[51] Richard E. Atleo, Principles of Tsawalk: An Indigenous Approach to Global Crisis (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 7.
[52] Atleo, Tsawalk: A Nuu-Chah-Nulth Worldview, 71.
[53] Atleo, 74.
[54] Atleo, Principles of Tsawalk, 8.

Forbes observes that, rather than embrace a holistic analysis inclusive of spiritual aspects of existence, Europeans "allow myths and dogmas to distort or predetermine their conceptions," concluding that, "many Europeans cannot tolerate mystery."[55] Embracing unknowability, then, becomes an integral part of refusing the (anti)relational mode. In the story about Son of Raven, Atleo emphasizes that the specific contents of the Creator's box of light "must remain unutterable"[56], a remark which suggests a further point of resonance with the Frankfurt School. Adorno and Horkheimer's later writings exhibit a theologically-inspired turn towards negation, wherein the task of critique is to approach knowledge not through the hubristic positing of universal ideals and objective facts but rather through a subjectively situated account of what it is not: "[philosophy] can profess its allegiance to a possible positive solution only by denouncing the conditions which make such a solution impossible . . . It cannot prescribe how people are to escape from the charmed circle of the status quo; it can only seek to give the charm a name."[57] One cannot name the ideal form of anything, be it human relationships to the world or revolution. This epistemic tactic of generative negation simultaneously holds open the space for plurality while also keeping alive a hope for "something else"— another way, another world beyond the limits of what is currently known or experienced. The notion of an unnameable "something else" permeates the later writings of both Adorno and Horkheimer, and I would argue that their integration of this negative theological motif is one of the strongest points of alliance between the Frankfurt School and those Indigenous scholars for whom a relationship to the sacred cannot be excluded from a truly holistic understanding of the world, even if it must remain unutterable.[58]

In this paper I have sought to articulate the contours of an imperialist paradigm fuelled by the denial, repression, and disruption of relationships—a process I termed deracination. I have also sought demonstrate how the positionality of the Frankfurt School, as German-Jewish scholars surrounded by the totalitarian tides of the 1930s and 40s, led them to develop Critical Theory as a methodological intervention, one which resonates well with the core principles of Indigenous epistemologies as they are presently being articulated and practiced by Indigenous scholars seeking to disrupt the dominating knowledge practices behind colonialism. Their shared commitment to holistic, relational, and self-reflexive forms of knowing makes the Frankfurt School a promising site of inspiration

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[55] Forbes, Columbus and Other Cannibals, 183.
[56] Atleo, Principles of Tsawalk, 8.
[57] Max Horkheimer, Critique of Instrumental Reason, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, Radical Thinkers (1974; repr., London: Verso, 2012), 32.
[58] See Atleo, Principles of Tsawalk; Deloria and Wildcat, Power and Place; Forbes, Columbus and Other Cannibals; Little Bear, "Jagged Worldviews Colliding."

for Euro-settler scholars looking to develop culturally appropriate and situated methodologies for their work alongside and in support of the projects of Indigenous resurgence and decolonization in the territories currently claimed by the Canadian settler state.

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Whose Trust?

Anti-Asian Racism and the Technologic of Dis/Trust in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Noah Khan

Ontario Institute of Education

University of Toronto

When thinking through the pandemic, the concept of institutional trust quickly surfaces; one then rightly asks, "How can I rebuild trust?"; however, to suppose that trust can be rebuilt implies a certain logic with respect to the concept of trust. This logic implies an instrumentalism, a structure that can be broken and pieced back together. Forward and backward, it is assumed that parties can move on the spectrum of trust, to offer the logic a fair level of flexibility that is still not enough to give an adequate account of it. It is important to understand the movement of the spectrum itself, through time and space. This history of trust then informs the ways in which trust is co-created, between parties but even still there are further issues. The spectrum is not only from one point to another, but rather a complex network of nodes wherein definite parties become confused and blurred. On top of this, through this increasingly complex, moving network, one must create plans to increase trust in the future tense, accounting for the elusive, transient present. After beginning with a historical context of the late 1800's U.S.A., I will demonstrate the ways in which technological relations affect networks of dis/trust by examining the breakdown in trust between Asian Americans and their fellow citizens in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. After documenting the immense oppression resulting from this loss of trust, I will look to the future of creating trust, problematizing the notion of connection through the aforementioned oppression.

The Temporality of Trust

It is well understood that repeated violations of trust diminish an individual's propensity to trust;[1] however, I would like to propose that this understanding lacks a degree of complexity that comes with temporality. To begin,

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1. Wouter van den Bos, Eric van Dijk, and Eveline A. Crone, "Learning whom to trust in repeated social interactions: A developmental perspective," *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 15, no. 2(2011): 244.

there are a host of examples of anti-Asian racism throughout U.S. history. One can look to governmental legislation such as the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the first racial-based exclusion law, which suspended Chinese immigration to the U.S. for ten years in response to a belief that Chinese individuals were a threat to U.S. culture,[2] or the 1922 Cable Act that prevented Chinese immigrants from becoming citizens even after marrying a U.S. citizen.[3] To be sure, this sentiment was not restricted to the public sector, as can be seen in the example of an 1886 soap advertisement that pushed "for kicking the Chinese out of the U.S."[4]

While it may be simple to agree that these are violations of trust, one must explore the ways in which they violate trust to fully grasp the temporal nature of trust. One can say that these violations are simply events along a linear notion of time, thus aligning with the theory of repeated violations as previously mentioned.[5] However, I would like to propose that these violations change the very way in which trust is negotiated. In these cases, trust is not negotiated between two distinct parties of people, but also two identity markers. In cases of anti-Asian racism, it is not just the Asian Americans that are being negotiated with (if it can be called negotiation in these instances), but also the identity marker of "Asian." As such, these violations do not simply diminish the propensity of the individual oppressed at that time to trust their fellow citizens, but also the propensity of Asian Americans of the future, that are identified as Asian, to do so. In this way, the temporality of trust is not only limited to the space-time between two parties, but across history, in that the parties of trust were identity markers rather than individuals, despite individuals bearing the effects.

The Present Pandemic

While many results of violations of trust bear resemblance to past instances such as hate-inspired violence, advances in technology have also shaped the ways in which trust is co-created as well as the networks involved, and thus changed trust violation. From past to present, violence is no stranger when trust falls through. As of July 2020,

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2. Thomas K. Le et al., "Anti-Asian Xenophobia and Asian American COVID-19 Disparities," *American Journal of Public Health* 110, no. 9(2020): 1371.

3. B. L. Wilson, "Virtual Town Hall Examines Anti-Asian Racism" *GW Today*, April 20, 2020.

4. B. L. Wilson, "Virtual Town Hall."

5. van den Bos, van Dijk, and Crone, "Learning whom to trust," 244.

Asian Americans experienced an enormous surge in hate crimes against them,[6] mere months after the COVID-19 pandemic had begun. Hate crime is dishearteningly a familiar feature of society, but the level of amplification and mass of networks (e.g., Twitter) is new. In a study conducted on hateful tweets during the pandemic, a dataset of over 30 million tweets was compiled, containing tweets relating to anti-Asian hate. It not only found that there were 900,000 hateful tweets and a mere 200,000 counter-hate tweets, but also that bots made up only 10% of the hateful users, and that hateful bots were much more successful in attracting followers than counter-hate bots. As well, it was found that counter-hate messages (which were identified via a set of anti-racist hashtags) can discourage users from becoming hateful in the first place.[7]

Beyond the sheer size of hate (which is both the cause and consequence of distrust), the positionality in space-time is altered by social media's resistance to geographical localization. With the understanding that users can be largely anonymous and that the targets of hate can be ambiguous, the question must be asked: Whose trust is being broken? The present pandemic presents a situation that further complicates understandings of trust. The network of trust is massively amplified through increased social connection via social media, but the nodes of connection are blurred by anonymity. As such, an Asian American in a context where meaningful discourse occurs online may not be able to know between which party a loss of trust has occurred. Thus, to state the problem, distrust becomes an insidious, visible yet invisible, state of being. One must walk through one's society unsure of their levels of trust with any given party, breeding anxiety, fear, and discomfort. This can be seen in a massive increase in the Asian/White mental health gap, which displays that Asian Americans have suffered disproportionately in the area of mental health in relation to White individuals during the pandemic,[8] as well as in indicators that heavily point to a further decrease in mental health for Asian Americans in the coming future.[9] With the issue of trust now taking on

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6. Angela R. Gover, Shannon B. Harper, and Lynn Langton, "Anti-Asian Hate Crime During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Exploring the Reproduction of Inequality," *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 45, (2020): 648.

7. Caleb Ziems et al., "Racism is a Virus: Anti-Asian Hate and Counterhate in Social Media during the COVID-19 Crisis," CLAWS, May 25, 2020.

8. Cary Wu, Yue Qian, and Rima Wilkes, "Anti-Asian discrimination and the Asian-white mental health gap during COVID-19," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 44, no. 5(2020): 820.

9. Supriya Misra et al., "Psychological Impact of Anti-Asian Stigma Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Call for Research, Practice, and Policy Responses," *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* 12, no. 5(2020): 462.

a deeply-rooted, insidious nature, one must look to the ways in which this issue implicates itself into other conceptual structures, given its departure from previous understandings of trust.

Networks of Love

It is without question that love, compassion, and care (I will use the three interchangeably) rely upon relationships of trust. What all four of these concepts harbour in common is a feeling of togetherness, connection, or relation; however, as has been seen, the very nature of trust is warped given different technological settings that affect feelings of togetherness, connection, or relation. This then raises the question as to whether the expression of love is contingent upon technological considerations. This is quite a considerable departure from the most prominent pedagogical theories of love and will require substantial deliberation.

