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RESISTING REALITY: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION AND SOCIAL CRITIQUE

Introduction

What does it mean that gender and race are socially constructed? How should we understand the very real social relations of oppression with which structural forms of sexism and racism go hand in hand? And what can analytic philosophy contribute to the attempts of feminist and other types of critical theory to both analyze and criticize the status quo? These are some of the questions Sally Haslanger's important book *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique* addresses by bringing together a number of highly influential essays, which explore the relation between social construction and social critique, drawing on insights from feminist and critical race theory. Offering reinterpretations of notions such as ideology, social structure, and oppression, Haslanger's analyses combine the methods of analytic philosophy and critical theory to provide a challenging view of the social world we live in, and of what's wrong with it.

Haslanger is one of the most prominent voices in contemporary analytic metaphysics and epistemology and from early on has used the conceptual and argumentative resources from this approach to contribute to the project of critical social theory in general and feminist theory in particular (in this her project can be seen as related to the work of philosophers such as Rae Langton, Elizabeth Anderson, Ann Cudd, and Charlotte Witt). Haslanger's interest in gender and race, however, is not merely theoretical but bound up with her activist engagement in the struggle to overcome structural obstacles to inclusivity and non-discrimination in the academic world in general, and philosophy in particular – obstacles which are still poorly understood (if not flatly denied) by many in the profession and which range from continuing outright discrimination and micro-aggressions, to unconscious biases and schemes, and the socially dysfunctional atmosphere of many departments (Haslanger 2008; Haslanger 2013a). In a similar vein her work explores the continuing impact of structural racism on the educational opportunities of students of color and the ways in which this impact is mediated by the micro-politics of the classroom (Haslanger 2014).

Against this background it is no surprise that the title of her book – *Resisting Reality* – is intended to be ambiguous: on the one hand, it refers to the all-too-common resistance to recognizing the reality of the social world, especially within philosophy; on the other hand, it refers to the urgency of resisting a world that is unjust in so many ways. As Haslanger (2012, 30) writes: 'We should not resist seeing the reality that we should, in fact, resist; in fact, disclosing that reality is a crucial precondition for successful resistance.'

The papers in the first section of the book address the phenomenon of social construction and seek to clarify some of the confusions that this notion has given rise to, placing special emphasis on the preconditions and implications of a specific form of the constructionist project which Haslanger calls 'the debunking project'. This project can be seen as a variant of the critique of ideology in that it proceeds in the form of a critique of naturalization and dehistorization – of the ways in which the social appears, or is made to appear, as natural: it 'typically attempts to show that a category or classification scheme that appears to track a group of individ-

uals defined by a set of physical or metaphysical conditions is better understood as capturing a group that occupies a certain (usually "thick") social position' (Haslanger 2012, 132). At the same time, Haslanger advances an understanding of social construction that she takes to be compatible with certain forms of realism, objectivism, and naturalism, thereby shifting established understandings of constructionism and of realism towards a form of critical realism, a critical realist social ontology (see also Mikkola 2013).

The papers in the second section focus on gender and race and show what a social constructionist account can teach us about them. In many cases, social differences are masked and taken to be natural – gender and race are prominent examples. Both race and gender are defined by, and thus do not only go along with, hierarchical social relations and structures; they consist in a complex set of social positions of subordination and privilege that individuals occupy by virtue of their bodies being interpreted and marked in a certain way. Haslanger therefore argues that we should understand race and gender not as natural but as – still very real! – social kinds and thereby arrive at a revised understanding of race and gender (that she contrasts with 'the manifest concept'): what it means to be a woman, for example, is among other things to be structurally subordinated – being a woman thus has to do more with social relations than with supposedly intrinsic properties. Accordingly, both sexism and racism have to be understood in terms of structural forms of oppression and not in the individualizing terms of 'bad attitudes' and 'failings of the heart'.

The papers in the third section investigate issues in epistemology and philosophy of language more generally in so far as they touch upon social construction and social critique as introduced in the first two sections. As we have seen, in everyday discourse we often use categories of gender and race as if they were referring to natural properties ('the manifest concept') while as a matter of fact they are referring to social positions and relations ('the operative concept'). But how precisely should we understand the possible mismatch between the manifest and the operative concept and what would be the right course for conceptual reform?

Haslanger's book is an ambitious and thought-provoking attempt to think through the challenges that the project of social critique raises with regard to ontology, epistemology and the philosophy of language – hence it comes as no surprise that it raises difficult questions about philosophical methodology, social ontology and critical theory in a way that has already sparked a lively debate (see, e.g., Jones 2013; Mills 2013; Haslanger 2013b; Mikkola 2013; Lepold 2013). With this dossier we hope to continue this debate and contribute to it from a variety of different perspectives.

In his contribution, Titus Stahl discusses the possibility of an immanent critique of our linguistic practices and the understanding of ideology critique underlying Haslanger's project. Arianna Betti investigates the methodological role of models and schemas as irreducible interpretive tools and the importance of making them explicit. Mari Mikkola raises questions about the normative underpinnings of Haslanger's theory of oppression and asks what makes oppression wrongful. In her extensive reply, Haslanger responds to the questions raised by these three contributions, further developing the arguments from her book and opening up new perspectives for future discussions.[1]

At the end of the introduction to her book, Haslanger expresses the hope that her work will be 'at best useful for a while, and will then become obsolete as our social conditions and narrative resources evolve' (Haslanger 2012, 30). As for the first part of her hope, it seems safe to say that it has already been vindicated – as for the second part, making critical theory obsolete is of course a long-term collective project to which philosophy, as Haslanger's work exemplifies, can contribute its share.

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[1] The articles have initially been presented as papers (along with a fourth comment by Beate Rössler) at a workshop with Sally Haslanger on her book at the University of Amsterdam on November 18, 2013.

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CRITICIZING SOCIAL REALITY FROM WITHIN
HASLANGER ON RACE, GENDER, AND IDEOLOGY

1. Introduction

Any kind of socially progressive critique of social practices must accomplish the difficult task of taking up a stance that is both appropriately critical of, and sympathetic to, the self-understanding of those whom it addresses. In doing so, it must avoid two mistakes: on the one hand, it must take into account that many of the negative features of our societies, such as racism and sexism, are not only rooted in what people do, but also pervade the very *conceptual categories* in which we understand ourselves. Thus, any serious critique of our social world has to seemingly reject many aspects of this socially dominant self-understanding. It seems necessary to do so in order to avoid falling into the trap of unconsciously reproducing relationships of oppression or subordination by formulating one's criticism in a language that already buys into a problematic conceptual framework. On the other hand, it is a futile enterprise to try to *completely* reject and replace the categories of the self-understanding of those whom one addresses. This is not only because it is hardly possible for critics to step completely outside of the language and the ways of thinking which are prevalent in their society. If they attempt to do so, critical theorists might also become unable, firstly, to correctly identify the subjective

experiences of oppression to which critical theories must necessarily refer; secondly, they risk becoming unable to formulate normative principles to which those whom they address could reasonably agree; and, thirdly, they become less capable of understanding the social struggles of their times. In other words, if social critics do not aim at an understanding of social practices from the 'inside' (that is, as understood from within those frameworks of thought and action that they aim to criticize), their critique becomes too disconnected to be valuable.

Even though one might entertain the thought, for example, that it would be better if we all just rejected the idea of 'race' and treat the concept of 'race' as having no meaning at all, it quickly becomes clear that not only would this ignore the fact that categories of 'race' are real for all of us, but that for many members of our societies the fact that they belong to one race and not to another is encountered each day as a brute fact. The experience of belonging to a 'race' cannot be understood without reference to the reality which 'race' actually has in our societies, understood in terms of the meaning of the relevant discursive ascriptions.

Critical theorists have traditionally employed a methodological solution to this dilemma, namely, the method of 'immanent critique'. As a method, immanent critique begins from the self-understanding of a given society and critically evaluates this self-understanding on its own terms in order to emphasize the ways in which it fails to successfully structure the practice of that society and to point out the pathologies that it necessarily produces. If one of the tasks of critical theories is to make this burden of a self-understanding being deficient according to its very own standards 'still more oppressive by adding to it a consciousness of it, and the shame […] more shameful by making it public', as Marx (1972, 134) famously argued, they might be capable of breaking the spell of ideological self-understandings without resorting to an 'external standpoint'.

While many social theorists engaged in progressive politics would agree to this description, the enormously difficult task of articulating this idea in the terms of our most advanced philosophical theories of language, mind, and social reality has rarely been attempted. It is the great achievement of Sally Haslanger's essays in *Resisting Reality* that she offers exciting new

answers on how to think about these problems. This especially concerns her analysis of the role of race and gender concepts, an analysis that neither rejects them in favour of some idealized notion of how we *better should* think or speak, nor accepts them as a mere given to which we have to adapt.

There are two points in *Resisting Reality* in which both the advantages and the challenges of this strategy become explicit. The first point concerns the treatment of the categories of race and gender (categories for which the problem that I have just described is especially salient). The second point concerns the notion of 'ideology'. I would like to argue that in both cases Haslanger's treatment of the issue goes beyond traditional approaches and establishes extremely interesting results. However, I would also like to examine both cases to see whether her approach involves a certain residual individualism that makes some of her arguments less powerful than they could otherwise be.

2. Semantic Externalism and Social Kinds

One of the most fundamental claims of *Resisting Reality* concerns a combination of *realism* and *constructionism* in regard to gender and race. Haslanger argues that concepts such as 'woman' or 'black' describe something *real* (as opposed to a mere illusion), but what they describe are not (as some people often think) essential or even natural properties of individuals, but rather *social kinds*. In particular, such terms describe the membership of people in groups that occupy certain positions in social hierarchies of domination (Haslanger 2012, 229-235).[1] With this claim, Haslanger not only rejects *naturalist* theories of race and gender, but also *eliminativist* theories that hold that race and gender terms do not refer to anything at all (cf. 299 ff.).

This theory rests on a certain picture about the meaning of concepts. Of course, Haslanger acknowledges that the intuitions that typical language users have about the meanings of race and gender terms do not necessarily go along with an explicit understanding that they refer to social kinds.

In fact, many people who talk about race and gender believe the corresponding terms to refer to *natural kinds*. However, drawing on externalist theories of meaning, Haslanger argues that an introspective analysis of concepts (that is, an analysis that refers to the understanding of ordinary language users) is inadequate to determine their content (379, 398). Instead, she endorses a variety of *semantic externalism*, that is, a view about concepts that holds that what determines their extension – and also, at least in part, their meaning – is what these concepts really 'track'.

We can therefore distinguish between two aspects of a concept: the *manifest* and the *operative concept* (92, 370). The manifest concept is determined by the meaning that language users *understand* a term to have. In contrast, the operative concept is determined by the properties or entities that are *actually tracked* by the linguistic practice in which such terms are employed.

As is obvious in the case of race and gender categories, there can be a mismatch between manifest and operative concepts. For instance, many people believe that these terms track essential, intrinsic properties of individuals that serve to explain their behaviour, whereas closer inspection reveals that there are, in fact, no such intrinsic properties. Rather, the way we employ categories of race and gender in our 'everyday theories' suggests that these concepts reliably track *positions of social status* due to which certain groups of people, as categorized by certain physical 'markers', are systematically treated differently.

This mismatch between operative and manifest concepts in our everyday use has direct implications for the question of critique: given this distinction, we can attempt to provide an immanent critique of our linguistic practices. This is because we are in principle capable of finding out (and convincing others) that our concepts of race and gender are not adequately understood using an essentialist theory of these phenomena. Such an immanent approach that points out a problem of a social practice (in this case, of the practice of categorizing persons according to gender) 'from within' is preferable to a critique 'from the outside' which only takes up the manifest concept and subjects it to a 'detached' metaphysical scrutiny. In this case, such an 'external' critique could only discover that

nothing in the real world is captured by the manifest, essentialist concept of race (because there are no racial essences that play any role in the best explanation of the behaviour of individuals). Consequently, an external critique of our 'race' vocabulary could only argue for *discarding* this vocabulary and replacing it with another. But such a critique not only fore-closes the possibility of investigating the possible rationale of some of our discursive practices in which we employ this vocabulary, it also does not tell us anything about the best understanding of the experiences of those persons who are members of the respective social kinds.

This way of spelling out an 'immanent' strategy relies on a distinction be-tween the semantic self-understanding of people and the actual social kinds that their concepts track that is often presented as relatively clean-cut. Even if Haslanger acknowledges that there can be multiple, compet-ing concepts on both the operative and the manifest level (see 370, n. 5), she seems to clearly distinguish two possible types of social critique: first, a *critique of concepts* that shows that some concepts which many people take to refer to natural kinds actually refer to social kinds, and second, a *critique of society* that aims to change what social kinds there are. While the first type of critique might be a precondition for the second (we must know, for example, that 'woman' refers to a social kind in order to be able to intend to change society so that women, understood in terms of social status positions, no longer exist), these activities seem relatively independ-ent from one another.

To see why this might be a problematic way to put it, it is useful to exam-ine in more detail how different kinds of semantic 'externalism' concep-tualize the 'external'. Haslanger introduces semantic externalism in two of its forms: first, there is the 'natural kind' variety which describes the view that the meaning of natural kind terms is partly constituted by the 'external' instances of that kind that are responsible for our use of that concept.[2] Second, there is a 'social variety', that is, the view that the mean-ing of some of our concepts is constituted by the linguistic usage of our community.[3] After referring to these two classical models, Haslanger in-troduces her own account that she calls 'objective type externalism'.

According to objective type externalism:

'Terms or concepts pick out an objective type, whether or not we can state conditions for membership in the type, by virtue of the fact that their meaning is determined by ostension of paradigms (or other means of reference fixing) together with an implicit extension to things of the same type as the paradigms.' (374)

It is clear that this is an extension of natural kind externalism to social kinds. In other words, it takes the *objective type* which is tracked by the concept to be central for its meaning. Of course, in contrast to traditional natural kind externalism, this account also allows for the possibility that the objective type in question is a social kind. Compared with social ex-ternalist approaches (which also apply to more than natural kind terms), however, the *communal use* of a term does not play any discernible role for its meaning on this account.

My main worry regarding this move towards a *specific* kind of externalism is not one about its independent plausibility as a position within the phi-losophy of language. In other words, I am not so much concerned with the success of 'objective kind externalism' as a theory of meaning, but ra-ther with the consequences of choosing one such theory for a *critique* of concepts.

As a starting point, we could interpret Haslanger's treatment of the mat-ter as entailing that our individual understanding of linguistic terms, as captured by the 'manifest concept', is fully independent from our social conventions which are constitutive for the social kinds that these terms track, that is, as an 'individualist' variant of objective social kind external-ism. Such an interpretation could emphasize some useful features of ob-jective kind externalism for her critical project that aims to uncover how individuals' understanding of the meaning of their concepts can mislead them. That is, the resulting account of meaning would support a type of philosophical critique that uncovers the ways in which beliefs of individu-als about the proper use of race and gender terms only make sense by re-lying on assumptions which do not withstand philosophical reflection. But sharply dividing the semantic self-understanding of individuals (as the

basis of the manifest concept) from social reality (as constitutive for the social kinds which determine the operative concept) also runs the risk of concealing more 'material' aspects of the discourses in which these concepts are used.

This point might best be illustrated by looking at another theory of conceptual content: Robert Brandom's inferentialism. Even though Brandom's peculiar mixture of externalist and semantic holism leaves many questions unanswered, it is clear that it goes along with the externalist intuition insofar as the meaning of concepts is not taken by him to be determined by the 'internal' self-understanding (or the mental states) of a concept user. Rather, on Brandom's account, it is the *pattern of socially licensed inferences* between propositions involving certain concepts that determine their meaning (e.g. the fact that one can legitimately infer 'Fido is an animal' from 'Fido is a dog' determines part of the meaning of 'dog'). That inferences are socially approved of, however, is a matter of the *implicit social rules* of a linguistic practice as instituted in the entirety of a community's reactive dispositions (see Brandom 1994, chs. 1 and 2).

If we look from the perspective of this kind of externalist theory to the issue of the 'real' meaning of 'our' race and gender terms, we might say that the social conventions that regulate the use of such terms are essentialist insofar as they often support, for example, inferences from the ascription of racial or gender identities to ascriptions of intrinsic properties of certain kinds. In other words, our social conventions governing the *socially shared* linguistic use of race and gender concepts might only make sense on a metaphysically unacceptable essentialist interpretation of these terms. If we neither want to accept a naturalist analysis nor say that these concepts do not refer to anything at all, then it is very useful for a critical project to distinguish, once more, between the operative concepts at play, concepts that are determined by the objective social kinds that race and gender terms *really* track, and the manifest concepts which are determined by the *implicit, practical, collective* linguistic self-understanding of a community.

If we consequently locate 'manifest' concepts on the level of communal discursive practices (as would be completely consistent with Haslanger's

theory),[4] then it is plausible to say that *both* the manifest and the operative concepts are (at least somewhat) independent from *any individual's* self-understanding, and that both the existence of the manifest concept and the existence of the entities and properties tracked by the operative concepts are fully dependent on social practices. It then becomes possible to distinguish between *manifest concepts on the individual and the social level*.

Especially in the case of race and gender terms, we can imagine that there are contexts in which *some* competent users of these concepts do not explicitly believe, even on a close inspection of their semantic intuitions, that these concepts denote essential, intrinsic properties of people. For example, we might imagine that there are philosophers in some university who – as a matter of explicit belief – do not think that women or members of racialized groups are intrinsically less capable at doing academic work than men or 'white' people. Nevertheless, the very same individuals may still – without any sense of alienation – participate in a discursive practice in which inferences from ascriptions of race and gender to ascriptions of intrinsic philosophical abilities are regularly counted as valid and are treated as unproblematic. In a case like this, one could say that the *inferential norms* governing the use of their gender concepts in their discursive practice determine both their socially shared manifest concepts and their operative concepts, *despite* their explicit semantic beliefs.

Such a mismatch between the explicit self-understanding of individuals and their *collective self-understanding as instituted in a social practice* seems possible because discursive practices are constituted by more than just the individual semantic intuitions or the beliefs of their members. Socially shared inferential norms do not normally only reflect a sum of contingent individual mental states or dispositions, they also usually express practical distinctions that have belief-independent support in legal rules, conventional procedures, institutions, and material arrangements.[5]

If one acknowledges, however, that *both* the socially shared manifest and the operative concepts of a community are a matter of social practices which are not exhausted by discursive interaction in a very narrow sense but are highly interdependent with legal rules, organizational rules of

formal and informal work, with markets, city layouts and all other kinds of material arrangements, a narrow distinction between critical interventions that aim at a *better self-understanding* and political interventions that change the *institutional and social structure* becomes problematic. If we examine language as one component of social practices amongst others, a 'merely semantic' critique of race and gender naturalism that aims at an *improvement* of the self-understanding that a group has of its own conceptual schemas - that is, a critique that attempts to change the beliefs of group members about the meaning of concepts such that these beliefs better track the real meaning of these concepts - becomes a problematic idea if one separates this activity too much from social critique in a broader sense.

For example, if as a result of being convinced by a critique of gender naturalism someone only changes their individual understanding of the corresponding terms without ceasing to participate in the relevant discursive practice, then they would necessarily begin to use these terms *inadequately* according to the rules of this very practice. That is, a belief of theirs to the effect that they have now grasped the 'real' meaning of these concepts turns out to be false, at least in one sense: what they now take to be the correct rule of application for these concepts (especially in regard to inferences) is apt to generate failures of communication with their fellow language users. Thus, they must acknowledge that the critic has brought them to *change* their use of the concept rather than to *better understand* the collectively shared use.

This line of thought not only supports the conclusion that an immanent critique of race and gender that only aims at convincing people to *individually* revise their semantic self-understanding might miss its aim as long as it does not *also* aim at changing collective social practices that are *both material and discursive*. It also becomes clear, more importantly, that the 'real social kind' which our race and gender terms track is not metaphysically independent from the social practices that determine the socially shared manifest meaning of the relevant concepts. Rather, whenever we aim at revising our semantic self-understanding so that it better conforms to what race and gender 'really are', the very same process of revision might change exactly that, namely, what race and gender *really*

are. To put it more concretely, it might turn out that a society where it is collectively acknowledged, as a matter of inferential discursive practice, that 'our' concepts of race and gender track social kinds constituted by certain structures of oppression, could very well be (in virtue of the revisions to the whole web of practices that such a change would necessarily entail) a society in which these structures of oppression no longer exist in their present form.

To pursue this line of thought just one step further: if we acknowledge that certain social kinds (such as race and gender) can perhaps only exist in societies in which the inferential practices embody a *collective illusion* about the meaning of the terms by which these kinds are tracked, the goal of revising our semantic intuitions such that manifest and operative concepts become *congruent* does not make sense any more. Rather, what we then should ask is how our practices must change in order for there to be no longer any necessity for incongruence. This, of course, is a point that – in different ways – has been made both by Hegel and Marx. With his idea that there is a 'life of the notion', that is, a movement of continual conceptual revision that might never come to an end, Hegel has expressed the intuition that, at the foundation of our conceptual practices, there might be a social process that is not guided by a goal of eventual 'correspondence' between concepts and reality but rather by the goal of pursuing solutions to the specific problems of each stage in that process (see Hegel 1997, 27 f.). Against the potentially conservative implications of that theory, Marx (1940) has pointed out that it might be part of that very process that certain concepts of the social are 'necessarily misleading' inasmuch as their deceptive nature is rooted in the very social practices they seemingly enable us to understand. A further examination of these lines of inquiry might lead us away from questions of metaphysics towards a more sociological inquiry concerning the internal dynamics of social practices and historical changes, an inquiry that no longer relies as much on the criterion of whether our concepts correctly grasp objective kinds and focuses more on standards of progress that are internal to social practices.

3. The Critique of Ideology

The search for an immanent form of critique is, as I understand it, also at the core of Haslanger's notion of ideology critique. As the term is used throughout *Resisting Reality*, 'ideology' does not only include explicit beliefs, but also background assumptions, habits of thought and perception (18, 448) and socially shared schemas (413-418). These elements all form a background for the application of concepts (413). Ideology critique is thus thought to disrupt a *dogmatic* application of concepts (17), that is, an application of concepts that is insufficiently understood and insufficiently responsive towards considerations about what the *point* of using these concepts should be.

Haslanger argues that we should understand statements that employ ideologically-laden terms not as straightforwardly false, but as true in relation to certain *contexts of assessment* (419-421). In other words, ideological concepts (such as 'cool' or 'cute', in Haslanger's examples), if they are understood as relative to a social context of assessment, can be employed correctly without ideology critique becoming inappropriate – for such critique does not primarily rest on the assumption that the application of these concepts is *false*, but rather that these concepts (and consequently, the social contexts of assessment) are in some way *defective*. For this reason, ideology critique need not endorse the relativist implications that seem to follow from the idea of contextual truth. Ideology critique as a practice, Haslanger argues, must rather aim at finding a *common ground of assessment* from which a rejection of ideological judgements can be shown to be justified (425). Of course, such common ground cannot always be assumed to exist. Rather, ideology critique must often try to change or resist certain forms of *de facto* common grounds.

Even though Haslanger resists any temptation to enter into debates about normative justification, aspiring instead to 'only' elucidate the social reality that such debates are about, the notion of ideology is one in regard to which it becomes problematic to refrain from taking up a position on normative principles: for the question naturally arises as to how participants could ever be *justified* in privileging one form of common ground over another. Haslanger suggests that there might be formal criteria for designating some forms of common ground as superior, for example, if they can be reached without coercion or violence (426). These formal criteria are clearly useful, but it is not obvious that they capture everything that is wrong about ideologies, many of which precisely serve to support social structures of oppression without resort to violence. On an everyday understanding of 'ideology', ideologies are clearly in some sense *deficient* as *representations* of the world, but if they are, at the same time, true according to some contexts of assessment we should also expect the question as to which one of these contexts one should privilege to be answered in reference to certain normative *and* epistemic considerations.

Although I can only voice an intuition here that is not yet entirely developed, I believe that this problem is, once more, connected to the question of what the 'common' in common ground means. An agreement about certain conversational implicatures or an agreement about the applicability of certain concepts that constitute a common ground is, as Haslanger describes it, both a question of habit and socialization and a question of individually shared beliefs. What makes a 'common' ground into something that is *shared* can be understood, in regard to these aspects, as an agreement of *individual* dispositions or beliefs.

However, there might be another aspect of what makes a common ground into something 'common', namely a *normative understanding*, not only in regard to which further discursive moves are justified given that common ground, but which also might include an agreement about how one can *change* that common ground.

To use Haslanger's example: a conversational agreement about certain features of ethnic groups might be more or less problematic according to the degree the vocabulary of 'race' itself can be *challenged* within the further development of the conversation. We can compare two cases here: in the first case, there is an understanding that racial ascriptions (or judgements about 'coolness' or 'cuteness') might turn out to be false but that they can *never* turn out to be *inapplicable*. In the second case, however, while racial ascriptions are collectively accepted by all participants, they also (implicitly) accept the rule, that there are certain observations that would make it rational to drop this kind of ascription altogether from the

discursive repertoire. While the second case seems to be a case in which there are inappropriate or even misleading categories in play, it seems not such a clear-cut example of ideology as the first case. This is because, in the first case, there is a normative *restriction* built into a discursive situation which disallows certain ways of further developing the common ground which does not exist in the second case. Such a restriction on the ways in which a common ground can be changed (a restriction which is especially obvious in the case of the ideologies of race and gender naturalism) is a *normative* feature of the discursive situation which – while it might be supported by habits or beliefs – requires more than a mere *agreement in content* between the respective interlocutors' independently existing beliefs or dispositions. This normative feature rather belongs to the institutional aspects of a speech situation, or rather, of the normative social practice into which the 'common ground' is embedded.

If we acknowledge this normative aspect of ideological 'common grounds', we might formulate an immanent critique of the degree to which the institutional or normative rules of conventional speech situations *limit* the development of conceptual alternatives from 'within'. This might turn out to be a criterion to distinguish ideological from non-ideological 'common grounds' that allows for degrees, and that combines normative and epistemic considerations in just the right way (see also Stahl 2013). Of course, as soon as we understand this to be not only a matter of individual dispositions and beliefs but also of material practices and forces, the 'common ground' might turn out to have a richer material and historic dimension than those which become accessible if one only focuses on speech-act theoretic considerations alone.

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[1] Where not otherwise indicated, all references in brackets are to Haslanger 2012.

[2] This variety of externalism was introduced by Putnam (1975). Haslanger's full definition is 'natural kind terms or concepts pick out a natural kind, whether or not we can state the essence of the kind, by virtue of the fact that their meaning is determined by ostension of a paradigm (or other means of reference fixing) together with an implicit extension to 'things of the same kind' as the paradigm' (374).

[3] The most famous proponent of this variety is Burge 1979; Haslanger characterizes it as follows: 'the meaning of a term or the content of a concept used by a speaker is determined at least in part by the standard linguistic usage in his or her community.' (374)

[4] In her discussion of the 'improvisation theory of meaning' (437-439), Haslanger also requires a 'coordinating intention' of language users in respect to the usage in their community as well as a 'shared tradition', but this still allows for the question of whether that which makes up these shared elements is, in any way, independent from individual semantic beliefs and intuitions (see also Lepold 2013, 33).

[5] Carefully distinguishing between individual and shared manifest meanings might also be helpful for countering objections such as those by Saul (2006), who argues that a survey of uses of race and gender terms rather supports that they do not have any clear meaning at all. Against this view, it could be argued that while it might be true for many individuals, there can still be social rules that give these terms a (relatively) clear meaning.

ARIANNA BETTI

ON HASLANGER'S FOCAL ANALYSIS OF RACE AND GENDER IN
RESISTING REALITY AS AN INTERPRETIVE MODEL

In *Resisting Reality* (Haslanger 2012), and more specifically in Chapter 7, a focal analysis of race and gender as social classes is proposed. A *focal analysis* is an account of:

'a variety of phenomena in terms of their relations to one that is theorized, *for the purposes at hand*, as the focus or core phenomenon. For my purposes, the core phenomenon is the pattern of social relations that constitute men as dominant and women as subordinate, or whites as dominant and people of color as subordinate. An account of how norms, symbols, identities, and such as gendered or raced is then given by reference to the 'core' sense.' (Haslanger 2012: 7; see also 228)[1]

One way to put the point cited above is that the core meaning or sense of 'woman' – a term referring to gender, not to be confused with 'female', a term referring to sex – is adequately though partially captured (for a certain purpose) as 'those who are socially subordinate'. In other words, *so-cial subordination* is the common core (focus or core phenomenon) of both the concept of *woman* and that of *person of color*, though the core of the concept of *woman* contains, next to *those who are socially subordinate*, also other sub-concepts, e.g. (the concept corresponding to the terms) 'due to their perceived or imagined female reproductive capacities', while the concept of *(person of) color(ed)* contains, next to *socially subordinate* the sub-concepts (expressed by) 'due to the interpretation of their physical features as evidence of their ancestral links to a particular geographical region' (9, 234 and ff.). Furthermore, both these concepts, *woman* and *colored*, next to a core, have each a periphery or *margins*: the sub-concept of *weakness* for instance, belongs to the margins of 'woman', since it only enters the concept of woman in certain contexts.

When talking of the *core* and *margins* of a concept as being constituted by sub-concepts, I use a terminology from a recent discussion in a different field: the methodology of the history of ideas (Kuukkanen 2008). This is deliberate. Building upon this terminology, a recent proposal in the methodology of the history of ideas, known as the 'model approach', has been advanced to defend the use of interpretive models as cognitive schemas for a sound and implementable method in the history of ideas (Betti and van den Berg 2014). The methodology of the history of ideas is relevant to Haslanger's focal analysis because Haslanger sees gender and race concepts as carrying structural *continuities* across cross-cultural and transhistorical *discontinuities*: 'Gender varies tremendously cross-culturally and transhistorically, but there are, I argue, important structural similarities across these variations.' (8).

It is precisely on account of the details of this very idea of continuity in discontinuity that the method of (Lovejoy-style) history of ideas has been attacked: what *is* it that stays the same, exactly? And how can something stay the same and yet change? Most importantly, holists like Hintikka and Spitzer ask: isn't every idea, including *gender*, essentially dependent on its context (Hintikka 1975, 26-8, 34; Spitzer 1944; Lovejoy 1944, 206-7)? So much so that, in fact, there is no such thing as the concept of *gender* but only of *gender-in-context-x*? The point had been made for transhistorical considerations, but it can be easily adapted for cross-cultural ones.

Betti and van den Berg's (2014) model approach is a defence of Lovejoy-style history of ideas against critics such as Skinner. In this approach, ideas or concepts are construed as complex relational frameworks (models) that combine both stable parts (continuities) and variable parts (discontinuities). To this date, one of the most fully developed models of this kind is the so-called Classical Model of Science (CMS), which systematizes in seven conditions an ideal of science adopted by various philosophers throughout history (de Jong and Betti 2010). Using this model, historians can detect both continuities and discontinuities when studying how the meaning of the concept of *science* changes in different periods and intellectual contexts, i.e. by pointing out which *parts* of this model remain stable (core, in bold) and which change (margins, italics):

The Classical Model of Science (de Jong & Betti 2010)

A *proper science S* satisfies the following conditions:

(1) All *propositions* and all *concepts* (or *terms*) of *S* concern a specific set of objects or are about a certain domain of being(s).

(2a) There are in S a number of so-called fundamental *concepts* (or *terms*).

(2b) All other *concepts* (or *terms*) occurring in *S* are composed of (or are definable from) these fundamental *concepts* (or terms).

(3a) There are in *S* a number of so-called fundamental *propositions*.

(3b) All other *propositions* of S follow from or are grounded in (or are provable or demonstrable from) these fundamental propositions.

(4) All *propositions* of *S* are true.

(5) All *propositions* of *S* are universal and necessary in some sense or another.

(6) All *propositions* of *S* are known to be true. A non-fundamental proposition is known to be true through its (grounding) proof or demonstration in *S*.

(7) All *concepts* or *terms* of S are adequately known. A non-fundamental concept is adequately known through its composition or definition.

I claim in this paper that the model approach to the history of ideas shares interesting similarities to Haslanger's focal analysis from the methodological point of view, and that attracting attention to these similarities, and thus seeing Haslanger's focal analysis as an interpretive model in the sense of Betti and van den Berg (2014)(or as something that can be *turned* into such a model) seems to me useful in a least four ways. I will briefly discuss all four.

1. Methodological support to Haslanger's focal analysis of gender and race.

The first way in which it is useful to attract attention to the similarity between Haslanger's focal analysis and interpretive models in the sense of Betti and van den Berg (2014) (henceforth: models) is this: if Haslanger's focal analysis is (or can be turned into) a model in Betti and van den Berg's sense, then the arguments used to support the latter can also usefully support Haslanger's focal analysis. This is a salient point, because, as Betti and van den Berg argue, without the use of models to trace concept drift, Lovejoy-style history of ideas or any similar enterprise cannot withstand two important objections, namely holism and Skinner's bias objection.[2] For Skinner objects: since when we use interpretive frameworks such as Betti and van den Berg's we impose our own framework, aren't such models biased (Skinner 2002: 58-9), and don't they only afford arbitrary reconstructions (ibid.: 79-86)? Here is where an important similarity between the model approach and Haslanger's focal analysis comes in handy. According to Betti and van den Berg's model approach, historians of ideas studying concept drift should frame their interpretations on the basis of models, i.e. interpretive frameworks or networks of concepts that are fully *explicit* as well as revisable. Both Betti and van den Berg and Haslanger

systematize or capture *explicitly* something that in the sources interpreted by both enterprises often remains *implicit*; so their interpretive aims are both geared to uncover a certain conceptual framework that normally remains implicit – in the case of Haslanger's focal analysis, implicit in gender discourse. Consider now Skinner's objection: the best possible counter-objection to this is to turn it on its head. Yes, models do represent biases, but turning biases into models is in fact the best we can do since such interpretive filters are indispensable.

As Betti and van den Berg (2014) have argued, models work like *schemas* in cognitive psychology. The notion of schema owes its rationale to the idea that our cognitive processes involve an interaction between sensory input and *prior* (contextual) knowledge, (represented by) a framework or *schema* (Anderson 1977, 417). The idea has also been applied to studies in reading comprehension ('text is gobbledygook unless the reader possesses an interpretative framework to breathe meaning into it'; Anderson 1977, 423), resulting in the suggestion that contextual knowledge is a prerequisite for comprehending a prose passage; on a schema-theoretic view of reading comprehension, contextual knowledge is provided by schemata.[3] Within cognitive psychology the existence of schemas is a matter of course, but the point is that schemas are rarely made *explicit*. Betti and van den Berg exploit the parallel between cognitive schemas and models and say that the best defence against Skinner's biases objection is thus to make such models as interpretive tools *explicit*. If we do so, it is in fact not a danger, but simply sound methodology for shaping our interpretations in the form of models, and apply the models so obtained; for by doing this, our biases or hidden assumptions are there for all to see, and thus open to criticisms. Indeed, models are, crucially, (supposed to be kept) *revisable*.

2. Clarify descriptive/normative ambiguities in the notion of meaning of a concept.

In the gender studies literature, a subtle constant oscillation seems to exist around the very idea of *meaning*. Consider the following claim:

(*p*) the meaning of a gender term e.g. *woman* is 'those who are subordinate due to their perceived or imagined female reproductive capacities'.

Must (p) be understood as a *normative* or a *descriptive* claim? Does it *prescribe* what 'woman' should mean? Or does it simply empirically *record* how the word 'woman' is used or what it is taken to mean in ordinary discourse? I say it is both things at once, but ambiguity on (salient details regarding) this point tends to remain, and that ambiguity is not something we should welcome. As an example, consider this passage:

'Roughly, women are those subordinated in a society due to their perceived or imagined female reproductive capacities. It follows that in those societies where being (or presumed to be) female does not result in subordination along any dimension, *there are no women*.' (8, my emphasis)

Does this passage mean that we should take our dictionaries, look up *woman*, and replace the definition we find there with 'subordinated in a society due to their perceived or imagined female reproductive capacities'? No. (Haslanger herself stresses that we should not; see 12.) But then how should we interpret the claim that this *is* the focal meaning of 'woman'?

The claim that *woman* is to be construed as 'subordinated in a society due to their perceived or imagined female reproductive capacities', I maintain, must be seen as a *descriptive* construal of a felt social *norm* (a norm adopted in certain cultures, periods, by certain people and so on), and the claim must be seen as geared to *purely interpretive aims*: claim (p) is a tool.[4] My proposal is this: *gender* (or *race*) in Haslanger's analysis has to be understood in a way similar to how complex concepts as interpretive models in the sense of Betti and van den Berg's (2014) function. A model such as the Classical Model of Science mentioned above is not a schematic representation of a *normative* claim on what science should be, it is instead the *descriptive* abstract systematization of science as a felt norm *by others*, of what others have thought that science must be. There are two levels here, one descriptive and one normative, and although their interaction is key, the two levels must be clearly kept apart.[5] Failure to distinguish the two levels seems to be behind the concern of theorists such as Butler (Butler 1990: Ch. 1; Haslanger 2012: 228).

3. Support to the model approach as methodology from different fields.

The third way in which it is useful to attract attention to the similarity between Haslanger's focal analysis and interpretive models in the sense of Betti and van den Berg (2014) is this: if Haslanger's focal analysis of gender and race is indeed an example of an interpretive model of the kind advocated in the model approach or can successfully be turned into one, the latter will receive indirect interdisciplinary support. Finding examples in different fields and geared to different aims is important to the model approach as a methodological proposal, because the model approach as a whole has so far relied heavily on one example of interpretive model, the so-called Classical Model of Science (de Jong and Betti 2010), which systematizes the concept of axiomatic science within one field - history and philosophy of science - and has purely historical interpretive aims. If we can show that the interpretive practice of philosophers in a field as diverse as gender studies is also shaped by an interpretive model similar in kind (in this case Haslanger's focal analysis) and, on top of that, that that model is geared (also) to systematic aims, then the model approach receives indirect support.

4. Philosophical foundation of meaning for the computational (distributional semantics) analysis of gender.

There is also a fourth reason why a reflection on the idea of Haslanger's focal analysis from the perspective of the model approach to history of ideas is useful: recent experiments apply tools from distributional semantics – a branch of computational linguistics – to textual material in order to enlarge the evidence base of hypotheses from gender studies (Herbelot, von Redecker, and Müller 2012). The descriptive/normative ambiguity on the notion of meaning described under 2. (above) carries over to these experiments. It is a rather widespread *topos* to associate the very enterprise of distributional semantics to an idea of *meaning as use*: why study the distributions of terms such as *woman* and *black* and *black woman*? Well, because meaning is use, so the empirical analysis of a large number of texts – this is the background idea – reveals something deep about *the* meaning

of such terms. But the problem with this is, again, that without a foundational analysis of what meaning is, it is rather unclear what we should take such studies to reveal, exactly. From the point of view of the discussion under 2., we can take these studies first of all to reveal the description of a felt norm. But in the light of the other points I have raised we can go a bit further, and see these studies as serving a broader interdisciplinary purpose. Here is the proposal: we can take these distributional experiments to yield extremely valuable bottom-up suggestions as to how to help set up, refine and enrich interpretive models in the sense of Betti and van den Berg (2014) (i.e. Haslanger's focal analysis turned into such models) as tools for gender studies research – models which, as we have said, have the descriptive aim of fixing in an articulate manner felt gender norms.[6]

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[1] Where not otherwise indicated, all references in brackets are to Haslanger 2012.

[2] For a longer exposition of this point as well as an extended rebuttal of objections to Lovejoy-style holists and to Skinner, see Betti and van den Berg 2014.

[3] As an illustration, consider the following passage from a famous experiment by Bransford and Johnson:

'A newspaper is better than a magazine / A seashore is a better place than the street / At first, it is better to run than to walk / You may have to try several times / It takes some skill but it's easy to learn / Even young children can enjoy it / Once successful, complications are minimal / Birds seldom get too close / Rain however, soaks in very fast / Too many people doing the same thing can also cause problems / One needs lots of room / If there are no complications, it can be very peaceful / A rock will serve as an anchor / If things break loose from it, however, you will not get a second chance.' (Bransford and Johnson 1972, 722)

This passage makes sense only when we are supplied with the contextual knowledge that its topic is *making and flying a kite*. Bransford and Johnson's various experiments with these and similar textual fragments indicated that both the comprehension ratings and recall scores of subjects supplied with contextual knowledge before reading the passages were higher than those of subjects who lacked it (Bransford and Johnson 1972, 717; see also the so-called Restaurant Schema, Grow 1996 after Schank and Abelson).

[4] Note that if 'gender' is a *theoretical* term, as Haslanger points out, then it might be that the theory we are talking about is better described as a theory of theories, as general methodology, and *not* as the theory of gender studies. We are a step higher, it seems.

[5] One difference worth mentioning is that the two tend to be applied to different sources, for a model such as the Classical Model of Science is applied mainly to historical-technical professional texts of philosophers, while Haslanger's focal analysis tends to be applied or *also* applied to contemporary textual material produced in a non-technical context – the analysis pertains to society at large, so to speak, it might include newspapers, Wikipedia, twitter, Facebook, what people say in bars, and might or might not be applied to conceptualisations that count as history or to scholarly texts.

[6] Haslanger presents the idea of focal analysis by using diagrams, which might overlap for race and gender, and offers a metaphor in terms of mixing colors to understand the phenomenon of intersectionality, i.e. the fact that *black woman* should not yield only the intersection or combination of *black* and *woman* but a new meaning (see also Herbelot, von Redecker, and Müller 2012, 2.2). How should we put together the mixing color metaphor and intersectionality? Maybe by just stressing that intersectionality works at the intentional level, as meaning does, so that e.g. *black women* have a core doubly qualified as 'subordinated due to their perceived or imagined female reproductive capacities, as well as due to the interpretation of their physical features as evidence of their ancestral links to a particular geographical region.'

Krisis

MARI MIKKOLA

OPPRESSION: ITS HARMS AND WRONGS

1. In this paper, I will focus on Sally Haslanger's (2012) elucidation of oppression understood as a structural, relational and group-based phenomenon.[1] The intuitive underlying idea is that oppression involves some unjustly harmful and illegitimate misuse or misallocation of power. For Haslanger, Fs are oppressed as Fs (as a social kind) by an institution I in a context C if (by definition) there exists some relation R, where being an F non-accidentally correlates with being disadvantaged by standing in an unjust relation R to others, and I creates, perpetuates or reinforces that relation (325). With this definition of oppression in mind, I will raise two concerns: one exegetical, another about the normative underpinnings of Haslanger's account. This paper's main critical questions are: What makes the relation R unjust? What normatively grounds the unjustness of oppression? My view is that Haslanger does not sufficiently elucidate these issues, which she must do in order to make good her moralised conception of oppression.

The structure of the paper is as follows: I will first spell out Haslanger's account of oppression more carefully (Section 2). I will then outline my two concerns (Section 3). Finally, I will consider some ways in which Haslanger could reply to them (Section 4).

2. As already noted, Haslanger aims to explicate structural, relational and group-based oppression. What does she mean by these? First, there is a distinction between agent and structural oppression. The former focuses on individuals' or groups' actions and it is the job of our best moral theory to tell us when some action is wrongful. By contrast, the latter is about collective, institutional arrangements and a theory of justice should normatively evaluate its wrong (314). Specifically, when thinking about structural oppression the important question is: is some structure (policy, practice, institution, norm) unjust and does it create or perpetuate illegitimate power relations (317)? Second, the relevant relations that oppression is about pertain to the distribution of goods and power, and to relationships that define expectations, entitlements and obligations (327). Finally, determining whether a particular instance of structural oppression is group-based involves two moves. To begin with, we must determine whether there is oppression and misallocation of power that causes some wrongful harm. For this part, one must 'rely on a substantive theory of justice' (322). Just looking at the effects or motivations of agents cannot yet determine whether the wrong is linked to group membership. Rather, group-based harms typically involve Iris Marion Young's (1990) five 'faces' of oppression: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. Next we must determine whether one's social kind membership non-accidentally correlates with a disadvantage. That is, whether the group's being a group of Fs is causally relevant to a particular injustice.

Recall that I am interested in examining what makes some relation R unjust and what normatively grounds the unjustness of oppression. Haslanger does not spell out in much detail what the unjust harm of oppression amounts to (or why oppressive harm is unjust). She notes that oppressive harm is about constraints imposed on the oppressed (320) and

that it involves Young's five 'faces'. In fact, Haslanger explicitly refuses to spell out the normative underpinnings of these harms because doing so would allegedly require a theory of justice. In the course of her argument, Haslanger juxtaposes moral and political wrongs with individual and structural ones. Individual/agent oppression is about moral wrongs, whereas structural oppression is about political wrongs (although Haslanger admits that the distinction is not entirely clear). Now, one clearly cannot spell out a theory of justice in addition to a theory of oppression in just one article. Nevertheless, I have two concerns relative to Haslanger's refusal to explicate the wrong of oppression.

Exegetical concern: The noted juxtaposition is unclear to me; it is also not obvious why accounting for oppression's unjustness requires a full theory of justice.

Normativity concern: As I see it, we need to account for the wrong of injustice for emancipatory social-theoretic purposes. But this does not require a full theory of justice; I contend that it merely requires an interim theory of injustice. In the following section, I will elaborate these concerns.

3. To start with the exegetical concern; how are we to understand the moral and political wrongs, which seem to map onto individual and structural oppression? Here is what Haslanger says in particular: moral theory is 'a theory of human conduct, so concerned primarily with individuals'; political theory is about our collective arrangements. Both can be morally wrong though (cf. 314, n. 7). Haslanger further hints that structural oppression is wrong in a unique kind of way (318). This implies that the wrong of structural oppression does not simply supervene on individuals who inflict wrongful harm and that individual and structural oppressions are wrong in distinctive kinds of ways. In footnote 14, Haslanger explicates a background assumption that her elucidation of oppression trades on:

'injustice and so the wrong of structural oppression consist not simply in unjust distributions of goods, opportunities, and such, but in inegalitarian social relationships, that is, in relational obligations and expectations that distribute power hierarchically.' (321)

Finally, the moral/ political distinction seems to map onto the right-and-wrong/ good-and-bad distinctions (334). So, structural oppression involves political wrongs, which pertain to our collective arrangements; it does not supervene on individual moral wrongdoing; political wrongs are about goodness/ badness (as opposed to right and wrong); and oppression turns on inegalitarian social relationships and problematic distributions of social power. However, it is still unclear to me how such political wrong comes apart and differs from morally wrong structural arrangements, if at all. In short, why think that political wrongs are different in kind from moral wrongs? This is an issue that Haslanger does not sufficiently clarify.

Consider next the normativity concern. A certain background assumption guides my examination of Haslanger's position: that our theories of oppression must not only elucidate the harms of oppression, but also its wrongs. That is, our theory should explicate the wrongfulness-making feature of oppression as well as its harmfulness-making conditions for social-theoretic purposes. And it is precisely the former normative aspect that Haslanger's elucidation of oppression fails to provide. Why do I hold that both wrong and harm must be explicated? To answer this question, let me start by sketching the desiderata of emancipatory social theory. Ann Cudd (2006) has provided a helpful preliminary account of the adequacy conditions of such a theory. She holds that our analysis of oppression ought to provide 'a clear and coherent definition of oppression and conditions to pick out the right cases of oppression' (Cudd 2006: 20). A comprehensive theory of oppression must further answer and give guidance to the following more specific questions (Cudd 2006: 21): Who is oppressed, and who benefits from oppression? How does oppression originate? How do oppressive institutional structures form? How does oppression endure over time? Our theory of oppression should finally provide some way to conceptualise overcoming it (Cudd 2006: 21). Cudd's desiderata fit those articulated by Haslanger (2000) elsewhere: an emancipatory social theory should provide a good and systematic articulation of

(for instance) why women as a group are and continue to be oppressed. We must explain and identify women's oppression that is due to sexist social structures. So, according to Cudd, a theory of oppression is made good by empirical accuracy (descriptive component) and by providing us tools with which to overcome oppression (normative component). This also fits Iris Marion Young's view: for her, without a social theory 'normative reflection is abstract, empty, and unable to guide criticism with a practical interest in emancipation' (1990: 5). Now, I agree wholeheartedly with Young. But I think that the relation goes both ways: any attempt to formulate an adequate emancipatory social theory requires and cannot avoid a normative theory in order to articulate why some ways of treating others are wrongful and illegitimate. This is something that both Cudd's and Haslanger's theories lack. Let me clarify: these theories do not lack normative components altogether. After all, both aim to say how we should proceed in order to undercut gender injustice. But, my contention is, an adequate emancipatory social theory requires a different normative component. In my terms, such a theory is needed to elucidate different forms of injustice (oppression, domination, discrimination) in their various flavours (sexist, racist, homo- and trans*phobic, ableist, classist injustices). I am not able to provide an argument for my view here. Still, for me the desiderata of an emancipatory social theory are:

- It must provide clear and coherent definitions of different forms of injustice.
- The theory must explain injustices of various different flavours.
- It should provide some way to account for the conditions of social justice.
- Our theory should say why these forms of injustice are wrongful - we need an elucidation of what makes injustice unjust.

Why should we think that the final normative requirement is necessary? As I see it, it is needed in order to meet the first three adequacy conditions – that is, in order to make good the descriptive aspects. If we aim to delimit different forms of injustice (e.g. oppression), where these forms are understood in moralised senses, we need an account that explicates that moralised sense. This is how feminist philosophers like Haslanger understand 'oppression' and its cognates. They are not understood in non-

evaluative terms; still, the relevant evaluative component is not sufficiently elucidated and often left implicit. Explicating the wrong will enable us to clarify ascriptions of oppression and other forms of injustice: that is, seeing more clearly what makes injustice wrongful can help us overcome conceptual confusion about 'injustice' and its cognates – it will help us meet the first desideratum. After all, although historically terms like 'oppression' referred to political tyranny, contemporary usage is much less unequivocal. Putative forms of injustice involve (at least) deprivation of freedoms, rights or deserved privileges as well as differential treatment. In Cudd's words, the post-twentieth century usage of 'oppression' refers to 'unjust violence, and economic, social, political, and psychological injustices suffered by a wide variety of social groups. These cases include: colonial natives, racial and ethnic minorities, religious minorities, gays and lesbians, and the disabled' (2006: 20). It is important to clarify conceptual confusion and to elucidate what we mean by 'injustice' and 'oppression' in order to specify who really are oppressed and which resistance strategies can be effective. I take a normative analysis of injustice's wrongfulness to be an integral part of this conceptual task. Further, it is important to have a clear view about (say) what makes patriarchal treatment of women wrongful in order to ensure that calls for gender justice have the required force. I concur with John Stuart Mill (1974) that, in order to avoid our intellectual and political commitments stagnating and becoming 'mere dead dogma', we must interrogate those commitments and their rational foundations. In this way, the justifications for our commitments are kept alive. With the above in mind, my concern is that Haslanger largely presumes such normative justifications and she does not elucidate them in detail. And so, she does not articulate what normatively undergirds the unjustness of some relationship R and why some ways of treating others are wrongful. Even though I take Haslanger to provide a laudable elucidation of oppression and its harms, I also take her view to lack this crucial normative component. And in order to make good her moralised sense of oppression, Haslanger should provide such an elucidation.

4. Haslanger has a number of options subsequently available to her. Contra me, she could simply deny that an elucidation of the wrong of oppres-

sion is needed. But in this case we would need to have a thoroughgoing metaphilosophical discussion about what renders an emancipatory social theory adequate. Haslanger could alternatively provide the normative underpinnings of her theory of oppression simply by appealing to what makes oppression harmful. Doing so would not require a 'full' theory of justice and we would still have an idea about the wrongness-making features that render some social relations unjust. However, I contend, just appealing to the harms will not suffice. This is because harms and wrongs come apart: I may suffer severe harms due to some painful medical condition but this makes the condition neither morally wrongful nor unjust. Suffering harms can be indicative of some underlying wrong, but they do not elucidate the wrong. A further normative theory is needed for that.

Finally, perhaps Haslanger could appeal to Young's five 'faces' of oppression to capture not merely the constraining harms of oppression, but also oppression's wrongs. Maybe Haslanger intended Young's five forms of oppression to provide the normative grounding I am seeking all along. After all, for Young the five forms capture both the harms and wrongs of oppression. However, I do not think that this would let Haslanger off the hook. This is because Young's normativity does not go far enough either and Young too fails to provide a good elucidation of why her putative wrongs of oppression are actually wrongful. Consider just one example case: exploitation or 'who works for whom' (Young 1990: 58). Young describes such oppression in largely Marxist terms, where one group's labour benefits another group. Still, she seems to want to extend the notion to non-labour relations as well. Hallmarks of such broader exploitative relations are asymmetry and dependence. For instance, under patriarchy women and men's familial relations tend to be asymmetric (e.g. women's double-shift vs. men's single-shift) and characterised by dependence (e.g. the gender wage-gap tends to make women financially dependent on their male partners). However, I submit, these relations are not per se morally problematic. An obvious example of a morally innocuous asymmetric dependence-relation is that between children and parents. So, we need something further to render such relations morally problematic, which will make exploitation unjust. Feminists often argue that under patriarchy such relations are problematic due to the relative powerlessness of women (cf. Okin 1989). Intuitively I agree; but again, power differ-

entials alone do not render asymmetry and dependence oppressive. Parents undoubtedly have more power than their children, regardless of whether we mean 'power over' or power in some more diffuse sense. Nonetheless, this does not render the relationship oppressive. So, the relations that mark exploitation for Young do not explicate what makes exploitation wrongful. Young too needs a further normative theory in order to make good the idea that her forms of oppression are not just the harms, but also the wrongs of oppression. This being the case, it would not be a good idea for Haslanger to appeal to Young's five 'faces'.

The gist of my discussion is this: for Haslanger, oppression involves political wrong in the aforementioned sense. However, I am failing to see how this differs from moral wrong and what more would be needed in order to elucidate the wrongfulness of oppression. Further, I have suggested that Haslanger must provide an elucidation of oppression's wrongfulness. This is needed for social-theoretic purposes and without such an elucidation Haslanger cannot make good her moralised sense of oppression. Although there is much to like about Haslanger's notion of oppression, it needs more strengthening on the normative side. I would like to see Haslanger take up this challenge.

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[1] Where not otherwise indicated, all references in brackets are to Haslanger 2012.

SALLY HASLANGER

INDIVIDUALISM, INTERPRETATION, AND INJUSTICE:
A REPLY TO STAHL, BETTI AND MIKKOLA

I am honored and delighted to have the opportunity to respond to the critiques of my book *Resisting Reality* offered by Arianna Betti, Mari Mikkola and Titus Stahl (and, in person, to Beate Rössler). I am especially grateful to Robin Celikates for having organized the symposium on my work and for having given us this opportunity for publishing the commentaries along with my reply.[1]

Each of the commentaries raises important concerns and suggestions, many of which I wholeheartedly endorse. In this reply, I will begin with Stahl's critique because it raises issues that segue easily into those raised by Betti and Mikkola.

1. Meaning, Individualism, and Ideology

Resisting Reality is a somewhat confusing book because it is a collection of papers written over the course of twenty years. So it is not at all clear how some bits connect to others. For example, my work on gender and race predated my work on ideology, and it takes effort to see how my accounts of gender and race function as ideology critique. Drawing on claims I

make scattered throughout the book, Stahl does an excellent job in piecing together the puzzle, while also showing how some of the pieces don't quite fit. As Stahl points out, ideology critique is best understood as a form of immanent critique, i.e., a critique that 'break[s] the spell of ideological self-understandings without resorting to an "external standpoint"' (5).[2] But the reliance on an internal rather than external standpoint is not the only important feature of ideology critique, for critique must also, as he says, 'break the spell' of ideology. Those who understand the critique cannot simply go on as before.

Stahl suggests that my distinction between manifest and operative concepts enables us to see how critique can be immanent. If one simply argues that a concept does not track reality — where what is real is discovered through 'metaphysical scrutiny' — this, Stahl maintains, is an external critique. External critique, as we know, often has little motivating force. However, if it can be shown that there is a conflict between 'the semantic self-understanding of people and the actual social kinds that their concepts track', then the tension provides an internal basis for changing how we go on. In contrast to the race or gender eliminativist who claims that the race or gender concept we have fails to track reality and so should be eliminated, the critical realist has resources to examine and explain how our (operative) concepts constitute divisions in the world that we misrepresent to ourselves.

The 'spell' of ideology is broken, moreover, not just by revealing the incongruence between the kind and the concept, for a solution to such incongruence might be simply to adjust the concept to the kind we track. Instead, the recognition both that the kind is constituted by our social practices — including our discursive practices as revealed in explicating the operative concept — and that the kind is embedded in structures of oppression, disrupts the imperative to revise our (manifest) concept to correspond to the (operative) kind. Stahl suggests:

'[...] the goal of revising our semantic intuitions such that manifest and operative concepts become *congruent* does not make sense any more. Rather, what we then should ask is how our practices must change in order for there to be no longer any necessity for incongruence.' (9)

Stahl's worry, however, is that this critical potential of my view is not available to me because my account adheres to a 'residual individualism' and is insufficiently materialist. If the goal of critique, as I develop it, is for individuals to change their use of the concept, e.g., by rejecting the manifest concept of *woman* and adopting the concept I offer, then the best we can hope for is a change in the beliefs of a few individuals and systematic miscommunication. What we are aiming for, however, is substantive social and material change: a change in the social practices that constitute individuals as raced and gendered. How can we achieve this?

Stahl argues that the account could achieve its critical potential more effectively by incorporating an inferential role semantics of the sort proposed by Brandom (1994). He maintains that although I embrace an objective type externalism in the spirit of Kripke (1970) and Putnam (1975), I fail to fully appreciate the social externalism Burge (1979) recommends, and so leave the determinants of meaning in the individual's head. However, if, as on Brandom's account, 'it is the pattern of socially licensed inferences between propositions involving certain concepts that determine their meaning' (8) and if the licensing is 'a matter of the implicit social rules of a linguistic practice as instituted in the entirety of a community's reactive dispositions' (8), then conceptual change cannot be understood simply in terms of changing an individual's mental states, but must involve a change in the community's practices.

There might be many reasons for preferring one semantics over another. However, in the context of this discussion, the question Stahl and I consider is only whether one semantics or the other is more useful for an account of ideology critique. I am a semantic externalist. I believe that the meaning of a term is its extension. A variety of concepts may be associated with a term, but these concepts are not part of the meaning and do not determine the term's extension in a Fregean way. Associated concepts and background beliefs may, however, be important pragmatically for fixing the term's extension, guiding inferences using the term, and the like (see Ch. 16).

My distinction between 'manifest' and 'operative' concepts associated with a term may be understood as metasemantic. The manifest concept is what the typical user associates with the term, what concept we take ourselves to be deploying when we use the term. The operative concept is one whose extension matches the extension of the term as revealed in practice, and also explains our use and its deviation from the manifest concept's extension. It is true that I have sometimes spoken of the 'manifest concept' as if it is the sort of thing that an individual user has in his or her head and that the goal of the debunking project is to get him or her to change this. But there are also many contexts in which I emphasize the social and material determinants of meaning (e.g., Ch. 3, Ch. 13, Ch. 16), and the importance of changing social practices to dislodge problematic concepts (e.g., Ch. 5, Ch. 6, Ch. 15). The important question here, however, is whether one needs an inferential role semantics in order to achieve the critical potential of my account. I think an externalist semantics is adequate (even though other views might also be adequate).

In several of my papers I rely on an account of practices that borrows from the social science literature. Practices are partly constituted by schemas. Roughly, schemas consist in clusters of culturally shared concepts, beliefs, and other attitudes that enable us to interpret and organize information and coordinate action, thought, and affect. (See also Betti's reference to schemas (15)). Both concepts and beliefs, in the sense intended, store information and are the basis for various behavioral and emotional dispositions. Schemas guide our responses to material resources, and the coordinated, embodied responses to resources are practices. On my view, schemas are the key to understanding ideology and also social meaning. Ideology is not just in the head, it is enacted.

I propose that in a particular social context the norms governing default inferences and apt (affective, behavioral) responses depend substantively on the schemas that are dominant in the context. The schemas associated with Fs 'license' what cognitive, behavioral and emotional responses are appropriate, given a conceptualization of something as an F. Note that I am not suggesting that the schemas are part of the linguistic meaning of the terms in question; nor am I claiming that the meaning of a term should be analyzed in terms of inferential role. Rather, the schemas are (in a loose sense) conventionally linked to the terms (and socially meaningful things in addition to terms) and play a pragmatic rather than a se-

mantic role. By drawing on pragmatics, we can understand linguistic interactions as guided by conversational norms, some quite general, some specific to a social milieu, and others to a particular context. The norms, among other things, determine the permissible next steps in the conversation (whose turn, what tone, speech act, content), permissible inferences, and default additions to the common ground. All this is compatible with a standard externalist semantics.[3]

Putnam (1975) makes a related point: in order to acquire a word, one must learn a stereotype associated with its extension. The content of the stereotype is determined by the linguistic community:

'The nature of the required minimum level of competence depends heavily upon both the culture and the topic, however. In our culture speakers are required to know what tigers look like (if they acquire the word 'tiger', and this is virtually obligatory); they are not required to know the fine details (such as leaf shape) of what an elm tree looks like. English speakers are required by their linguistic community to be able to tell tigers from leopards; they are not required to be able to tell elm trees from beech trees.' (249)

'The theoretical account of what it is to be a stereotype proceeds in terms of the notion of linguistic obligation; a notion which we believe to be fundamental to linguistics and which we shall not attempt to explicate here. What it means to say that being striped is part of the (linguistic) stereotype of 'tiger' is that it is obligatory to acquire the information that stereotypical tigers are striped if one acquires 'tiger' [...].' (251)

I am suggesting something similar, but extending it in two ways: the schema associated with a term is not just a set of beliefs about the extension of the term, but can include a broader range of cognitive/affective/behavioral elements. And, in the broad picture, I'm not just concerned with the schemas associated with terms, i.e., linguistic or specifically communicative items, but also social items more generally (actions, images, statuses, events).

So far it is not clear how an inferential role semantics is preferable to a model that places more emphasis on pragmatics. Given the obscurity of the line between semantics and pragmatics, this is not surprising. Stahl seems to suggest, however, that we might find further advantages to an inferential role semantics when we look more carefully at the importance of common ground in ideology critique.

As Stahl points out, I argue that ideology critique is not simply a matter of showing that ideological beliefs are false, for given the fact that ideology will often play a role in constituting social reality, ideological beliefs are often true of that reality. For example, if ideology drives the social division between racial groups, there will be truths about the differences between racial groups that are important to know. As he says:

'[... ideological concepts] can be employed correctly without ideology critique becoming inappropriate – for such critique does not primarily rest on the assumption that the application of these concepts is *false*, bur rather that these concepts (and consequently, the social contexts of assessment) are in some way *defective*. For this reason, ideology critique need not endorse the relativist implications that seem to follow from the idea of contextual truth. Ideology critique as a practice, Haslanger argues, must rather aim at finding a *common ground of assessment* from which a rejection of ideological judgments can be shown to be justified.' (10)

In my papers on this issue (Ch. 15, Ch. 17), I waffle considerably on how we should pursue critique across ideological frames. In some cases, I think, we can only achieve external critique. But, as indicated above, in practice there are reasons to work for immanent critique, or critique relative to a common ground shared by those engaged in the dispute. How can we establish a common ground, or shared context of assessment, across ideological differences, specifically one that is adequate to demonstrate the defectiveness of a concept? I suggest that in some circumstances one context of assessment might be better than another, e.g., more objective, more reliable, more politically acute, etc. In such a case the external critique from that context would be justified and, one might argue, even those not situated in that context have reasons to embrace its results.

It is not obvious to me that any of my suggestions work, especially if the goal is to find a model for immanent critique. However, let's suppose for the moment that an immanent critique is one that is offered against the backdrop of a common ground, drawing only on that common ground. Stahl suggests:

'[...] there might be another aspect of what makes a common ground into something 'common', namely a *normative understanding,* not only in regard to which further discursive moves are justified given that common ground, but which also might include an agreement about how one can *change* that common ground.' (10)

'If we acknowledge this normative aspect of ideological 'common grounds', we might formulate an immanent critique of the degree to which the institutional or normative rules of conventional speech situations *limit* the development of conceptual alternatives from 'within'.' (11)

The idea seems to be that the common ground consists not only in a set of shared beliefs, but also a set of norms for conversation. These norms govern which next moves are permissible in conversation (who's turn, what tone, speech act, what content), permissible inferences, and default additions to the common ground.[4] In addition the conversational norms set limits on conceptual revision; in terms sketched above, they circumscribe what changes are allowed to the schemas associated with the terms used.

We can then compare conversational contexts with respect to the specific norms in place: do the norms in question allow us to challenge beliefs about, say, the naturalness of race, or is the naturalness of race treated as a necessary component in the schema associated with racial language? (The same may be asked for evaluative beliefs in the schema too.) Stahl suggests that, on this model, highly restrictive norms that prohibit conceptual critique and revision are more ideological than those that are less restrictive. Possibly, this could then be a basis for immanent critique: the rigidity of your norms for conceptual revision prevents you from responding in fruitful ways to input that, by your own lights, you should accommodate.

I am completely sympathetic to the suggestion that conversational norms play an important role in placing ideological limits on our thinking and speaking. One way they function is, as I just suggested, by making it unacceptable to challenge the schemas associated with ordinary terms, even when the schemas include problematic elements. I accept Stahl's point that the norms governing conversation, including how we update the common ground, are social norms and are not best explained in individualistic terms (though there may also be very specific norms that individuals develop in conversations with each other). I am not convinced, however, that one needs to embrace an inferential role semantics to accommodate this (nor is it clear that Stahl thinks so).

I am less sympathetic, however, to Stahl's suggestion that we can evaluate whether a set of conversational norms is problematically ideological by the extent to which they allow for conceptual revision. One problem is that it is not entirely clear when we have conceptual revision and when we have a new concept, or when we revise a schema and when we employ a new schema. (This is relevant to Betti's commentary.) Moreover, a set of norms that limits revision but is liberal in allowing the introduction of new terms, schemas, etc. may be no more limiting to our thinking and speaking than a set of norms that easily tolerates revision. Or so it seems.

Yet this response leaves out the valuable point that Stahl makes earlier, i.e., that an eliminativist approach to problematic concepts is less powerful in 'breaking the spell of ideology' than critique that juxtaposes the manifest and operative concepts in order to illuminate their incongruence; or, at least, an eliminativist approach is less powerful than a critique that finds ways to make explicit how our discourse and other social practices are implicated in creating the divisions that we purport to simply represent. Given this insight, I believe that rather than focusing on the general norms of conversation with respect to revision, we need to go back to a view of ideology critique as substantive debunking: look at how our words contribute to creating the reality we purport simply to describe when we use the words. As Stahl points out, this is not a critique of an individual's use of words, nor is it a critique of what a particular individual believes. It is a critique of a set of social practices in familiar normative terms. What makes it ideology critique is that a crucial first step in the

process is to reveal the social practices that we misrepresent to ourselves as not apt for evaluation. (The normative basis is in question in Mikkola's commentary.) This, I think, is a valuable form (though not necessarily the only form) of ideology critique.

2. Interpretation, Explanation, and Conceptual Change

One of the main projects I undertake in my book is to offer a critique of our social practices constituting gender and race by offering a focal analysis of these social categories (Introduction and Ch. 7). The idea of a focal analysis is common in readings of Aristotle's metaphysics (Owen 1960), though perhaps a more illuminating terminology for the phenomenon is 'core-dependent homonymy' (Shields 1999). Core-dependent homonymy is called for when the uses of a term suggest it is polyvocal, but treating it as simply ambiguous is inadequate because there are systematic connections between the different uses. Aristotle claims that,

'Just as everything which is healthy is related to health (pros hugieian), some by preserving health, some by producing health, others by being indicative of health, and others by being receptive of health; and as the medical is relative to the medical craft (pros iatrikên), for some things are called medical because they possess the medical craft, others because they are well-constituted relative to it, and others by being the function of the medical art - and we shall also discover other things said in ways similar to these - so too is being said in many ways, but always relative to some one source (pros mian archên).' (Met. 1003a34–b6)

Christopher Shields elucidates the standard example of health:

'[...] 'health' is a core-dependent homonym, since its various occurrences coalesce around a core notion. The accounts of 'healthy' as it crops up in various contexts should reflect this coalescence. If we provide accounts of 'healthy' in 'healthy practice', 'healthy complexion', 'healthy glow', 'healthy regimen', 'healthy portion', 'healthy salary', 'healthy relationship', and 'healthy frame of mind', we will need to relate them all to some

one principle. There must therefore be a base sense or base case of being healthy which is in somehow prior to all of these derivations. Perhaps 'healthy person' serves as such a case. If so, we may say that healthy complexions and healthy glows are indicative of the health of a healthy person; healthy practices and regimens are sometimes productive of health and at other times preserve it; healthy bodies are not corrupt and so are capable of being healthy, and are thus 'receptive of health'. Core-dependent homonyms are non-discrete homonyms which display a theoretically significant form of association.' (Shields 1999, 105-6)

An important, though controversial, feature of Aristotle's notion of homonymy is that the focus of analysis is not words or concepts, but things, kinds, properties. The project is one of 'real definition' rather than 'nominal definition' (Rosen 2013). In the case at hand, we want an account of *what health is*, not simply of 'our concept' of health. Although we begin our inquiry by employing the concept as we understand it, we may learn that we are confused or misled about the relevant reality; in other words, the division(s) we take our concept to track may not be the division(s) that are worth tracking. We discover the divisions worth tracking not just by a priori inquiry, but by methods that also include empirical inquiry. The goal of analysis, on this view, is to explicate and improve our understanding of a domain by mapping the systematic relationships in reality that our language aims to trace.