Pedagogical theories have long centred love as a lens through which to engage the world, emphasizing oneness, camaraderie, and most importantly to the ends of this paper, compassionate interconnected subjectivity. The notion of compassionate interconnected subjectivity is used as a way in which to understand love in the works of two of the most prominent pedagogical scholars: Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*[10] and *Pedagogy of the Heart*[11] and bell hooks' *All About Love*.[12] In these works, love is represented as compassionate interconnected subjectivity, posited as an ideal towards which one must strive to truly reflect one's deeply interconnected nature. However, what they do not capture are the technological aspects of love—the operation of love within material constraints such as space-time. Emblematic of this consideration is the work of Helen Fisher in *Anatomy of Love*[13]. Fisher discusses love from a biological anthropological perspective, recognizing the neurological and psychological components of love that are undoubtedly affected by technological circumstance. It is clear that in this perspective, while I may or may not be infinitely interconnected with those inhabiting the universe, I cannot actually evoke the feeling of love without being able to do so under material constraints (i.e. I cannot love someone who I am not even

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[10] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2018)

[11] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Heart* (Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2021)

[12] bell hooks, *All About Love* (Harper Perennial, 2000)

[13] Helen Fisher, *Anatomy of Love: A Natural History of Mating, Marriage, and Why We Stray* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2016)

aware of). Taking this perspective forward, technological considerations become incredibly important for the conceptual analysis I intend to engage in.

Fragmentations

Within the latest information and communication technologies, it is often argued that one is the most connected they have ever been; however, as has been explored with the concept of trust, one must explore the ways in which connection itself must negotiate with the form it is being made through. To do this, one must carefully consider the technological functionalities of a given medium, I shall dilate upon several. In Martin Heidegger's *The Question Concerning Technology*,[14] he takes the stance that Being is revealed through a type of concealing, that the only way in which the world can be made intelligible is through the concealing of some ontological truth. Yet, if one takes it to be true that all Being is in some way interconnected, it does seem apparent that one can move closer or further from understanding the Other through connection and knowledge of various kinds. One might readily admit that it is easier to connect with another individual through one medium over another. For example, developing connection within a Zoom meeting quite obviously is easier than engaging with another individual through an asynchronous, anonymous message board; the differences here being largely technological. Thus, it seems that my ability to *be* with another person (love them, trust them, etc.) is mediated by varying levels of technological constraints; I shall term these *onto-technological fragmentations*.

Recalling the large amount and proportion of anti-Asian hateful tweets found during the pandemic,[15] one now has points of examination to discern the ways in which connection, a foundational pillar of trust, was shaped and altered through various onto-technological fragmentations. The onto-technological fragmentation of note (among many) is anonymity. Anonymity appears to be a fragmentation because it separates one's ability to connect with another through nominal identification, a convention of quotidian operations. As I go through my life, I expect to be able to tie the content of my engagement with another individual to a certain name to distinguish it from

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[14] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings, revised and expanded edition* (Routledge, 1993)

[15] Caleb Ziems et al., "Racism is a Virus."

content associated with someone else; this is meaningful in the majority of interactions humans have where identifying features cannot be escaped (through vision of someone's physicality, hearing of someone's voice, etc.). However, anonymity serves to flout this conception of connection. In the technological space of Twitter (through the usage of a Twitter handle), acts of anti-Asian racism lost their identifying anchor; one cannot tell if two different users (whether hateful or not) are in fact the same user, where the user is located, what they look like, or any other useful information one might readily desire if power is being enacted upon oneself. Without this critical information, one loses a key touchstone for navigating the world. Audiey C. Kao describes this as "hesitancy and trepidation about walking out the door…because some hate you enough to harm you…just because of how you look."[16] In this way, one can see how the onto-technological fragmentation of anonymity severs the connection necessary to both physically and mentally navigate a connected world (which might manifest in hesitancy to physically leave one's abode or negative mental health outcomes, respectively).

However, to view anonymity in this fashion is to operate under Heideggerian pretenses, that onto-technological fragmentations empiricize the human into a historical reality rather than an agent acting on and with constraints. In *History of Sexuality*,[17] Michel Foucault rearranges power (which onto-technological fragmentations constitute) to be rearticulated as a form of generative production with his conception of biopower. To examine the ways in which onto-technological fragmentations can serve as not only constraints, but as levers for production, one needs only to revisit anonymity with a different ethical choice. The prior example presumes that one wants to navigate the interconnected world using the structure of identification, which is a choice made in the realm of ethics. If one takes a different ethical route and subordinate identification, anonymity proves to be an effective onto-technological fragmentation through which to navigate the interconnected world. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, anonymity also allowed Asian Americans and others to express anti-hate in a way that keeps

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[16] Audiey C. Kao, "Invisibility of Anti-Asian Racism," *AMA Journal of Ethics* 23, no. 7(2021): 507.

[17] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: Introduction* (Pantheon Books, 1978)

themselves relatively safe and untargeted. For many marginalized groups, subverting the gaze of the hegemon is a useful navigational tool, as has been widely noted in the fields of feminism, and Islamic studies.

With both negative and positive results stemming from the conceptual analysis of connection, it becomes rather difficult to discern how one might move forward in an age of rapid technological advancement and thus rapid conceptual change. However, hidden within the two (Heideggerian and Foucauldian) sides of examining the onto-technological fragmentation of anonymity is the navigational hinge. In both cases, the polarity of anonymity's effect is determined by the way in which a given individual desires to navigate the interconnected world. It is thus necessary that an ethical choice be made in order to discern the path forward: How might one best navigate the interconnected world? To this end, I shall delve a little deeper into who the 'we' might be.

Forming the Future of Trust

To answer, "Whose trust?": The answer is simply 'yours'. Regardless of whether you are hateful, counter-hateful, trusting, distrusting, Asian, or not, when the parties have become anonymous, the parties have become you. One may have trouble experiencing this when they are the privileged party and do not feel distrust towards Asian Americans, but it can be understood clearly. If an Asian American, due to advances in technology, must face massive, anonymous waves of hate, they cannot be sure who in their environment is hostile to them, how many people are hostile to them (due to bots and the global nature of social media), nor even the level of hostility (due to the limited expression inherent to social media), among other unknowns. Due to this, along with historical oppression, the structure of trust becomes universalized. Each citizen becomes a source of potential violence, fear, and uncertainty.

However, we do not have to simply accept this as the new normal. I purport that we have a politico-ethical responsibility to take up this issue of trust in the modern age along several lines. As I have demonstrated, trust in this case (and many other similarly identifiable cases) is not between myself and another, but rather, myself and everyone. In the new technological power structures that we find ourselves in, striated with onto-technological fragmentations, there is an ethical imperative to orient oneself toward transparency and togetherness rather than

anonymity and isolation. The imperative can be built upon many foundations, but the biological anthropological foundation makes the case clearly. In order to deal with the challenges of life such as pandemics or regimes of racism, an individual is not enough. One must be able to connect with others to prosper through trusting relationships and thus is ethically obligated to maintain structures of connection they must necessarily draw on in order to navigate human life effectively. This conclusion, although based in different foundations, expands upon Simone de Beauvoir's central argument in *Pyrrhus and Cinéas*,[18] that we must work to design, develop, and maintain the structure of equality. Focusing directly on materially human affairs, this structure cannot exist without the necessary components of connection and trust, upon which relationships can be built in order to solve the pressing issues that face humans as a species.

Therefore, it follows that one might take up this duty in personally, without anonymity, expressing counter-hate. We must recall that counter-hate can prove effective at halting hate before it begins.[19] However, this is not the only way to go about the maintenance of a structure of trust nor the point of most salience. The key problem, as we have seen, rests in the anonymity. Size can be countered with oppositional size, but an invisible opposition blurs the entire network of trust. As anonymous hate and distrust attempts to draw the world into darkness, it is we who may project ourselves into the vast night as a constellation of stars that guide us to trust, for while the hateful individuals may inhabit the shadows, we do not lose access to the light we possess. Both in and out of trust crises, we must position ourselves without anonymity as allies to the structure of trust we know we can navigate in order to avoid being forced into anxiety and general discomfort. I have demonstrated the universalization of trust in situations such as the widespread anti-Asian racism I have engaged; thus, if one desires trust and security against this and other forms of racism and/or oppression, it follows that one has a responsibility to light up their node on the network of trust through public expression. For even if you do not require that network now, there may come a time when you will, when the weight of oppression is too heavy for you to lift on your own.

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[18] Simone de Beauvoir, "Pyrrhus and Cinéas: A Cette Dame," *Simone de Beauvoir: Philosophical Writings* (University of Illinois Press, 2004): 77–151.

[19] Ziems et al., "Racism is a virus."

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Multidimensional Autonomy:
The Socio-Political and Temporal Dimensions of Autonomy

Kawthar Fedjki

University of Waterloo, MA Philosophy

I. Introduction

Per sociologist Robert L. Barker, oppression is defined as "the social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual group, or institution."[1] The extent of the impact that oppression can have on a person's life can be measured on various axes. Although it can affect individuals on distinctive levels, two impactful aspects include the social-political sphere and the temporal element. The socio-political dimension is ruled by both "subtle and not so subtle forms of inequality and oppression" that are systemically driven and furthered by cultural contexts and governmental infrastructure.[2] The temporal dimensions, wherein the autonomy of the self is extended, are driven by any changes that occur across time. Both of these levels are of great importance to the discussion of autonomy, such that their effects ought to be analyzed individually and in tandem with one another.

Despite the impact that these levels have on autonomy, the subject itself remains broad and complex. Two general schools of thought within philosophical discourse surrounding autonomy are the internalist and externalist views. Put simply, the internalists determine autonomy by considering internal states of mind and how the external world causally impacts these mindsets, thereby impacting autonomy. In contrast, the externalists hold that while agent psychology is important, it does not represent the entire scope of impact, and so they consider external circumstances as well. While the current views illuminate some considerably important facets of what it means to be autonomous and how this autonomy is hindered or extended, they are not comprehensive. Aside from a brief mention of socio-political and temporal impacts on autonomy, externalist and internalist views do not comprehensively address these dimensions, thus rendering the existing views unable to properly understand impacts on autonomy.

This paper will attempt to discuss *how* the present frameworks understand oppressive constraints in terms of temporal limitations and socio-political implications, in order to determine to what extent these oppressive

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[1] Barker, Robert L. *The Social Work Dictionary*. 5th ed. (Washington, DC: NASW Press, 2003), 307.

[2] Rebekah Johnston, "Personal Autonomy, Social Identity, and Oppressive Social Contexts," *Hypatia* 32, no. 2 (2017): 312.

constraints impact autonomy. I will begin by briefly distinguishing externalist and internalist views on autonomy, focusing on those illustrated by Paul Benson, John Christman, and Marina Oshana. I will then outline the parameters of an example involving the experience of being a woman, and what the insinuations on individual autonomy are with regards to the aforementioned constraints. Responses to the example will be discussed from the perspective of the philosophers, before demonstrating that the interpretations are missing some crucial aspects that render them unable to properly consider within their scope the impact that the temporal and socio-political constraints have on autonomy.

II. The Views

In the vast expanse of philosophical discourse surrounding relational autonomy reside the internalist and externalist perspectives. The internalist views focus on how the external, social world impacts the internal life of agents, on whom a minimal "requirement of rationality" is imposed to ensure that their decisions maintain a certain level of independence free from coercion.[3,4] These views can be further divided into subtypes, including the proceduralistic accounts, as well as the strongly and weakly substantivist accounts. The external views of autonomy are tied to internalist theories in that they are some combination of internal views and external circumstances. They are defined by the notion that "the conditions required for autonomy play a constitutive and causal role" wherein an agent's psychological profile is important, but not sufficient.[5]

John Christman, in "The Historical Conception of Autonomy," holds an internalist view that relies heavily on a person's life history and its impact on their autonomy. By viewing the self as having "temporally extended elements," Christman considers the "flow of events" that make up a person's identity over time.[6] This is part of his notion that "narrative coherence" is important for agents to be able to reference and utilize past experiences when making decisions in the present, so that these choices do not come about spontaneously.[7] As such, the introspection that is required for these decisions is itself "temporally extended phenomena."[8] He views autonomy as being a form

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[3] Natalie Stoljar, "Relational Autonomy and Perfectionism," *Moral Philosophy and Politics* 4, no. 1 (2017): 28.

[4] Natalie Stoljar, "Autonomy and the feminist intuition," in *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self,* ed. Mackenzie, Catriona and Natalie Stoljar (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 103.

[5] Natalie Stoljar, "Relational Autonomy and Perfectionism," *Moral Philosophy and Politics* 4, no. 1 (2017): 28.

[6] John Philip Christman, "The Historical Conception of Autonomy," in *The Politics of Persons: Individual Autonomy and Socio-Historical Selves.* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 137.

[7] Ibid, 138.

[8] Ibid, 138.

of "self-government," which is one's ability to direct their own life from their "own perspective rather than be manipulated by others or forced into a particular path by surreptitious or irresistible forces."[9]

Furthermore, he proposes that "authenticity or nonalienation" be considered "necessary" conditions for autonomy.[10] By understanding whether an agent is authentically endorsing the decisions that they are not alienated from, Christman posits that a clearer picture of autonomy can be presented. According to Christman, alienation is psychological in nature and decidedly involves more than simply failing to identify with a trait; rather, it "involves feeling constrained by the trait and wanting decidedly to repudiate it."[11,12] On the other hand, authenticity involves an internal conception of traits or ideas as accepted extensions of the temporally extended self, rooted in "integrity or general faithfulness to one's central values."[13] According to his proceduralistic account, a person can lack authenticity and still maintain autonomy – because although alienation (or lack thereof) is a determinant of authenticity, the two can be substantively distinguished as sub-conditions. This is to say that a person who lacks authenticity because they feel alienated from their decision can still have autonomy, but a diminished version of it. A person who is putting on a "charade" of authenticity, wherein there is a lack of integrity to their values, must also demonstrate that the ideals are "external" to their identity and "intolerable" to their temporally extended self-conception in order to lack autonomy.[14] So, to be considered as autonomous, a person must acknowledge the ideals as being part of their practical personal identity and tolerated as part of their self-conception.

In Paul Benson's "Authority and Voice in Autonomous Agency," he outlines his weakly substantivist internalist view of self-authorization. This self-authorization posits that for agents to have genuine ownership over their actions, they must actively treat themselves as having authority, with reflexive attitudes that promote it. It is a more comprehensive and encompassing response to the "narrow" views of autonomy.[15] The view that Benson endorses concerns a self-governance that is itself governed by conditions that necessitate agents to "take ownership"

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[9] Ibid, 134.

[10] Natalie Stoljar, "Relational Autonomy and Perfectionism," *Moral Philosophy and Politics* 4, no. 1 (2017): 39.

[11] Ibid, 39.

[12] John Philip Christman, "The Historical Conception of Autonomy," in *The Politics of Persons: Individual Autonomy and Socio-Historical Selves.* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 143.

[13] Ibid, 159.

[14] Ibid, 159.

[15] Paul Benson, "Taking Ownership: Authority and Voice in Autonomous Agency," in *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism: New Essays*, ed. John Christman and Joel Anderson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 102.

of their motives and subsequent actions, by engaging the "active and reflexive features" of ownership.[16,17] As such, this view considers the authority of autonomous agents based on their will, not whether their authorized motives are authentically theirs.

The authority that he argues for must be externally bestowed unto agents, who internally endorse it within themselves simultaneously. It is not enough to simply assign a "*de facto* control" over agential properties, by assuming that agents inherently have authority.[18] It is crucial to consider that agential persons are limited by aspects such as social circumstances, bound by the "needs and interests" of those within their spheres, as well as the institutions that govern them.[19] The relational levels of ownership can be implicit or explicit, requiring consideration of the external factors that impact them and their application.

For Benson, an important aspect of self-authorization is that agents have the authority to conduct themselves in certain ways *and* the authority to be held responsible for their autonomous actions. In this way, they can answer for what they do, regardless of their moral or legal awareness at the time. Benson holds that they are still held responsible even in times of "trivial action or authentic ambivalence," where they do not hold unequivocal support for their actions.[20] Thus, if they are able to speak to their actions when faced with any criticisms, then they are considered autonomous agents with ownership.

In a deviation from the internalist positions held by Benson and Christman, Maria Oshana presents an externalist view of relational autonomy. On her account, people who are "subject to 'domination' or the possibility of arbitrary interference" throughout their lives "do not have 'substantive' independence" and cannot be considered as autonomous.[21] Due to the oppressive domination to which they are subjugated, agents are affected by a form of "practical disability" that renders them unable to be in proper and complete control of their own lives.[22] As such, these agents lack "substantive autonomy."[23]

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[16] Ibid, 102.

[17] Ibid, 107.

[18] Ibid, 107.

[19] Ibid, 108.

[20] Ibid, 108.

[21] Natalie Stoljar, "Relational Autonomy and Perfectionism," *Moral Philosophy and Politics* 4, no. 1 (2017): 31.

[22] Marina Oshana, "Social-Relational Autonomy," in *Personal Autonomy in Society*. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 70.

[23] Ibid, 73.

Oshana also discusses the plethora of conditions and circumstances that can impact autonomy. There are "psychological, historical," and "procedural competency" requirements that agents ought to meet in order to be considered autonomous.[24] However, Oshana argues that even if these conditions are met, an agent can still be considered as non-autonomous by virtue of their "social circumstances."[25] These social criteria are external, objective, and neutral with regards to the psychological state of the agent and their inner workings. As such, for Oshana, autonomy is based on the "social-relational" aspects that govern a person's life, per their "personal relations" and "social institutions."[26] This is why the impact of oppression and domination can be severe enough to render a person as lacking autonomy, regardless of their individual internal states or whether they internalize the coercion.

III. The Case

Using the Retro Woman as an example, I will illustrate the extent to which the aforementioned oppressive temporal and socio-political constraints impact autonomy. Similarly to Oshana's Taliban Woman example, where there is a "woman living under a Talibanic regime" who appears to lack autonomy even though she lives a life that is "consistent" with her personal values, this example describes a woman living under harsh patriarchal standards.[27] These are the retro standards of a "middle-class America" in a post-World War II idealized society centering around the suburban nuclear family with archetypical roles based in the "limiting standards of gender identity."[28,29] In this Cold-War era Western society lives a White Woman who has grown up being primed to be a 'good housewife' to a man. She is bound by the "traditional gender roles" of the time, which obligate her to prioritize her physical person, maintaining the latest fashion and beauty styles, and ensuring that she is prim and proper, a reflection of the prescribed image of femininity.[30] Furthermore, she is encumbered with maintaining her family and home, taking care of her children, and upholding the moral values. For the most part, she will likely not set out high aspirations for educational or professional pursuits. Her social status as a (White) woman and cultural education has informed

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[24] Ibid, 50.

[25] Ibid, 49.

[26] Ibid, 59.

[27] Ibid, 60.

[28] Francesca Vavotici, "Being an Instance of the Norm": Women, Surveillance and Guilt in Richard Yates's Revolutionary Road," *European journal of American studies* 15, no. 2 (2020): 1.

[29] Ibid, 2.

[30] Christin Stracke. "Postwar America and the Suburban Housewife in Revolutionary Road and Mad Men," *Philipps-Universität Marburg* (2013): 12.

her that a man will marry her and take care of her and her material needs.[31] As such, she follows the social scripts to become this ideal suburban housewife, living out her life until she is molded just right for a man.