My core-dependent accounts of gender and race are attempts at real definition not conceptual analysis in the traditional sense. As in the case of health, there are a variety of expressions that draw upon gender/race terminology and concepts, e.g., gender/race identity, gender/race oppression, gender/race discrimination, gender/race norms (masculinity/femininity, whiteliness (Frye 1992)), gender/race symbols and meanings; also more specific notions such as: 'Black art', 'women's literature', 'women's knowledge', 'the Hispanic/Asian/Black family etc. It is unclear how to make sense of such ideas (see, e.g., Hall 1992). What does it even mean to suggest that rationality is gendered? (See Antony and Witt 1993); more specifically, my contribution reprinted as Ch. 1. offered my account in an attempt to show that although terms for gender/race are being used in different ways in these examples, there is a systematic connection between

them that is not just a matter of loose association; the best account treats them as core-dependent homonyms with the core being gender and race as social classes. For example, (oversimplifying considerably) if *being White* is to be socially privileged by virtue of a reading of the body as having relatively recent European ancestry, then *White racial norms* are those such that following them makes those so-marked successful in that position of privilege, and *White racial identity* is an internalization of those norms in some form or other (see also Ch. 9).

A virtue of my account is that it elucidates a core-dependent homonymy between different uses of gender/race terms by reference to the systematic relationships between social phenomena that we have reason to track. My claim is not that my account 'analyzes our concept', in the sense that it provides an interpretation of what people have in mind when they use the term, or that it is what determines the extension of gender/race language in a Fregean way, but that it captures the social reality that underlies our thinking and speaking, but is hidden from view. This is an aspect of the account that Stahl draws on in arguing that my work offers a way to understand immanent critique: what we are talking about is at odds with what we take ourselves to be talking about. (His further suggestion, recall, is that we 'break the spell' of ideology by revealing this gap and our role in creating the social reality that has been hidden.)

A common complaint against my accounts of gender and race is that they are counter-intuitive, and that I am simply 'changing the meaning' of the terms. Arianna Betti brings to the conversation her expertise in the history and philosophy of science, and suggests that if I embrace Betti and van den Berg's (2014) model approach to concepts (and their application of this approach to interpretation in the history of ideas), then the charge of changing the subject is misguided.

Betti and van den Berg are interested in the question: How can philosophers and scientists in different periods (or even at the same period!) be employing the same concept but also disagree with respect to what the concept entails? (Betti's primary example is the concept *science*.) There are, of course, a variety of options for addressing this question of conceptual difference and conceptual change: perhaps some thinkers have a bet-

ter grasp of the concept than others; perhaps they use the same words, but are not really employing the same concept; perhaps their disagreement lies in the application or determination of the concept, not the concept itself, etc.

But Betti and van den Berg are unwilling to opt for these solutions. Behind this question they see a challenge to the very project of the history of ideas:[5] If to capture an idea one must represent the author/thinker's historically specific understanding of it (and who could better understand the idea than its author?), then the worry is that ideas cannot have a history. Something with a history changes. But how could an idea, assuming it is fully determinate and transparent to an individual, change? A history of ideas could only be a sequence of different ideas, held at different times by different authors. The history of *an idea* must either not adequately capture the idea in question, or must not be genuinely historical.

On Betti and van den Berg's model approach, complex concepts should be understood as having a core set of conditions and a more peripheral set. The core conditions are essential to it and the peripheral ones are accidental. So just as an ordinary object can vary with respect to its accidental features and remain the same thing, so a concept can vary with respect to its accidental conditions and remain the same concept. For example, perhaps it is essential to the concept of *university* that it is an institution of higher learning, but only an accidental condition that it grant (post-) graduate degrees, or include professional schools. Moreover, in a particular context, some of the conditions for the application of the concept may be implicit and others explicit, so this makes space for the theorist to illuminate aspects of the concept that those who deploy the concept may not be aware of. In short, Betti and van den Berg resist the claim that ideas are fully determinate and transparent to an individual; an idea may change over time as long as in different periods it has certain structural features (core conditions) in common (2014, 7).

I am sympathetic to many aspects of a model approach to the history of ideas. I too resist the claim that we have transparent access to what we think or mean, and also that ideas/concepts must be fully determinate. I worry, however, that Betti and van den Berg's project does not mesh as

neatly with mine as Betti suggests. First, although Betti draws a parallel between their model approach to concepts and my focal analysis of gender and race, the phenomenon of focal meaning – or core-dependent homonymy – is not just a matter of differentiating core and margin conditions of a concept; and second, Betti and van den Berg's investment in the history of *ideas* is somewhat at odds with my effort to provide real definitions.

Recall that a core-dependent account of, say, *health*, does not define the word or concept in terms of a set of conditions, some of which are essential to it and some accidental. Rather, such an account of *health* captures the explanatory core of a range of phenomena, including cases when we use cognate terms such as 'healthy,' 'healthful,' 'heal,' etc. It is possible for a concept to conform to a model account and yet not be part of a core-dependent homonymy; and it is possible for some core concepts of core-dependent homonymies to be definable in strictly necessary and sufficient conditions. The phenomena crosscut each other.

One might think, however, that in both cases, the challenge is to represent a complex phenomenon structurally, and so to see how different parts are related to a core. In the history of ideas, the goal is to represent how people think of something, e.g., science, by relating their different understandings of it to a core set of ideas, allowing variation along the margins. There is a sense in which my project is consistent with this and a sense in which it is not.

I have already emphasized that I am a semantic externalist; as is typical, my externalism extends to concepts as well, i.e., conceptual content is not a matter of what is in the head, but is determined by the social and physical environment. There are places in Betti and van den Berg (2014) where it appears that their project is to capture something more like the narrow content of a concept as employed by different thinkers. They opt for a model approach because it allows them to focus on core elements of the narrow content in order to argue that individuals have the same concept, in spite of some differences, because they share those core elements. Externalists do not face this problem. We share with Socrates the concept of water because the semantic/conceptual content of *water* is water. Of course, we also differ from Socrates in our understanding of water, because we believe that water is composed of hydrogen and oxygen, and he did not. He did not have the concepts of hydrogen and oxygen.

In the case of water, we can be confident that we share our concept with Socrates because the stuff we are talking about is right before us (and him): we drink it, bathe in it, etc. Our disagreement about what sort of stuff it is, or about what counts as instances of it, does not call into question the content we share. It is more complicated when what we are talking about is less concrete and obvious. On my view, however, the content of the concept of *race* (and the meaning of the term 'race') is a determinable with particular social groups (Blacks, Latino(a)s, Whites, Asians, American Indians, relative to the current US context) as determinants. Roughly, a race is a group of individuals situated in a social hierarchy by reference to markings assumed to be evidence of ancestry in a certain geographical region. This specification is a way of gaining insight into the organization of our classification of individuals into races and our racial practices more generally. It captures important features that the groups we call races have in common. Many people do not think of the groups this way, but that does not mean the specification does not capture the content of the concept of race. Socrates did not think of water as made of hydrogen and oxygen, but that does not mean that his concept of water was different from ours.

Just as it is important to distinguish what water is from what we think about water, it is important to distinguish what gender/race is from what we think about gender/race. This is relevant to what I said above concerning my distinction between the manifest and operative concept. It is best to think of both the manifest and operative concepts as metasemantic. The manifest concept is a specification of what the typical user associates with the term, i.e., the standard beliefs (schema?) that are conventionally connected with the term in a context (see the previous quotes from Putnam). The operative concept offers a specification of the content so as to illuminate the extension, e.g., so that we are better able to track it counterfactually, to explain our use, and to account for errors in the manifest concept.

Betti suggests that my account of gender does not provide a descriptive analysis, but is instead 'normative'.

'The claim that *woman* is to be construed as "subordinated in a society due to their perceived or imagined female reproductive capacities," I maintain, must be seen as a descriptive construal of a felt social *norm* (a norm adopted in certain cultures, periods, by certain people and so on...) A model such as the Classical Model of Science mentioned above is not a schematic representation of a *normative* claim on what science should be, it is instead the *descriptive* abstract systematization of science as a felt norm *by others*, of what others have thought that science must be. There are two levels here, one descriptive and one normative, and although their interaction is key, the two levels must be kept apart.' (15)

Although I am not sure I understand the point Betti is making, I maintain that my analysis of gender is descriptive, in fact, descriptive of the material reality of gender, even if it is not descriptive of anyone's thinking about gender. In short, I am offering a theory of *what gender is*, not what some people think it is, or what they think it should be. This is the goal of real definition.

So although I take seriously the charge that my proposed accounts of gender and race are not accounts of 'our concept' or that they change the meaning of the terms, the argument for this claim based on our everyday thinking about race and gender is not convincing to me. I would interpret these complaints, rather, as pointing out that the schemas associated with our use of terms such as 'race' and 'gender,' schemas that are encoded in manifest concepts, are at odds with the best account of what race and gender are, i.e., with important facts about gender and race that my accounts illuminate. And this charge I embrace, for it is exactly this incongruence, as Stahl puts it, that I aim to draw attention to as a first step in ideology critique.

3. Justice, Oppression, and the Normative Basis for Social Critique

Although I frequently speak of ideology critique and the critique of social practices, I have not myself offered a normative theory of social or political justice that might be invoked to support such critique. This is, in part, due to the accidents of my philosophical biography. I was trained in analytic metaphysics, epistemology and philosophy of language, not in moral and political philosophy. So I often feel more comfortable relying on the normative work of others, e.g., Elizabeth Anderson, Iris Young, G. A. Cohen, Ann Cudd, Susan Okin, to provide the moral basis of social critique.

One might think, however, that in a paper titled 'Oppressions: Racial and Other' (Ch. 11) one should provide an account of the moral wrong of oppression. What else would we be looking for? Yet my goal in that paper was not to elucidate oppression per se, but to give an account of what it is for oppression to count as *racial* oppression, or *sex* oppression. An account of such modification is straightforward if one believes that in order for a practice or structure to oppress a group, individuals within the structure must have hostile or offensive attitudes towards members of the group. But I do not hold that view. I believe that structures can oppress groups even without targeted hostility or ill-will. The problem becomes acute if some groups suffer multiple disadvantages, e.g., if those who are poor are also members of a racial minority. In such cases the group may be systematically disadvantaged, but it is much harder to say what makes that systematic disadvantage *racial* if the group is not targeted for ill-will due to their race. My paper attempts to explain how we can distinguish cases of structural race-oppression from structural class-oppression (and similar cases), *assuming* that the group is oppressed for the purposes of the discussion.

Nevertheless, Mari Mikkola challenges my tendency to avoid normative theorizing and calls on me to provide an account of what makes oppression morally wrong. She is not asking for a theory of justice – in fact, she argues that we do not need a theory of justice to identify forms of oppression. But we do need an account of the wrongness of the injustices we seek to rectify. I agree that it would be good to have such an account.

Mikkola develops her challenge by drawing a distinction between the bad or harm caused by oppressive conditions and the wrongfulness of oppression. She says:

'A certain background assumption guides my examination of Haslanger's position: that our theories of oppression must not only elucidate the harms of oppression but also its wrong. That is, our theory should explicate the wrongfulness-making feature of oppression as well as its harmfulness-making conditions for social theoretical purposes.' (20)

Although it is not clear to me that I have explicated the harmfulness of oppression any more than the wrongfulness of oppression, Mikkola seems willing to grant that I have done enough on the issue of harm; it is an account of wrongfulness that she takes to be lacking. This focus may be because she maps a contrast between good/bad and right/wrong onto my distinction between moral theory, whose subject matter I take to be the actions and character of individuals, and political theory, whose subject matter I take to be how we collectively organize ourselves.

'[… Haslanger's] moral/political distinction seems to map onto the right and wrong/good and bad distinctions. So, structural oppression involves political wrongs, which pertain to our collective arrangements; it does not supervene on individual moral wrongdoing; political wrongs are about goodness/badness (as opposed to right and wrong); and oppression turns on inegalitarian social relationships and distributions of social power. However, it is still unclear to me how such political wrong comes apart and differs from morally wrong *structural* arrangements. In short, why think that political wrongs are different in kind from moral wrongs?' (20)

I am afraid that I have been terribly unclear about the distinction I intended between moral and social/political theory. All that I intended to suggest is that moral theory (and ethics) is about the actions (good and bad, right and wrong) of individuals, and social/political theory is about the collective arrangements (good and bad, right and wrong) of groups of individuals. It was not my intention to suggest that individuals' actions are subject to evaluation in terms of right/wrong whereas collective arrangements are subject to evaluation as good/bad. The mapping Mikkola proposes in the passage just quoted was not what I intended.

As I understand the distinction between good/bad and right/wrong, to judge something good or bad is to make a value judgment about it. Things can be evaluated as good along many dimensions depending on the kind of value at issue, e.g., aesthetic, prudential, democratic, moral. To judge something as right/wrong is to judge it to be at least *pro tanto* required. Again, there may be different sorts of requirements of us: religious, cultural (etiquette), civic, moral. It is important to note that in addition to requirements of us as individuals, e.g., one ought not to break one's promises, there are also requirements concerning how we ought to organize ourselves, e.g., we ought to organize ourselves to provide care for the disabled. Both individuals and political institutions can do good things that are not morally required, and can do morally required things that are not good along some dimension or other.

That aside, the question remains: What makes oppressive structures and practices wrong? What makes it the case that we are required not to organize ourselves in oppressive ways? One possible answer is that it would be bad or harmful to do so. This is an answer that rests on the assumption that we ought not to organize ourselves in ways that are bad or harmful. This answer is incomplete insofar as it leaves open the question of what sort of bad or harm is relevant (what values would be violated)?[6] But it is surely a familiar strategy that utilitarians, in particular, and many consequentialists would endorse. And feminists could plausibly contribute: first we determine a set of feminist values, and then we articulate a principle or set of principles for weighing values, e.g., should all of the values be maximized to the extent possible? If we agree that sexual equality and individual autonomy are valuable, how do we weigh sexual equality and individual autonomy to create a just society?

Of course, many have argued that a consequentialist approach to justice is inadequate because consequentialists cannot guarantee the protection of certain basic rights. I am sympathetic to such concerns. Perhaps Mikkola is suggesting that we need a theory of social wrongdoing that goes beyond causing socially bad things (i.e., things contrary to what is socially valuable) to happen. Of course, many forms of oppression are wrong because

they violate basic rights. For example, Iris Young suggests that one of the five faces of oppression is systematic violence. And the contemporary world is one in which women, LGBTQ individuals, racial minorities, the disabled, and others, are oppressed by virtue of suffering systematic violence. In such cases the wrongfulness of oppression is the wrongfulness of violating the right to bodily integrity and security. It is unclear to me why we need a new normative grounding of such rights. (I will return to the question of whether we do.)

Mikkola argues, however, that there are cases that cannot be handled so easily, e.g., exploitative relations of asymmetric dependence. She points out that asymmetric dependence in the case of parents and children is not unjust. In my 'Oppressions...'-paper, I suggested that I was sympathetic to Elizabeth Anderson's (1999) relational egalitarianism (another example of passing the hard normative work to others!). Anderson argues that contemporary egalitarians have gone astray by focusing their attention on distributive justice. She proposes that the core egalitarian commitment is to egalitarian social relations. She says:

'[…] egalitarians seek to abolish oppression – that is, forms of social relationship by which some people dominate, exploit, marginalize, demean, and inflict violence upon others. Diversities in socially ascribed identities, distinct roles in the division of labor, or differences in personal traits, whether these be neutral biological and psychological differences, valuable talents and virtues, or unfortunate disabilities and infirmities, never justify the unequal social relations listed above [...]. Positively, egalitarians seek a social order in which persons stand in relations of equality. They seek to live together in a democratic community, as opposed to a hierarchical one. Democracy is here understood as collective self-determination by means of open discussion among equals, in accordance with rules acceptable to all.' (Anderson 1999, 313)

On this view, social structures are unjust if they include or depend on 'forms of social relationship by which some people dominate, exploit, marginalize, demean, and inflict violence upon others'. It seems to me that one might articulate this in terms of rights (that as moral equals we have a right not to be treated this way) or in terms of values (that femi-

nists place a high value on equal social relationships, and this value can only be overridden in extreme circumstances). In either case, we can use this as a basis for saying that asymmetric dependence in parent-child relationships is permissible as long as the relationship does not position parents to dominate, exploit, marginalize, demean or inflict violence on the child. Some social structures do organize family life so that these violations are accepted, others do not. The former structures are unjust and they are so because they are inegalitarian.

I am not arguing here that Anderson's relational egalitarianism is the last word in understanding the wrongs of oppression, or that further elaboration is unnecessary. For example, in my view Anderson (1999) places too much weight on our pure status as moral equals to ground social equality, and situates her view in too Rawlsian a framework emphasizing the political domain. For example, she claims:

'[…] democratic equality regards two people as equal when each accepts the obligation to justify their actions by principles acceptable to the other, and in which they take mutual consultation, reciprocation, and recognition for granted.' (313)

I believe we need more material demands on social equality than this suggests. And Anderson signals that she would agree. For example, she claims that '[…] democratic equality is sensitive to the need to integrate the demands of equal recognition with those of equal distribution' (314). And: 'To live in an egalitarian community, then, is to be free from oppression to participate in and enjoy the goods of society, and to participate in democratic self-government.' (315) However, as I understand the structure of her view, it is the stance of moral equality that rules out oppressive social relations. In particular, the attitudes of mutuality she takes to be fundamental to moral equality are incompatible with oppressive relationships: if there is oppression, then someone is failing to view and treat another as a moral equal.[7]

I find this implausible. Oppression is, in the primary instance, a structural phenomenon. Under conditions of oppression, the relations between groups of individuals are wrongly hierarchical, i.e., members of the op-

pressed group are systematically positioned in relations that disadvantage or wrong them. But such positioning is typically the result of broad social forces that are not under individuals' control. As Charles Tilly puts it:

'[…] whatever else we have learned about inequality, social scientists have made clear that a great deal of social inequality results from indirect, unintended, collective, and environmentally mediated effects […].' (Tilly 2002, 28)

People may even be socialized to think that *the way* to treat another as an equal is to position them in relations that are, in fact, problematic, e.g., ensuring equal access to wage labor looks good, but it isn't good if it is ensuring equal access to exploitation.

More importantly, it is reasonable to think that structures are oppressive when they organize social life so there are roles that require individuals to wrong or harm others.[8] Individuals who occupy such roles are responsible for their wrongful/harmful actions, but to point only to the individual actions is to miss the fact that the structure will find ways to position someone in that role. For example, in oppressive work conditions, a manager will be responsible for many unjust hardships the employees face. But even if a particular manager quits, there will be others who replace him or her. There will be others who replace him or her because the broader structure offers few options for those who reasonably seek to avoid poverty or abuse. So even if we agree that the individual manager acts badly and/or wrongly, there is a further bad/wrong in the structure of the workplace and the broader society. (Note also that good structures provide roles for people to do good; structures can facilitate, by the roles they make available, vision, creativity, generosity, leadership, and other good things).

As I see it, there are four claims that should be distinguished:

a) No harm done unless (somewhere down the line) there is harm to an individual.

b) No wrong done unless (somewhere down the line) an individual is wronged.

c) No harm done unless (somewhere up the line) an individual causes the harm.

d) No wrong done unless (somewhere up the line) an individual does (the) wrong.

I am (with qualifications) somewhat sympathetic to (a); but (b)-(d) strike me as false. People can be wronged without being wronged by an individual, or being wronged by a structure/practice that was wrongly created by an individual. Most structures and practices are not created by the actions of an individual or even a well-defined group of individuals. They evolve, and their evolution is caused by forces other than individual agency. So things can go wrong socially even when, under the circumstances, no individual is violating a moral requirement, or even, strictly speaking, causing the harm.

Claim (d) is compatible with much of what Anderson says about democratic, or relational, egalitarianism. (It may even be compatible with everything she says!). If, however, I do not locate the normative basis of egalitarianism in the moral equality of individuals, one might insist that I articulate an alternative basis for egalitarianism. And this might be what Mikkola is asking of me. But I am tempted to reject the demand, for I do not see why we need to provide a further normative grounding for a commitment to social equality, i.e., a society free of relations of domination, exploitation, marginalization, etc. in order to proceed.

What does it mean to 'proceed'? Should we simply apply existing theories of justice in our accounts of the wrongs of sexism and racism? Or does a concern with oppression require a different approach? I think there are two broad traditions in political theory that correspond roughly to those concerned with justice and those concerned with oppression. The difference is methodological: what questions are we asking and why? What methods are apt in looking for answers and what counts as an adequate answer? What are the sources of epistemic authority?

Crudely, to distinguish theories of justice and of oppression, it is useful to ask: is the theory being done for the purpose of social activism? Or is social activism what we do once we apply our theory to the world and find that the world falls short? Are we looking to theory because there are pressing matters within feminism that need sorting out; or are we theorists who are happy to guide activists when they will listen to us?

In describing critical theory, one often finds it emphasized that a critical theory is embedded within a social movement. I quote Nancy Fraser in the introduction to my book:

'To my mind, no one has yet improved on Marx's 1843 definition of critical theory as "the self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of the age." What is so appealing about this definition is its straightforwardly political character. […] A critical social theory frames its research program and conceptual framework with an eye to the aims and activities of those oppositional social movements with which it has a partisan, though not uncritical identification […]. Thus, for example, if struggles contesting the subordination of women figured among the most significant of a given age, then a critical social theory for that time would aim, among other things, to shed light on the character and basis of such subordination. It would employ categories and explanatory models that revealed rather than occluded relations of male dominance and female subordination. And it would demystify as ideological any rival approaches that obfuscated or rationalized those relations.' (Fraser 1989, 113)

Theories of oppression begin with an investment in a particular social movement and the theoretical/political questions they ask are those that are important for bringing about social justice in a particular time and place. They do not begin by asking what justice is, in the abstract, or attempt to provide a universal account of justice. I think Mikkola and I agree that usually a universal account of justice is not necessary to improve the situation, for we can adequately identify pressing injustice. In theorizing about oppression we are theorizing about something actually occurring that we want to change.

Moreover, theories of oppression are not typically trying to answer the normative question: is this unjust? Is this oppressive? In the context, it is usually pretty clear to everyone that an injustice has occurred or is occurring. A large part of what theorists of oppression try to do is explain how and why certain recognizably unjust social structures work to the advantage of some and not others. Part of the project is descriptive/interpretive, calling upon us to *see* the system as a system, to *see* the unfairness, the injustice.

Because theories of oppression require a description and explanation of actual injustice, they cannot be achieved a priori. So critical theorists rely on work in the social sciences. Along these lines, it may be helpful to think of 'justice' as a thin moral concept and 'oppression' as a thick moral concept. For example, philosophers have contrasted the terms 'right' and 'wrong' with terms such as 'courageous', 'miserly', 'insulting', 'generous'. The latter thick terms seem to somehow involve both a normative and a descriptive component. It is highly controversial how to spell this out, but if the contrast makes sense, it is plausible that 'justice' is thin like 'right' and 'good' and 'oppression', 'domination', and 'emancipation' are thick. This suggests that different methodologies are called for in exploring what justice is and what oppression is.

A corollary of this is that theories of oppression do not attempt to be normatively neutral. They are invested in the emancipation of particular subordinated groups. So for any theorist, there are particular groups of individuals in whose interest it is developed. It does not assume that all of us have shared, or even compatible, interests.

The 'critical' in critical theory is not just about embeddedness, however, but also about social critique. In the background there is a moral epistemology committed to situated knowers. This is not to adopt a standpoint epistemology or to privilege the epistemic position of the subordinate; but it does require that an understanding of injustice take into account – in fact and not just in practice – the experiences of the subordinate. There is controversy about the details of the epistemology, but here is an example in Iris Young:

'Normative reflection arises from hearing a cry of suffering or distress, or feeling distress oneself. The philosopher is always socially situated, and if the society is divided by oppressions, she either reinforces or struggles against them. With an emancipatory interest, the philosopher apprehends given social circumstances not merely in contemplation but with passion: the given is experienced in relation to desire. Desire, the desire to be happy, creates the distance, the negation, that opens the space for criticism of what is. This critical distance does not occur on the basis of some previously discovered rational ideas of the good and the just. On the contrary, the ideas of the good and the just arise from the desiring negation that action brings to what is given.' (Young 1990, 5-6)

I myself am dubious of Young's specific epistemology of social critique, for desire is as affected by existing social norms as belief and action. My point here is not to endorse any particular moral epistemology of injustice, but to highlight the idea that within inquiry into oppression, theorists, in general, and philosophers, in particular, are not granted special epistemic authority in understanding what is good and right and just; but neither are we just trying to systematize the 'ordinary understanding' of these notions, granting authority to the 'ordinary person'. The goal is an immanent critique that draws on a full range of epistemic capacities – not just rational, but also perceptual, emotional, practical – in response to the lived world we are part of; theorists differ on how such critique gains normative traction.

So as I understand the relationship between injustice and oppression, the issue is less whether one concept applies to one sort of wrong and the other to another (though I think it is pretty likely that there are cases of injustice that are not cases of oppression, and not likely that there are cases of oppression that are not forms of injustice). The issue is what sort of theory each is embedded in: what questions it asks, what methods it employs, and what purposes it serves.

Many thanks, again, to my commentators for an enjoyable and tremendously valuable discussion of these issues.

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[1] Thanks to Robin Celikates, Tom Dougherty, Julia Markovits, and Stephen Yablo for commenting on whole or partial drafts of these comments. References to chapters in what follows are to chapters in Haslanger (2012).

[2] There are many questions about what counts as ideology critique, and how to characterize immanent critique, that I will not go into here. Instead, I will draw on what I take Stahl's use of the terms commit him to.

[3] I discuss this also in my Eastern APA Presidential Address. December 29, 2013. Forthcoming in the *Proceedings and Addresses of the APA* 2014.

[4] I am grateful to Jack Marley-Payne for helping me appreciate this point.

[5] Note that they are explicit in using the terms 'concept' and 'idea' interchangeably (2014, 2). For the purposes of this exposition of their view, I follow them in this.

[6] Mikkola assumes that harmful acts may be not only permissible, but morally required, e.g., '[…] harms and wrongs come apart: I may suffer severe harms due to some painful medical condition, but this makes the condition neither morally wrongful or unjust.' This, however, is highly controversial. See Harman 2009; Thomson 2011; Bradly 2012. As a result, I will avoid using speaking of 'harm,' and will speak instead in terms of 'badness'.

[7] This is one reading of the argument (see Anderson 1999, 315). However, I find her use of 'moral equal' and 'social equal' somewhat confusing in this section of the paper. A different reading of the argument reaches the conclusion that social equality is incompatible with oppression. Given that this claim would seem to be trivial, and that we are starting with moral equality as the normative basis of egalitarianism, I have interpreted her to be arguing that a society in which moral equality is the basis of human interaction is one in which oppression would be eliminated. Although this is plausible in the abstract, I do not believe it is plausible for actual societies for the reasons I sketch. Another, perhaps deeper, question is how we should understand 'moral equality.' Anderson sometimes speaks as if moral equality consists in a set of attitudes we have towards each other: each accepts obligations of justification, recognition, etc. (see the passage quoted above); in other contexts moral equality seems to be a feature of relationships that does not supervene on the attitudes of the individuals in the relationship, but functions as a kind of fundamental standing in the moral universe. Relations of domination are wrong because they violate this standing. I find this idea more plausible, but also more elusive.

[8] Thanks very much to Tom Dougherty for making this point in conversation and pushing me to develop it.

Krisis

HUUB DIJSTELBLOEM

SCIENCE IN A NOT SO WELL-ORDERED SOCIETY: A PRAGMATIC CRITIQUE OF PROCEDURAL POLITICAL THEORIES OF SCIENCE AND DEMOCRACY

1. Changing relations between science, politics and society

A look at some recent debates on science and technology in liberal democracies, for example those concerning the possible health risks of cell phones and the dangers of radiation posed by Universal Mobile Telecommunication Systems (Bröer, Duyvendak and Stuiver 2010; Bröer and Duyvendak 2010), the effectiveness of vaccination campaigns (Lips 2011; 2010), and promises of shale gas (Metze 2013), easily leads to the conclusion that either citizens have lost all their trust in science and technology or that today's experts and policy-makers are doing a lousy job. Technological applications, but also scientific knowledge itself – as in the case of climate change (Oreskes and Conway 2010) – are highly contested today.

However, there is an incongruity here. What exactly is at stake in the present situation? Surveys still show a high degree of public trust in science *in general* and an overwhelming number of technologies do *not* give rise to public controversies, although their risks, costs and social consequences are far from undisputed (Tiemeijer & de Jonge 2013; Dijstelbloem & Hagendijk 2011; Eurobarometer 2010; Eurobarometer 2005). So what is the case if 'trust' and 'reliability' are not the issue?

This paper does not claim that 'there is something rotten in the state of science' (although I cannot rule out that this is the case), nor does it state that people have become increasingly skeptical or even cynical about science. Instead, it studies how the relationships between science, politics and society are reformulated in current debates in liberal democracies. In order to do so, it evaluates these relationships from different theoretical points of view: on the one hand, a concept which holds democracy mainly as a mechanism to arrive at legitimate and justified decisions; on the other hand, a concept which emphasizes the continuously changing societal and technological conditions under which democracy has to be reestablished.

The starting point for this discussion is a critical reading of Philip Kitcher's *Science, Truth, and Democracy* (2001) and his subsequent *Science in a Democratic Society* (2011). The thesis that will be put forward is that procedural democratic approaches to issues concerning science and technology are not sufficiently equipped to do justice to the *transformative nature* of the issues mentioned above. This transformative nature concerns the meaning these issues are given and conversely the epistemological and social consequences these issues have. Issues such as shale gas have both an epistemic and a political and social dimension. Not only do they give rise to tensions between science and politics in terms of diverging public and private interests and uncertainties on various levels, but they also lead to the formation of new groups of people, 'coalitions of unusual suspects' consisting of concerned citizens, activists, lay experts, local companies and NGOs, whose unlikely association in turn affects the nature and content of the debate. As a result, these issues do not only challenge current scientific insights but also affect the existing social order.

Who are these people whom the sciences ought to be concerned with? Which notion of democracy correctly takes group formation under conditions of scientific and technological uncertainty into account? Is it possible to develop a notion of politics that takes epistemic issues into consideration? And a notion of science that is sensitive to its place in society?

This paper proposes that an answer to these questions ought to be formulated within a more substantive understanding of democracy than the procedural concept allows for, and that the political theory of classical pragmatism offers valuable insights for doing so. I will not claim that a fully substantive account of democracy ought to be embraced. Instead, the aim of this paper is to show that classical pragmatism leads to a kind of middle ground between procedural and substantive notions of democracy. As such, it is supposed to do justice to the transformative nature of the issues mentions above.

I will develop my argument in the following steps. I will start with an analysis of a proposal by Kitcher (2001) to arrive at a kind of 'well-ordered science' to fuel the interaction between science, politics and society. Thereafter I will debate some of the presuppositions of Kitcher's scheme by pointing out that his most recent (2011) defense of well-ordered science rests on a quite narrow interpretation of the implications of a pragmatist theory of democracy. I will then claim that Kitcher's model is in need of a more radical reading of some specific notions of pragmatist thought that will lead to a better understanding of the tensions between science, politics and the public. In order to do so, I will contrast Kitcher's 'well-ordered science' with Dewey's notion of 'inquiry'. In addition, I will clarify that a pragmatist political theory aims not just to represent or unify the existing political community but to extend that community to new groups and new domains. Key to this is the notion of 'publics.' Finally, I will explain that pragmatist political theory emphasizes the transformative nature of publics and their environments. Crucial to this understanding is the notion of 'experience'. Neglecting this element of the theory means missing the content of this problem-based approach. The paper ends with a concluding section.

2. Well-ordered science

'What is the role of the sciences in a democratic society?' With his opening sentence of *Science, Truth, and Democracy* (2001), Philip Kitcher makes clear that his concerns as a philosopher of science are not restricted to questions of a formal kind. In his subsequent work, *Science in a Democratic Society* (2011), he explained that his worries come from two sides. On the one hand, he is concerned about the erosion of scientific authority: 'a variety of challenges to particular scientific judgments has fostered a far more ambivalent attitude to the authority of the natural sciences' (2011: 15). On the other hand, he is concerned about the social embedding of science: '…the tangled relations now evident between Science and social decision making…call for philosophical attention' (Kitcher, 2011: 155). What we urgently need is:

'[…] a theory of the place of Science in a democratic society – or, if you like, of the ways in which a system of public knowledge should be shaped to promote democratic ideals.' (Kitcher, 2011: 26)

I will claim that the ideal of a 'well-ordered science' that Kitcher proposed in both books as a theory of this sort is too narrow a concept to combine science and democracy and that it fails to do justice to the social ontology that surrounds current issues. His subsequent shift (2012; 2011) to the political theory of the American philosopher John Dewey is promising in that respect but still neglects some important elements of classical pragmatism that emphasize the mutual interaction between science, democracy and society.