While she may have expected a poetic fairytale ending full of love and children, that is likely not the case. In continuing with the traditions of her time, she is overworked in her undervalued role as a housewife – not only must she maintain the illusion of a docile and perfect woman, she is to keep her home in a spotless state, raise her children, *and* keep her husband happy. For her efforts, she likely receives no payment or financial benefits in return as it is expected of her and taken for granted that women will comply with the standards that are set for them by society. It may be assumed that she ought to be content with the privilege and status afforded to her by relation to her husband, as well as any potential "material upgrade."[32] She may even be subjected to further harm in the form of physical and emotional abuse. Although she may not appear oppressed to those within her society who have grown accustomed to the status quo, even her own privilege as a White Woman is not enough to protect against the stifling patriarchal norms of her society. As such, her social status and the many restrictions that it comes with (of which she has been raised and educated to understand) make it so that she should *not* be considered as having full agency, or even having partial autonomy. The oppression of the (White) Retro Woman can contextualize the greater extent of autonomy diminishment that a racialized woman would experience in Cold-War era American society.

Should this woman find the opportunity and ability to decide to leave her society in favor of another place that would give her the freedom to pursue an education of her choice or a career that does not limit her based on her gender, then perhaps some things may change. Her ability to exist may be less restrained by the social scripts that are heavily enforced and monitored within her society; she may be able to become who she *really* is, uninhibited, and not who her society has forced her to become. However, it is likely that she will maintain that her life before, under the oppressive society, was a fully autonomous life and that the choices she made were authentically hers, regardless of influence. As such, even with the newly found liberties of this open society, the Retro Woman would hold onto the schemes of the oppressive society wherein she once lived.

Not only is the Retro Woman oppressed in the past by virtue of the socio-political implications imposed by her social status as a woman in a dominant, aggressively patriarchal society, but her oppression has implications over

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[31] Ibid, 19.
[32] Ibid, 19.

time. Although she may change her setting and society, and in turn her situation and status, it may be the case that the reason the ideas from her previous social education persist within her is that the effects of the oppressive society remain in her mind. Even when the socio-political dimension of her autonomy is not as compromised as it once was, she maintains a shaky sense of autonomy – if any at all. Almost like a reflex, she continues to respond to social stimuli in the same way, even when the oppression is long gone.

IV. The Responses

The aforementioned example illustrates a woman who exists within the framework of an oppressive patriarchal society. Just like Oshana's Taliban Woman, the Retro Woman most likely feels as though "she has chosen her life-plan autonomously," almost taking for granted the profound impact that her social education and culture might have had on the development of these sentiments.[33] While this is not to disregard that everyone is in some shape or form the product of their social upbringing, it is not always the case that this upbringing leads people to accept their oppression and become complacent to this subjugation. It appears that she maintains some integrity between her decisions and core values even once she leaves the oppressive society – however the doubt is whether those were *her* own values to begin with.

Oshana presents the Taliban Woman, a woman who lived a life that seemed to be effectively autonomous, wherein she once worked as a physician.[34] As such, her decision to embark towards a life that will likely "disable self-awareness" and impair her autonomy is itself an autonomous decision.[35] Her choice to embrace a life path that she is cognizant may negatively impact her agency is further emphasized as being autonomous upon her affirmation that it is "consistent with her spiritual and social values," making it authentically her own.[36] However, Oshana holds that the Taliban Woman is *not* autonomous, because despite the fact that she seems to have made an autonomous choice to pursue a new life, her autonomy is limited and "systemically subject to the ultimate will of others" which means that she is no longer able to exercise autonomy in her present situation.[37] So, even though she does what wants, what she wants effectively impedes her autonomy.

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[33] Marina Oshana, "Social-Relational Autonomy," in *Personal Autonomy in Society*. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 61.

[34] Ibid, 60.

[35] Ibid, 60.

[36] Ibid, 60.

[37] Ibid, 61.

Based on her analysis of the Taliban Woman, it can be assumed that Oshana would respond in the same way to the Retro Woman. Where in the "occurrent sense of the term," while she is in the society, it may seem like she has some sense of autonomy, this is *not* the case.[38] All of her decisions are based on the wills and whims of others, who likely do not take her into consideration when constructing the schematic notion of what it means to be a woman in that society – a blueprint that she is to follow. If she does not, there are society-wide observed consequences that she may suffer due to her status and circumstance – ranging from social exile to abuse and torment. However, a key difference between the Retro Woman and the Taliban Woman is that the latter made the conscious choice to "renounce her rights," even though she is in fact oppressed regardless of her internal view on the matter.[39] On the other hand, the Retro Woman was born into this society and raised under the tutelage of those who actively oppress her in order to become a complacent cog in their machine.

In this case, Oshana would likely maintain that the Retro Woman "has no practical authority over her situation" during her time in the oppressive society and therefore cannot make any decisions that are truly her own.[40] She will always be limited by the fence that her society has created for her, just as the Taliban Woman does not possess any true authority or control over her own will, since they are both manipulated and ordered by others around them – namely, men. It may be possible that she meets all of the conditions that impact the formation and evolution of autonomy, but per Oshana's view, that does not necessarily mean that the Retro Woman has autonomy. In fact, the impact of her social-relational atmosphere renders her autonomy so lacking, that the effects of her oppression are long-lasting beyond her persistence in the society of their origin. Although Oshana may hold that the Retro Woman would have practical control over her decisions once she departs from her gilded cage of suburbia, the long-standing temporal constraints on her autonomy may persist, and impact her ability to exercise this control.

Christman, with his proceduralistic internalist view of autonomy, would consider the story of her life up until that point of great import. By referring to her narrative history, it is clear that the choices of the Retro Woman make sense along the trajectory of her life story and were not made on a whim without forethought. When making these decisions, she introspected and considered this history, as well as her social education. In order for her to have

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[38] Ibid, 61.
[39] Ibid, 61.
[40] Ibid, 61.

properly engaged in the procedure prescribed by Christman, however, she ought to come to the awareness that her social influences were instrumentally oppressive. When considering this on its own, it is difficult to see her as oppressed. Her socially constructed identity and the cultural influences that created it have been with her from the start, and the narrative structure that she resides in does not contain any alarming deviation that would raise any red flags regarding her autonomy.

According to Christman, this is not the end of the story. The authenticity and nature of alienation must be considered when deciding on the status of one's autonomy. Here, either argument regarding her autonomy could be supported. If the Retro Woman exhibits a level of authenticity in her choices – where they align with the history she has developed within the context of her society – then it is only a matter of alienation. In this case, it is unlikely that the Retro Woman would feel alienated by her choice, because she may not feel the need to consider it constraining in any way. As such, from this perspective, Christman would consider her as autonomous. Yet, it is possible that despite having spent her entire life within that social sphere, she may not feel that the decisions she makes while participating in that society are authentically hers. Perhaps they are simply adaptable preferences that she has to make in order to survive given the oppression faced by someone of her social status. Regardless, she does not accept them as authentically her own. Due to both authenticity and alienation being necessary for autonomy, it would be difficult to consider her autonomous in this case according to Christman.

By analyzing the case of the Retro Woman from the perspective of Benson's self-authorization view, it is likely that the she would be considered as lacking autonomy. Ralph Ellison writes of the *Invisible Man*, a Black man living in 1930s America who feels that his true self is infinitely unseen due to racial prejudices and stereotypes that impose certain roles and characters on him, rendering him categorically invisible.[41] Just like the Invisible Man, the Retro Woman is placed against social scripts that confirm attitudes aligning with subjugation and complacency.[42] This may foster a false sense of security within the Retro Woman, or an acute lack of confidence – as with the Invisible Man – which would erode any potential sense of autonomy that she may have had prior to understanding the machinations of her society. Even after leaving the oppressive context, she may continue to carry the inability to

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[41] Ralph Ellison. *Invisible Man*. New York: Vintage International, 1995.

[42] Paul Benson. "Taking Ownership: Authority and Voice in Autonomous Agency," In *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism: New Essays*, ed. by John Christman and Joel Anderson, 101–26. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 111.

consider herself as having authority or the ability to speak for her actions. As such, per Benson's view, she would be considered as lacking autonomy.

Thus, by considering the three perspectives offered by the aforementioned philosophers, the Retro Woman would be found to be lacking autonomy.

V. What is Missing?

Despite the range of responses provided to analyze the case of the Retro Woman, wherein she appears to lack autonomy in her own life even after changing her contexts, there still appears to be something neglected from the discourse. Each of the perspectives addressed by Christman, Benson and Oshana seem to consider an aspect of the mammoth that represents autonomy, but they only tackle one part at a time. This leaves much to be desired with regards to understanding the amalgamation of conditions associated with a bolstering sense of autonomy, as in reality, it is not one or the other but rather the combination of conditions which come together to impact it.

On Christman's proceduralist view, personal history and the temporal dimension of the self (and by extension autonomy) are given ample consideration. Although it does consider the "value commitments, cultural identifications, [and] religious connections" that agents have, it does so within the context of how they fit into the person's narrative.[43] While it may appear that the two are part and parcel, for one's history is shaped within the context of their culture, it misses the nuance of the impact of the socio-political on the individual. Despite Christman's "political liberalism," he does not consider how social status or constitutive constraints can impact one in the present – regardless of history or experience.[44] This dynamic aspect of practical identity is often neglected owing to its political nature, but it is important due to the stringent hold that it has on autonomy. Furthermore, his position hinges on agent's having a two-dimensional socio-political identity, wherein they are subject to only *one* kind of oppression at a time that they always internalize, before going through procedural motions of introspection. As such, his view, while important in its consideration of the temporal dimension, has an incomplete grasp on personal autonomy.

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[43] John Philip Christman, "The Historical Conception of Autonomy," in *The Politics of Persons: Individual Autonomy and Socio-Historical Selves.* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 141.

[44] Natalie Stoljar, "Relational Autonomy and Perfectionism," *Moral Philosophy and Politics* 4, no. 1 (2017): 40.

Benson's position falters in the same manner as Christman's. He places far too much emphasis on the agent's own authorization that they afford unto themselves. Although he does mention that the external expectations or perceptions of the agent and their ownership can impact the agent's ability to bestow this authorization on themselves, it is still an internal process. The caliber of social circumstances is not considered at the length it ought to be for such a position, and its temporal association is considered even less. While an interesting point, to allow the agent this authority, it still wavers between being too stringent and not stringent enough.