The starting point for my discussion is Kitcher's emphasis on 'significant truths'. Elaborating on a specific treatment of scientific realism and objectivity, Kitcher claims that the status of scientific theories and facts is epistemologically justifiable, but that there are no scientific grounds for pinning down the direction of research programs (2001, Ch. 6; 2011, Ch. 1). Kitcher takes 'moral and social values to be intrinsic to the practice of the sciences' (2001: 65) because the organization of every research program demands not only theory-construction on a more general level in order to arrive at a certain degree of coherence, but also many practical deci-

sions to be taken and priorities to be set. The course of research programs is for a large part an historically and socially contingent process which is not led systematically by 'context-independent goals for inquiry' (2001: 73). The implication is not that 'the history of science should be viewed as a sequence of irrational transitions' (2011: 35). Rather, it is that decisions about the course of science 'cannot be reduced to simple formalisms' (2011: 36). The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that it is questionable whether the sciences can be hierarchically unified and whether integration within a single unified framework is possible (2001: 71). Of more importance for the discussion here is the conclusion that the agenda for scientific research cannot be formulated solely on scientific grounds. Science cannot set its own agenda scientifically *in a significant way*.

This conclusion creates opportunities for a more comprehensive account of agenda-setting in which the course of scientific inquiry is determined by a variety of parties, interests and considerations. However, Kitcher is reluctant to support a kind of stakeholder democracy of science (e.g. Latour, 2004) in which co-construction is the aim and participation in science by laypersons or the public at large becomes an end in itself. To him, 'vulgar democracy is a very bad idea' (2001: 117). Instead, he advocates what he calls a division of epistemic labor (2011: 25) and sketches an ideal of 'enlightened democracy' (2001: 133-134) as a middle ground between the pure democratic model of epistemological equality and the expertocratic model of an elite of experts.

At first glance, Kitcher's proposal is a perfect example of what Latour (1993) has called the 'modernist divide,' a separation of tasks and responsibilities between science and politics. Politics is concerned with power and will-formation, it is aimed at decision making, and its final task in a democratic society is to attribute responsibility: the governors are accountable to the governed. Science, on the other hand, is concerned with truth, it is aimed at research, and its task is to arrive at rational, independent, more or less objective descriptions and explanations of social and natural phenomena. In the end, this division of labor boils down to a strategy of 'purification': both sides have to be protected against contamination to prevent irrationality and irresponsibility.

However, 'well-ordered science' is not a convenient scapegoat and the ideas behind it are too intelligent to be accused of naive modernism. Latour's idea of the 'modern constitution' offers a telling but also somehow simplified image of the relationship between science and politics. In fact, it sketches a conceptual image of their relationship in rather static terms and does not offer many clues for understanding this relationship under more dynamic conditions, when mutual interaction and actual tensions between the two arise. Moreover, the divide is restricted to only two 'powers,' but it is easy to distinguish a few more, such as the media, the law, and economy/industry.

Kitcher focuses on the *interaction* between science and democracy and moves on to ask how the aims of scientific inquiry should be determined. With his focus on interaction Kitcher leaves the boundaries between science and democracy untouched and refrains from an analysis of real existing or imagined practices in which these (elusive) boundaries are contested or redefined. His suggestion (2001, Ch. 10; 2011, Ch. 5) is to come to a kind of 'well-ordered science'. This proposal aims to combine an epistemologically realistic idea of science with a procedural and deliberative account of democracy that relies heavily on Rawls' notion of 'public reason,' the common reason-giving of citizens in a pluralist society.

Kitcher proposes a three-stage cycle. In the first stage, representatives of groups in society deliberate about their preferences for scientific research. In this process of deliberation, they learn more about the preferences of other groups. This will result in a consensus, an agreement on how to accommodate their differences, or a vote about the issues that need to be investigated by academics. This result goes to scientific communities, whose role is to say 'how' these issues can be investigated and how probable significant results are. In this second stage, it is important to ask a diverse group of researchers to identify the probability of different scientific ventures succeeding. This would give the decision-makers, the representatives, a more balanced view of the possibilities of contemporary science. Just as they decided in stage one on the aims of scientific inquiry, they decide in stage three which projects to fund, based on the additional information given by researchers.

This method forces scientists to discuss explicitly the non-scientific consequences of their work. The current, arbitrary, foundations for deciding what lines of inquiry to follow could be replaced by a more 'enlightened democratic' foundation. According to Kitcher, this would not lead to better or more truthful science, but it would be more democratic and this would be an improvement on the current state of 'elitism'.

In short, in the first stage, ideal deliberators, seen as representatives of civilians, make a scientifically informed choice as to what policies are worth pursuing. In the second stage, science develops possible scenarios to pursue the policies. In the third stage, the deliberators choose which scenario is most to their liking. The resulting policy would be the perfect combination of democratic preferences and scientific knowledge (Kitcher, 2001: 118-23).

Kitcher's ideal of Well-Ordered Science is instructive for several reasons. First of all, his epistemologically realistic image of science is likely to correspond with the self-image many scientists have of their profession. Second, as a philosopher of science Kitcher explicitly draws attention to the societal position of the sciences. Third, Kitcher tries to connect the position of the sciences to the demands of democratic decision-making.

Kitcher emphasized that well-ordered science is an 'ideal'. However, this ideal resembles many real-life policy practices in which exactly the same order of things can be found. They start with public debate about a new problem, for instance the need for a vaccine. The next step is scientific advice to the government about the possibility of developing a vaccine. Parliamentary discussion then follows. Finally the process ends with a decision and execution of policy programs. So why does Kitcher describe his proposal as an 'ideal'? He refrains from an evaluation of pre-existing decision-making processes, which come quite close to his ideal. Instead, his aim seems to be to further polish the theoretical underpinnings of his proposal.

3. The turn to pragmatism

In *Science in a Democratic Society* (2011), Kitcher repeats the main ideas of *Science, Truth, and Democracy* (2001), including his ideal of well-ordered science. Also included is an application of his theoretical framework to some examples, namely debates on the history of life and evolutionary theory, biomedical technologies, genetically modified organisms and climate change (2011, Chapter 9, 'Actual Choices'). Theoretically, one of the main differences between the two books is that in the latter, Kitcher explicitly grounds his concept of democracy on Dewey's thinking. Although Brown (2004) had encouraged Kitcher to take this direction, no reference to that suggestion is made. Neither does Kitcher explain why he considers a more elaborated idea of democracy necessary or in which respects his new ideas differ from his former ones.

Despite these lacunae, his turning to Dewey makes perfect sense. Key elements of Dewey's ideas are the emphasis on the political significance of science and technology and the inseparability of democracy and education, the value of democracy as a culture and as a way of life rather than as a set of formal political institutions, his relentless attention to the primacy of the method, both in science and in democracy, and a continued focus on consequences rather than principles. With respect to re-thinking democracy and the place of the sciences in modern societies, Dewey's work can be regarded as 'political theory'. The development of a political theory implies the attempt to formulate a coherent network of concepts and abstractions to investigate specific current issues in society (Wolin, 2004: 504). 'Political theory' differs in structure from both political philosophy and political science. Where political science focuses on the empirical field of 'politics,' political theory is engaged with the meaning of 'the political,' as it can also manifest itself beyond the practice of conventional politics (Mouffe, 2005: 8). In contrast to political philosophy, political theory can be a seen as an attempt to conceptualize 'the political' by addressing specific political issues instead of taking classical political-philosophical issues as a guide.

How much does Kitcher take from this? Is he satisfied with some of Dewey's more modest proposals to make democracy more 'intelligent'? Or is

he prepared to read Dewey in a more radical way and to see Dewey in opposition to many mainstream ideas of what democracy is all about? If one hopes for the latter, the start is promising. Kitcher regards the voting concept of democracy quite inadequate and states firmly that 'the existence of elections and of majority rule is not constitutive of democracy. Often, these serve as the expression of a deeper idea, that of popular control. Nevertheless, they may not even be *expressions* of that idea but *betrayals* of it' [original emphasis] (Kitcher, 2011: 65). Climate policy is one such example. According to Kitcher (2011: 128) climate policies are hijacked by short-term wishes such as maintaining the usual energy consumption to the effect that democracy fails to represent the interest of the people (i.e. political action to prevent harm and to mitigate the consequences) but focuses on various misguided preferences instead. He therefore agrees with Dewey that 'democracy is more than a form of government' that it is 'primarily a mode of associated living' and that it is concerned with 'a way of life' (Kitcher, 2011: 69-70). According to Kitcher, Dewey connected freedom to self-realization and stressed both the need for positive freedom as well as for certain levels of protection (2011: 70). As a consequence, Dewey's idea of democracy is perfectly suitable for addressing what Kitcher considers to be one of the major problems of contemporary societies, namely 'the problem of *unidentifiable oppression* [original emphasis], where the limitations on freedom are either not felt, or, if felt, are difficult to trace to their source because no single agency is involved' (Kitcher, 2011: 78).

To prevent such oppression in general and to mitigate negative consequences of science and technology in particular, he proposes that science, and the public system of knowledge in which it is embedded, serve the purposes of citizens of a democratic society by way of 'investigation'. Soon, however, it turns out that the idea of 'investigation' has little to do with the kind of joint problem-solving or co-production of knowledge that has drawn ample attention in, for instance, the fields of Science and Technology Studies and Policy Analysis. Instead, it is to be understood in the more narrow meaning of 'responsible decision making' (Kitcher, 2011: 114). As a result, Kitcher's reading of Dewey's political theory is in line with the widespread view that holds Dewey as a deliberative democrat *avant la lettre* (e.g. Bernstein, 2012).

Central to deliberative democracy is the idea that a system of elections to represent citizens preferences ('votes') is not sufficient to arrive at reasonable legitimate grounds for binding collective decisions. Instead, broader support based on shared argumentations ('voices') is vital to an inclusive model of democracy, which has collective will -formation at its center.

This ideal, however, faces some serious constraints. The scale of contemporary democratic nation states, the transnational nature of many issues, the complexity of the problems and the difficulty of arriving at consensus put limits on the feasibility of deliberative processes. In practice, therefore, deliberative processes come not as an alternative but in addition to representational democracy. They are mainly focused on specific topics and include selections of stakeholders.

The same is the case in Kitcher's account. But this gives rise to fundamental questions. The range of people involved in debates and the energetic and emotional nature of controversies in today's media culture have given rise to some criticisms of the ideal and practice of deliberative approaches to democracy. His approach will have to clarify what kind of framework should be used to decide who are appropriate participants in collective decision-making processes. It needs to point out what arguments can be used in favor of, or against, including representatives in the policy-making process (Shapiro, 1996: 233-234). In addition, it will have to formulate criteria for deciding what means of persuasion are legitimate in the deliberative process (Nussbaum, 2001). Such an approach has to be careful not to overestimate the possibility of certain groups with a less-developed social position to transform themselves into active citizens (Young, 1997: 60-75). Science's authority is put to the test in media cultures and the unpredictable dynamics of social media affect political and scientific communities (Hajer 2009). Under such conditions both moral as well as epistemic authority has to be co-produced in mutual interaction (Brown 2009). 'Who is entitled to speak on which topic and who is granted the authority to do so' and 'who is entitled to act on behalf of the people and who is in the legitimate place to do so' are questions that remain to be answered.

At this point, one would expect a reaction from Kitcher, because clearly a choice has to be made: either he regards himself as a deliberative democrat and comes up with a defense against these accusations, or he holds that pragmatist political theory purports something quite distinct, or at least proposes a specific version of deliberative democracy and makes this more explicit. Kitcher implicitly chooses the former and replies to these criticisms with mere practical considerations. However, these criticisms of pragmatist political theory demand a more fundamental reply to the following: does pragmatist political theory essentially consist of a procedural or a substantive account of democracy?

Kitcher neglects this question. Its urgency, however, is emphasized by Talisse (2007) who stressed that substantive interpretations of pragmatism may be incompatible with pluralism in some respects. Talisse's analysis is based on the well-known distinction between 'procedural' and 'substantive' accounts of democracy, the first being a notion that regards democracy as a process for arriving at collective will-formation and decision-making in a legitimate and justified way, and the second claiming that democracy demands something 'stronger' and 'deeper' such as a shared idea of what it means to be a citizen, to have rights, to live in freedom, or even a common agenda to broaden the project of democracy to less empowered groups. Or, as Rosanvallon (2011: 4) has described the two positions, on the one hand we have an account of legitimacy based on social recognition of some kind of power, and on the other hand an account of legitimacy based on conformity to some norm or system of values.

The merit of the procedural notion of democracy is that it allows for the inclusion of a variety of perspectives in decision-making processes and refrains from a substantive account of what democratic outcomes ought to be. Conversely, from the perspective of this approach substantive accounts of democracy run the risk of being incompatible with pluralism and as such with the kind of freedoms defended by Dewey and Kitcher. To Talisse (2007), Dewey's particular comprehensive doctrine is even oppressive, since it 'unavoidably involves the coercion of reasonable persons to live within civic and political institutions and structures that are organized around a comprehensive moral vision of human flourishing that they could reasonably reject' (Talisse, 2007: 46).

Kitcher does not attempt to answer this accusation. By neglecting it, the suggestion is made that a pragmatist political theory is only viable in a procedural sense. In the following, two objections will be raised which may counter the aforementioned accusations. The aim is to show that pragmatist political theory offers more substance than Kitcher's reading allows for and that a more substantive interpretation of pragmatism does not need to end up in republican theories or in communitarianism. I will build up my argument in two subsequent steps. First I will introduce Dewey's notion of 'inquiry' as a much more comprehensive attempt than Kitcher's 'well-ordered science' to integrate the methods of science with those of democracies. I will clarify that pragmatist political theory aims not to represent or unify the existing political community but to extend that community to new groups and new domains. Key to this objection is the notion of 'publics'. Thereafter, I will explain that pragmatist political theory emphasizes the transformative nature of publics and their environments. Crucial to this understanding is the notion of 'experience'. Neglecting this element of the theory means missing the content of this problem-based approach.

4. Inquiry and the coming-into-being of publics

Dewey's ideal of fuelling democracy with intelligence was more ambitious than Kitcher's ideal of 'well-ordered science'. It may have been a bit naïve in that it had some blind spots for power relations but it certainly aimed at much more than arriving at legitimate decisions. Central to Dewey's philosophy is his notion of 'inquiry'. In *Logic, The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), he explained this idea:

'Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole.' (Dewey, 1938: 104)

When Kitcher (2012) reflects on this notion in his lecture *The importance of Dewey for philosophy (and for much else besides)* he regards it as similar to what he now calls his ideal of 'well-ordered inquiry'. Kitcher rightfully points out that crucial to the notion of inquiry is the presupposed 'we' that will conduct it. He agrees with Dewey that this 'we' is a fiction. However, as I will suggest in the following, Dewey's idea is not just to restore the collective nature of the democratic project but to redefine it altogether into a search for the fragmented public. Contrary to this, Kitcher strives to combine Dewey's broad democratic ideals with a procedural account of democracy aimed at decision-making that is simply too narrow to do justice to the full implications of pragmatist political theory. However, Dewey's position is clearly distinguished from those who consider science as merely a puzzling or *scientific* problem-solving activity separated from politics or from societal tasks. To Dewey, science begins *in medias res* and takes a situation that is 'disturbed, troubled, ambiguous, confused, full of conflicting tendencies' as its legitimate starting point. In order to so, he broadens the task of the sciences by redefining its methods. Instead of emphasizing the differences in aims and methods of science and democracy, Dewey sees a close resemblance between the two when it comes to the iteration between means and ends.

This point of view has been criticized for paying little attention to questions of power and passion. Wolin (2004), for instance, has criticized Dewey for identifying democracy 'with a method of discussion that assimilates it to science, while science is consistently described in communal terms that make it appear naturally democratic' (Wolin 2004: 517). In other words, by comparing science to democracy and democracy to science, Dewey leaves out import elements of both and reduces them to a 'method'. In addition, this method has been described as a 'process without purpose' (Diggins 1994) and as offering 'unjustifiable social hope' (Rorty 1999) because in the end it would lack a clear direction and an ideological horizon. Instead, I will argue that Dewey's political theory may lack sensitivity for power relations, but that it is passionate through and through by being infused with a strong desire to accommodate technological societies with an appropriate notion of democracy. In that sense, I will follow Brown (2009: 153) in that 'despite common misunderstandings, Dewey's notion of inquiry as purposive interaction goes beyond a rationalistic, in-

strumental understanding of science, and as part of human experience in general, is a fundamentally passionate and moral enterprise.'

Particularly in the period 1920-1950, Dewey was driven by the question of how to explain to the American people that a proper organization and use of science and technology can contribute to the intellectual and moral development of society and of citizens (Russil 2005; Wolin 2004: 504). Science, technology and industry determined the new face of the American society at the beginning of the twentieth century as it finally pulled into the machine age. Dewey emphasized the self-realization of people. Self-realization can come about when people create relationships with their environment, similar to the way in which Woodrow Wilson talked about The Great Society at that time as 'a new era of human relationships'. Scientific and technological developments are not seen by Dewey as a 'danger', but judged on their capacity to make new viable linkages. This idea turns out to be fertile ground for redefining democracy.

Democracy is, in the famous words of Abraham Lincoln, 'the government of the people, by the people, for the people.' The sovereignty of free citizens is thus reflected in their reconcilability in a political ideal. This phrase aptly illustrates the idea behind the democratic project, but the question is *how* the people can be brought together in this ideal and *what* their connectedness consists of. Today's networks of roads, housing and wiring are not just the cement of society because they make available the facilities along which normal human traffic can take its course. Scientific and technological developments transform the social contexts in which people find themselves. They establish the relationships that bind them again for discussion.

In Dewey's pragmatist political theory as formulated in *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), democracy is neither based on a 'collective,' nor grounded on the protection of 'individual' rights or interests. Instead, he proposes an approach in which the size and scope of political issues should be determined. Dewey is interested in the effects of new problems. The 'people,' the demos, is a phantom, a ghost, which has to be discovered. Dewey spoke of 'the eclipse of the public' which seemed to be lost and bewildered. It is not a given, but depends on the issue at stake. To allow for the

changeable nature of the various groupings that shape society, Dewey introduced a different view of *who* the *demoi* or the relevant communities are in a democracy. Instead of the demos, or the people, he speaks of *the public*.

From this view, politics is not primarily a matter of a community of people who consult one another, but a thing that arises from the fact that private actions and transactions may affect strangers who are not directly involved in those transactions or transaction consequences. In his famous definition, he stated that 'the public consists of all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of human action' (Dewey, 1927: 15). The public is not an a priori notion but something that comes into being a posteriori.

This notion of the public is neither a liberal nor a republican or communitarian one. It breaks with the individual nature of the former and with the notion of the common good in the latter. As such, the notion offers an opportunity to break with the aforementioned dichotomy between procedural and substantive accounts of democracy. A promising way to arrive at a middle ground between these diverging ideas has been offered by Shapiro (1996). Shapiro distinguished between three notions of democracy, the first having to do with principles of democratic governance, the second with the underlying metrics of value, i.e. with which principles of justice are applied, and the third with ways for advancing democratic principles in everyday life. The first notion entails a substantive account of democracy, the second a procedural account, and the third emphasizes the importance of a certain 'method' which makes democracy viable in everyday life.

The advantage of adding the third perspective is that it breaks down the stalemate position between the first and second option. Proponents of a substantive account of democracy criticize the procedural account for being empty and focusing solely on questions of redistribution. It is accused of having a blind spot for already existing power relations and inequalities and for refraining from doing justice to all kinds of minorities and immaterial claims. Conversely, proponents of a procedural account of democracy question the idea that there is some way, independent of what democratic procedures generate, to determine what outcomes are genuinely democratic.

The third perspective somehow offers an alternative by shifting the attention to the question of *how* political innovation is to be arrived at. Neither the first nor the second option suggests how a political philosophy, whether it is a substantive or procedural one, can relate to the social world, i.e. how one can aspire to its ideals under the constraints of social reality. This leads Shapiro (1996: 130) to say that 'designing democratic institutional constraints is inevitably a pragmatic business, best pursued in a context-sensitive and incremental way'. He supports this statement with three reasons. First of all, democratic maps of an uncultivated social terrain are bound to run aground when the sheer complexity of social life is not taken into account. Second, any procedure ought to be open to various kinds of initiatives of self-organization in order to allow people 'to discover ways to democratize things for themselves'. Third, thinking in terms of systems and blue-prints leads to a state-centric view of politics. As a result, Shapiro (1996: 123) typified his desired account of democracy as 'more than process, less than substance'.

Dewey's account of democracy, however, is much more than 'a way out' in a solidified philosophical debate. It opens up an innovative point of view on social dynamics and the interaction between people, politics, science and technology. To grasp this dynamics, it is important to emphasize that in Dewey's account the distinction between the public and the private does not coincide with that between the social and the individual. A social action has a private character as long as the consequences do not transcend the stakeholders involved. In contrast, an individual act can be of a public nature because the consequences relate to people who were not initially taken into consideration (Dewey, 1927: 12-14). He thus speaks of the public as an effect of unforeseen consequences. Technologies, whether they are the industrial powers of the "machine age" or today's information technologies, connect humans and machines, or (as Latour would say) 'humans and nonhumans,' and shape associations of people, a 'community of the affected' (Marres, 2012: 43). These publics are not pre-existing groups of people, but come into being as constructed assemblages.

5. Experience as democratic energy

The second distinctive feature of pragmatism that is important to stress is the notion of 'experience'. The dynamics of current debates concerning science and technology are hard to grasp when their emotional and energetic nature is not taken into account. Not because people today are over-excited or because the media focus only on scandals and hypes, but because the very relationship between people's expectations, political decision-making and the course of scientific research and technological innovation is driven by a 'political economy of hope' (Rose 2001). Contrary to Kitcher's 'rationalized' reading, this notion of experience is central to classical pragmatism. It does not only have psychological meaning but democratic consequences as well. Moreover, the notion of experience is crucial for understanding the *transformative nature* of issues in which publics are related to questions of science and technology.

In his essay *On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings* (1899), William James famously described how certain events, such as crossing Brooklyn Ferry, connect people to one another. James himself once wrote that the piece contained 'the perception on which my whole individualistic philosophy is based' (Richardson, 2012: 145). In a poetical way, with many references to Robert Louis Stevenson, Wordsworth, Whitman and others, James argued that doing things together unites people and transforms strangers into what is now called a 'community of fate'. Experiences blur the boundary between the individual person and the social group. This notion of 'experience' is also central to Dewey's thought. To Dewey, experience is a path into the world. In *The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy* (1917), he explained that in the following way:

'Experience is primarily a process of undergoing: a process of standing something; of suffering and passion, of affection, in the literal sense of these words. The organism has to endure, to undergo, the consequences of its own actions. […] Undergoing, however, is not mere passivity […]. Our undergoings are experiments in varying the course of events; our active tryings are trials and tests of ourselves.' (Dewey, 1917: 49)

As such, experience allows for a specific relationship between humans and nature, between the inside and the outside world. It is not 'a veil that shuts man off from nature' but 'a means of penetrating continually further into the heart of nature' (Dewey, 1925: 4-5).

In the revival of pragmatist philosophy in the 1980s and 1990s, most notably in the works of Hilary Putnam and Richard Rorty, this notion of experience was concealed behind a somewhat analytic and linguistic interpretation of classical pragmatism. In addition, Putnam and Rorty have put more emphasis on the epistemological aspects of pragmatism than on the political theory, although Rorty's later works, especially *Achieving our Country* (1998), may count as an exception. Kloppenberg (1999), for instance, remarked that:

'[...] the early pragmatists emphasized 'experience,' whereas some contemporary philosophers and critics who have taken 'the linguistic turn' are uneasy with that concept. […] Language was thus crucial for understanding the experience of others, but for James and Dewey language was only one important part of a richer, broader range that included interpersonal, aesthetic, spiritual, religious, and other prelinguistic or nonlinguistic forms of experience.' (Kloppenberg, 1999: 86-87)

Recently, some authors have related this notion of experience in classical pragmatist philosophy to its political theory in more explicit and lively ways (Livingston, 2012; Ferguson, 2007). Dewey's theory offers many clues but James's is more complicated, one reason being that it remains debatable whether James actually developed anything like a 'political theory'. Attempts to reconstruct James's political theory often take his 'radical pluralism' as a starting point. The Great San Francisco Earthquake of April 18, 1906 is a good example of how a single event has very distinct consequences for different people and finally can even be regarded as a collective name for a 'whole series of geological slippages, fractures, and vibrations that constitute seismic activity' (Livingston 2012: 1). In *On Some Mental Effects of the Earthquake* (1987), James described how he was thrown face-first from his bed as the earthquake shook his bedroom 'exactly as a terrier shakes a rat' (Livingston 2012: 1). He reported:

'Everybody was excited, but the excitement at first, at any rate, seemed to be almost joyous. Here at last was a real earthquake after so many years of harmless waggle! Above all, there was an irresistible desire to talk about it, and exchange experiences.'

Here it becomes clear how the notion of experience contains a democratic meaning in that it connects the coming into being of publics to their variable material environment. As such, the notion refers to the transformative nature of both publics and the issues they are confronted with. To James, the earthquake served as an emblematic example of how experiences both unite people as well as throw them back on themselves. On the one hand, the seismic event was a dreadful nightmare for everybody, leaving three thousand dead and a quarter-million residents homeless and hundreds of thousands in shock. On the other hand, the meaning and impact of the earthquake were different for many people and had varying consequences, so that the experience remained an individualistic affair in the end (Ferguson, 2007: 61). In a passage in Lecture 4, 'The One and the Many,' of his *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), James described what he had in mind:

'The world is full of partial stories that run parallel to one another, beginning and ending at odd times. They mutually interlace and interfere at points, but we cannot unify them completely in our minds.' (James, 1907: 71)

Dewey certainly would not disagree, but to him there is more communality in experiences. This communality is achieved by following the transformation processes publics and their environments undergo. Creating common experiences from fragmented events is a task he explicitly attributes to science and philosophy and most of all to democracy itself. It ought to be central to a political theory of science. Neglecting the notion of experience impedes a substantive interpretation of democracy that emphasizes the mobilizing role of hopes and expectations and, most notably, the formation of new publics that are gathered together by the emotional energies of society.

6. Conclusions

Kitcher's 'enlightened democracy', the three-stage process of well-ordered science, takes the place of 'science in society' into account and does justice to the idea that the sciences ought not to set their agenda in splendid isolation. However, Kitcher's idea of democracy is mainly aimed at making justifiable decisions. Although he shifts from relying heavily on the political philosophy of Rawls's in *Science, Truth, and Democracy* (2001) to following Dewey's political theory in his subsequent work, *Science in a Democratic Society* (2011), his concept of democracy is a deliberative one in the procedural sense. The main criticism which has been brought forward here is that *from a pragmatist account of democracy*, this concept is too restrictive. Instead, classical pragmatism, most notably the works of James and Dewey, allows for a broader account of democracy.

Pragmatist political theory in general and Dewey's ideas of democracy in particular have been the subject of much criticism. This varies from the accusation that Dewey's mingling of the procedures of democracy with the methods of science into a thing called 'inquiry' leads to a kind of 'social engineering' to the fear that this inquiry is easily captured by private interests and is susceptible to the influence of self-assertive, well-organized groups (e.g. Zakaria 2003).

A viable reading of pragmatist political theory demands a stronger elaboration of the notion of 'radical pluralism' and the way scientific and technological developments both unite as well as divide people. Key to such an understanding are the notions of 'publics' and of 'experience'. If one agrees with the pragmatist imperative that actions, including thought-acts and speech-acts, are to be judged by their consequences, a pragmatist political theory ought to be sensitive to the idea that it need not give *a priori* justifications for decision-making processes, but instead should focus on the consequences, i.e. on the *a posteriori* effects of science and technology. This is exactly what Dewey was aiming for with his notion of 'the public'. The conclusion he arrived at was that unforeseen consequences lead to publics who have to be taken care of democratically.

Kitcher's 'enlightened democracy,' however, emphasizes the epistemic and procedural aspects of decision-making processes while neglecting public emotions and energies which are not unusual in the 'economies of hope' and the 'politics of expectations' (Brown 2003; Brown and Michael 2003) that surround scientific and technological promises, as in the case of biofuels, GMOs, shale gas or the development of new therapies and pharmaceutical drugs. Moreover, procedural approaches to democracy tend to neglect the substantive idea of 'experience' as a cornerstone for arriving at shared ideas and images. As such, they are blind to the political consequences of social-technological change, for instance the rise of groups of unusual suspects and the shaping of unlikely coalitions such as inhabitants, environmentalists, activists, water corporations and beer breweries in the case of shale gas, which led to 'pop-up publics'.

As Honneth (1998: 780) already concluded, Dewey's notion of democracy leads to a third road between 'an overethicized republicanism and an empty proceduralism'. Although Kitcher's procedural account is too narrow, pragmatist political theory differs from substantive concepts of democracy in that it is not primarily aimed at the formulation of the common good or a binding general will. Geuss (2001) therefore suggested that Dewey's democracy 'is not at all intended as a concept with application to the political system of a state, but as the ideal of a liberal community which, like ancient direct democracy, lacks state-structures' (Geuss, 2001: 127).

Perhaps the distinction between a substantive and a procedural theory is not the crucial issue here. If the goal of the distinction is mainly to arrive at some analytical clarity, replacing the dichotomy existing between procedural and substantive concepts of democracy for the more empirical distinction between representative and deliberative forms of democracy is a first option. In doing so, it becomes much clearer that despite the differences, pragmatist political theory is part of the 'deliberative family' which has a bare individualistic notion of representative democracy as its counterpoint.

However, something more important is at stake here. The 'substance' of pragmatist political theory bears a different meaning of 'the political' altogether. Pragmatism, I would claim, emphasizes the *transformative nature of reality* and regards both science and democracy as more or less collective enterprises aimed at 'inquiry'. Issues relating to science and technology will have to be investigated in a continuous iteration between means and ends to arrive at a viable place in society. This ought to result in the identification of publics who deserve special treatment because they are likely to experience the consequences of science, technology and related policy programs in a distinctive way. As such, pragmatist political theory exchanges the general idea of 'membership' of deliberative theory for a much more contextualized and partial account, not as a substitution for but as a supplement to the existing political community. Only when this element is fully taken into account, will a political philosophy of science and democracy based on classical pragmatism become viable.

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RUTH SONDEREGGER

DO WE NEED OTHERS TO EMANCIPATE OURSELVES?
REMARKS ON JACQUES RANCIÈRE

1. Teaching equality

My starting point is what I take to be the core of Rancière's entire work, namely equality or, rather, what Rancière calls 'the presupposition of equality of anyone and everyone' (Rancière 1999: 17). As far as such presupposition is concerned, the pivotal book undoubtedly is Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Rancière, 1991); i.e. those *Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* Rancière draws from the writings of the self-declared ignorant schoolmaster Joseph Jacotot (1770-1849) who discovered, practiced and theorised the equality of all speaking beings during the time he was teaching in Louvain (Belgium). Jacotot qualifies such equality as the equal intelligence of all beings that have been able to learn their first language on their own when they were infants; i.e. without yet understanding the hints of those who already spoke that language. In other words: they learned their first language autonomously and had to be their own

teachers since all other alleged teachers spoke a language the respective child did not yet understand (Rancière 1991: 5). From this Jacotot concludes that learning (a language) does not depend on teachers. Rather, the only prerequisite for learning is the desire to learn; be it for reasons of survival, play, curiosity, knowledge or whatever.

As is well known to readers of Rancière, Jacotot developed his theory about the equal learning ability of all speaking beings upon an unintended experience during the time he taught in Louvain. There he found out, accidentally, that he could teach his students capacities that he himself did not possess simply by encouraging them and by forcing them to talk about what they had learned and to report as to how they had proceeded in learning. To be more precise, Jacotot, who did not speak Flemish, encouraged his Flemish-speaking students (with the help of an interpreter) to learn French via a Flemish/French edition of a book entitled *Télémaque* (Fénelon, 1997), that was quite popular in Jacotot's days. The overwhelming success of his students who learned French incredibly swiftly via Fénelon's *Télémaque* inspired Jacotot to develop his anti-pedagogical theory of 'universal teaching' (Rancière 1991: 16). According to this theory, teaching is not based on (more, higher, more profound etc.) knowledge but on encouragement. Pupils, Jacotot contends, do not need teachers who already know what their disciples are supposed to learn, as long as the latter really want to learn and as long as they believe in their capacity to learn. As a consequence of this, a person who, for example, does not speak Greek is, according to Jacotot, very well able to teach her children how to read and write Greek texts. For all this person needs to do is to encourage and support the child in finding out on her own.

The only reason why we sometimes might indeed need teachers is, in the eyes of Jacotot, our lack of the courage to make use of the capability to learn on our own; i.e. some of us might need teachers who remind us of the fact that we are, in a way, already experts in learning by ourselves because we successfully did so when we learned our first language. In other words, it is not the knowledge or the content-related expertise of teachers that we might need in processes of learning but solely their encouragement based on the belief in universal intelligence. According to

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Jacotot, intelligence is universal in two respects: it is the equal intelligence of all speaking beings, and it structures all kinds of capabilities – shoe-making, for instance, no less than singing or reading. As a result, universal teaching consists in practicing the belief in these two axioms and in acting accordingly.

Those, on the other hand, who insist on the superior knowledge of teachers and conceive of education as the progressive replacement of the pupil's ignorance by the teacher's knowledge, produce nothing but stultifying effects. They ensure, Jacotot contends, that the inferiority of those who need to learn is endlessly prolonged by definition, because a teacher needs to always know at least a little bit more than her student. Moreover, by insisting on an irreversible gap between teachers and pupils – to the effect that the promised equality between them is continually postponed – conceptions of teaching that are based on superior knowledge betray emancipation (cf. Rancière 1991: 118 ff.). The irreversible gap guarantees that pupils will always depend on their teachers and that equality is 'deferred from commission to commission, from report to report, from reform to reform, until the end of time' (Rancière 1991: 134).

It is no coincidence that Rancière published the results of his archival research on Joseph Jacotot's anti-pedagogical theory of universal teaching in 1987.[1] Around that time, both the school system and theories of education were fervently discussed points of issue in France. In these discussions republican elitism was pitted against reforms that were supposed to gradually reduce the inequalities of the French school system; inequalities, that is, which had been analysed by, above all, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, 1979; Bourdieu, 1984, 1991).[2] Without mentioning the main intellectual figures of this debate, namely Jean-Claude Milner and Pierre Bourdieu, Rancière seems to address both of them critically by bringing Jacotot's method of teaching into play. For Jacotot's method circumvents the shortcomings of both sides without being a compromise (cf. Ross in Rancière, 1991[3]). Or, to put it differently, Jacotot's anti-pedagogy rejects the republicans' belief in the rationality of knowledge taught by allegedly neutral and knowledgeable teachers who are not interested in the social backgrounds of their pupils no less than the (Bourdieusian) reformers' starting point: namely that we

have to begin with analysing and acknowledging inequality between (different classes of) pupils in order to then be able to gradually reduce it. Moreover, Bourdieu's supposedly emancipatory analyses of inequalities require the superior knowledge of sociological experts, which categorically contradicts Jacotot's axiom of the equality of all intelligences.

Rancière, on the other hand, contends with Jacotot that nothing but the equality of all intelligences can be the starting point of convincing theories and practices of emancipatory teaching. Otherwise, for example, if we conceive of equality (between teachers and pupils no less than between pupils with different social backgrounds) as the *goal* of emancipatory education – which is the claim of both the republican and the Bourdieusian reforms – education will be in need of perfection forever. Moreover, we will be stuck in efforts of analysing and eventually reinforcing inequality. What Rancière, therefore, rejects together with the superior knowledge of teachers:

'[…] is the logic of the pedagogical process in which the schoolmaster starts from the situation of ignorance which is that of the student and progressively replaces ignorance by knowledge, his knowledge, and progressively takes the student away from a situation of inequality to lead him or her 'towards' a situation of equality.' (Rancière, 2010b: 167)

2. The politics of equality

As already mentioned above, Rancière's voice can hardly be discerned from Jacotot's in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. This is not only the result of lengthy quotes from Jacotot's writings but also due to the fact that Rancière's book consists to a large extent of a very sympathetic reconstruction of Jacotot's life, theory, and praxis. At times, one cannot but indeed get the impression of reading Rancièrian variations on motives by Jacotot. However, Rancière's accentuation is somewhat different. On the one hand, Rancière uses Jacotot's theory of universal teaching as one amongst many other opportunities to re-articulate his account of politics as an emancipatory act of claiming equality by those who are not even

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recognized as speaking beings.[4] On the other hand, Jacotot's theory provides more evidence, indeed almost a proof, of the equality of all speaking beings that has been the centrepiece of Rancières account of political emancipation since his earliest writings. Therefore, it is not Jacotot's anti-pedagogy that fascinates Rancière but, rather, the fundamental role that Jacotot ascribes to equality in processes of learning and teaching which in its turn means that Jacotot conceives of learning and teaching as emancipatory practices.[5]

According to Rancière, Jacotot's theory comes down to two axioms (Rancière 2010b: 168) that conjunctly account for the 'presupposition of equality'. The first axiom amounts to claiming that equality is not a telos or a utopian goal but a starting point. The second consists of the proposition that there is only one kind of intelligence, namely the universal, and in fact anarchistic, intelligence of being able to learn anything autonomously; an intelligence, that is, which is shared by the scientist, the technician, the peasant, the craftsman, the musician, the painter etc. It is the intelligence of anybody. This implies, let it be understood, that the capability to speak a language does not range above the capacity to construct a computer or play the piano. Being the result of universal teaching and learning, they are all on an equal footing. Or, to put it differently, once we have found a way into our first language we are, in principle at least, able to construct ways into many other unpredictable fields of theoretical and practical knowledge we desire to become acquainted with. Talking of such universal intelligence in terms of the capacity to speak, as Rancière no less than Jacotot has a tendency to do, therefore does not necessarily imply that the capability of speaking is superior to the capability of e.g. singing. According to Rancière, it is just an easy way to summarize the general capacity of learning anything autonomously possessed by those who have learned to speak a language. This is why Rancière quotes and emphasizes Jacotot's statement: "*speaking* is the best proof of the capacity to do whatever it is"' (Rancière 1991: 65). However, it seems that summarizing the general capacity to learn as the capacity to speak is not without problems to which I will return later.

In Rancière's view, the presupposition of equality therefore is supposed to be not so much about speaking a shared language or sharing the capabil-

ity of speaking whichever language but, rather, about learning a new practice – no matter which. In order to emphasize the possibility of such radical newness within familiar practices Rancière says at one point: 'We know that improvisation is one of the canonical exercises of universal teaching. […] In the act of speaking, man doesn't transmit his knowledge, he makes poetry' (Rancière 1991: 64 f.). Furthermore, and this is where Rancière gives Jacotot's universal teaching a surprising twist, the presupposition of equality is about claiming and/or taking something that is radically new in the sense that one has no admission to claiming or taking it.

However, it is very likely, even almost unavoidable, that we forget about such equal and supposedly poetic intelligence of learning as discovered by Jacotot and re-discovered by Rancière. For wherever we look and from the moment we start demonstrating our capacity to learn we are told that (innate) talent, excellence, ingeniousness etc. do play a role; that in real life hierarchies of knowledge and expertise rule, and rightly so. We start believing that teachers who know more than their pupils are necessary, that some are less talented and more in need of being taught than others; that some are so incapable of learning that even teaching would lead to nothing and that this is why one should not invest time, knowledge and money into such lost causes. Even in our times of cognitive capitalism where (life-long) learning has become imperative and appears to be less exclusive, mechanisms of control and classification like tests, marks and rankings have not disappeared. Paradoxically, they have rather become rampant.[6]

In light of this, it is all the more remarkable that Rancière follows the path of Jacotot's two axioms, and even takes them further. On Rancière's account, Jacotot not only encourages us to revise our theories of pedagogy and practices of teaching. Rancière goes so far as transforming Jacotot's axioms into some kind of a paradoxically non-foundational fundament of what he calls emancipatory politics, or just politics. As is well known by those who are familiar with his thought, the events called politics by Rancière are not struggles for, or negotiations about, getting more of this or that property, be it power, sovereignty, money, influence, rights or whichever other goods or positions that are available within an established community. For all these struggles do not challenge the existing

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order of properties, powers, positions etc. That is why they are, in Rancière's terminology, nothing but acts of a police that reinforces, primarily via aesthetic strategies, the respective orders. Such orders define and secure what counts as property, knowledge, or right, and who is entitled to claim the goods and positions just mentioned. Last but not least, such reinforcement implies that there is nothing that cannot be resolved within the existing order, which in its turn means that there are no alternative orders, in fact no outside. Margaret Thatcher's claim that there is no alternative should therefore be given the credit of being the most concise description of Rancièrian police.

Politics on the other hand, consists in doing or claiming something that the members of an established community are not able to perceive or claim, at least, or to be unable to see because it does not make sense in the current distribution of positions, goods, places and times. Rancière dubs such confrontation a situation of disagreement – *mésentente* – a situation, this is, in which one party claims to not understand or see what the other is talking about. In many cases of disagreement the representatives of the established distribution of positions and properties whom Rancière also calls the representatives of a 'consensus' do not even realize that others are talking to them or that others are there at all.

'Disagreement is not the conflict between one who says white and another who says black. It is the conflict between one who says white and another who also says white but does not understand the same thing by it or does not understand that the other is saying the same thing in the name of whiteness. […]. Disagreement occurs wherever contention over what speaking means constitutes the very rationality of the speech situation.' (Rancière 1999: x)

In order to make herself heard, perceived and understood in such a constellation of radical disagreement the dissenter needs to successfully demonstrate that the two parties in question have something in common. Or, rather, she needs to demonstrate that they are even equal and that it is because of this equality that the ignorant side, that which claims to not see the problem, is very well able to understand and that the other side is justified to take what she is claiming in an understandable and rea-

sonable way. Such demonstration 'of a paradoxical world that puts together two separate worlds' (Rancière 2010c: 39) presupposes, let it be understood, an act of radical, indeed poetic, translation. For it consists in building a bridge between two formerly incommensurable worlds or 'distributions of the sensible' (Rancière, 2004). Obviously, Rancière implies that such a bridge is not dissimilar to the bridge that children need to construct when they learn their first language. As soon as some minimal understanding is reached between the two worlds, it becomes evident that the current distribution of positions, properties, and entitlements together with their conditions of perceptibility is not without alternative, that the respective *status quo* cannot provide a solution for all problems but rather excludes that on which it at the same time rests and purports to respect: the equality of all beings able to learn on their own.

3. Some intricate implications of Rancière's politics of radical equality

Rancière's account of equality has far-reaching consequences for political thought and action. On three of them I would like to put special emphasis in order to, on the one hand, defend them against misinterpretations and, on the other, to discuss possible limitations of Rancière's radical equality. However, my overall aim is to provide a reading that makes such radical equality as compelling as possible.

(1) Contrary to what readers of Rancière might assume at a first glance, and despite its Habermasian overtones,[7] the presupposition of equality is not a transcendental fact on which one could rely (after having deduced it) once and for all. Rather, equality is something that needs to be acted out, to be verified time and again and that, in order to be verified, presupposes faith in equality. 'Liberty is not guaranteed by any pre-established harmony. It is taken, it is won, it is lost, solely by each person's effort' (Rancière, 1991: 62).[8] In other words: the equality in question is not just there – e.g. as a stable potentiality or transcendental ground – but rather in need of specific, actual 'verifications' that very often refer to no less specific official acknowledgements, inscriptions and documentations of equality; be it the declaration of human rights, constitutions, the equal

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treatment policy of a company, or the mission statement on diversity of an institution etc. Such inscriptions frequently turn out to be important and useful tools in specific struggles. However, in themselves, they are as weak as all argumentative deductions of equality no matter whether such deductions proceed in a logical, transcendental, neurophysiological, or whatever other (scientific) way.[9] To put it differently: all such inscriptions, and even the axiomatic presupposition of equality, are nothing in themselves but everything in acts of constituting equality by claiming it.

Rancière does not only refuse to deduce equality. Likewise, he does not define it. When he speaks of axioms of equality or contends (with Jacotot) that equality is something that all speaking beings share, such claims should not be misunderstood as definitions. Similary, remarks about the ability to speak (and, as a consequence, to learn) as evidence of the equal intelligence of all speaking beings should not be read as arguments in favour of an ultimate foundation. By making such assertions Rancière rather declares his faith in equality.

'It is true that we don't know that men are equal. We are saying that they *might* be. This is our opinion, and we are trying, along with those who think as we do, to verify it. But we know that this *might* is the very thing that makes a society of humans possible.' (Rancière, 1991: 73)

In my view, the most striking strategy of practicing his belief in equality is Rancière's kind of writing which consists in narrating ever new (mainly archival) stories about successful acts of claiming and taking equality, i.e. by narrationally giving empirical evidence. Such practice of doing philosophy is strongly opposed to all kinds of foundational thinking. However, I would not deny that it is rather misleading to call a 'presupposition' that which needs to be poetically re-invented in every single situation where disagreement in the sense of *mésentente* is articulated.

(2) Rancièrian equality needs to be actively claimed and taken as opposed to being conceded or condescendingly awarded to somebody.[10] The reason for this is that those who have their place in an existing distribution of the sensible are unable to understand the claims of the excluded, unable to see that the axiom of equality is ignored and that there are alterna-

tives to the current distribution of places and positions. The claiming party, however, does dispose of the intelligence to see the cracks in the distribution of the sensible in question. One of the expressions of the claiming party's intelligence is its bilingualism both language-wise and perception-wise. By bilingualism I mean that the subjects of the claiming part understand both the rules of the current distribution of the sensible plus something else. They virtually live in two worlds and, therefore, are in a condition that comes close to what W.E.B. Du Bois had already in 1903 called the exceptional intelligence of 'double consciousness' in his book on *The Souls of Black Folk* (Du Bois, 1996).[11]

Especially in light of whom mainstream political and moral philosophy primarily addresses, it seems to me to be a major step to stop addressing the wrongdoers and/or apologists of the *status quo* by way of warning, criticizing, correcting or showing them in how far they are logically or morally wrong or, at least, blind. For such strategy always implies the assumption that it is only from the wrongdoers and/or apologists that changes can and must be expected. Rancière's writings reject this type of reasoning and critique since it amounts to nothing but yet another round in the game of prioritizing the existing distribution of the sensible over all possible alternatives. Instead of addressing the representatives of the *status quo*, Rancière's account of equality therefore puts the emphasis on encouraging those who are so radically excluded from equal treatment that their claims appear as incomprehensible, as mere noise, gibberish, or nonsense. By expecting substantial changes from the demanding party instead of the wrongdoers who represent the *status quo* Rancière emphasizes the demanding party's capacity to learn, to speak (up), and to change the distribution in place; he indeed accentuates the exceptional bi- or multi-lingual intelligence of the demanding party. Although such radical demonstrating and claiming of equality is difficult and rare, Rancière keeps emphasizing that in principle it is always and everywhere possible. 'Anybody can be emancipated and emancipate other persons [...]' (Rancière, 2010b: 169). However, we will have to raise the question as to whether this is not a rather empty possibility. Moreover, it needs to be asked why Rancière only speaks of the politically empowering aspects of bilingualism without ever mentioning its inhibiting dimensions that, ac-

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cording to Du Bois for example, cannot be cut off from the emancipatory ones.

(3) Despite the fact that Rancière often conceives of Jacotot's universal intelligence as 'collective intelligence' and even speaks of a 'communism of intelligence' (Rancière 2010a: 80)[12], he keeps emphasizing that collective intelligence is not the intelligence of a collective. In *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, for instance, he contends: 'But this much is true for each individual's intelligence taken separately: it is indivisible, without community, without division. It cannot, therefore, belong to any group, for then it would no longer belong to the individual. We must therefore conclude that intelligence is only in individuals, that it is not in their *union*.' (Rancière, 1991: 76) In a similar vein, he answers the question 'How far can the communist affirmation of the intelligence of anybody coincide with the communist organization of a society?' by explaining: 'Jacotot entirely denied such a possibility. Emancipation, he said, is a form of action that can be transmitted from individuals to individuals. […] But a society can never be emancipated' (Rancière 2010b: 169). Put differently, collective intelligence is not the intelligence of a group – let alone of a stable community or a state – but the individual intelligence of anyone (unqualified).

Although it is quite clear from what Rancière distances himself with his definition of collective intelligence as the intelligence of anyone – namely from a totalitarian collective that speaks with one voice – it remains rather opaque, first, how his insistence on emancipation as an individual affair can be reconciled with the collective dimensions of emancipatory processes; and, second, what this conception of collective intelligence positively amounts to. Rancière's characterisation of collective intelligence as the intelligence of everyone is primarily directed against Negri and Hardt's theory about the intelligence of the multitude as developed in their book *Empire* (Negri and Hard, 2000). A closer look at Rancière's critique shows that what he rejects is, first of all, the homogeneity of a multitude beyond (internal) struggles. Additionally, he repudiates the belief, inherent in Negri/Hardt's celebration of the intelligence of the multitude, that the current form of capitalism, namely cognitive capital-

ism, necessarily implies its own destruction. In Rancière's eyes, such faith in a typically Marxist teleology is all but convincing (Rancière, 2009b).

No matter whether Rancière is right in his critique of Negri/Hardt, it does not sufficiently clarify the specific collectivity or communism of intelligence Rancière is interested in despite his general emphasis on the individual. Moreover, in light of the significance of this concept for all of Rancière's writings, it is all the more astonishing that he does not take Virno's further elaboration and critique of Negri/Hardt'ss account of the intelligence of the multitude into consideration but prefers, as it were, to flog a dead horse (Virno, 2004; Power, 2011). Virno's account of the 'general intellect' not only comes close to what Rancière seems to have in mind when he appropriates Jacotot's concept of a universal intelligence; it might also have enabled Rancière to positively determine what the collectivity of intelligence consists in. Moreover, in *Communists Like Us*, co-authored by Negri and Félix Guattari, Negri is after an anti-totalitarian conception of communism that comes very close to what Rancière seems to be striving for.[13] However, without further clarification Rancière's concept of a collective or communist intelligence remains rather opaque. It is difficult to see more in Rancière's kind of communism than, on the one hand, the universal intelligence of all speaking beings; or, on the other, the possibility of a succession of individual acts of emancipation the connection between which appears as arbitrary. But why then should one call such succession collective or even communist intelligence?

4. The inter-active and fractional communality of communist intelligence

Despite the fact that Rancière, to my knowledge, does not use the term 'autonomy' when he theorises political emancipation, one can easily get the impression that his emphasis on the individual is very much in line with classical, liberal accounts of autonomy in political and moral philosophy.[14] According to such accounts, autonomy refers to the universal capacity of any thinking and speaking individual to take self-determined and un-coerced decisions. Emancipation, accordingly, is the process of

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becoming such a self-determined individual that, in its turn, is possible because of the universal capacity to think and judge. From such a perspective, those who do not emancipate themselves can be blamed to be irrational, and even immoral, for they possess all the capacities needed for emancipation. A classical key reference in this context is Kant's practical philosophy. However, if we take a closer look at Kant's (probably most famous) text on emancipation, a text also alluded to by Rancière when he discusses his relation to communism,[15] namely 'An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"', we might be surprised. For the opening paragraphs of this short text already indicate that Kant's account of self-determination, emancipation, and true autonomy might be less individualistic, or to put it provocatively, more communist than Rancière's – or so it seems at least.

After having emphasized how difficult it is to free oneself from 'guardians' – for it is so convenient 'to have a book to have understanding in place of me, a spiritual adviser to have a conscience for me, a doctor to judge my diet for me, and so on' – Kant continues:

Thus it is difficult for each separate individual to work his way out of the immaturity which has become almost second nature to him. […] There is more chance of an entire public enlightening itself. This is indeed almost inevitable, if only the public concerned is left in freedom. For there will always be a few who think for themselves, even among those appointed as guardians of the common mass. (Kant 2008: 54-55)

In other words, Kant conceives of the company of, and interaction with, others as essential for facilitating seemingly individual acts of emancipation that, let it be understood, turn out to be mutual achievements. However, the necessarily communal dynamics of emancipation that transcends individual attempts to emancipate oneself do not lead, according to Kant, to an (identitarian) collective.[16] Rancière, on the other hand, contends:

'There cannot be a class of the emancipated, an assembly or a society of the emancipated. But an individual can always, at any moment, be emancipated and emancipate someone else, announce to others the *practice*

and add to the number of people who know themselves as such and who no longer play the comedy of the inferior superiors. A society, a people, a state, will always be irrational. But one can multiply within these bodies the number of people who, as individuals, will make use of reason […].' (Rancière, 1991: 98)

Rancière, in other words, conceives of emancipation and autonomy as the result of essentially individual acts of claiming one's universal – or, if you will, collective in the sense of universally shared – capacity to speak despite the fact that he quite often designates the intelligence that is at the basis of individual emancipation, and at the same time subjectivation, 'collective intelligence'. However, as I have tried to indicate, the meaning and substance of this collectivity needs to be further developed. For all that is really clear is, first, Rancière's aversion as far as collectives that rest on fixed, if not essentialist, qualities are concerned and, second, that he therefore turns to individuals who share the same universal intelligence but seem to not necessarily need each other to develop or intensify this intelligence. When Rancière writes: 'Collective understanding of emancipation is not the comprehension of a total process of subjection. It is the collectivization of capacities invested in scenes of dissensus' (Rancière 2009a: 49) it is therefore difficult to see more in such collectivization than a summation or concatenation of autonomous acts of strong individuals in various scenes of dissensus. To put it differently: although it is obvious that Rancière conceives of emancipation as a process of concatenation and extension – one cannot be emancipated, i.e. faithful to the presupposition of equality, without encouraging others to believe in their power to emancipate themselves – he strictly refrains from calling such networks emancipated. This in its turn suggests the assumption that emancipation is an essentially individual achievement. Before I try to develop an alternative reading of Rancière's term 'communist intelligence' I want to highlight a related problem of individualism.

The moral and political implications of Rancière's claim that the subalterns who have no part, can under all circumstances speak for themselves if they only want to and try hard enough, are all but unquestionable. For

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this seems to imply that those (without a part) who do not emancipate and subjectivise themselves are morally and politically inferior. What comes to mind, here, is Gayatri Spivak's critique of Deleuze's and Foucault's claim that the subaltern can under all circumstances speak for and liberate themselves. Spivak objects that such praise of the strength of subaltern subjects amounts to a denial of the intellectuals' entanglement with, and political responsibility for, the subaltern. In my eyes, such criticism applies no less to Rancière than to Foucault and Deleuze's statements in a discussion about the role of intellectuals (Spivak, 1988; Foucault and Deleuze, 1977).[17]

It goes without saying that Rancière is neither literally issuing imperatives to emancipate oneself or claiming that all speaking beings are responsible for their emancipation. However, given his Jacototian tendency to anchor universal intelligence in the individual capacity to speak, it is almost impossible to not interpret his claim that everybody who can speak is, in principle, able to emancipate herself, as not implying such an imperative. There seem to be two Rancières — not dissimilar to the two Kants Foucault distinguishes when he discusses Kant's essay on *Enlightenment* (cf. Foucault 1984).[18] The position of the first and strictly universalist Rancière makes it difficult to not conceive of the 'self-incurred immaturity' of speaking beings and the related subaltern positions as a sign of moral or epistemological lack. However, the second Rancière knows as much as Foucault's second Kant that the capacity to resist and to thereby emancipate oneself is not implied in the capacity to speak. Rather, it is self-confidence and courage that are needed for emancipation, which, in their turn, depend on supporting and encouraging others. In other words, it is far from unproblematic, in my view, to summarize universal intelligence and equality as the capacity to speak. Moreover, one should be cautious in relation to 'in principle'-statements about emancipation; statements for example that suggest that speaking beings can in principle always and everywhere emancipate themselves.

My rejection of Rancière's exclusion of contexts of multi-layered domination that make disagreement extremely difficult (without the encouragement of others), together with my search for a non-individualistic articulation of emancipation that Rancière's term collective or com-

munist intelligence seems to imply, bring me back to Jacotot. In my view, we need to address Jacotot's individualism before we can elaborate upon aspects of collectivity in Rancièrian emancipation, i.e. on aspects that put Rancière's irritating insistence on individual emancipation and the individual use of emancipatory reason into perspective. For Rancière seems to have inherited some elements of Jacotot's individualism that are hard to reconcile with the idea of political emancipation as a collective enterprise that we undoubtedly find in Rancière's oeuvre as well.[19]

Jacotot's anti-pedagogy is individualistic to the extent that it puts all emphasis on the individual will to learn. Moreover, it is the will of more or less isolated subjects that is the target of an emancipatory teacher's encouragement by his faith in all pupils' universal intelligence. What Jacotot, in my view, therefore has in mind when he talks about the universal intelligence of all speaking beings is a capacity that all speaking individuals share as individuals. The only interaction Jacotot mentions, and indeed highlights, is the one-way street of encouragement that leads from the teacher to the pupil in cases where the pupil's individual will is not strong enough. An indication of this one-way street might be the fact that Jacotot, to my knowledge, never let himself be encouraged to learn Flemish.

It is against the backdrop of this scenario that I would like to suggest that we widen the scene of teaching as encouragement and allow for practices of mutually teaching faith in equality.[20] For the rejection of teachers who claim to (principally) know more than their students does not imply that teaching by way of motivating and by encouraging efforts to learn are no longer important. To the contrary, everything depends on such support — not least in the eyes of Jacotot who, however, neglects the mutuality of encouragement. As far as the importance of (unilateral) encouragement is concerned, Jacotot even agrees, in a strange way at least, with Rancière's arch-enemy Pierre Bourdieu. For the latter's research on the French school and university system provides us with ample evidence that it is not primarily knowledge that is taught and tested unequally in schools and universities but rather the self-assured — 'believing', so to speak — way of presenting, defending or questioning knowledge.[21] Therefore, everything depends on teaching and encouraging the belief in one's

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learning and emancipatory abilities – in the matter of universal intelligence no less than in Bourdieu's project of propagating equality by way of analysing the structures that obstruct it.[22] Such teaching, respectively the necessity thereof, should not be restricted to rather crass contexts of subalternity and inequality. If we take into account how tempting it is to believe in the hierarchy of rated and ranked knowledges, expertises, talents, universities, journals etc. – which is all the more important as we are living in a world where such thinking in terms of excellency is violently enforced – everybody is (at times) in need of encouragement as far as faith in universal and equal intelligence is concerned – teachers of emancipation no less than students.[23]

Whereas pupils who are unable to realize their equality need encouragement in faith, those who already have faith in universal intelligence and claim to be followers of Jacotot, i.e. the emancipated, need actual demonstrations of emancipation – particularly where they least expect such demonstration. In other words: emancipated subjects need others who allow encouragement to happen and emancipate themselves with the help of such encouragement. Otherwise even Jacotot's followers would risk losing their faith – in his day no less than in ours. For all that followers of Jacotot and Rancière possess in terms of 'proofs' of the presupposed universal intelligence are actual verifications of equality. To put it differently: only as long as alleged teachers and so-called students of emancipation interact and exchange their roles can finite subjects who teach, and are being taught, keep alive what I would like to call a (more or less intensive) atmosphere or communality of active and truly collective intelligence; a communality that goes, let it be understood, beyond the additive concatenation of individual emancipations.

It is the frequency of the exchange of roles between teachers and pupils seeking emancipation that determines the emancipatory intensity of such communality. The frequency of such exchanges is important because it works against the reification of emancipation as a stable position and thwarts accounts of emancipation in terms of numerical expansion, the latter of which also presupposes that emancipation is a stable position that cannot be lost. Moreover, the frequency in question allows us to identify specific networks and communalities as more emancipatory than

others, i.e. to do precisely what Rancière denies when he insists that no groups but only individuals can be emancipated. However, my critical reading of Rancière's denial of substantially communal emancipation does not imply that he never mentions what I suggested to call a communality of emancipation, to the contrary. The exchanges (of letters), the philosophical clubs, reading groups, art magazines etc. of seemingly uneducated workers that Rancière highlights, notably in *Proletarian Nights* (Rancière 2012) are the best cases in point. It is especially in light of this book that readers of Rancière (myself included) cannot but be puzzled by his rejection of emancipatory communalities as opposed to emancipatory individuals. This rejection becomes even odder in the face of Rancière's at least sporadic use of the terms 'collective' or 'communist intelligence'.

The above-sketched account of reinforcing processes of mutual emancipation would also make room for taking the weakness of the intelligences of both sides – of the emancipated and those who want to emancipate themselves – into account; not in order to analyse the (social) contexts and causes of such weakness as most sociologists according to Rancière do. As I tried to indicate, I rather think that accounting for the fragility of Jacotot's universal intelligence would allow us to envision a kind of emancipation that is no longer the property of an individual or a collective that speaks with one voice but, rather, an inter-active communality of mutual encouragement as far as faith in equality is concerned. Such communality would allow us to envision an emancipatory communality that no single individual or collective subject could ever establish and that, therefore, actually goes beyond a concatenation of individual acts of emancipation but also beyond collectives that speak with one voice. In other words: the inter-active communality of mutual teaching and being taught as to how one can be faithful to universal equality would enable us to invest concepts like 'collective intelligence' or 'communism of intelligence' with meaning and liberate Rancière from undecidedly oscillating between an almost empty communism and an individualistic account of emancipation. Education however, let it be understood, is just one of many scenes where faith in universal equality and demonstrations thereof work like a major provocation and are correspondingly difficult to perform – most notably today.[24]

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Let me conclude by contending that if my explication of communal dimensions in Rancière's account of equality is adequate we have to reject, or modify at least, his claims that we can make use of emancipatory reason only 'as individuals' (Rancière, 1999: 98) or that emancipation is 'transmitted from individuals to individuals' (Rancière 2010b: 169). If Rancière had always taken seriously what he says at a certain point, we have quoted above, namely that universal intelligence is a 'practice' as opposed to a property be it of individuals or collectives, he could not have rejected collectives, be they 'a society, a people, a state', without questioning the individual (Rancière, 1991: 98); not least because subjectivation always concerns just some specific dimension(s) of what seems to be an indivisible individual: for example the emancipation as a worker but not necessarily as a woman as well. In my view, Rancière is after a community of emancipatory activities that precedes and transgresses both individuals and collectives. He however lacks concepts (or inventions?) that would enable him to both go beyond the binarism of indivisible individuals and closed collectives and re-signify communism.

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[1] The relation between teachers and their pupils had already played a pivotal role in Rancière's *La lecon d'Althusser* (1974). In retrospect he writes in his 'Foreword to the English edition' of *Althusser's Lesson* in a Jacotitian vein: 'My book declared war on the theory of the inequality of intelligences at the heart of supposed critiques of domination. It held that all revolutionary thought must be founded on the inverse presupposition, that of the capacity of the dominated.' (Rancière 2011: xvi)

[2] In the section 'Society Pedagogicized' of *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Rancière refers to the debates of his days rather explicitly. (Cf. Rancière 1991: 130 f.)

[3] For a contextualization of Rancière's account of emancipation within the field of so-called critical pedagogy cf. Biesta 2010: 43 f., Bingham and Biesta, 2010: chapters 2 and 3.

[4] All of Rancière's early writings revolve around such claiming of equality. Cf. Rancière 2003, 2011, 2011b, 2012.

[5] However, as Kant has noted already, there is an educational challenge in all processes of emancipation that, not for nothing, has been dubbed the educational paradox: the challenge as to how one can cultivate freedom through coercion. (Cf. Kant 1977: 711, Biesta 2010: 41 f.)

[6] Nina Power (Power, 2009) to my mind is right in pointing out that Rancière does not pay enough attention to this current paradox.

[7] Rancière's claim e.g. that 'social inequality is unthinkable, impossible, except on the basis of the primary equality of intelligence. Inequality cannot think itself' (Rancière, 1991: 87) is reminiscent of Habermas' claims in his *Theory of Communicative Action* (Habermas 1984 and 1987). According to the latter, communication that treats all people involved equally is prior to all strategic uses of language.

[8] Todd May's term 'active equality' therefore seems to me to be an absolutely apt characterization of Rancière's idea of equality (May, 2008: esp. 38-77).

[9] Despite the fact that Rancière misleadingly speaks e.g. of a 'syllogism of emancipation' (Rancière, 1995 b: 45 ff.) he should not be blamed, to my mind, for a '*petitio principii*' (cf. Marchart, 2011: 138). For Rancière would be the first to admit that there is no logical, transcendental or similarly foundational base for egalitarian politics.

[10] Cf. e.g. Rancière, 1991: 106 f.: 'government doesn't owe the people an education, for the simple reason that one doesn't owe people what they can take for themselves. And education is like liberty: it isn't given; it's taken.'

[11] Donna Haraway makes a similar point when she discusses the special 'vantage points of the subjugated' in relation to epistemological challenges (Haraway, 1988: 583 f.).

[12] Cf. also Rancière, 2010b: 168: 'Emancipation means the communism of intelligence, enacted in the demonstration of the capacity of the 'incapable': the capacity of the ignorant to learn by himself.'

[13] 'Make no mistake about it: communism is not a blind, reductionist collectivism dependent on repression. It is the singular expression for the combined productivity of individuals and groups ('collectivities') emphatically not reducible to each other. If it is not a continuous reaffirmation of singularity, then it is nothing – and so it is not paradoxical to define communism as the process of singularization.' (Guattari and Negri 1990: 17)

[14] Rancière does, however, frequently use the concept of autonomy when it comes to aesthetics and art theory (cf. Rancière, 2002). For a critique of Rancière's aesthetic autonomy and its political implications see Bennett, 2011.

[15] In his 'Communists Without Communism' Rancière writes: 'Emancipation is the way out of a situation of minority. A situation of minority is a situation in which you have to be guided because following the path with your own sense of direction would lead you astray' (Rancière, 2010b: 167). Kant opens his essay on emancipation by contending: '*Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity* is inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another' (Kant, 2008: 54).

[16] In 'What Is Orientation in Thinking' Kant goes even a step further when he strips (individual) freedom of consciousness of the quality of real freedom: 'We do admittedly say that, whereas a higher authority may deprive us of freedom of *speech* or of *writing*, it cannot deprive us of freedom of thought. But how much and how accurately would we think if we did not think, so to speak, in community with others to whom we *communicate* our thoughts [...]' (Kant, 2008: 247; for an anti-subjectivist reading of Kant see also O'Neill, 1989: esp. 3-50).

[17] According to Spivak, it is pre-eminently (neo-)colonialism that produces all kinds of crass and multiple forms of domination and subalternity; forms of domination, this is, which make it more than clear that it is cynical to assume that all speaking subjects can in principle under all circumstances – 'always, at any moment' (Rancière, 1991: 98) – speak for and emancipate themselves. From the perspective of such a postcolonial critique it is hardly surprising that Rancière completely circumvents all issues of (post-)coloniality. For they would challenge the ubiquity of the possibility of, if not the imperative to, individually emancipate oneself as defended by Rancière. (See also Rancière's negative answer to Sudeep Dasgupta's question about Rancière's relation to postcolonial studies (Dasgupta, 2008)). Emmanuel Renault formulates a similar objection when he writes about the mature Rancière: 'At the end of his journey, Rancière seems to have returned to a Sartrian philosophy of absolute freedom where everybody can free themselves from their social fate, a philosophy of political freedom grounded in the communist principle of equality rearticulated in the epistemological [...] terms of the 'equal competence of everybody' (Renault, 2012: 186).

[18] Foucault distinguishes between the ahistorical Kant of the *Critique of Pure Reason* who equals autonomy with the capacity to think, judge and emancipate oneself, on the one hand, and the political Kant who acknowledges the necessity of historical struggles for autonomy and emancipation on the other.

[19] In *The Emancipated Spectator* Rancière, writes about a collective intelligence that would be more than the sum total of individual intelligences: '[...] it is exercised by an unpredictable interplay of associations and dissociations. [...] Everywhere there are starting points, intersections and junctions that enable us to learn something new [...]' (Rancière, 2009a: 17). See also Rancière, 2008: 173, 178, 180.

[20] To conceive of education as a practice where everybody involved is both a teacher and a pupil is neither new nor original. Antonio Gramsci is famous for noting in his *Prison Notebooks* that 'Every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil a teacher' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 350). In a similar vein, Nina Power refers to Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society* when she suggests that Jacotot and Rancière should conceive of educational processes as networks rather than as individual acts (Power, 2011: 6). Cf. also Mayo 1999 and Sternfeld 2009. For discussions of the accusation that Rancière's praise of Jacotot mistakenly neglects more recent developments in pedagogy see Bingham and Biesta 2010 and Pelletier 2012.

Krisis

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[21] Research in inequality as analysed by Bourdieu but strongly rejected by Rancière would then again play a role. However, such analysis would be blind if it were not combined with Jacotot's and Rancière's faith in equality. Peter Hallward comes to a similar conclusion (cf. Hallward, 2009). See also Nordmann, 2006; Sonderegger, 2012.

[22] See e.g. his suggestions as far as equality in art education is concerned (Bourdieu, Darbel and Schnapper 1991).