In tandem, internalist positions do not consider the possibility of agent's *not* internalizing their oppression. Regardless of whether or not they are impacted by the oppression, directly or otherwise, agent's do not always acknowledge their circumstances as burdened by oppressive factors, and thus do not always internalize them as part of their self-conception. While their autonomy can still be impacted even when the oppression is not internalized, it warrants its own discussion that the internalists do not consider. Most of the internalist views on autonomy simply operate on the conception that agents *have* internalized the things that hinder (or progress) their autonomy. It is possible that the temporal implications of a person's autonomy are much different when they do not internalize their oppression – perhaps their personal history is altered because they do not internalize their oppression, or because they interpret it differently *since* they do not internalize it. So, these scopes are extremely important for autonomy as they continue to push discourse towards understanding autonomy, but internalists do not succeed in this.

On the other hand, Oshana and the externalists like her provide much needed attention to the impact that social circumstances have on the development of individual autonomy. The point she makes regarding the history, psychology and competency requirements being important but not representative of the whole picture is vital to consideration of all the possible aspects that can affect agent's autonomy. It is also emblematic of the externalist nature to act as a combination of internal views and external circumstances. However, by honing her focus mostly on the social-relational components of an agent's life, such that these are the aspects that determine autonomy, Oshana seems to be committing the same offence she implies other views are committing. By illustrating that the previously mentioned conditions are *not* actually the most important part of personal autonomy since she simultaneously focuses on the external relational effects, Oshana seems to be undermining them just as much.

Furthermore, in doing so, she overestimates the impact that the external world has on autonomy – so much so, that she states that autonomy is *based* on these external aspects. This view neglects to consider the effect that the

individual, their abilities and internal management has on autonomy. At the very least, this view minimizes these aspects to a startling degree. Not only does this allow people to receive more leeway when considering things like moral blameworthiness, it also does not consider that certain social relationships are superficial and perhaps poor indicators of autonomy due to biases, stereotype threats, and misconceptions about perceptions. Due to these factors, more consideration should be given to the psychological, historical and competency requirements in this externalist view.

By focusing on this external aspect, however, the externalists also necessarily neglect decision making. Decision-making is an internal process that requires introspection, as well as the use of previous experiences and knowledge (i.e. one's accumulated history). Since externalists favor the impact of outward circumstances on agential autonomy – despite giving some consideration to internal processes – then it is largely no longer up to the individual what the status or nature of their autonomy is, as it is solely defined by the scope of their social relations. Further to this, decision-making is heavily impacted by the constraints and conditions of the agent's external life, including their social ties and cultural identity. This does not mean that the agent's decisions will cease to have an impact on the development of their autonomy. Whether directly or indirectly, the decision-making process of agents is inextricably tied to autonomy, for the aforementioned reasons of bias and perception. In their choice to move past internal decision-making, externalists are leaving their view vulnerable to many criticisms regarding its ability to address autonomy, especially considering the embedded internal views within.

This demonstrates that a potential solution to all of these problems, both internalist and externalist, could be to meet in the middle of these views. By incorporating the consideration of personal history, self-authorization – as well as responsibility and ownership over actions – and both the social-relational aspect *and* the psychological, historical, and competency requirements offered by Oshana, a more comprehensive view can be constructed. The amalgamation of these factors ought to be considered as kinetic along the continuing temporal sequence of the self. As such, an amended view that takes into consideration multiple aspects that can have very real and practical impacts on autonomy ought to be given consideration over views that simply focus on one aspect while neglecting others of import.

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper discussed the nuances of the internalist and externalist views of autonomy as provided by Christman, Benson, and Oshana, respectively. These views were applied to a hypothetical case illustrating oppression which focused on the socio-political and temporal dimensions of a woman's autonomy. By analyzing this case example through the lens of these theories, it was concluded that the woman was *not* autonomous, even after she left the context of her oppression. However, despite the analyses provided, these theories are imperfect and incomplete – through their narrow, single-tasked focus on one aspect at a time, they neglect to consider the entire scope of aspects that impact autonomy. As such, on their own, they appear unable to properly understand or explain how oppressive constraints can be thought of in terms of their temporal limitations and socio-political implications, to determine to what extent these constraints can impact autonomy.

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Creaturely Realism, the Critique of Property, and the Climate Crisis

Ishaan Alexander Selby
English and Cultural Studies, PhD Candidate
McMaster University

Bénédicte Boisseron signals a new possibility for theories of animality, arguing that the decade long explosion in critical animal studies "offers a unique chance to take an in-depth look at the modern impact of a historically grounded system of mutual racialization and animalization."[1] I contend that taking advantage of this chance we must think Blackness and animality together as converging on a common critique of the human without drawing a direct equivalence between these distinct forms of being.[2] Given the complex intersection of the questions of species difference and the formation of the human with logics of sexual difference and the construction of the sexual minority, we can extend the link between Blackness and animality and thus Black studies and animal studies to eco-feminism and queer engagements with the non-human.[3] My project here shares space with Mel Y. Chen's proposal of an optic "that seeks to make consistently available the animalities that live together with race and with queerness."[4] We can think of these links in essentially intra-active terms with animality. The central project of this paper will be reading the critique of property into the critique of the human in order to bring animal studies together with the questions of power and difference addressed by minority discourse. I will conclude with some reflections on the forms of togetherness and alliance engendered by our pandemic times and what possibilities emerge from alliance beyond the human.

The analytic I develop for these readings and engagements that bring together theories of animal life with minority discourse travels under the heading of creaturely realism. The creaturely as a theoretical term is borrowed from Anat Pick's notion of the creature as something "material, temporal, and vulnerable" caught between the forces

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[1] Bénédicte Boisseron, Afro-Dog: Blackness and the Animal Question (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 2.
[2] I capitalize the 'B' in Black as a way of keeping in view the freedom struggles and subjectivity of the people of the African diaspora.
[3] For a connection between queer theory, disability studies and animal studies see Jasbir K. Puar, The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability, Anima (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 53-4.
[4] Mel Y. Chen, Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect, Perverse Modernities (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

of contingency and necessity that shape life.[5] The creaturely for Pick is deeply connected to embodiment, serving as "a powerful antidote to anthropocentrism," especially the forms of anthropocentrism that rely on a separation between mind and body whether conceptually or substantively.[6] I take both these dimensions of Pick's framing and further emphasize the aesthetic dimension of its fleshy embodiment in contrast to a philosophy that abstracts non-human life from its corporeality.

I hinge upon realism for two related but distinct areas of intervention. The first takes its cues from literary conceptions of realism and works to de-romanticize the animal which is often idealized in post-Heideggerian philosophies of animality such as in the thought of Derrida. That is, while Derrida encourages us to confront the exploitation of animal life in industrial agriculture and techno-science, his primary archive in The Animal That Therefore I Am is twentieth century anti-humanist philosophy and modernist literature.[7] In contrast to this, I want to emphasize capitalism as the central technology of articulating the species line, rendering historically contingent both the formation and reproduction of capitalism and also the formation and reproduction of animality: that is, I hope to emphasize the dimensions of social and political thought that focus on the material construction of animality as a form of property. I see this move as the key mode of intervention necessary to critical work in animal studies.

The second sense in which I summon realism here is the political intervention of "thinking the war" against animals, i.e. as a balance of forces that enshrine anthropocentric domination, as Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel has argued.[8] The "war" is understood here as the massive amounts of exploitation and death meted out to non-human animals in slaughterhouses, farms, and laboratories but also the blunting of compassion that such mass killing requires. While Wadiwel's argument makes use of biopolitical critiques of sovereignty, I emphasize differently the construction of capitalist property as central to animal exploitation and thus to the war on animals. That is, the argument of this paper takes inspiration from Wadiwel's thinking the relations of force that define animal life but place it more explicitly within the property-form.

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[5] Anat Pick, *Creaturely Poetics: Animality and Vulnerability in Literature and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011)., 5.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Jacques Derrida, The Animal That Therefore I Am, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008). For a critique of Derridean animal studies in line with my own see Nicole Shukin, Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times, Posthumanities 6 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 29–42.
[8] Dinesh Wadiwel, The War against Animals (Brill, 2015), 253, http://brill.com/view/title/32110.

The analytic of creaturely realism shares space with recent work like Christopher Chitty's concept queer realism which seeks to recast queerness not as "marking some utopian opening up…of self-transformative play" but instead as a "precarious social status outside the institutions of family, property and couple form."[9] Creaturely realism is thus in close dialogue with this focus on dedramatizing the queer from a necessarily transgressive position, an escape or even affective intensity, to a set of relations with a material history that is closely yoked to the history of property. In a similar fashion, animality is not understood as a legitimating notion with which to rethink ontology—much less to bestow humanity with certain features—but rather as a set of relations that exist in close formation with the development of capitalist social formations. The claim at the heart of this argument is that the animal (as a discursive form) has a history and that such history emerges with the formation of property through a process of accumulation and dispossession that subtends the valuations of capitalism and the workings of the commodity form.

I place the animal in the circuit of what Donna Haraway calls 'encounter value.' Encounter value is added to Marx's classic dyad of use value and exchange value to address "relationships among a motley array of lively beings, in which commerce and consciousness, evolution and bioengineering, and ethics and utilities are all in play" within the circuits of capitalism.[10] I thus mark creaturely realism as a kind of chilling of the romance of the non-human. This deromanticizing serves to interrogate what has been allowed to ossify into dogma in critical animal studies: the animal as a liberating resource of difference.