[23] Biesta (2007), Pelletier (2009, 2012), and Ruitenberg (2008) go so far as to claim that all kinds of organizations – first of all schools – betray equality because they imply (more or less) hierarchies. Therefore, institutional promises of equality and democracy come down to swindle. All that institutions can do is to make (undefined) room for equality and democracy to (hopefully) enter.

[24] Rancière's claim is disarmingly simple yet explosive the moment it touches on educational practice' (Power, 2011: 4).

DANIËL DE ZEEUW

ENGAGED WITHDRAWAL
OCCUPYING POLITICS BEYOND POLITICS

Theoretically informed and systematic accounts of the Occupy movements of 2011 are yet to be developed, although some attempts in that direction have been made. What these events in any case might allow is a mapping of possible forms of protest and sites of struggles to come. Such a mapping will have to extrapolate the main structural tendencies present in these events, by means of a critique of the ways in which they themselves failed to meet their own standards, as well as the way contradictory tendencies cancelled each other out in the process of their articulation. For there is always something in such events that cannot be grasped and must remain unresolved – as a promise, or as an *aporia* – for the simple reason that it cannot simultaneously process the larger internal and external transformations it itself produces. This seems to confirm the Hegelian truism that the event and its understanding are asynchronous and in need of a third perspective that grasps their difference as a unity. However, contrary to this dialectical picture, the event itself is fragmented and partial, split between its 'being something' on the one hand, and the processes of self-recognition and self-misrecognition by the actors involved on the other ('being x, y, z').

As such the process of (mis)understanding (as x, y, z) always expresses more than the event is able to bear, while at the same time this understanding cannot but fail to be adequate to what the being of the event signifies. On the one hand, this means that the various ideas and ideals attributed to Occupy cannot be falsified by simply pointing to the ways in which they fail to match the 'empirical' reality of Occupy. On the other hand, neither can these ideals disregard this reality altogether. Going beyond these two 'false' approaches constitutes the moment of critique. By critique I mean the type of philosophical analysis that attempts to disentangle the contradictory tendencies of an event that only 'really' appear on the empirical plane as always-already resolved into a non-contradictory complex, but that can be discerned in the ways the events are represented by the actors whom it concerns (irrespective of whether they actually participated in the protests).

The first part of this essay reviews what I propose to call, with the previous paragraph in mind, various 'self-(mis)understandings' of Occupy. These focus on Occupy in terms of the phenomenology of being-there, the public debates and policies it did or did not transform, the collective awareness and sense of momentum it triggered, the organizational and social logic of its camp sites, and the socio-economic and historical context in which it took place. The second part abstracts from these analyses and attempts to understand Occupy more conceptually, as a 'protest form' by relating it to a discussion in political ontology that is particularly lively today: between advocates of a new model for radical politics that proposes the cumulative exit from existing political and economic institutions, and advocates of a model that proposes new forms of radical-democratic engagement with existing institutions. The first model is developed in the writings of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, the second in the work of Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Rancière. The latter formulate a critique of the former's model of radical politics as 'exodus'. In her latest work, for example, Mouffe (2013) opposes her own proposal for radical politics ('engagement with') to that of Hardt and Negri ('withdrawal from'). Instead of arguing that Occupy incorporates either one or the other exclusively, I show that it unites within itself aspects of both, developing a protest form I propose to call 'engaged withdrawal': the outward and engaged performance of an inner-directed withdrawal, where the de-

velopment of the social-communicative, economic and political potentialities it already possesses become the very 'substance' and icon of its protest against an unjust order while at the same time celebrating the latter's increasing irrelevance.

Modest beginnings: what just happened?

Was the Occupy movement as significant as the events known as May 68 (Wallerstein 2011)? Was it the 'rebirth of the political (and the social) as such' (Mitchell et al. 2013: x)? Did the year 2011 mark the end of the end of history (Roos 2011)? Given the quantity of academic work on Occupy, a cynic could easily point to a certain over-eagerness in critical leftist theorists, who, after years of apparent societal consensus and stability, find in Occupy the long awaited bedrock in which to anchor their critical perspectives. Such a condition of scarcity is bound to lead to over-interpretations and exaggerations of Occupy's overall significance. However, one could reply that these exaggerated responses are themselves the clearest sign that something important did indeed happen, if not in 'reality', then at least in the experience and imagination of many people whose obscure feelings of dissatisfaction acquired a concrete form, as David Graeber (2013) points out.

I too am among those people. In the fall of 2011 I visited New York City. Like many European tourists, I watched seagulls circle the Brooklyn Bridge, strolled around Manhattan, took the ferry to Staten Island and visited several of the city's finest museums. On the 15th of October however, while riding a local bus, dozens and dozens of police vans passed by. Curious, I got off at the next stop. Just on my right, a band of men wearing Guy Fawkes masks were put against a wall and then thrown into a van by an equally anonymous band of police. Behind them a large crowd of protesters marching in the direction of Times Square emerged. Recognizing the signs and slogans of Occupy Wall Street, I decided to join in. And despite my inclination to a form of detached, aristocratic individuality, I too became just a little enchanted. Besides Graeber, the authors of the books I review in the following paragraphs all attempt to preserve such a feeling of enchantment, a sense of the aesthetic and vital aspects of Occupy, the being-there, the 'real-time' of the movement, without succumbing to an empty utopianism: writing from personal experiences on site, of the singularity of the events, of occupying the place where it counts (the financial district), and of coming to terms with the phenomenological power of the alternative assemblages of which some of the authors became an integral part. It is on the basis of these experiences that they develop the more 'theorized' reflections on the socio-economic context and political significance of these protests.

In a bundle of three essays, Mitchell, Harcourt and Tausig (2013) connect a sense of commitment and solidarity with the spirit of Occupy to a more detached critical analysis (viii). Taussig's contribution offers a 'thick description' of the lived experience of Zuccotti Park. Almost in the margins of quotations from Occupy protest signs, he sketches a poetic portrait of the magical, atmospheric, energetic, almost divine qualities of being-here-now, among strange fellow-travellers – the repetitive, ritual force of the people's microphone and the drum circles, the metaphoric quality of being squeezed in and surrounded by the architectural emanations of Corporate Glory, where the mundane meets the extraordinary, the flash of the now, the renewed presence of things past, the drama of a personal story – immersed in a 'sea of hope'. But also insecurity, despair of the centrifugal tendencies inherent to open constellations, slowly falling apart, making way for what has always been and can return at any moment. Taking its cue from Walter Benjamin's notion of capitalism as religion, anti-capitalist or capital-critical uprisings are proposing mantras different from those of the prevailing doxa implemented by financial sects, erecting different shamans: 'We use our magic to thwart their magic' (Mitchell et al. 2013: 30). Somewhat similarly, Mitchell's contribution analyzes Occupy at the level of the imaginary, the iconographic and the spectacular – the frantic circulation of images: banners, slogans, videos, exchanged locally and dispersed globally. Occupy may not be a true revolutionary event, but it certainly presented an image or an echo of one (Mitchell et al. 2013: 98) and can be studied as such. Mitchell too shows that if Occupy did not accomplish any 'tangible' change, it certainly opened up new ways for our political imagination, and transformed the way we talk about our world.

Taking a less atavistic approach, Harcourt claims that Occupy fashioned 'a new kind of politics' (Mitchell et al. 2013: 46). The argument revolves around the distinction between *civil* and *political* disobedience. Whereas civil disobedience accepts the principal legitimacy of political institutions, political disobedience 'rejects the ideological landscape that has dominated our collective imagination' and 'resists the very way in which we are governed' (Mitchell et al. 2013: 47). Political disobedience turns away from conventional political strategies, as organized around specific issues and policy debates, the party system, labor unions, lobbies, to the point where 'it even resists attempts to be categorized politically' (Mitchell et al. 2013: 47). The main progression of the Occupy movement lies in its overcoming of the false oppositions between Government and Free Markets that traditionally structure the oppositions between Democrats and Republicans in the United States. The financial crisis of 2008 revealed that, if necessary, banks and even whole industries operating on the 'free market' could be instantly nationalized to preserve the system as a whole – something secretly anticipated by the financial sector itself. The collective insight that emerged from this crisis – that Government and Free Markets are structurally woven together – implies turning away from those political institutions in order to find other solutions. For Harcourt Occupy signifies this novel awareness, that it always takes two to tango, i.e. that neither the conjunction of government and market-society, nor the expansion or intensification of one to the detriment of the other, can provide a viable solution to today's problems. However, the current political system is largely premised on the very idea that, *yes it can* provide those solutions.

On the basis of a recent collection of interviews it seems that Chomsky (2012) would surely agree. He interprets the new protest movements as the late effect of a major and dramatic systemic transformation that began in the 1970s. Whereas the immediate post-war era seemed to move into the direction of a relatively more egalitarian and just society based on social-democratic ideals, the seventies and eighties saw the rise of the financial sectors, supported by neoliberal institutions as well as governments, which themselves became increasingly dependent on the very sectors they were supposed to regulate. As the 1% became exorbitantly wealthy, the gap between public policy and public will grew exorbitantly, creating a 'plutonomy' and a 'precariat'. For Chomsky, the legitimacy and success of Occupy mainly depends on the continued existence of broad popular support – this is its fundamental challenge. Surveys do in fact show that large parts of the American population agree with the idea that the financial sector must be regulated, those responsible for the crisis prosecuted, tax breaks for the 1% removed, and the influence of money over politics limited. The perception of class conflict and economic inequality has significantly increased as well. A lesser part however identifies directly with Occupy's practical methodology. But the openness of the movement, in terms of its (lack of) demands, its (lack of) aims, and its (lack of) ideological commitments, offers it up to diverse linkages amongst different groups and social strata, and thus potentially to such broad popular support.

In *Occupy Nation* (2012) Gitlin too claims that, unlike other recent social movements, Occupy began with a majority base of support. But, despite the evidence of surveys about *public opinion*, it can still be asked, 'Why, if the protesters represent the feelings of '99% of Americans' have so very, very few of those represented bothered to support the initiative in any way at all?' (Smucker 2011: online). The great merit of the book is that it doesn't shy away from these difficult questions, while also discussing the very concrete problems that arose within the camp sites, 'the splendors and miseries of structurelessness': from the progressive inefficiency of the General Assembly (the miserable prospect that 'freedom is an endless meeting'), the internal strife and factionalism, the influence of demographic differences, and the presence of psychiatric patients, drug dealers and vagrants. Despite these difficulties Gitlin sympathizes with Occupy as 'a sort of new tribe', characterized by a collective hostility to all forms of authority, elitism and leadership, fueled by an amateuristic DIY-ethos, and based on horizontal consensual decision-making procedures. He warns not to repeat mistakes made in the past by the progressive movements of the sixties and seventies, which, by taking a radical turn, became increasingly disconnected from society-wide support, and were thus prevented from forming an extended left-of-center majority that could have launched them into the center of political power (Gitlin 2012: 172). Like Chomsky, Gitlin would like to see Occupy and future movements go in that moderate but effective direction.

Beyond Representation

In stark contrast to these 'modest' proposals, Occupy has also been made to fit the description of an emerging revolutionary agency: the Multitude (Hardt and Negri 2012). In this radical interpretation Occupy signals both the crisis of democratic representation and the latest expression of an emerging 'exodus' of the multitude from the economic and political structures of power, especially the representative mechanisms of the state and the conventional public spheres set up for the articulation of dissent (Lorey 2012). According to Hardt and Negri, Occupy shows that the Multitude is able to 'throw off systems of political representation and assert their own powers of democratic action' (Lorey 2012: online). Occupy is a stage in the self-education of the Multitude in which it 'must discover the passage from declaration to constitution' and from resistance to exodus. Already the sole source of the production of social wealth, it must learn to appropriate and defend this common excess from the parasitic apparatuses of imperial command (Hardt and Negri 2001).

Several criticisms of this way of interpreting Occupy as radically anti-representational have been raised. As Hardt and Negri argue that 'representation is not a vehicle of democracy but an obstacle to its realisation' and that it 'separates the population from power' (Hardt and Negri 2012: 17), Dean and Jason object to the way *any* mechanism of representation is here equated with current institutionalized forms of indirect representation: 'Rather than recognizing representation as an unavoidable feature of language, process for forming and aggregating preferences (always open to contestation and revision), or means of producing and expressing a common will, these tendencies construe representation as unavoidably hierarchical, distancing, and repressive' (Dean and Jason 2012: online). Similarly, Laclau, Mouffe and Rancière criticize Hardt and Negri's notion of Multitude as a purely constituent power that — freed of Empire — would inaugurate a spontaneous community beyond all representational mediation and division. Instead, they emphasize the necessarily hegemonic (partial, heterogeneous and exclusionary) nature of any social order. This means that radical politics cannot be grounded in the given identity of a part of the social (not even the 99%), since the genuine moment of politics is what precedes and conditions this identity. As the latter is pre-

cisely what is at stake in politics it can never function as its ground. Representation is a necessary part of the collective contestation of a given hegemonic order (itself a set of representations that distributes the identities of the parts of the social in a specific manner) and essential for rearticulating and redistributing these parts *differently*. Instead, by attempting 'to found politics on the essence of a mode of life' (Rancière 1999: 92) the theorists of the Multitude believe that 'its oppositional consciousness does not require political articulation' (Mouffe 2008: online).

Laclau (2005) describes the process in which any collective capable of political action is necessarily constructed and constituted by means of representation: 'the represented depends on the representative for the constitution of his or her own identity' (Laclau 2005: 158). The representative and represented determine each other, the identity and unity of the latter is not a given on the basis of which a more or less 'adequate' representative can be erected (Laclau 2005: 161). He rejects the idea that something like 'the will of the People' or 'the desire of the Multitude' precedes or escapes the representational dynamic. The figure of a 'people' or 'Multitude' is itself always already the effect of a representation, the construction of an empty signifier that corroborates an equivalential chain of particular issues and demands. Representation is not merely a political, super-structural, phenomenon but 'the primary terrain of constitution of social objectivity' (Laclau 2005: 163). This means that it is illegitimate to think of the destruction of representation as the liberation of the true communal essence, the proper identity of the multitude (Žižek: online).

Hardt and Negri however deny that the construction of a people out of a heterogeneous multiplicity by means of representation is the *only* way of envisioning a political subject capable of collective action. In a (rather under-developed) response, Negri (2008) criticizes the hegemonic approach for perpetuating mechanisms of transcendence by ontologizing a 'sovereign' difference that necessarily separates society from its own social power, the institution from its social base, the representatives from the represented. The notion of Multitude contains in itself the rejection of the category of the people Laclau, Mouffe and Rancière attempt to uphold in the face of its liberal alter-ego. The Multitude is anti-people in as much as it is anti-state: whereas the people is inherently tied up with the oppressive

logic of the state, the Multitude exists beyond the 'representational nexus' of sovereignty. It is its own representation, or rather, the dissolution of that transcendence intrinsic to any representation.

Together, these differences lead to very different models of radical politics, and to different interpretations of the overall significance of Occupy. Mouffe (2013) refers to Occupy as employing an anti-institutional strategy 'inspired by the exodus model' (Mouffe 2013: 71). The rejection of political representation and the articulation of demands seem to validate this assessment. Furthermore, the communal and self-organizing spirit of the camp sites, like the advocates of exodus, would envisage politics unantagonistically as 'acting in concert' (Mouffe 2013: 79). According to Mouffe, post-workerism promotes the wholesale turning away from representative democracy, focusing on the construction of alternative, non-representational forms of collective life under the influence of neither state nor market. What she calls 'withdrawal-from' consists of impeding the *transfer* of the accumulated excess of intellectual, communicative and cooperative capacities of the Multitude into the power of state administration, as well as impeding 'its configuration as productive resource of the capitalistic enterprise' (Virno 2004: 71). Similarly, with Negri it consists of *subtracting* already autonomously existing productive capacities from its capitalist mode of organization and regulation, and thus of destroying the specific limits currently imposed on those capabilities (Hardt and Negri 2009: 152). In this respect Mouffe's criticism of Occupy resembles that of Dean concerning the various *interpretations* of Occupy as anti-or unrepresentational, as 'a fantasy of multiplicity without antagonism, of difference without division', but not of her analysis of the *actual* movement: 'The rejection of representation [...] comes up against Occupy Wall Street's powerful slogan, "We Are the 99 Percent." The slogan represents the people and the political message of the movement by asserting division' (Dean and Jason 2012: online). *This* aspect of Occupy seems to fit the model for radical politics Laclau and Mouffe develop quite well, as constituting an 'Us against Them', rediscovering the antagonistic basis of society and identifying itself as having a stake in this struggle.

In *Agonistics* (2013) Mouffe defends a hegemonic model for radical politics based on engagement-with. She sets out to show that engaging with the hegemonic make-up of society is a necessary condition for genuine social change, which can only succeed through the construction of a common will and set of demands that transcends the immediate play of differences immanent to the social field. She traces the various differences between the post-workerist and post-foundationalist models for radical politics to differences between their respective political ontologies. Whereas Negri and Virno develop an ontology of immanence, both Laclau and Mouffe develop an ontology of radical negativity. The latter argues that antagonism is irreducible, from which they derive the necessity of political articulation and mediation. This means that the type of immanent community beyond antagonism Hardt and Negri (and possibly Occupy) envision is permanently unavailable. Any radical politics must aim at transforming the existing institutions, towards a *different* hegemony, and not beyond it. So through a series of intermediate steps, the necessity of engagement-with and the impossibility of withdrawal-from are derived from the ontological irreducibility of antagonistic difference, and the necessarily hegemonic mediation of this difference. This prevents making 'a redemptive leap into a society beyond politics and sovereignty where the Multitude can immediately rule itself and act in concert without the need of law or the State' (Mouffe 2013: 78).[1]

Beyond politics

Whereas in Laclau and Mouffe (2001) what separates every social order from itself is the difference between 'the political' and 'politics', in Rancière it is the difference between 'politics' and 'police' (Marchart 2007). Police refers to 'the organization of bodies as a community and the management of places, powers, and functions' (Rancière 1999: 99) from which the 'part of those who have no part' is excluded. Politics refers to a singular mechanism of subjectivation of this part that interrupts the smooth workings of the police order. Genuine politics and social change therefore emerge from 'the confrontation between the police logic of the distribution of parts and the political logic of the part of those who have no part' (Rancière 1999: 73). For both Laclau, Mouffe and Rancière this discrepancy is inscribed in the ambiguous and self-subversive notion of the people, as

designating both the constituent power of the body politic *and* what nevertheless fails to be expressed by this body. Yet compared to Laclau and Mouffe, Rancière takes a more skeptical stance towards representative democracy and the function of parliamentary politics, describing these mechanisms as essentially 'oligarchic' (Rancière 2006: 297). However, unlike Hardt and Negri he refuses to idealize direct democracy vis-à-vis representative democracy, rejecting the very conception of democracy as a *form of government*, i.e. as a particular ordering of the social (Rancière 2006: 298). Instead, for Rancière democracy refers to the aforementioned singular and unidentifiable act of interruption of the police order.

In *Disagreement* (1999) Rancière develops his model for radical-democratic politics on the basis of this difference, as only the latter enables the contestation and modification of a given social order. What blocks this democratic, an-archic rupture is precisely what disables the opening of this difference, by a totalitarian equation of politics and police. In the tradition of political philosophy, the totalitarian suppression of this difference becomes the hallmark of an ideal community, which takes three forms: archipolitics, parapolitics and metapolitics. What these forms have in common is that each tries 'to achieve the essence of politics by eliminating this difference from itself that politics consists of, to achieve politics by eliminating politics' (Rancière 1999: 63). In 'The People or the Multitudes?' (2010a) and 'Communists without Communism? (2010b) Rancière criticizes Hardt and Negri's idealization of the biopolitical autonomy in a way that partly fits his critique of Plato's archipolitics and Marx's metapolitics. Although it is not made explicit, Rancière interprets the theory of the Multitude as an extension of this tradition of thought.

In *The Republic* Plato provides the blueprint for such a post-political community beyond hegemony, as 'the complete realization of the *arkhê* of community [...] replacing without any leftover the democratic configuration of politics' (Rancière 1999: 65). Plato proceeds from the distinction between an ideal *politeia* (an organic community in which each part has his part) and the *politeiai*, 'the sundry varieties of bad regimes bound up with the conflict between parts of the city and with the domination of one part over the others' (Rancière 1999: 63). Consequently, 'In place of the disturbing elements of political subjectivization, the *politeia* puts the

roles, aptitudes, and feelings of the community conceived as a body animated by the one soul of the whole' (cited in Bosteels 2010: 85). Like Plato's archipolitics, Marx's metapolitics 'summons the precarious artifices of the political scene before the truth of the immanent power which places beings in community' (Rancière 1999: 86). The essential difference is that for Marx 'the truth of politics is no longer located above politics as its essence or idea. It is located beneath or behind it, in what it conceals and exists only to conceal' (Rancière 1999: 82). What lies beneath, the real material development of society, is 'the true movement that should, through its achievement, dispel the appearances of political citizenship in favor of the reality of productive man' (Rancière 1999: 83).

Similarly, the exodus of the Multitude signals the becoming-immanent of the law of the social, towards an ideal community where 'the law (*nomos*) exists as living *logos*: as the ethos (morality, ways of being, character) of the community and of each of its members; as the occupation of the workers; as the tune playing in everyone's heads and the movement spontaneously animating their bodies; as the spiritual nourishment (*trophê*) that automatically turns their minds toward a certain cast (*tropos*) of behavior and thought' (Rancière 1999: 67). Liberated from the violent disjunctions of Empire, the Multitude becomes a purely constituent power, and as such harbors a wisdom that 'would not consist in scrupulous attention to the institutions ensuring the power of the people through representatives so much as in the appropriateness of political practices to a society's ways of being, to the forces that move it' (Rancière 1999: 97). The singularities that make up the Multitude, like the men of Plato's ideal Republic, are what they are and do what they do, not because of some transcendent law or mechanism of representation, but by following that common law intrinsic to its own forms of life (the virtue Plato referred to as *sôphrosunê*).

By implication, Rancière's criticisms of Hardt and Negri's republic of the Multitude can be applied to Occupy participants and commentators that applaud its supposedly anti-representational or post-political design. The self-reflexive obsession with (the rejection of) demands and conventional politics, like the concept of the Multitude would manifest 'a phobia [...] of any politics that defines itself "against"' (Rancière 2010a: 86). It is in this

context that the very definition of politics is increasingly at stake. What does it mean to act politically? Rancière's analysis of modern metapolitics shows that the term 'political' is subjected to a series of ideo-morphological reversals and semantic alterations that radically double its meaning. At the moment one attempts to delimit or to define the scope of 'the political', it diverts and reverses it. As such it leads to the absurd situation in which, supposedly, genuine political action can take place not because of but *despite* 'politics', and in which 'the "end of politics" is ex-actly the same as what the menders of "political philosophy" call "the re-turn of politics"' (Rancière 1999: 92). In several analyses of Occupy too there is a sense that to designate it as *political* fails to grasp its full signifi-cance – the label 'political' seems somewhat of a misnomer (Mitchell et al. 2013: 47). Similarly, Gitlin recalls a left-wing activist friend from Paris commenting on Occupy that perfectly captures the apparent paradox: 'I have never seen a political movement that is so apolitical' (Gitlin 2012: 24). The name Occupy remains inconclusive in this respect as well. It can be applied to several 'apolitical' activities: one can occupy a place in line for a concert, a parking spot, and so on. What phenomena, actions or senti-ments could be dubbed a-, supra- or anti-political, and what is the explan-atory value or (I wanted to say 'political') significance of such negative terms?

Politics in love

Like many protest movements before it, Occupy started from a shared outrage, in this case over the corruption of the political system and the financial sector. This part of its motivation was essentially negative: in rep-resenting the 99% it determined itself as being-against another, the 1%. Were this negative element lacking, it would perhaps become difficult to conceive of Occupy as a *political* protest, or even as a protest at all. For what is a protest other than its being-against, (as almost any being-for can be re-described as a being-against)? What is left of it *qua* political protest when it would be completely indifferent not only to existing political or economic institutions, but to being-against as such, and instead exclusive-ly focuses on designing and managing the conditions of its own develop-

ment? It seems that an alternative, *positive* designation or vocabulary seems to be lacking, which leads to negative descriptions of Occupy as a-, non- or anti-political. The more fashionable term 'social movement' in that sense already carries a more positive connotation.[2]

Of Occupy it is indeed often said that it rejects the prospect of the recogni-tion of its demands or the representational inclusion of its interests by the existing political institutions. When the question was asked if Occupy should stay out of politics, most of the occupants answered in the affirma-tive (Gitlin 2012: 112). Instead, Hardt and Negri argue, it commences from the self-sufficiency of its own collective powers, the potentialities inherent to it as a constituent force. This actually makes for a point of continuity with the social movements of 1968 and the various ideas of the Situation-ists such as the *autogestion généralisée*. According to Pearce, these revolts were both cause and effect of an already growing disenchantment with representational politics that led to 'a fall in political party activism and cynicism towards the organised form of politics' but also to a new type of social movement (Pearce 2005: 3). What Occupy has in common with this type is a 'sense of "autonomy" from politics defined as the activity of the State and political parties' (Pearce 2005: 4) and the insight that 'the con-flicts and contradictions of advanced industrial society can no longer be resolved in meaningful and promising ways through étatism, political regulation, and the proliferating inclusion of ever more claims and issues on the agenda of bureaucratic authorities' (Offe 1985: 819). However, alt-hough based on the same insight, in contradistinction to the retreat into private life of the majority of populations, or the private wars of far-left groups like *Brigate Rosse* with the authorities, these new social move-ments '*do* make a claim to be recognized as political actors by the wider community – although their forms of action do not enjoy the legitimacy conferred by established political institutions – *and* who aim at objectives, the achievement of which would have binding effects for society as a whole rather than just for the group itself' (Offe 1985: 828).

One of the central ideas of May '68 is that the personal is the political, that in fact *everything is political*. The idea that everything is political is de-pendent on the idea that power relations aren't limited to the sphere of politics but that they are everywhere, that they are immanent to the so-

cial fabric. This means that *resistance* to power must be exercised everywhere as well. This is its normative implication: the necessity of doing politics, always and everywhere. However, one of the other central messages of May '68 was *Make love, not war.* It seems to me that these two ideas are not easily reconciled. In the notion that everything is political, 'political' refers to the reality of antagonism. But the classical figure of antagonism is that of war, the struggle between enemies. So if love is the opposite of war, and we must make love instead of war, it is in a sense also opposed to the realm of the political, as the realm of antagonism and struggle. So on the one hand, we shall do politics, but also, we shall make love.

Is the latter simply the ideologically naïve, American-utopian variety of the countercultural movements that denies the reality of antagonism and thus the necessity of struggle? I think this explanation is too simple, and has secretly already decided what 'really matters' in each case. Perhaps we should take the incommensurability of these two ideas more seriously, for example by relating it to Hannah Arendt's contrasting of politics and love in *The Human Condition*. In this work she refers to love as the greatest of *anti-political* forces, for the reason that love is an inner-directed, altogether private matter, and as such is indifferent to the public spaces of genuine politics, in which decisions concerning the order of 'the world' are to be made. Instead, for Arendt love is essentially 'worldless'. Whereas politics designates a collective, outward engagement with public affairs that transcends private and individual concerns, love relationships are blind to the inevitable distances inherent to the inter-subjective reality of conflict, the irreducible differences amongst men in need of public-political mediation. Placed on a spectrum between the two extremes of politics and love, Mouffe, Laclau and Rancière are closer to the former, as Hardt and Negri would be closer to the latter. Love is indeed a persistent theme of their work. As the sequel to Empire reminds us: 'Today time is split between a present that is already dead and a future that is already living … In time, an event will thrust us like an arrow into that living future. This will be the real political act of love' (Hardt and Negri 2004: 358). The uneasy contradiction hidden in the notion of a 'politics of love' Occupy inherited from May '68, and it is up to future protest movements to continue the search for a key to this riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma: a politics beyond politics.

Final remarks

By understanding the political design of Occupy on the basis of a comparison between the model for radical politics developed by Laclau, Mouffe and Rancière and that of Hardt and Negri, I want to show that the 'protest form' of Occupy articulates withdrawal *as* engagement and *vice versa*, dissolving the apparent contradiction between these two models of radical politics. On the one hand, it clearly addresses and engages antagonistically with the existing institutions and society as a whole, by rejecting politics as it is and by drawing a dividing line between itself (the 99%) and the other (the 1%). In this it is outer-directed, and although not explicated, it contains a demand: Things must change! On the other hand, it continuously defers and undermines its own being-against, by emphasizing its own capacities as an autonomous, DIY form of community. It starts from its own qualities and potentials, instead of demanding an external agency to compensate for what it perceives to be its own lack, as if something were owed to it (e.g. a right). This implies that by engaging in the construction of new forms of being-together indifferent to, and withdrawing from, the political rationality of the existing institutions, it presupposes not scarcity, but plenitude. Yet these activities are still performed *as* alternatives to the prevailing order, and as such addressed to it. In order to affirm its self-sufficiency, it must *demonstrate* – by the occupation of a symbolic space essential to the whole of society – that it is *in fact* self-sufficient. It must address those who deny this self-sufficiency, to show that it no longer needs to address nor *be* addressed. In order to defy representation, it must be able to *show* and thus re-present this process of refraining, developing a living contrast with politics as usual. In a similar vein, Mitchell describes the paradoxical logic of occupation as entailing 'a refusal to say something while at the same time saying it' and as 'it speaks by refusing (for now) to speak; it declares by refusing to declare' (2013: 103). The question remains whether the coherence and unity (the We) of Occupy is still fundamentally dependent on its being-against, as Laclau and Mouffe would suggest, or if this unity can be grounded immanently, in its social powers, as Hardt and Negri suggest.

The symbolism of the original Adbusters poster captures the complexity of these arrangements. The ballerina is *opposed* to the bull, but only indi-

rectly: not as an equal opponent engaged in a struggle for hegemony and intend on destroying it, but as the positive affirmation of its own self-sufficiency. It aims not at the negation of the bull, but uses its back as a stage on which to develop its own potentials, in *juxtaposition* to the bull, but in that very gesture preserving and affirming its own autonomy. On the other hand, in the background, surrounded by what appears to be a cloud of teargas, come the real protesters, sticks in hand and gasmasks on, prepared for the fight that can begin at any moment. What the interpretation of Occupy as engaged withdrawal enables is that, as the outward performance of withdrawal, Occupy points beyond itself, to what it cannot be, *in the form of a protest*. As the site where the exit from political and economic institutions is theatrically staged as an opportunity, it carries within itself the seeds of a coming non-movement, the formation of forms of community that, unlike earlier social movements, no longer aim at maximum political visibility and participation, maximum 'voice', and maximum recognition by its institutional surroundings. From this perspective, what is generally perceived as the failure of Occupy (its dissolution and lack of real political effects) might become a sign of its success, in terms of withdrawal. So that, if Occupy no longer exists today, as a *protest* movement, perhaps this is only true insofar Subcomandante Marcos of the Zapatista movement does not exist (Khasnabish 2008: 135). And an opponent that does not exist is perhaps the most eerie and difficult to deal with, just as the Terrorist is always missing yet everywhere, triggering a surveillance apparatus spanning the globe but unable to digest the terror it itself simulates. But the problem of an enemy that does not exist applies to Occupy as well: financial power is splintered into a thousand data centers and anonymous suits just 'doing their job'. Bereft of the bull's back, will the ballerina hang in mid-air, serenely, only to look down and, like Wile E. Coyote, start falling? At which point the activists and riot police would either emerge from the mist, or everything recedes again into the petty everyday life of the 99%.

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[1] The distinction between 'engagement with' and 'withdrawal from' is structurally similar to Hirschman's distinction between two types of consumer responses to the deterioration of products or the performance of institutions used to trigger them to transform or adapt themselves: 'exit' and 'voice' (1970). Whereas exit refers to the abandoning of the product or service towards available alternatives, voice refers to the process of 'expressing ones concern', of engaging interactively with institutions. This distinction can be used for a categorization of social movements, where some predominantly act according to the logic of 'voice' and others to the logic of 'exit'. However, exit differs from exodus as the former too, as a strategy, is aimed at, and a function of, the adaptation of companies or institutions. So whereas 'exit' is still a strategy aimed at forcing the company or institution to transform itself for the better, 'exodus' emphasizes the cumulative irrelevance of institutions as such. It seems that Occupy is closer to exit than exodus, although there will also be elements propagating a strategy closer to the latter.

[2] Perhaps the difficulty in finding such a positive term corroborates a particular difficulty in representing the phenomena under consideration. And maybe this difficulty isn't simply accidental, merely a failure of discourse, but essential to these very phenomena, and as such cannot be separated from the refusal of political representation by the occupants.

ROGIER VAN REEKUM

HET GOEDE WOORD
OVER DISCUSSIES TUSSEN SOCIOLOGEN

In de zomer van vorig jaar mocht ik een debat voorzitten tussen twee sociologen: prof. dr. Duyvendak en drs. Oudenampsen. Het debat ging over de vraag hoe de politiek-culturele veranderingen in Nederland te begrijpen. Doordat het een gevestigde professor sociologie en een nog niet eens gepromoveerde socioloog betrof, ging het debat haast onvermijdelijk ook over de vraag hoe het recente verleden nu precies herinnerd moet worden en wie daar nu precies de juiste kijk op had. De politiek-culturele ontwikkelingen vormen al enige tijd een druk bediscussieerd onderwerp in de sociale wetenschap. Wat is er precies aan de hand? Is er sprake van een electorale correctie op een al-te-tolerante consensus onder de eens zo linkse elite? Hebben we te maken met populistische demagogie? Werden de politieke opvattingen van het electoraat misschien altijd al verkeerd begrepen? Komt het door sociale problematiek in de wijken? Of is er een hardnekkig probleem met racisme? Wat gebeurt er eigenlijk in het dage-lijks leven van mensen? Is er sprake van een nieuwe medialogica in de publieke politiek en opinie? Of moet het politieke tumult begrepen worden als een symptoom van laat-kapitalistische vervreemding? Aan

verklaringen, diagnoses en verwante oplossingen geen gebrek. Het liep die zomermiddag uit op een verhitte discussie. Dat kon moeilijk anders, want beide discussianten zijn niet alleen beroepsmatig maar ook, zeg maar, openbaar betrokken bij het onderwerp. Bovendien spreken zij ieder een aantal cruciale argumenten van de ander tegen. Duyvendak ziet een lompe maar onherroepelijke verspreiding van een stelsel aan progressieve oriëntaties, terwijl Oudenampsen wijst op een energiek front van con-servatisme. Hoe komen deze nogal verschillende voorstellingen van poli-tieke cultuur tot stand? Om over deze vragen nog eens goed na te denken, publiceert *Krisis* een briefwisseling waarin beide sociologen hun stellingen nog eens innemen. Ter inleiding bij hun gedachtewisseling wil ik hier de discussie in een wat bredere context plaatsen, omdat er veel meer op het spel staat dan een interpretatie van de empirie alleen.