By difference, in this particular sense, I am referring to the privileging of alterity within post-human theory such that animal studies, in particular, comes to focus primarily on the species line. That is, my hope is to think against the polarization of metaphysical separationism and biological continuism with a focus on the material structures that shape human and animal relations, with property being the chief among them. Rather than theorizing animality exclusively as a "marginal object" against forms of anthropocentric representation, I argue that a critical animal studies worthy of the name must interrogate the political and economic formations that subtend anthropocentrism.[11] It also opens up the possibility of theorizing without the gaze of the human since, on these terms, while humans and non-humans are dialectically entwined, the dual poles retain a relation of dependent

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[9] Christopher Chitty, Sexual Hegemony: Statecraft, Sodomy, and Capital in the Rise of the World System, Theory Q (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 26.
[10] Donna Jeanne Haraway, When Species Meet, Posthumanities 3 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 46.
[11] Claire Colebrook, Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction. Vol. 1: ..., Critical Climate Change (London: Open Humanities Press, 2014), 30.

autonomy. Through a critical engagement with the animal question, we call into question the sets of exclusions and presumptions that form hegemonic constructions of the human.

Susan McHugh's interrogation of sheep sex orientation studies, for instance, marks an underground current within queer theories of the non-human for this kind of intervention. Sheep sex-orientation studies and their framing of homosexuality as natural, obscures the way in which sheep figured as homosexual are used for sheep farming profit maximization.[12] As she bluntly questions: are the sheep engaging in same sex acts gay? Or "are they all just sheep?"[13] The lesson of queer theory McHugh draws from here is that these tightly prescriptive definitions are unhelpful as it "enables the same old identity categories to cover over wildly divergent relations and activities."[14] I emphasise differently here the intersections between capitalist production and the use of same-sex acts performed by non-humans with a kind of deromanticizing of queerness as a transgressive horizon. The "just sheep" of it all speaks not to some gay order of nature but the resistance to shoring up a gay identity per se as an enshrining of a recognized and recognizable category of difference. The productive dimension here is an interrogation of the logic of difference and whether difference or the human-animal distinction should represent the key problem for animal studies to solve. My contention is that such a focus already presumes difference is in itself valuable, keeping the animal question forever searching for alternatives to or syntheses between biological continuism and metaphysical separationism and in tired debates about the limits and affordances of anthropomorphism.

Derrida as one of the central figures of contemporary critical animal studies places the animal at an abyssal difference from man and figures animality as undying spectrality and thus leaves uninterrogated the question of a human-animal difference even in its radicalized form.[15] Derrida's rhetoric of abyssal difference, results from the idealizing tendencies present within his discussion of animality. Matthew Carlarco confronts the question of difference directly in his break with Derrida's insistence on maintaining the human-animal distinction, which Carlarco flatly admits he sees as "one of the most dogmatic and puzzling moments in all of his writings."[16] Derrida

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[12] S. McHugh, "QUEER (AND) ANIMAL THEORIES," GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies 15, no. 1 (January 1, 2009): 154, https://doi.org/10.1215/10642684-2008-022.
[13] Ibid., 155.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Jacques Derrida, The Animal That Therefore I Am, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 29–30.
[16] Matthew Calarco, Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 145.

believes in insuperable divisions between human and animal, strangely repeating Heidegger's rhetoric of the abyss that Derrida elsewhere seeks to trouble.[17] Derrida's critical confrontations with Heidegger proceed by interrogating the set of binary oppositions that reduce animality to an undifferentiated mass called 'the Animal', an idea that forms the central intervention that Derrida thinks against in all his writing and speaking about animals. Derrida's critique of Heidegger is ultimately focused on an interrogation of the distance that Heidegger places between humans and non-human animals, without philosophical justification or scientific reference. Derrida proceeds by rethinking whether humans can be said to possess what Heidegger sees as distinctive to humans.

However, the abyssal difference Derrida sees between animals and humans in Heidegger, recurs within Derrida's own interventions and conclusions in thinking and rethinking the question of human and animal difference. As Carlarco argues "Derrida's insistence on maintaining and reworking the human-animal distinction is profoundly mistaken."[18] As a contrast to Derrida, Carlarco cites Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" which argues that we could just let the distinction go.[19] What if we pose the question of the animal in terms of creaturely realism? Animality, along these lines, would be a concrete entity outside of the romantic logic of spectrality and so subject both to relations of life and relations of force. Rather than positing a human and animal distinction, and the resultant problem of how to think of that distinction, we let that distinction go and instead thought in terms radically outside its purview.

The task of creaturely realism as a politico-theoretical framework is to think animals as political entities and so subject to sovereignty and thus to relations of racializing assemblages, sexual difference and minoritized sexuality even if the way they fit into those nexuses is necessarily bumpy and messy. The bumpy messiness may be constitutive in order to avoid the collapse of the animal question into these other dimensions of historical experience. The account presented here takes inspiration from Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel's critical interrogation of anthropocentric forms of sovereignty. Sovereignty for Wadiwel "does not refer to a right or capacity to rule, but instead to a form of violence that claims and prevails to govern an arbitrary…distinction between those that might otherwise be

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[17] Ibid., 146. See Jacques Derrida and John P. Leavey, "Geschlecht II: Heidegger's Hand," in *Martin Heidegger* (Routledge, 2006).
[18] Ibid., 148.
[19] Ibid., 150.

undifferentiated from us."[20] Wadiwel here is drawing from Derrida's own work on sovereignty as a kind of stupidity referring to "a right to judge poorly (upon no basis) inherent in the right to judge."[21] It is this violent stupidity inherent in sovereignty that undergirds the infamous Heideggerian gesture of the distinction between world-less, world-forming and poor in world, and therefore distinction between Being and beings as well as the privileging of human subjectivity.[22] The analytic of creaturely realism with its investment in a materialist politics further develops this account by placing the formation of the human within a nexus of racial, sexual, and gendered relations and within the nodal points and productive relations of global capitalism, which proceeds by marking out particular bodies for extraction and exploitation as well as premature death.

The alternatives to seeing the human-animal distinction as the central question of the non-human can be found within Black feminist theories of the human and the refiguring of posthumanism through those theories. Writing in this tradition, Alexander G. Weheliye names the racializing assemblage as a "set of sociopolitical processes that discipline humanity into full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans."[23] This process has a historically specific character and is yoked closely to various regimes of colonial difference and the intimacies between settler colonialism, the slave trade and indentured labour as well as the formation of modern liberal conceptions of property and political freedom.[24]

Sylvia Wynter reads the formation of the human without putting it in terms of a universal condition to be overcome, and so casts the problem along radically different lines of historical-materialist conjuncture. The point here is both historical and theoretical. Wynter's work emerges at the same moment as posthumanism is conceived within the academy and uses "many of posthumanism's critical concepts" but it also "interrogated the racialized and gendered relevance of these thematics, often transforming posthuman concepts in the process."[25] The central project of Wynter's racialized refiguring of posthumanism is a need to "reimagine the human as an index of a multiplicity of historical and ongoing contestations and to identify the relational operations of such contestations rather than take

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[20] Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel, War Against Animals, 261.
[21] Ibid., 257.
[22] Ibid., 261.
[23] Alexander G. Weheliye, Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 4.
[24] On these intimacies see Lisa Lowe, The Intimacies of Four Continents (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 1–43.
[25] Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, "Animal: New Directions in the Theorization of Race and Posthumanism," ed. Kalpana Rahita Seshadri, Michael Lundblad, and Mel Y. Chen, Feminist Studies 39, no. 3 (2013): 673.

the 'human's' colonial imposition as synonymous with all appearances of 'human.'[26] The upshot here is that a critique of anthropocentrism must mark out a central role for racialization and patriarchy. The materialist aspect of creaturely realism is a focus on the actuality of non-human life as subject to relations of being and relations of force, without a strict division between those sets of relations and even intersections and coincidences between those sets rather than merely deciding the human-animal distinction as the be all and end all of the animal question and philosophies of the non-human. These alternatives under the heading of materialist critique return critical theory to the critique of property in so far as race and queerness both exist in relations of a dependent autonomy with capitalist social formations and modern statecraft, i.e. the broad preconditions for contemporary property.[27] It is this critique of property and state that leads me to think about the climate crisis as it is by now cliché to note that capital and empire form crucial stages on which the drama of the crisis plays.[28]

Claire Colebrook identifies three different types of extinction: "the now widely discussed sixth great extinction event (which we have begun to imagine and witness, even if in anticipation); extinction by humans of other species (with the endangered species of the 'red list' evidencing our destructive power); and self-extinction, or the capacity for us to destroy what makes us human."[29] It is this auto-extinction that is echoed in Donna Haraway's question: "What happens when human exceptionalism and the utilitarian individualism of classical political economics become unthinkable in the best sciences across the disciplines and interdisciplines?"[30] I read both these reference points as signalling the death of the self-enclosed individualism of man and a move from the death of man as a theoretical gesture to a theoretico-political necessity since the availability of these conceptual apparatuses have been made impossible in the advent of multi-layered forms of extinction.

The gesture, as I read it, can be seen in moves like Foucault's famous closing lines of The Order of Things who signals that some unknown event "of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility –

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[26] Ibid., 681.

[27] See Christopher Chitty, Sexual Hegemony, 35-8 and Brenna Bhandar, Colonial Lives of Property: Law, Land, and Racial Regimes of Ownership, Global and Insurgent Legalities (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), 1–33.

[28] For a recent examination of both the structural and historical links between capitalism and the climate crisis see Nancy Fraser, "Climates of Capital: For a Trans-Environmental Eco-Socialism," NLR (Jan/Feb 2021): 94-127. For recent work reading the Anthropocene as an imperial formation see Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, Allegories of the Anthropocene (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 2.

[29] Colebrook, Death of the PostHuman, 9.