'Op het spel staan'… dat klinkt gewichtig. Is dat niet al meteen een van de achterliggende kwesties: dat de sociologie bar weinig gewicht in de pu-blieke schaal weet te leggen? Wat staat er in hemelsnaam 'op het spel' in de sociologie van vandaag? Wat doet het ertoe dat op een zonnige middag twee blanke mannen met elkaar discussiëren in, *of all places*, de oude vergaderzaal van de Heeren XVII, broedplaats van mercantilistische terreur. De heeren zijn het niet eens … nou en?

Wie de hier inheemse sociologie beschouwt, komt zonder al te veel moeite tot de conclusie dat er bijzonder weinig op het spel staat in de beoefening van deze vorm van kennisproductie. Ja, natuurlijk: er is geregeld strijd over benoemingen, methoden, curricula, concepten, stromingen, tradi-ties en, zo nu en dan, empirie. Dat neemt echter niet weg dat de sociologie vooral voor zichzelf een discussiepunt is. Daarvoor zijn voldoende re-denen aan te voeren en het autoreferentiële karakter van de sociologie vormt zeker geen oneigenlijke invulling van tijd en moeite. Laat het duidelijk zijn: de sociologie hoort zichzelf ter discussie te stellen. De vraag is wel of het interne touwtrekken ook nog gevolgen heeft voor kwesties en publieken buiten de academische kring. Gezien het wordingsproces van sociologie in Nederland en haar huidige beoefening zijn er eigenlijk twee manieren waarop dat het geval neigt te zijn.

Ten eerste is er het grote Uitzoeken. Diep verankerd in de geschiedenis van de inheemse sociologie en de paternalistische uitbouw van de overheid is de idee dat sociologie het mogelijk maakt om 'maatschappelijke vraagstukken' om te vormen tot 'empirische vraagstellingen', zodat uit het antwoord op die 'vraagstellingen' een prudente bestuurslogica gedestilleerd kan worden. Op grond van een bepaalde consensus over wat modernisering is – ontwrichting van een rustig leven –, schudden socioloog en bestuurder elkaar de hand en wordt de laatste ondersteund in zijn rol als voorganger. De socioloog schijnt de bestuurder bij in zijn poging vat te krijgen op een nog duistere toekomst. Mede onder invloed van de sociologie wordt in de loop van de naoorlogse periode deze voorstelling van zaken steeds minder kies gevonden. Burgers zouden moeten worden vrijgemaakt van bestuurlijke bevoogding. In de plaats van toekomstvisies gingen sociologen zorgen voor de broodnodige 'feiten' voor het voeren van verantwoorde 'debatten' over 'maatschappelijke dilemma's'. Anders dan vaak gesuggereerd wordt, staat de toenemende dominantie van onthechte, kwantificerende methoden in de naoorlogse periode niet in tegenstelling tot deze buitenacademische relevantie van sociologie. Het politiek uitkleden van de werkelijkheid tot naakte feitelijkheden is precies wat burger en bestuur nodig schijnen te hebben wanneer zuil en ideologie verdampen. Vandaar ook dat de sociologie in de afgelopen dertig jaar vooral empirische vulling heeft kunnen geven aan bestuurlijke projecties: 'verheffing'; 'sociale vernieuwing'; 'integratie'; 'cohesie'; 'politieke betrokkenheid'; 'activering'; 'individualisering'; etc. Het bestuur bedenkt een probleem en de sociologen zoeken uit hoe veel, hoe vaak, hoe erg dat is en wie, wat, waar gedaan heeft om het probleem te laten voortbestaan. Voor deze vorm van buitenacademische relevantie geldt dus dat wanneer sociologen kennis produceren, zij iets hebben uitgezocht in het kader van bestuur. Om diezelfde reden is onenigheid tussen sociologen eigenlijk altijd onbruikbaar. Hoe minder discussie over kennis, hoe beter die kennis toepasbaar wordt in het doorbreken van bestuurlijke twijfels.

Ten tweede is er het grote Benoemen. Deze vorm van buitenacademische invloed houdt zich op in de kieren van het dominantere Uitzoeken. Dat wil zeggen, zo nu en dan lanceert een socioloog al uitzoekende een begrip, concept of frase die om soms volstrekt onduidelijke redenen taalgebruik wordt voor buitenacademische gesprekken. Dat taalgebruik leeft dan in het wild voort en heeft dikwijls allerlei onbedoelde effecten in de voorstelling van de samenleving en haar problemen. Sommige sociologen zijn zo goed in het bedenken van dit soort talige instrumentaria, vaak omdat zij goed op de hoogte zijn van hoe er zoal gesproken wordt in gezaghebbende fora, dat zij er hun voornaamste activiteit van weten te maken. Opzichtig verheffen zij zich dan boven het povere uitzoeken van hun collega's en meten zich buiten hun beroep als universiteitsambtenaar de status van 'publicist' aan. Keurige uitgevers en hoofdstedelijke debatcentra staan tot hun beschikking. De een is beter in het straatvechten op de opiniepagina's, terwijl de ander het vooral moet hebben van de kennismiddag op het ministerie. Hoe het ook zij, wanneer deze socioloog kennis produceert worden manieren van spreken aangereikt die zaken in een bepaald daglicht stellen. Hier lijkt discussie tussen sociologen op het eerste gezicht wel degelijk op haar plek buiten de academie. Het lastige blijft dat discussie al te gemakkelijk verwordt tot publiek debat dat toevalligerwijs door sociologen wordt aangevoerd. Het is dan nog steeds niet discussie tussen sociologen qua sociologie dat de boel op scherp zet of publieken involveert.

Ik overdrijf natuurlijk een beetje, maar zo gezien moeten we ons afvragen of er voor niet-academici ooit iets op het spel staat in de Nederlandse sociologie. Zijn discussies in de sociologie ooit het object van publieke controverse, fascinatie en bevlogenheid? Wanneer mensen in Genève de handen op elkaar brengen omdat met vijf sigma's aan waarschijnlijkheid is vast komen te staan dat onder volstrekt onpraktische omstandigheden een energieveld wel degelijk meetbaar gemaakt kan worden als ware het een puntmassa – het blijkt een kwestie van maar hard genoeg botsen – dan is dat reden voor de NOS-redactie om het heugelijke nieuws aan haar kijkers tentoon te spreiden: het blijkt toch echt te kunnen! Gebeurt zoiets ook weleens bij sociologen? Nee, natuurlijk niet. Een voorbeeld: dat sociologen met enige zekerheid hebben vastgesteld dat etniciteit niet een kenmerk van groepen is maar een bepaalde wijze van grenstrekken betreft, zal de NOS-redactie en haar kijkers aan hun reet roesten. Zij bepalen zelf wel wat zij willen geloven over hun sociale relaties met anderen, vooral als het zoiets belangrijks betreft als etniciteit. Ziedaar het probleem van sociologen: een verbrandingsmotor bouwen, behandelmethoden valideren, thermometers kalibreren, hersenscans maken, geslachts-

aanpassing uitvoeren, zeewering plannen, is allemaal tot daar aan toe, maar over de samenleving gaat uiteindelijk de samenleving zelf. Dat is min of meer wat het betekent om in een liberale democratie te leven: natuurlijk zijn er samenlevingsdeskundigen maar uiteindelijk hebben burgers het laatste woord. Kortom, de socioloog houdt op gepaste momenten, namelijk wanneer het beslissend wordt, zijn betweterige mond.

Het zal in iedere context weer net anders zijn, maar er is – denk ik – in brede zin maar één strategie om aan deze sociologische aporie te ontsnappen: evangelisatie. Het publiek moet niet betrokken worden bij discussies in de academie; die discussies moeten zo gevoerd worden dat ze geopenbaard kunnen worden. Dat klinkt natuurlijk als een nieuwe loot aan de stam van het grote Benoemen. Toch denk ik dat hier een nieuwe richting te ontdekken valt. Er zijn wel degelijk sociologen, zelfs in de bestuurzieke polder, die een dergelijke route verkennen. Ik zou willen voorstellen dat we de discussie tussen Merijn Oudenampsen en Jan-Willem Duyvendak op deze manier lezen: hier proberen twee sociologen – ieder op eigen wijze – hun onenigheid zo aan te gaan dat het een bredere, buitenacademische controverse zou kunnen worden. Dat is op zich al heel wat gezien de zojuist geschetste geschiedenis van de inheemse sociologie. Zowel Oudenampsen als Duyvendak proberen sociologie op zo'n manier te bedrijven dat het nooit alleen beroepssociologen kunnen zijn die uitmaken hoe een controverse zal verlopen. Dat betekent voor beiden echter wel iets anders en daarin schuilen cruciale vragen over de sociologische evangelisatie van het Nederlandse publiek.

Oudenampsen speelt de jonge iconoclast. Alles moet kapot. Hij openbaart het vraagstuk als een sociologische strijd: zal de jonge hond erin slagen de sleetse gedachten van een *old boy* lek te prikken? Oudenampsen kan bogen op een aanzienlijke stijltraditie – die van de kritische theorie – waarin het de bedoeling is de politieke assumpties van gearriveerde kennis te ont-sluieren: 'Duyvendak heeft kennelijk niet door dat …' Wie Bourdieus Homo academicus gelezen heeft, weet dat de waarde van een argument evenredig is aan het aanzien van de opponenten die ermee omvergeworpen kunnen worden. Toch is het niet enkel reputatie die op het spel staat. Oudenampsen beoogt meer dan de enscenering van een spektakel. Sociologie moet haar publiek vormgevoelig maken: de politieke

cultuur is niet wat zij op het eerste gezicht lijkt te zijn. Kennis is alleen 'goed' wanneer zij het publiek in staat stelt kritische vragen te stellen bij de verhalen die er over de politieke cultuur verteld worden. Evangelisatie staat gelijk aan bewapening en agitatie.

Tegenover zich vindt Oudenampsen een oudere jongere die, ergerniswekkend, het vraagstuk helemaal niet als een strijd voorstelt. Er is nooit een betere verdediging bedacht dan niet op het strijdperk verschijnen. In plaats van de aanval zoekt Duyvendak naar mogelijke redenen voor onenigheid, met Oudenampsen en in de politieke cultuur. Onenigheid is niet iets waartegen het publiek zich moet wapenen, maar iets wat zelf tot onderwerp van discussie en analyse gemaakt moet worden. Wanneer mensen zich uitspreken voor gelijkheid en tolerantie wat betekent dat dan en hoe wordt dat in de politieke cultuur verbeeld? Hier staat evangelisatie gelijk aan reflectie en contemplatie.

In beide vormen van sociologie heeft het publiek een cruciale rol voor het beslechten van controverses, maar niet op dezelfde manier. Oudenampsen biedt het publiek de sociologie aan als een oriëntatie op hetgeen ze door politieke spelers wordt voorgehouden: *don't believe the hype*! Duyvendak daarentegen praktiseert de sociologie als een vorm van bezinning: waarheen leidt de weg? Het culmineert in volstrekt andere taxaties van hetgeen politiek aan de hand is in Nederland. Oudenampsen ziet een progressivisme dat zijn overtuigingskracht is kwijtgeraakt aan een conservatieve contrarevolutie die, anders dan een lamgeslagen links, nog durft te dromen. Duyvendak ziet een progressivisme dat niet meer weet wat vooruit is en daardoor zijn toch al marginale rol verspeelt juist op het moment dat een ruime meerderheid van het electoraat van god los is.

De verschillende opvoeringen van het sociologisch evangelie – bewapening en bezinning – zijn niet los te zien van het inhoudelijke geschil. Dat neemt niet weg dat de manier waarop de professor en de promovendus hier discussiëren een tamelijk nieuw en hoopgevend fenomeen is in de Nederlandse sociologie. Goddank broeit er een verlangen naar polemiek. Het publiek dat verondersteld wordt een rol te bekleden in deze discussies is nog nauwelijks gevormd, maar het zal er ook nooit komen zolang sociologen met elkaar discussiëren alsof dat publiek enkel kan

meeluisteren. Laten sociologen vooral doorgaan op deze weg. Laat ze met elkaar praten alsof andere publieken een logisch, bruikbaar en eigenlijk onmisbaar onderdeel van hun kennisproductie zijn. Tegenover zich vinden zij een, laten we eerlijk wezen, nietszeggend beheersingsbeleid dat 'kennis nuttig moet maken voor de samenleving'. Dat is meer van het- zelfde: uitzoeken, benoemen, uitzoeken, benoemen … Het zal zaak zijn sociologische methoden en discussies buiten de academie te verspreiden, zodat wanneer de samenleving over zichzelf spreekt daarmee de sociolo- gie direct meepraat. Wie zich dit doel voor ogen houdt, ziet al gauw dat 'de' sociologie onherkenbaar veranderd zal moeten worden: Gaat heen en vermenigvuldigt u!

Rogier van Reekum is als onderzoeker verbonden aan de Erasmus Univer- siteit Rotterdam binnen het *Monitoring Modernities project* (ERC) Rogier heeft een Master-graad in Sociolgie (UvA) en Filosofie (UvA); hij is tevens redacteur van *Krisis*.

Krisis

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MERIJN OUDENAMPSEN

CORRESPONDENTIE
OUDENAMPSEN & DUYVENDAK

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Beste Jan-Willem Duyvendak,

Alweer een tijdje geleden discussieerden wij over de politieke veranderingen in Nederland van het afgelopen decennium, en hoe deze politiek te duiden. De discussie was scherp, soms zelfs wat fel van toon. Centraal stond de vraag wat de politieke signatuur is van de kentering die zich sinds de opkomst van Fortuyn heeft voorgedaan. En of deze omslag eerder conservatief of progressief genoemd kan worden. In het debat kwamen we daar niet helemaal uit. Deze briefwisseling biedt hopelijk de gelegenheid om dit belangrijke debat voort te zetten op wat gemoedelijker wijze.

Oncontroversieel vertrekpunt van de discussie is de vaststelling dat er sinds de zogenaamde kiezersrevolte van 2002 een veelomvattende verandering heeft plaatsgevonden in de Nederlandse politieke cultuur. Een nieuw nationalisme kwam op, de politiek van de harde hand gaf de toon aan wat betreft sociale problematiek en criminaliteit, tolerantie kwam gelijk te staan met wegkijken, de problemen rond migranten en hun nageslacht moesten vooral benoemd worden en politieke correctheid werd in de ban gedaan. Het was echter een omwenteling met een tegenstrijdig karakter: een rechts politiek offensief gelegitimeerd met het schrikbeeld van bedreigde progressieve waarden. Zoals Fortuyn op bekende wijze stelde: 'Ik heb *geen zin* de *emancipatie* van vrouwen en homoseksuelen nog eens *over te doen*' (Poorthuis en Wansink 2002).

Als gevolg van dit paradoxale karakter lopen de analyses over de aard van deze omwenteling nogal uiteen. Er zijn auteurs die de omslag een eenduidig conservatief karakter hebben meegegeven. Denk aan Willem Schinkel, die het land in zijn kenmerkende stijl heeft beschreven als 'Museum Nederland'; wijlen Jos de Beus die niet zonder enthousiasme observeerde dat de conservatieve beweging had aangezet tot een 'manifeste behoudzucht' in de publieke opinie; en als buitencategorie Rob Riemens, die de opkomst van de PVV met die van het fascisme heeft vergeleken. Anderen legden juist de nadruk op de progressieve waarden die nu door de rechterzijde verdedigd werden. Zij vonden dat juist de omarming van deze progressieve waarden over de traditionele politieke scheidslijnen heen de verhaallijn was die uitgelicht moest worden. Volgens deze visie was er ook minder sprake van een breuk maar bovenal van continuïteit.

Jouw werk is een toonbeeld van deze laatste tendens. De oratie die je hield in 2004 heeft de veelzeggende titel: *Een eensgezinde, vooruitstrevende natie*. Je schreef daarin dat bijna 'het gehele autochtone politieke spectrum in Nederland zich achter progressieve waarden schaart' (Duyvendak 2004: 11). Deze visie speelt eveneens een belangrijke rol in de argumentatie van *The politics of home*, waar je schrijft over een 'homogeneous progressive moral majority' (Duyvendak 2011: 87). In een eerder stuk voor *Krisis* stelde ik dat 'een dergelijke uitspraak enkel houdbaar lijkt na een aanzienlijke reductie van de betekenis van begrippen als "vooruitstrevendheid" en "progressieve waarden"' (Oudenampsen 2013: 73). In je werk hanteer je een zeer selecte definitie van progressieve waarden. Die worden gereduceerd tot de ontkerkelijking en de daaruit voortkomende 'progressieve opvattingen over homoseksualiteit, gender en gezin' (Houtman en Duyvendak 2009: 4). Op het fundament van deze beperkte consensus bouw je vervolgens de these van een eensgezinde progressieve meerderheid. Enkel de conservatief-religieuze minderheid zou daar geen deel van uitmaken, bestaande uit moslims, de SGP en de CU. De politieke polarisatie uit het afgelopen decennium is in jouw ogen het resultaat van 'een vooruitstrevende meerderheid' die zich verzet tegen 'een als conservatief-

religieus gepercipieerde minderheid' (Houtman en Duyvendak 2009: 96). Ik nam in hetzelfde artikel in *Krisis* ook stelling tegen het conservatismebegrip dat je hanteert en in het bijzonder de stelling dat 'de conservatieve positie niet politiek [wordt] gearticuleerd' (Duyvendak 2004: 11). Conservatisme lijk je zo eveneens te beperken tot opvattingen over homoseksualiteit, gender en gezin.

Jij ziet een eensgezinde vooruitstrevende natie met een progressieve meerderheid, een politiek waarin de erfenis van de jaren zestig doorklinkt als alomtegenwoordige achtergrondmuziek. Ik zie een overwegend conservatieve tegenbeweging waarin weliswaar enkele opvallende progressieve elementen geïncorporeerd zijn, maar die daarin een ondergeschikte rol spelen. Ik stel dat nieuwrechts een gemoderniseerde vorm van conservatisme in Nederland heeft ontwikkeld door enkele van de belangrijkste progressieve verworvenheden uit de jaren zestig en zeventig in haar programma op te nemen: vrouwenrechten, homorechten, individualisme, secularisme. De algehele toon is er echter een van verzet en strijd tegen de progressieve tijdgeest van de jaren zestig en zeventig. Verzet tegen links, tegen de babyboomers en alles waar zij voor staan. Sla een boek open van conservatieve denkers als Martin Bosma, Andreas Kinneging, Frits Bolkestein of Bart Jan Spruyt, lees blogs als GeenStijl en de afkeer van de jaren zestig komt je tegemoet. De 'conservatieve golf' zoals de (eveneens conservatieve) Volkskrantredacteur Hans Wansink (1996) het in een vroeg stadium heeft genoemd, is zowel een product van de progressieve tijdgeest als een afrekening daarmee. Op zich is dat niet zo vreemd als het lijkt. De historicus Von der Dunk, schrijvend over het conservatisme, zag het als 'het dubbelaspect van elke geestelijke stroming, die altijd tegelijkertijd voortzetting én negatie is van de stroming waar ze zich tegen richt' (Von der Dunk 1976: 89). In Groot-Brittannië is inmiddels de term 'progressief conservatisme' in omloop gekomen, om vergelijkbare ontwikkelingen in andere Europese landen te beschrijven (Diamond 2013). Ik prefereer zelf de term 'postprogressief' (Oudenampsen 2013), omdat progressief conservatisme een oxymoron is.[1]

Uitgaande van het idee dat de politieke kentering van het afgelopen decennium een gemengd en paradoxaal karakter kende, is er een redelijke discussie te voeren over het relatieve gewicht dat aan progressieve dan wel conservatieve elementen toegedicht kan worden. Maar in jouw werk lees ik een algehele ontkenning van dit gemengde karakter, enkel mogelijk door een zeer selectieve en gereduceerde conceptie van zowel conservatieve als progressieve waarden.

Ten eerste lijkt mij de stelling uit je oratie uit 2004, dat 'de conservatieve positie niet politiek wordt gearticuleerd' (Duyvendak 2004: 11) moeilijk houdbaar. Let wel, dit is geschreven vier jaar nadat de invloedrijke conservatieve Edmund Burke Stichting werd opgericht, met als deelnemers prominente conservatieve politici als Dries van Agt en Onno Ruding en intellectuelen als Andreas Kinneging, Bart Jan Spruyt, Paul Cliteur en Joshua Livestro. In 2003 werd het *Conservatief manifest* gepubliceerd waarin opgeroepen werd om 'de eenzijdige opvoeding tot mondigheid en het opkomen voor jezelf, je "eigen mening", gevoelens en sentimenten — de opvoeding die de erfenis vormt van de jaren zestig en zeventig — te repareren'. Het leidde tot felle reacties op de opiniepagina's door toenmalige hoogleraren als Ankersmit, Achterhuis, Van Doorn en Witteveen. In 2003 publiceerde Bart Jan Spruyt (2003) het boek *Lof van het conservatisme*, en in 2004 zou dezelfde Spruyt het partijprogramma van Wilders schrijven en de politieke nestor worden van het blonde fenomeen. Het was de tijd dat Jaffe Vink het *Trouw*-katern 'Letter en Geest' tot een neoconservatief platform omtoverde. De tijd dat Ayaan Hirsi Ali furore maakte met haar islamanalyse geïnspireerd op het werk van de invloedrijke neoconservatief Bernard Lewis. En waarin Bolkestein lezingen hield over de 'massacultuur die de democratie zou verzwelgen'. Wie het terugleest ziet bijna letterlijke vertalingen van neoconservatieve denkers als Irving Kristol en Norman Podhoretz, die overigens ook expliciet worden genoemd. Het was de tijd waarin Paul Scheffer zijn baanbrekende essay *Het multiculturele drama* publiceerde, dat hij inspireerde op neoconservatieve auteurs als Samuel Huntington en weer Norman Podhoretz. Het was een tijd waarin het in sociologische kringen ge-noegzaam bekend moest worden geacht dat Fortuyn (2002) in zijn boek *De verweesde samenleving* een nieuw type conservatisme probeerde te verwoorden. Er was kortom sprake van een levende conservatieve beweging, die zich klaarmaakte om het politieke establishment te veroveren en het politieke landschap de daaropvolgende jaren sterk naar rechts zou weten te bewegen.

Ten tweede leidt het idee van een eensgezinde progressieve meerderheid tot de ontkenning van het politieke conflict dat de afgelopen tien jaar de Nederlandse politiek in haar greep heeft gehouden. Een conflict waarbij de 'linkse elite' en progressieve waarden op vele terreinen onder vuur kwamen te liggen door een conservatieve tegenbeweging. Denk aan thema's als milieubescherming, cultuurbeleid, internationalisme, economie, arbeidsethiek, discriminatie, ontwikkelingshulp, terrorisme, immigratie, misdaadbestrijding, justitie en sociaal beleid. Op al deze gebieden zagen we de afgelopen jaren een beweging in het publieke debat en de politieke arena naar meer conservatieve opvattingen. De reductie van het progressieve project tot enkel seksualiteit, gender en gezin lijkt me een miskenning en geringschatting van de progressieve politiek in Nederland. En dat kan toch niet je bedoeling geweest zijn. Hetzelfde kan gezegd worden over het conservatisme.

Ten derde levert de zeer selectieve definitie van progressieve en conservatieve waarden ook allerlei problemen op wat betreft de consistentie in je eigen werk. Zo staat het eerdergenoemde boerkini-artikel (Houtman en Duyvendak 2009) vol met merkwaardige tegenstrijdigheden als het gaat om een kerngroep binnen deze progressieve meerderheid. Dan bedoel ik het electoraat van nieuwrechts, de voormalige arbeidersklasse en de lagere middenklasse, die om een of andere reden in het artikel steevast als 'maatschappelijke onderlaag' wordt aangeduid. Op pagina 9 lezen we dat deze 'onderlaag' niet meer socialistisch is, maar haar woede nu richt op de bestuurlijke elite. En op pagina 14 dat als gevolg hiervan de oude economische klassenpolitiek volledig op zijn kop is komen te staan, en niet links maar rechts de vertegenwoordiger is geworden van laagopgeleide autochtone groepen. Echter op pagina 12 lezen we dat de traditionele economische klassenpolitiek nooit heeft bestaan in Nederland vanwege de verzuiling. De arbeidersklasse is in Nederland nooit overwegend links geweest, want deze bestond ook uit protestantse en katholieke en daarmee conservatieve arbeiders. Deze niet-bestaande economische klassenpolitiek kan dus logischerwijs ook niet op zijn kop zijn gezet. Vervolgens lezen we dat deze vermeende vooruitstrevende onderlaag zich kenmerkt door een verlangen naar een 'stabiele, ordelijke en voorspelbare samenleving' (13). Dit wordt dan weer verklaard uit de these van het autoritarisme van de arbeidersklasse. Het is een stelling die de Amerikaanse

socioloog Seymour Martin Lipset aan het einde van de jaren vijftig formuleerde om het culturele conservatisme van de arbeidersklasse te verklaren. Dit betekent dat de eerder als progressief geïdentificeerde onderlaag, op cultureel gebied conservatief is, zoals Houtman en Achterberg (2010: 13) mooi uitleggen:

'Waar het gaat om de culturele kwesties die vooral sinds 2002 steeds centraler zijn komen te staan in de politiek, huldigt de maatschappelijke onderlaag echter juist de rechtse en autoritaire standpunten, zoals Lipset al in de jaren vijftig heeft betoogd: "Economische progressiviteit verwijst naar de gebruikelijke kwesties rond herverdeling van inkomen, status en macht tussen klassen. De minder bedeelden zijn overal meer progressief of links waar het gaat om dergelijke kwesties [...] Wanneer progressiviteit echter wordt gedefinieerd in niet-economische termen – waarbij het dan dus gaat om steun voor, bijvoorbeeld, vrijheidsrechten voor politieke dissidenten, vrijheidsrechten voor etnische en raciale minderheidsgroepen, een internationaal georiënteerd buitenlands beleid en een ruimhartig immigratiebeleid – dan is de correlatie precies omgekeerd."'

Dit idee van de conservatieve aard van het nieuwrechtse electoraat wordt verder bevestigd door recent empirisch onderzoek, dat stelt dat homoseksualiteit en vrouwenrechten 'nauwelijks van belang zijn voor PVV-stemmers' (De Koster et al. 2013). De logische conclusie lijkt mij dat opvattingen over seksualiteit, gender en gezin niet centraal hebben gestaan in het politieke conflict over 'culturele kwesties' van het afgelopen decennium, en daarmee tevens een beperkt verklarend vermogen hebben. De consensus op dat specifieke deelterrein lijkt me niet voldoende om in algemene termen te kunnen spreken over een progressieve meerderheid. Tevens moeten we concluderen dat de conservatieve positie wel degelijk wordt gearticuleerd, en er onder het electoraat ook vraag naar is.

Een laatste opmerking betreft de wijze waarop politieke standpunten geanalyseerd moeten worden. Als politici aan de rechterzijde zich als verdediger opwerpen van vrouwenrechten en homorechten betekent dit dan dat zij intrinsiek gemotiveerd zijn door zorgen over de emancipatie van deze groepen? Of zou het kunnen zijn dat hier een andere agenda

achter schuilgaat? Je stelt zelf in een recent artikel dat homorechten gebruikt worden om antimoslimsentimenten te legitimeren (Mepschen et al. 2010). Dat roept natuurlijk de vraag op of er met die rechtse omarming van progressieve waarden niet iets vergelijkbaars aan de hand is. Het betekent, lijkt me, dat er een relationele analyse gemaakt moet worden van dergelijke standpuntbepalingen. In plaats van genoegen te nemen met de nominale inhoud van politieke standpunten is het noodzakelijk te kijken naar de manier waarop deze worden gearticuleerd in een breder discours. Neem het statement van Thatcher over vrouwenrechten in 1982:

'The battle for women's rights has been largely won. The days when they were demanded and discussed in strident tones should be gone forever. And I hope they are. I hated those strident tones that you still hear from some women's libbers' (Thatcher 1982).

Hier wordt een affirmatie van vrouwenrechten gebruikt om het feminisme aan te vallen. Ik noem dit type discours postprogressief: het idee dat emancipatie al bereikt is, leidt tot een afwijzing van progressieve bewegingen. Een vergelijkbaar discours wordt naar mijn mening ingezet door nieuwrechts in Nederland, dat progressieve waarden omarmt als stok om moslims mee te slaan, maar zich juist afzet tegen de progressieve bewegingen die deze waarden gemeengoed hebben gemaakt.

Ik ben benieuwd wat je van deze these vindt.

Merijn Oudenampsen is socioloog en politicoloog. Sinds januari 2011 is hij als promovendus verbonden aan de Universiteit van Tilburg en doet hij onderzoek naar populisme en de ruk naar rechts. Tevens redigeerde hij *'Power to the people!' Een anatomie van het populisme*, samen met Justus Uitermark, Rogier van Reekum en Bart van Heerikhuizen (Boom|Lemma 2012). Hij schrijft regelmatig voor de Groene Amsterdammer, MetropolisM en Joop.nl.

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[1] Zoals Norbert Bobbio stelt in zijn bekende boek over het links-rechtsonderscheid (Bobbio 1996), zijn termen als 'progressief' en 'conservatief' relationele termen, die net als 'onder' en 'boven' voor een belangrijk deel hun betekenis ontlenen aan het contrast met het tegengestelde kamp. Het progressief conservatisme kan niet werkelijk progressief zijn, anders zou het immers niet conservatief meer zijn. Het progressivisme baseert zich volgens Bobbio op het gelijkheidsdenken, waar het conservatisme een verdediging is van menselijke ongelijkheid.

Krisis

Tijdschrift voor actuele filosofie

JAN-WILLEM DUYVENDAK

CORRESPONDENTIE
OUDENAMPSEN & DUYVENDAK

Beste Merijn,

Dank voor je brief als vervolg op ons publieke debat over politieke veranderingen in Nederland in het afgelopen decennium. Het is een belangrijke discussie omdat naar mijn idee niet alleen de 'populistische jaren' vaak verkeerd begrepen worden, maar ook de laatste decennia van de vorige eeuw, en dan met name de jaren zestig en zeventig. Onze huidige tijd wordt vaak gecontrasteerd met die decennia. Dat spreekt ook enigszins uit jouw terminologie van 'postprogressief'; als komend na een echt progressieve tijd. Zo'n term suggereert al snel alsof er een eenduidig progressieve periode is geweest die nu voorbij zou zijn. Die interpretatie van het recente verleden doet naar mijn idee echter geen recht aan de feitelijke ontwikkelingen die zich hebben voltrokken.

Voordat ik dat zal onderbouwen, eerst een enkele opmerking over het genre waarin je onherroepelijk terechtkomt als je zo'n onderscheid aanbrengt tussen 'progressieve' en 'postprogressieve' politiek: het genre van de nostalgie. De jaren zestig en zeventig worden in dit soort beschouwingen al snel het hoogtepunt van linkse politiek en sindsdien zou het slechts bergafwaarts zijn gegaan. Ik citeer uit jouw stuk:

'Ik zie een overwegend conservatieve tegenbeweging waarin weliswaar enkele opvallende progressieve elementen geïncorporeerd zijn, maar die daarin een ondergeschikte rol spelen. Ik stel dat nieuwrechts een gemoderniseerde vorm van conservatisme in Nederland heeft ontwikkeld door enkele van de belangrijkste progressieve verworvenheden uit de jaren zestig en zeventig in haar programma op te nemen: vrouwenrechten, homorechten, individualisme, secularisme. De algehele toon is er echter een van verzet en strijd tegen de progressieve tijdgeest van de jaren zestig en zeventig, tegen links, tegen de babyboomers en alles waar zij voor staan.' (83)

Je staat in het nostalgische beeld van de jaren zestig en zeventig dat je zo creëert niet alleen. Het valt me op dat een groep denkers van jouw generatie even nostalgisch is naar die decennia als veel babyboomers zelf. Het is een curieuze coalitie van dertigers en zestigers, die meent dat het sinds het 'neoliberalisme' van de jaren tachtig en negentig van de vorige eeuw alleen maar bergafwaarts is gegaan met links. Jullie bevestigen daarmee, ten onrechte, het beeld dat de babyboomers graag van die periode koesteren. Deze zestigers verlangen terug naar de 'hoogtijdagen' van het kabinet-Den Uyl (hoewel de meesten dat toen een veel te rechts kabinet vonden …). In een recent artikel (De Jong 2013) op TENK analyseert Alex de Jong fraai Jan Marijnissens hang naar dat verleden:

'*Tegenstemmen* was een opvallend nostalgisch boek: het neoliberale heden werd voortdurend afgezet tegen een verleden dat niet perfect, maar wel veel beter was. De alternatieven voor het neoliberalisme werden vaak voorgesteld als een terugkeer naar dit verder ongespecificeerde verleden waarmee waarschijnlijk het Nederland van de "sociaaldemocratische consensus" bedoeld werd.'

Jan Marijnissen en jij lijken beiden te denken dat conservatieve krachten het op de sociaaldemocratische erfenis van de jaren zestig hebben voorzien, daarmee het beeld versterkend dat er een helder onderscheid zou zijn tussen de progressieve en de postprogressieve periode. In een recent proefschrift laat Noortje Thijssen echter overtuigend zien dat de verhouding van 'rechts' Nederland ten opzichte van de jaren zestig veel ambivalenter is: de meeste 'verworvenheden' van de jaren zestig blijken –

ook door de door jou geciteerde conservatieve denkers – overwegend positief te worden aangehaald! Dat betekent niet dat ze in hun stukken aardige dingen zeggen over de woordvoerders van 'links', over de 'babyboomers', maar inhoudelijk zijn de thema's van de jaren zestig grotendeels tot het gedachtengoed van 'rechts' doorgedrongen. Thijssen laat zien hoe 'rechts' Nederland in de afgelopen jaren van een eenduidige diskwalificatie van de jaren zestig (en zeventig) tot een stevige omarming is gekomen van de idealen van die periode.