[30] Donna Jeanne Haraway, Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene, Experimental Futures: Technological Lives, Scientific Arts, Anthropological Voices (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 57.

without knowing either what its form will be or what it promises – were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of

Classical thought did, at the end of the eighteenth century, then one can certainly wager that man would be erased,

like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea."[31] We can also here cite Derrida's cryptic remarks at the end of his

essay "Structure, Sign and Play" who signals the advent of something "unnamable" (sic.) traveling under the sign of

the "species of non-species" and in the "formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity."[32] The

theoretico-political necessity, by contrast, is the coming extinction of Man and his properties in the contemporary

conjuncture of overlapping extinction that faces us today. The shift from gesture to necessity is not meant to impute

some kind of oracular power to figures like Foucault and Derrida. While there is a long tradition of critical theory

focused on a fundamental challenge to the structure of human subjectivity, at a particular level this has yet to be

understood in its fullness, namely the destruction of what is proper to man in a dialectic between a particular socio-

economic formation and statecraft- te bourgeois state and its process of accumulation by dispossession and the

various non-human forces that have been intensified by this formation even as they threaten to overwhelm the

system of production itself.[33] We can think here not just of climate disasters but perhaps more readily of pandemics

themselves caused by deforestation and factory farming and thus a kind of "externality" of capitalist production. A

provisional answer to Haraway then is that the apparatus of the human must be rethought not only as a social

construction but as a construction contingent on nexuses of racialization and capital as well as gender and sexuality.

Thus, the task for social and political thought and critical theory writ large is an interrogation of the properties of

man, understood as the legal embodiment of property along lines of gender and the normative composition of the

human subject.

In writing the above paragraphs, thinkers working within Indigenous critical theory have long challenged

the 'conventional' temporalities of climate change inherited from European political thought. For example, Kyle

Whyte points out that "Indigenous peoples have already endured harmful and rapid environmental transformations

due to colonialism and other forms of domination."[34] The belated recognition of the imbrication between humans

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[31] Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, Repr, Routledge Classics (London: Routledge, 2007), 422.
[32] Jacques Derrida, Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass, Reprint (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2002), 293.
[33] Jedediah Purdy, After Nature: A Politics for the Anthropocene (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), 18.
[34] Kyle P. Whyte, "Indigenous Science (Fiction) for the Anthropocene: Ancestral Dystopias and Fantasies of Climate Change Crises," Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space 1, no. 1–2 (March 2018): 227, https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848618777621. Indigenous critical political thought has also long interrogated the property-form as part of a larger critique of settler colonial dispossession see Robert Nichols, Theft Is Property! Dispossession & Critical Theory, Radical Américas (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

and the non-human world in European critical theory is a welcome one, but it is important to keep in mind the existence of such thinking from within traditional Indigenous ecological knowledges that long predates such turns within European philosophy, even radical philosophical thought.

The interrogation of man moves away from the abstract destruction of self-enclosed individualism and the utilitarian homo economicus toward emphasizing a very different history and form of political struggle. We can find the materials for such an emphasis in work like Ghassan Hage's Is Racism An Environmental Threat? Hage brings together anti-racist politics with ecology in order to analyze the overlapping structure of racism and environmental destruction. He argues that not only are racism and ecological collapse imbricated with one another but that they are "in effect one and the same crisis, a crisis in the dominant mode of inhabiting the world that both racial and ecological domination reproduces."[35] Hage argues for a more politicized conception of ecology stating, in manifesto-like terms, "one cannot be an anti-racist without being an ecologist today, and vice versa."[36] Domestication functions as a kind of archetypal pattern for modes of domination writ large. This expansive conception of domestication termed generalized domestication is "a mode of inhabiting the world through dominating it for the purpose of making it yield value: material or symbolic forms of sustenance, comfort, aesthetic pleasure, and so on."[37] In other words, discipline creates a sense of place and home through a dialectic of exclusion and inclusion premised on rhetoric of ownership and value.

The domesticated speaks to the disciplining of nature and deviant bodies from the nation-form whether through exclusion or incorporation- we can think the latter along with Jasbir Puar's trenchant formulations of homonationalism.[38] It also, perhaps somewhat obviously, speaks to disciplining animality. The placing of animals within certain kinds of enclosures and toward certain kinds of labour serves as the primary structural and historical purpose of animal domestication. Barbara Noske notes that many animals today under contemporary capitalist productive relations exist within what she calls "confinement systems." These confinement systems serve as loci of value extraction by crowding as many animals together as possible and "manipulat[ing] them toward ever greater

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[35] Ghassan Hage, Is Racism an Environmental Threat?, Debating Race (Malden, MA: Polity, 2017), 30.
[36] Ibid.,, 16.
[37] Ibid., 119.
[38] See Jasbir K. Puar, Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times, Tenth Anniversary Expanded Edition, Next Wave (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

productivity."[39] The homology then between the domestication of the racialized other, of nature as a resource for value extraction and of the animal as resource and labour speaks to their exclusion from the ambit of Man and thus also their propertyless status.

As Christopher Chitty locates, Marx draws the term proletarian from an analogy with the propertyless citizens of ancient Rome.[40] The subjects within this proletarian positioning both in the Roman constitution and for Marx can only sell their labour-power. The "freedom" of capitalism is precisely this freedom to sell one's labour-power which as Wadiwel points out is likened by Marx to the process of tanning such that the proletarian is "like one who is bringing his own hide to market."[41] This equation between the propertyless and animals generally and more specifically with their points of connection under capitalist relations of production speaks to a mutual condition of lacking property both in the sense of status and possession and also a lack of that which is proper to man.[42] While more theoretical research is necessary to make the claim of common condition, I do make the claim that animals, minority, subjects, and nature fall under the aegis of that lack.

The condition of lacking property, of being in a sense proletarian, and its intimacy with being queer and being racialized marks out the space for a theory of the non-human that is attentive to the complicated intersections between animal life, the climate crisis, capitalism and structures of domination and forms of oppression. My hope is that such a lack can be productive for modes of thinking and collective political resistance beyond polemical bifurcations between the natural and social and between human and non-human. Precarity as the new norm universalizes or at least extends this lack and so the conditions for forms of alliance to act against it.[43]

Thinking with increasing precarity means addressing the conjuncture: the arrangement of forces both human and non-human to which our writing and thinking must respond. The pandemic inspired new forms of alliance and togetherness. The networks of mutual aid that have sprung up to support the increasing number of

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[39] Barbara Noske, Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1997), 14.

[40] Chitty, Sexual Hegemony, 27.

[41] Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel, "'Like One Who Is Bringing His Own Hide to Market': Marx, Irigaray, Derrida and Animal Commodification," Angelaki 21, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 65, https://doi.org/10.1080/0969725X.2016.1182725.

[42] On the key role of the animal as raw material in the formation of Fordism see Shukin, Nicole, Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times, Posthumanities 6 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 88–89.

[43] See Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 20–21.

homeless people as well as the ill, the elderly and the disabled. All subject positions rendered disposable by the bourgeois state, as even meagre protections against the ravages of privatized care and the housing market were allowed to fall away under the aegis of a return to an imagined normality. The return to normal made manifest by the abandonment of mask mandates and other public health measures only throws into relief the way normality is always-already in contention.[44]

The time of the COVID-19 pandemic, still ongoing, also generated new forms of togetherness and intimacy in its particular regeneration of the struggle for racial justice and against the death-dealing institutions of the state. The coercive function of police and prisons were thrown into sharp relief as the pandemic raged through heavily policed racialized enclaves and throughout prisons and immigrant detention centres. The assemblies generated in response might have been identified as 'the swinish multitude'- to echo Edmund Burke's elitist panic over democratic power. The inhuman identification of the popular mass diacritically resonates with the proletarian as only having his hide to bring to market. That is, the mob is figured as inhuman particularly the mob existing outside the aegis of the 'normal'; one that contests the normal of police violence and immiseration of capitalism. The 'unruliness' of this kind of crowd formation and togetherness forms a possible historical realization of a propertyless subject beyond the non-human. In so far as this paper is an intervention in animal studies it is one that wants to think about what is called the political turn in animal studies. As Eva Meijer argues, the turn "from ethical consideration to political participation shifts questions about non-human animals from how they should be treated to how more insight can be gained into the ways they want to live their lives, what types of relationships they desire with one another and with humans, and how we can and should share the planet that we all live on."[45] The sharing of the planet and the contested conceptions of that sharing bring to the fore socio-economic arrangements and particular state-forms with the questions and problems posed by animal studies and critical theories of climate change. The intimacy between the critique of capital and the state and how the planet is shared as critical political questions are questions brought from the position of the propertyless in contestation with systems of profit and extraction subtended by the property-form and the repressive state apparatuses. These forms of precarity and

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[44] Dionne Brand, "On Narrative, Reckoning and the Calculus of Living and Dying," The Toronto Star, July 4, 2020, sec. Books, https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/books/2020/07/04/dionne-brand-on-narrative-reckoning-and-the-calculus-of-living-and-dying.html.
[45] Eva Meijer, When Animals Speak: Toward an Interspecies Democracy (New York: New York University Press, 2019), 2.

immiseration are reproduced ideologically by a discourse of responsibility that places the blame for suffering and death on the individual as the fundamental unit of not just economic but political life. The forms of assembly and togetherness forged by democratic political alliance against this logic of individual responsibility put forward an alternative set of ethics embodying "the insight that this is a social condition that is both shared and unjust" through the enactment of different political and ethical life-worlds.[46]

The pandemic serves as something of a prelude to and an intersection with the fundamental precarity that will be generated and intensified by climate crisis.[47] Precarity demands alliance that exceed the limits of the human, not just beyond the rhetorical and material constructions of human rights but also in alliance with non-human animals. That is, if it is essential to think questions of inhabitation, then it is essential to think political alliance beyond that which calls itself man. These questions have and will be thrown into sharp relief as the crisis intensifies and persists manifesting in the increase of a common vulnerability beyond the properties of man. The rhetorical figure of being 'all in this together' has been revealed as a trick of the camera obscura of ideology. However, a common lack of property instantiates an alliance through difference toward a ruptural unity that can free the sacrifices from the altar of property.

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[46] Judith Butler, Notes toward a Performative Theory of Assembly (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), 15–16.
[47] We should keep in mind the way the repressive elements of the state fully acknowledge the disruptive impacts on climate change and plan to engage in repression brought on by unrest. See Amitav Ghosh, The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable (University of Chicago Press, 2016), 138–41, https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226323176.001.0001.

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Book Review:
Ugly Freedoms, Elizabeth R. Anker

Tia Glista,
PhD candidate in English
University of Toronto

Over the past year, there has perhaps been no word more loaded or contested than 'freedom.' From nationwide convoys against pandemic safety measures, to anti-vaxx discourses, challenges to reproductive rights, and a strengthening billionaire class, the term has been marshaled as a defense of individual choice, personal comfort, and non-responsibility. That 'freedom' has been rallied around by the Right, by white people, and by ardent nationalists should come as no surprise, at least not according to the account of freedom offered by American Studies and political scholar Elizabeth R. Anker in her new monograph, *Ugly Freedoms.* Anker argues that the freedom to exploit, harm, displace, and withhold are not incidental misapplications of freedom, but in fact undergird the ways in which it has always been practiced in the United States.

Anker begins the book with a chilling excerpt of a battle song from the U.S. war to annex the Philippines, in which the torture method known as the 'water cure' is characterised by the singing soldiers not as the antithesis of American values, "but as an expression of them," as an act of freedom exerted on "resistant brown bodies."[1] Likewise, Anker reminds us that "slavery, legalized by US juridical processes, was interpreted by enslavers not as the opposite of liberty but as a practice of liberty," a 'right' that they defended in their bid to reject British oversight.[2] Drawing together exemplary moments in the history of colonization, slavery, and the nation's founding, she argues that freedom in its dominant mode is inseparable from mastery — thus, not so much as freedom *from* violence, but freedom *as* violence. Drawing on Saidiya Hartman's *Scenes of Subjection*, Anker's goal is not to recuperate freedom but to focalise its ambivalent nature.

Central to her critique of freedom is its weddedness to (the myth of) individual autonomy — for instance, freedom as the ability of the rational, humanist subject to think and decide for themselves, to control their own destiny, and not be regulated by their social circumstances. These freedoms can be considered 'ugly' in that they give

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[1] Elizabeth R. Anker, Ugly Freedoms (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022), 1-2.
[2] Anker, 3.

license to celebrate violence and domination as performances of individual rights and to disavow one's own complicity in exerting harm; this mode of freedom includes freedom from guilt, responsibility, and interdependence, as well as the biopolitical freedom to designate who can live and who can die.[3]

But Anker also gives us another definition for her titular 'ugly freedoms,' that is, modes of living that defy dominant aesthetic judgment and desirability, that are marginal, minor, debased, and not always successful, practices that she argues are moored in "deep dependence [and] obstructed agency."[4] Her linking-together of aesthetic theory with political theory is effective here in that it reminds us of how ways of living are made legible, categorised, shunned, and circulated, determining what we can imagine to be possible. Indeed, each of the chapters in the text's main body move from examining the brutality of freedom discourses, to those nonideal freedoms remaindered in sovereignty's mythical wake, often drawing on creative and aesthetic practices along the way. This doubling is a compelling move, but also not entirely clear; Anker's retrieval of ugly freedoms entail fascinating and attentive readings, but she does not always explain how they still fall under a rubric of 'freedom,' as opposed to simply being practices of mutuality or refusal that we may be inclined to support. As such, one of the book's most interesting promises is also a potential site of its shortcomings.

Anker's first (and best) chapter incisively investigates the white supremacy at the heart of U.S. democracy, told through the lens of sugar production as a practice embroiled in "indigenous dispossession, environmental destruction, and racial hierarchy."[5]. Sugar's sweetness conceals a gruesome archive in that "the popular craving for sugar is arguably an effect of the plantationocene" that began in the Caribbean and was later exported to the U.S.[6] Anker convincingly demonstrates how the sensorial enjoyment of sweetness for some was the result of systematized brutality towards others, by linking sugar production to the establishment of slave codes, reification of private property, and imperial expansion. She also turns to Kara Walker's 2014 sculpture at the Domino Sugar Refining Plant, *A Subtlety, Or the Marvelous Sugar Baby…* as demonstrative of sugar's sickly-sweetness, writing that "if sugar's delight on the tongue overpowers other critical sensations to render its ugly freedoms palatable, the Marvelous Sugar Baby catalyzes different sensorial registers of smell and sight to interpret freedom differently."[7] Though her reading

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[3] Anker, 10.
[4] Anker, 11.
[5] Anker, 37.
[6] Anker, 47.
[7] Anker, 43.

of the sculpture effectively draws out its *critique* of freedom, it is not clear how the sculpture itself then comes to *iterate* freedom, especially given Anker's own quick acknowledgement that "using forty tons of uneaten sugar for art is something only a consumption-obsessed society, indifferent to wealth inequality, could both afford and find unproblematic."[8] This might imply that *all* potential freedom acts are mired in some form of greed, yet Anker chooses to drop this thread.

The second chapter deals with how concepts of 'tragedy' are recouped by American history as steps in the nation's continuous 'self-improvement' and argues that philosophies of emancipation have enforced an onus to be self-directed and self-responsible as a front for withholding collectivity and racial justice. Anker reads Lars Von Trier's controversial film *Manderlay* as critically evoking the "violent racialized imaginaries of freedom" or "a fantasy of Black emancipation as white exoneration."[9] Though Anker curiously lays the director's fraught history to one side, she reads the film itself closely and does not shy from its complexities, particularly in terms of gender and the limits of white empathy. By compellingly locating acts of freedom in a film marked by ugliness and discomfort, she also offers reading against the grain as itself a possible gesture of freedom.

Chapter 3 reads contemporary freedom discourses as extensions of neoliberal capitalism, or the demand for unrestrained markets, profit-seeking, and consumption as they are positioned against the perceived 'coerciveness' of collective living/policy-making (think Michel Foucault's *homo economicus*). As Anker rightly points out, the unconstrained growth of the economy also entails the unconstrained surveillance and policing of society's most economically marginalized. She engages HBO's *The Wire* as exemplary of local, daily negotiations with neoliberal power that undo a belief in "individual self-reliance or police securitization."[10] Her guiding query — asking how political agency and freedom are lived without a vision of a better world to galvanize them — is a sophisticated way of thinking freedom amid constraint, rather than as transcendence. She locates her answer in performances of affect such as boredom and sarcasm that refuse to "rebrand their psychic lives" in alignment with ineffectual neoliberal reforms; this argument is reminiscent of Sara Ahmed's *The Promise of Happiness* or Lauren Berlant's *Cruel Optimism*.[11] It is clear from Anker's thorough analysis that *The Wire* is taking aim against neoliberal rationality, but

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[8] Anker, 75.
[9] Anker, 82. Anker, 99.
[10] Anker, 117.
[11] Anker, 127.

again, it is also easy for *freedom* to slip out of view, or to become a catch-all term for any ideological moves in which the show and its characters partake.

The final chapter considers climate destruction as a gesture of individualist freedom that denies the collectivity and interdependence of life. Drawing on those who defend their right to pollute or use excessive resources, Anker notes how their acts of destruction are claimed as legitimate through the rhetoric of private property — i.e. that one has the right to act as they please within the bounds of what they 'own.' This reifies the individual as sovereign and unattached to the community or ecosystem and attempts to naturalize property as an exercise of man's freedom over nature. It is also a construction of the human subject that it is divorced from other non-human organisms; to this end, Anker reads the hypermobility of bacteria as a (positive) form of ugly freedom for how it removes autonomy and agency from our vision of the subject. This ugly freedom is not something that we consciously enact but that it is inevitable, complicating what we conventionally consider praxis. Anker's reading of bacteria conceives of the world vis-a-vis a posthumanist interdependence, and while I agree with the ethics and capaciousness of this stance, Anker again does not make evident how this represents freedom itself, though it would be a better starting point from which to enable it.

Evidently, this problem is threaded throughout the book, in that instances of freedom as brutality or domination tend to be far more developed than the alternatives Anker offers to them. This is in part because of the (genuinely important) intellectual experiment that Anker has pursued by following freedoms that are considered minor or non-agential; I am not suggesting that their shortcomings are a matter of scale, however, but rather lie in the fact that their relationship to *freedom specifically* remains muddy and under-theorised. In a related vein, while Anker takes aim at conceptions of freedom in Western philosophical discourse, she more or less shelves the ways in which freedom has been taken up by minoritized intellectual communities. One thinks of Angela Davis' famous first lecture at UCLA, delivered when she was only 25 years-old, in which she argued that Black literature had been more insightful on the subject of freedom than the entire corpus of Western philosophy.[12] The limitation of Anker's study to either a) acts of freedom that maim and oppress, or b) practices of freedom that are obscure and without political vision, means that other legitimate movements that have stretched, complicated, and enacted their own modes of freedom are sidelined, left out of the question of 'freedom' altogether. One could argue that such

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[12] Robin D.G. Kelley, ""Western Civilization is Neither": Black Studies' Epistemic Revolution," The Black Scholar 50:3, 2020, pp. 4.

movements have already been the subject of scholarly attention, but Anker constructs *Ugly Freedoms* in such a way that it seems her two valences of freedom may not hold room for others; for instance, she acknowledges theories of marronage inspired by Neil Roberts and Orlando Patterson, but does not explain why such practices of fugitivity, refusal, or alternative world-making should not also be considered in the scope of her text.[13]

Despite this possible impasse, Anker's book is a provocative, well-researched, and capacious exploration of a loaded term. It will appeal to those across interdisciplinary fields of American studies, Black studies, postcolonial theory, feminist and queer theory, ethics and aesthetics, posthumanism, history, political theory, ecocriticism, and media studies. It takes intellectual risks and asks complex questions that enrich the ways in which we might conceive of ethical social practices and ways of being, and that encourage a deep reckoning with concepts normatively taken as given. In particular, it is an important rejoinder to work *with* ambivalence, as opposed to allowing for ideological calcification when we notice only the positive or negative, rather than their simultaneity.

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[13] Anker, 66-67.

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