En dat hoeft ook niet te verbazen, gegeven mijn stelling dat er in Nederland, niet *in* maar *sinds* de jaren zestig en zeventig een meerderheid is gegroeid voor – ik leen even jouw woorden – 'vrouwenrechten, homorechten, individualisme, secularisme'. Nederland spant vandaag de dag met andere Noordwest-Europese landen als Denemarken en Zweden de kroon in steun voor progressieve waarden. Maar ook in veel andere westerse landen, en zelfs in de Verenigde Staten (Fischer & Hout 2006), zien we een langzame, maar onmiskenbare trend dat een meerderheid van de burgers steun is gaan geven aan *liberal values.* In die zin is het inderdaad goed om je niet blind te staren op de jaren na 2000 maar om de recente tijd te vergelijken met de decennia daarvoor. Wie dat doet, ziet dat er geen sprake is van een contrast maar juist van een hoge mate van continuïteit tussen nu en de jaren zestig en zeventig, waarbij de groep die progressieve waarden steunt in omvang steeds verder toeneemt, en nu zelfs de kern van de VVD en de christelijke partijen heeft bereikt. Ook de aanhangers van de PVV steunen veel van die progressieve waarden (zonder dat dit overigens de reden is waarom ze op de PVV stemmen, zoals jij terecht vaststelt).

Nu kan het zijn dat we enigszins langs elkaar heen praten omdat jij je vooral lijkt te richten op de nieuwe conservatieven in het publieke debat, het politieke discours, terwijl mijn bijdrage zich vooral richt op de sociologische onderstroom in de samenleving: welke standpunten zijn Nederlanders in de afgelopen vijftig jaar gaan huldigen? Kijk je naar dat laatste, dan kun je niet anders dan constateren dat zich een enorme verschuiving heeft voorgedaan in de standpunten (en praktijken) van een ruime meerderheid van de Nederlanders, die zich eenduidig laat karakteriseren als de verbreding van de steun voor progressieve waarden.

Wat zijn dan die waarden en wat is hun betekenis? Jij lijkt geneigd de nieuwe *moral majority* in Nederland met een relatief progressief gezicht niet zo serieus te nemen omdat je denkt dat het hierbij zou gaan om een 'reductie van het progressieve project tot enkel seksualiteit, gender en gezin'. Ik citeer je verder:

'Denk aan thema's als milieubescherming, cultuurbeleid, internationalisme, economie, arbeidsethiek, discriminatie, ontwikkelingshulp, terrorisme, immigratie, misdaadbestrijding, justitie en sociaal beleid. Op al deze gebieden zagen we de afgelopen jaren een beweging in het publieke debat en de politieke arena naar meer conservatieve opvattingen.' (84)

Ik zal niet ontkennen dat op enkele van deze onderwerpen meer conservatieve geluiden in het publieke debat dominanter zijn geworden, hoewel nog te bezien valt – zie hierboven – of de Nederlandse bevolking op al deze punten ook meer conservatieve standpunten is gaan huldigen. Maar ik maak vooral bezwaar tegen een 'genivelleerd' beeld van de politiek waarin allerlei thema's door jou als min of meer even belangrijk, nevengeschikt, worden gepresenteerd. Het lijkt mij dat de waarden die sinds de jaren zestig steeds grotere politieke betekenis hebben gekregen – 'vrouwenrechten, homorechten, individualisme en secularisme' – van een andere orde zijn dan, pakweg, arbeidsethiek of misdaadbestrijding. Het gaat hierbij namelijk om de fundamentele omarming en beleving van *gelijkheid*, ongeacht gender, seksuele voorkeur, leeftijd, handicap, etc. Steeds meer mensen zijn sinds de jaren zestig en zeventig geheel anders in het leven komen te staan: niet meer ondergeschikt aan anderen. De meeste Nederlanders onderschikken zich niet meer aan een hoger wezen, vrouwen niet meer aan mannen, homo's niet meer aan hetero's, et cetera. Mensen willen zelf gelijkelijk beschikken over hun leven, ook over het begin (abortus) en het einde (euthanasie). Deze logica van de gelijkheid is de hele samenleving gaan doortrekken en heeft geleid tot 'horizontale' verhoudingen binnen gezinnen, instellingen, media, en dergelijke. Dat gevecht voor gelijkheid gaat langzaam – maar gestaag. Zelfs de SGP heeft nu vrouwen op de kieslijst, ook de ChristenUnie kent een groep homo's die zich organiseert.

Ik sluit niet uit dat ik mede zo gefascineerd ben door, en gepassioneerd ben over, deze voortgaande emancipatie omdat zij mij ook biografisch raakt. Ik heb pas in 2001 volledige burgerrechten gekregen, daarvoor ontbrak het mij aan het recht om te trouwen. Tot ver in de jaren negentig waren alle grote politieke partijen tegen het openstellen van het burgerlijk huwelijk voor paren van gelijk geslacht. Welaan, de positie van homoseksuelen is sinds 2000 sterk verbeterd: nu is homoseksualiteit zo ongeveer de kern van 'de' Nederlandse identiteit …

Die ontwikkeling naar een steeds bredere omarming van fundamentele progressieve waarden – gelijkheid, individualisme, secularisme – verklaart, paradoxaal genoeg, waarom op een aantal onderwerpen 'Nederland' conservatiever, of beter: intoleranter is geworden. Want je hebt gelijk: op terreinen als internationalisme, integratie en discriminatie is in de afgelopen jaren sprake van een conservatieve Wende. *Maar dat komt niet doordat Nederland niet progressief is, maar doordat ook progressieve mensen intolerant kunnen zijn.* Kijk naar het debat: moslims worden voortdurend aangevallen op het feit dat ze niet progressief zijn; het gaat permanent over hun 'achterlijkheid' in termen van vrouwen- en homorechten, over hun gebrekkige individualisme en het ontbreken van secularisme. Wil je de – dus inderdaad zeer gemengde – ontwikkeling in Nederland van de afgelopen tien jaar begrijpen, dan kan dat alleen door trends in thema's in samenhang te beschouwen: *inhoudelijk* zijn progressieve waarden omarmd, maar in *houding* zijn Nederlanders veel autoritairder geworden. Dat is precies wat ik in *The politics of home. Belonging and nostalgia in Western Europe and the United States* laat zien: migranten wordt geen ruimte gegund om 'anders' te zijn, ze moeten zich volledig assimileren en 'Nederlandse normen en waarden' gaan 'verinnerlijken' (ook al hebben de 'rechtse' en christelijke partijen in Nederland die normen en waarden zelf pas heel recent omarmd…).

'Links' is mede zo in verwarring omdat voor haar fundamentele waarden – gelijkheid, individualisme en secularisme –, nu worden gedefinieerd in nationale, en zelfs nationalistische termen. En helaas gebeurt dat niet alleen door 'rechtse' partijen. Het zijn PvdA-intellectuelen als Paul Scheffer en politici als Jan Marijnissen die deze nationalistische draai in de politiek mede hebben bewerkstelligd. Dat maakt het huidige beeld inderdaad erg 'gemengd': 'rechts' is verrassend progressief geworden als het om *liberal values* gaat, delen van links zijn treurigstemmend conservatief geworden als het ruimte voor diversiteit betreft: nieuwkomers worden buitengesloten en alles buiten Nederland wordt vooral als een bedreiging gezien.

Ik denk dat het weinig vruchtbaar is om te veronderstellen dat 'rechts' *liberal values* uitsluitend om strategische redenen heeft omarmd; dat ze daarom dus niet echt progressief zou zijn, maar 'postprogressief'. Ik sluit niet uit dat rechtse, christelijke en populistische partijen aanvankelijk, in ieder geval deels, vanwege politiek opportunisme progressieve waarden hebben omarmd (met name om moslims te kunnen bekritiseren). Maar onherroepelijk zijn ze er de afgelopen tien jaar zelf steeds meer in gaan geloven: je kunt met waarden niet blijvend opportunistisch omgaan. En anders is hun achterban die waarden wel serieus gaan nemen: het spreken van politici heeft een performatief effect. Het lijkt me beter iedereen die voor progressieve waarden zegt te staan op zijn of haar woord te geloven en de beterweterigheid achter ons te laten dat 'rechts' die waarden eigenlijk niet serieus kan delen. Veel interessanter, en politiek effectiever, is het openen van het debat over de vraag of een progressieve inhoud niet ook om een progressieve, tolerante houding vraagt: zouden *liberal values* niet tevens moeten inhouden dat mensen mogen 'afwijken'? We staan pas aan het begin van dat debat, lijkt me. In die zin is de omarming van liberale waarden niet postprogressief, maar nog zeer onvolledig. Nederland is veeleer 'preprogressief'.

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CHUNGLIN KWA

HOE KAN DE KLIMAATSCEPSIS HET HOOFD GEBODEN WORDEN?

Review essay over: Stephen M. Gardiner (2011) *A perfect moral storm: The ethical trage-dy of climate change*. New York: Oxford University Press;

Naomi Oreskes & Eric M. Conway (2010) *Merchants of Doubt. How a Handful of Scien-tists Obscured the Truth from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming*. New York: Blooms-bury Press;

Paul N. Edwards (2010) *A vast machine. Computer models, climate data, and the politics of global warming*. Cambridge, Ma: The MIT Press;

Clive Hamilton (2010) Requiem for a species: why we resist the truth about climate change. Oxford: Earthscan;

Mike Hulme (2009) *Why we disagree about climate change. Understanding controversy, inaction and opportunity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

De doorbraak voor het broeikaseffect, *global warming*, op de Amerikaanse politieke agenda voltrok zich in 1988. 'Met 99% zekerheid', zei James Han-sen, de directeur van het *NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies*, zou de mens daarvoor verantwoordelijk zijn via de uitstoot van broeikasgas-sen. Zijn uitspraak, gedaan tijdens een hoorzitting voor het Amerikaanse Congres, haalde de voorpagina van de *New York Times* en figureerde prominent in vele andere media over de gehele wereld. Presidentskan-didaat George Bush sr. beloofde een aanzienlijke regeringsinspanning, 'to counter the greenhouse effect with the White House effect', zoals hij zei. Ook in 1988 werd het *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC) opgericht, dat regeringen van 193 aangesloten landen zou advi-seren op basis van de 'beste wetenschappelijke en technische bevindingen die beschikbaar zijn', voor zover die door de wetenschappelijke gemeenschap van klimatologen en andere deskundigen van de atmosfeer in orde waren bevonden, met andere woorden: die de peer review waren gepasseerd.

Het momentum was echter van korte duur. Een jaar later liet het George C. Marshall Instituut, een conservatieve denktank, een ongepubliceerd rapport circuleren waarin het verband tussen opwarming van de aarde en de toename van broeikasgassen in de atmosfeer werd ontkend. Voor zover er opwarming was, zou die te wijten zijn aan een toename van het aantal zonnevlekken. Deze bewering stond lijnrecht tegenover die van het IPCC dat wel een zekere rol toekent aan de zonnevlekken, maar een veel doorslaggevender aan de broeikasgassen. Het Marshall Instituut vroeg en verkreeg toestemming hun bevindingen aan het Witte Huis te pre-senteren. Daar maakte het rapport grote indruk. Chefstaf John Sununu, van huis uit kernfysisch ingenieur, werd volledig overtuigd. Vanaf dat moment zou de Amerikaanse regering niets meer doen aan klimaatbeleid. Een korte opleving van de Amerikaanse inspanning (onder Bill Clinton) werd afgestraft door de Senaat. Met 95 tegen nul stemmen besloot deze om het Kyoto-protocol voor de terugdringing van broeikasgassen niet te ondertekenen. Zelfs onder Obama zou het met het Amerikaanse klimaat-beleid niet meer echt goed komen, zoals de wereld ervoor tijdens de Klimaatconferentie van Kopenhagen in 2009. Hoe kon dat allemaal gebeuren?

Klimaatsceptici zaaien twijfel over de *wetenschappelijke* onderbouwing van de projecties van de stijging van de gemiddelde wereldtemperatuur. Ze leiden daar een *beleids*conclusie uit af. De Nederlandse klimaatscepti-cus Marcel Crok meldt zich regelmatig in het publieke domein met de boodschap dat de wetenschappelijke onzekerheid zodanig groot is dat we vooralsnog af kunnen zien van maatregelen die broeikasgasemissies sterk terugdringen. De Amerikaanse ethicus Stephen Gardiner daarentegen erkent in zijn boek *A perfect moral storm* (al dan niet residuele) weten-

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schappelijke onzekerheid, maar stelt dat wat we wel weten van de wetenschap van de klimaatverandering het onontkoombaar maakt werk te maken van emissiereductie. Gardiners visie sluit aan bij die van de overgrote meerderheid van de klimaatwetenschappers, die vertwijfeld vaststellen dat in het algemeen wetenschappelijke opvattingen die kunnen bogen op een even grote consensus onder wetenschappers als de klimaatwetenschap brede maatschappelijke erkenning krijgen. Alleen de klimaatwetenschap niet! Als ethicus heeft Gardiner daar een verklaring voor: het reklimaatvraagstuk is zo gestructureerd dat wij worden verhinderd ethisch te handelen. Zo bezien zijn de klimaatsceptici (die bij Gardiner slechts zijdelings aan bod komen) een symptoom en niet de oorzaak van ons onvermogen te handelen. Gardiner analyseert het klimaatvraagstuk analoog aan het theoretische probleem van de *tragedy of the commons.* In de gebruikelijke weergave ervan treedt uitputting van de gemeenschappelijke hulpbronnen van de aarde op doordat het, vanuit een individu gezien, rationeel is zich zo veel mogelijk van de hulpbronnen toe te eigenen. Een individu zou zichzelf beperkingen kunnen opleggen maar dat is irrationeel als de anderen dat niet ook doen. De tragedie van uitputting kan echter voorkomen worden als de betrokkenen bereid zijn met elkaar samen te werken in plaats van ieder-voor-zich te gaan. Gardiner gaat er vanuit dat mensen daartoe bereid zullen zijn, dus een collectief zullen willen vormen, maar een voorwaarde daarvoor is dat de mogelijkheden tot het aangaan van samenwerking aanwezig zijn. Dat is echter bij het klimaatvraagstuk heel erg moeilijk: de partners in de samenwerking zijn de toekomstige generaties en die zijn nog niet aanwezig en kunnen dus ook niet voor zichzelf opkomen. Het klimaatvraagtuk is alleen oplosbaar als wij ons de toekomstige generaties zodanig als aanwezig kunnen voorstellen dat een rechtvaardige verdeling van de hulpbronnen van de aarde kan worden bereikt. Dat we dat niet kunnen, ziet Gardiner vooral als een falen van onze instituties. Argumenten ten gunste van het hier en nu krijgen daardoor vrij spel. Economen (zoals Björn Lomborg maar ook vele anderen) zeggen: ach, latere generaties zullen rijker zijn dan wij dus die zullen wel voor zichzelf kunnen zorgen. Gardiner verwijt deze economen niet dat ze intentioneel slecht handelen, maar noemt hun houding wel 'moreel corrupt'. In de gok die de huidige generatie neemt met het klimaat zijn de voordelen van ongelimiteerd gebruik van fossiele brandstoffen namelijk voor haarzelf en de risico's voor toekomstige gen-

eraties. Volgens deze analyse rechtvaardigen de klimaatsceptici deze morele corruptie doordat zij de risico's voor de toekomstige generaties bagatelliseren.

De morele corruptie van de eerste lichting klimaatsceptici, dus die van het Marshall Instituut, is uitvoerig onderzocht door de wetenschapshistorici Naomi Oreskes en Eric Conway. De man die in 1989 namens het Marshall Instituut de eerdergenoemde presentatie op het Witte Huis voor zijn rekening nam was William Nierenberg. Nierenberg was daar een goede bekende. Hij was nauw betrokken geweest bij een eerdere milieukwestie: zure regen, tijdens de beginjaren van het presidentschap van Ronald Reagan. Reagan had besloten een onderzoek van de National Academy of Sciences, dat verouderde Amerikaanse industrie had aangewezen als de veroorzaker van zure regen in Canada en New England, over te laten doen door een commissie met een nieuwe samenstelling. Nierenberg werd aangewezen als voorzitter. De commissie schreef een rapport dat de eerdere wetenschappelijke bevindingen bevestigde: de 25 miljoen ton aan sulfaatverbindingen die meekwamen met de uitstoot uit de fabriekssschoorstenen in het Midwesten waren de voornaamste veroorzakers van zure regen. Het duurde echter vreemd lang voordat het rapport werd vrijgegeven. Toen het eindelijk beschikbaar kwam, in 1984, bleek het een Executive Summary te bevatten waarin de belangrijkste conclusies van hun scherpte waren ontdaan. De volgende vier jaar zou de regering-Reagan zeggen: 'We weten niet precies wat de oorzaak van zure regen is.'

De Amerikaanse wetenschappelijke gemeenschap was zeer ongerust over de gang van zaken, de leden van de commissie waren woedend. Maar ze waren uitgespeeld. Nierenberg zelf waste zijn handen in onschuld en verwees naar het Witte Huis. Inmiddels is Nierenberg al geruime tijd dood (hij overleed in 2000, 81 jaar oud). Oreskes en Conway hebben zijn archieven onderzocht. In *Merchants of doubt* komen ze tot de ondubbelzinnige conclusie dat het Nierenberg zelf was die de Executive Summary herschreef, inderdaad in nauwe samenwerking met het Witte Huis. Tegelijkertijd was hij er persoonlijk van overtuigd dat *je op je klompen aanvoelt dat 25 miljoen ton sulfaat in de lucht niet veel goeds kan opleveren.* Maar blijkbaar woog die overtuiging voor hem niet heel zwaar.

Nierenberg is een van de vier hoofdpersonen in het boek van Oreskes en Conway. De anderen zijn Frederick Seitz, Robert Jastrow en Fred Singer. Alle vier zijn of waren natuurkundige of natuurkundig ingenieur, alle vier waren gevormd, aan het begin van hun carrière, door het werk aan de atoombom tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog, alle vier waren havikken tijdens de Koude Oorlog. Jastrow en Seitz waren prominent betrokken geweest bij het Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), oftewel *Star Wars*, het plan van president Reagan voor de ontwikkeling van een ruimteschild tegen mogelijke inkomende raketten vanuit de Sovjet-Unie. Ook zij waren dus goede bekenden op het Witte Huis. SDI was door de overgrote meerderheid van Amerikaanse natuurkundigen afgeschoten als onhaalbaar en gevaarlijk. Jastrow had in reactie daarop in 1984 het Marshall Instituut opgericht en hij vroeg daar direct Seitz en Nierenberg bij als resp. voorzitter en bestuurslid. De eerste missie van het nieuwe instituut werd de publieke opinie gunstig te stemmen tegenover Reagans rakettenplan. Naast hun loyaliteit aan de Republikeinse regering stond ook hun wetenschappelijke reputatie als een huis. Seitz was president van de National Academy of Sciences geweest in de jaren zestig en Jastrow was oprichter en directeur van het Goddard Institute for Space Studies (tot hij werd opgevolgd door de klimaatwetenschapper James Hansen!). Nierenberg was in 1989 net gepensioneerd als directeur van het Scripps Instituut voor Oceanografie.

In vergelijking met deze drie was de carrière van Fred Singer wat minder illuster verlopen, maar toch opvallend genoeg dat hij zich ook in de aandacht van de Republikeinse presidenten mocht verheugen. Zo was Singer door het Witte Huis toegevoegd aan de verder door Nierenberg samengestelde commissie voor zure regen en had hij een opmerkelijke rol gespeeld, enige jaren eerder, in het debat over het 'gat in de ozonlaag', dat zou leiden tot het beroemde Montreal-protocol waarin wereldwijd een verbod werd afgesproken op de chloorhoudende chemicaliën die ozon aantasten. Singer was verbonden aan de Heritage Foundation, een denktank die was opgericht uit onvrede over de onvoldoende slagvaardige wijze waarop het American Enterprise Institute *probusiness* standpunten op milieugebied uitventte. De Heritage zette zich in voor verlaging van luchtkwaliteitsstandaarden en het gemakkelijker verlenen van vergunningen aan de industrie. In 1987 plaatste de *Wall Street Journal* een artikel van Singer op de voorpagina waarin hij beweerde dat ozon in de hogere luchtlagen op natuurlijke wijze fluctueert. Singers verhaal had drie componenten: de wetenschap rond ozon is onvolledig en onzeker, vervanging van de gewraakte stoffen is duur en gevaarlijk, en de wetenschappelijke gemeenschap jaagt alleen eigen belang en ideologische standpunten na. Het Montreal-protocol is er gelukkig toch gekomen en de industrie heeft al lang ongevaarlijke vervangers ontwikkeld voor de onzonafbrekende stoffen. Maar nog in 1995 verwees Tom DeLay, de Republikeinse *House Majority Leader*, naar Fred Singer in antwoord op de vraag aan wie hij zijn mening over het gat in de ozonlaag ontleende.

Na de 'aftrap' van de opwarmingsontkenning door Nierenberg in 1989 zouden het Seitz en Singer zijn die de hoofdrol voor zichzelf opeisten. In 1996 beschuldigde Seitz (ook al op de voorpagina van de *Wall Street Journal*) het IPCC van fraude. Het ging over een hoofdstuk van het *Second Assessment Report* (1995), geschreven door Ben Santer, dat een belangrijke en een nieuw soort aanwijzing bevatte voor het aandeel van de mens in de opwarming van de aarde. Een '*discernable human influence on global climate*', in de bewoordingen van het rapport. In het eerste rapport, van 1990, had het IPCC zich beperkt tot de conclusie dat opwarming door de toename van broeikasgassen belangrijker was dan de invloed van de zon. Het had dat gedaan door een computermodel van de aarde het aardse klimaat te laten simuleren over de periode 1880-1980. Het bleek dat het model het stijgen van de temperatuur (en de fluctuaties daarbinnen) het beste kon verklaren door er drie hoofdoorzaken in op te nemen: de stijging van de concentratie van kooldioxide in de atmosfeer, de fluctuaties in de zonneactiviteit en de (koelende) effecten van vulkaanuitbarstingen. Werd de stijging van kooldioxide in het model weggelaten, dan was er een veel slechtere *match*. Voor het rapport van 1995 had Santer bewijsmateriaal verzameld, dat in de stricte zin van logische bewijsvoering geen 'bewijs' mag heten (het wordt immers afgeleid uit gegevens), maar toch zodanig specifiek naar menselijke invloed verwijst dat Santers techniek bekend is komen te staan als *fingerprinting*: alsof de vingerafdruk van de mensheid in het klimaat is aangetroffen. Santers waarneming betrof het volgende. De aardse atmosfeer bestaat uit twee luchtlagen, de troposfeer (waarin wij leven) en de stratosfeer daarboven. Wanneer de opwarming van de aarde zou worden veroorzaakt door de

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zon, dan verwacht je dat zowel de troposfeer als de stratosfeer in temperatuur stijgen. Bij stijging van de concentratie van de broeikasgassen verwacht je een stijging van de temperatuur van de troposfeer en een daling van die van de stratosfeer. *Dat is precies het verschijnsel dat kan worden waargenomen*. Daar mocht dus de term '*discernable*' aan worden verbonden.

Geen wonder dat de klimaatsceptici zich bedreigd voelden. De tegenaanval had het gemunt op Santers integriteit: hij zou zich niet aan de voorgeschreven reviewprocedures van het IPCC hebben gehouden. De beschuldiging van Seitz (die later diverse malen werd herhaald door Singer) was ongefundeerd, maar het duurde lang voordat Santer zich kon ontdoen van de negatieve beeldvorming rond zijn persoon.

We zien de contouren opdoemen van een patroon in de werkzaamheden van de vier topfysici. Oreskes en Conway stellen vast dat de vier, door het zaaien van wetenschappelijke twijfel, zich keerden tegen alle vormen van milieuregulering door de overheid. Deze diagnose krijgt nog meer relief door een andere casus. In dezelfde tijd dat Seitz en Singer hun persoonlijke aanval op Santer lanceerden vochten ze tegen de aanstormende golf van rookverboden in publieke plaatsen. In 1986 had de *surgeon-general*, de hoogste Amerikaanse functionaris voor de volksgezondheid, het verband tussen passief roken en kanker bewezen verklaard. In 1992 volgde een grote studie van de Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over passief roken. Singer noemde het rapport van de EPA *junk science* (rotwetenschap), omdat het geen onderscheid kon maken tussen passief roken en andere risicofactoren zoals dieet, luchtvervuiling en erfelijke predispositie. Maar dat had het rapport nu juist wel gedaan. Passief roken veroorzaakt een groot *extra* risico.

Singer stemde zijn uitspraken af op de tabaksindustrie, om precies te zijn met de public-relationsfirma's die door de industrie in de arm waren genomen. Seitz' betrekkingen met de tabaksindustie dateerden al van veel eerder. Direct na zijn pensionering als president van de Rockefeller University, in 1979, was hij gaan werken voor R.J. Reynolds, een firma die hij kende vanwege haar donaties aan Rockefeller. Seitz zou namens R.J. Reynolds geld verdelen aan onderzoeksinstellingen. Oreskes en Conway

laten zien dat de bedoeling van de firma was om zich zo van de steun van wetenschappelijke experts te verzekeren in de rechtszaken die de Amerikaanse overheid tegen de tabaksindustrie voerde. Het hielp niet, want de tabaksindustrie werd veroordeeld (in 2006, en in hoger beroep in 2009) voor het achterhouden van wetenschappelijke informatie over de gevaren van roken en passief roken, op basis van wetgeving tegen de georganiseerde misdaad en corruptie.

Oreskes en Conway trekken hieruit overigens niet de conclusie dat Seitz en Singer in letterlijke zin corrupt waren. Hun standpunten werden niet ingegeven doordat ze 'gekocht' werden door de tabaksindustrie. Al helemaal absurd zou het zijn ze te verwijten dat ze zouden zijn omgekocht door de olie-industrie die, net als de tabaksindustrie trouwens, conservatieve thinktanks als het Heartland Instituut financieel steunt. Seitz en Singer waren er trots op om voor de tabaksindustrie te werken, omdat het roken van een sigaret symbool staat voor individuele vrijheid en een rookverbod voor een bemoeizuchtige overheid. Singer schreef dat als de EPA zijn gang zou gaan er ook maatregelen zouden volgen tegen asbest, lood, zure regen en global warming. Voor hun kruistocht tegen overheidsbemoeienis betaalden Singer en de anderen een hoge prijs: het willens en wetens opgeven van hun integriteit tegenover de wetenschap. Seitz heeft zich een keer laten ontvallen dat dat niet erg was omdat 'die wetenschappers toch allemaal *Democrats* zijn'.

Merchants of doubt is een zeer gedegen, goed geschreven wetenschapshistorische studie. Tegelijkertijd is het een scherp boek, een harde klap terug in de meedogenloze *culture wars* die een deel van Amerikaans rechts voert tegen alles wat in hun ogen vies en voos is. In zekere zin zou je antiopwarmingsactivisten als Seitz, Nierenberg en Singer als Tea Party-activisten avant la lettre kunnen zien, en die vergelijking dringt zich des te meer op als je naar de klimaatsceptici kijkt zoals die zich manifesteren op blogs, in talkshows, etc. Ze zijn er in allerlei gedaantes, variërend van de luidruchtige Rush Limbaugh tot de meer genuanceerden, die althans van sommige wetenschapsgebieden echt iets weten. In 2005 bijvoorbeeld ontstond een heftige discussie rond de zogenoemde hockeystickgrafiek, een reconstructie van het verloop van de aardse temperatuur van ongeveer het jaar 1000 tot heden, door de klimaatwetenschapper Michael Mann. De

hockeystickgrafiek dankt haar naam aan haar vorm: een lange rechte lijn, tussen 1000 en 1900 iets schuin naar beneden lopend, en bij 1900 een knik en vervolgens een kort stijl verloop naar boven. Het IPCC nam de grafiek op in zijn derde assessmentrapport van 2001. Enige jaren later publiceerde Steven McIntyre, een gepensioneerde zakenman met een achtergrond in economie en wiskunde, een scherpe aanval op de statistische technieken die Mann had gebruikt bij de reconstructie van de temperatuurgegevens. Bovendien eiste hij de datasets op van Mann en diens collega's, iets waaraan Mann in eerste instantie slechts gedeeltelijk tegemoet kwam. Het werd een lange, bittere controverse waarbij steeds meer partijen betrokken raakten. De Amerikaanse National Research Council fungeerde ten slotte als arbiter. Zij oordeelde in 2006 dat Manns statistische methode, *principal component analysis*, in orde was en geen resultaten gaf die niet op andere manieren ook konden worden verkregen. Wel zou de kritiek van McIntyre geleid hebben tot verbeteringen in de methoden voor de reconstructie van oude temperatuurgegevens. Paul Edward, die de episode beschrijft in *A vast machine*, een historische studie van de klimatologie, betwijfelt dat. Veel van McIntyres kritiek was al 'onderweg' in de wetenschappelijke tijdschriften in bijdragen van de hand van reguliere wetenschappers en zou ook via het gewone wetenschappelijke proces tot dezelfde verbeteringen hebben geleid. Mann en de hockeystick zijn zwaar beschadigd in de publieke beeldvorming, daar lijkt hun rehabilitatie door de National Research Council niet veel meer aan veranderd te hebben. Later (Edwards heeft dit verhaal niet meer kunnen meenemen) werd Mann bovendien een tweede keer slachtoffer van een aanval, dit keer door een inbraak in 2009 in de computer van klimaatwetenschappers van de *University of East Anglia* en de diefstal van een grote hoeveelheid persoonlijke e-mails. De buitgemaakte mails, in wat *climate gate* zou gaan heten, zouden volgens de beschuldigingen laten zien dat de wetenschappers knoeiden met de klimaatgegevens. Doordat hij met de East Anglia-groep in contact stond werd ook Mann in de affaire betrokken. Opnieuw werd Mann vrijgepleit (evenals de wetenschappers van East Anglia) en nogmaals bleef de hockeystick overeind staan. Maar de schade was alles bij elkaar natuurlijk wel groot.

Een belangrijk onderwerp in de lijvige, vaak technische, maar toch zeer leesbare studie van Edwards is hoe de zogenoemde ruwe meetgegevens, de *raw data*, van weinig waarde zijn in welke klimatologische studie dan ook als ze niet in een nooit-ophoudend proces worden geïnterpreteerd, gecalibreerd en geïnterpoleerd, zowel door geavanceerde computerprogramma's als door historisch onderzoek naar vroegere manieren van meten. Over alle datasets die in de klimatologie worden gebruikt is debat en discussie mogelijk, en nieuwe inzichten leiden soms na decennia tot alweer nieuwe bijstellingen van de gegevens. Kritiek op data is dus het dagelijks werk van klimatologen. De interventie van McIntyre, met name zijn eis dat datasets via het internet algemeen toegankelijk moeten zijn, heeft ertoe geleid dat nu ook leken zich daarmee bezig kunnen houden. Daar kun je democratisering van de wetenschap in zien, en Edwards zou daarmee gelukkig kunnen zijn, maar niet met de achterdocht tegen de wetenschap die er vooral uit spreekt.

Hetzelfde dilemma doet zich voor bij een ander burgerinitiatief op het gebied van klimaatwetenschap, de website van SurfaceStations.org. De initiatiefnemer van deze site, Anthony Watts, een weerman op lokale tv en radio, plaatst foto's van de meetstations van het zogenoemde Historical Climatology Network (waarvan er in de VS 1221 zijn) op een site en roept sympathisanten op foto's bij te dragen. Voor dat idee, op zichzelf genomen, spreekt Edwards zijn bewondering uit. Maar Watts hoopt met de beelden aan te kunnen tonen dat veel meetpunten onbetrouwbaar zijn omdat er zich bijvoorbeeld een warmteafgevende uitlaat van een airconditioningsinstallatie bevindt in de buurt van de thermometer. Hieruit zou dan blijken dat de gemiddelde temperatuur van de wereld systematisch veel te hoog wordt ingeschat. Watts' actie heeft ertoe geleid dat er in 2011, dus na de publicatie van *A vast machine*, een grondige inspectie van de meetstations heeft plaatsgevonden. Een bias werd niet vastgesteld en dat zal Edwards niet hebben verbaasd. De hoge mate van integratie die is bereikt tussen klimaatmodellen en data geeft Edwards in dat we de modellen tekort doen door ze als 'theorie' te zien. Edwards deelt de meer gangbare visie niet waarin de berekende uitkomsten van de klimaatmodellen een hypothese vormen, die met grote waarschijnlijkheid waar is, maar niettemin hypothetisch van karakter blijft. Zo zien Oreskes en Conway de klimaatmodellen (en voor Gardiner is dat niet anders). Dat betekent dat deze auteurs in principe bereid zijn tot een bepaalde mate van 'scepticisme' tegenover de klimaatmodellen, scepticisme niet in de zin van

klimaatscepticisme maar als klassiek filosofisch scepticisme dat hypotheses nu eenmaal toekomt. Voor Edwards is de epistemische status van de klimaatmodellen dus een andere geworden: geen hypothese maar technologie. Een 'machine'. Meer nog dan Oreskes en Conway zoekt Edwards de weerlegging van de klimaatscepticisten op het door henzelf gekozen terrein: de wetenschap.

De aanvallen zoals op Ben Santer en Michael Mann, en op het IPCC als geheel, missen hun uitwerking niet. Veel klimaatwetenschappers zijn bang om voor 'alarmistisch' te worden uitgekreten. Dat zorgt voor een bias de andere kant op: een tendens om met de voorspellingen van de komende temperatuurstijging aan de veiligst mogelijke kant te blijven. Ondertussen stijgt de kooldioxideconcentratie in de atmosfeer gestaag verder, en daarmee de capaciteit van de aarde om almaar meer inkomende zonnewarmte op te slaan in plaats van terug te stralen de ruimte in. De pre-industriële concentratie van CO_2 was 275 ppm (parts pro million), in 2008 stond de teller op 387 ppm, de hoogste concentratie in de laatste 650.000 jaar. Het is nu vrijwel zeker dat in 2050 CO_2 de waarde van 550 ppm zal bereiken. De ethicus Clive Hamilton zegt, in *Requiem for a species* (waarmee de mens is bedoeld), dat het hoog tijd is dat wij ons van de illusie ontdoen dat de gemiddelde wereldtemperatuur niet verder zal stijgen dan twee graden boven het pre-industriële niveau. We zitten nu bijna op een graad en de verwachting is dat het vanaf nu steeds sneller zal gaan met de stijging, zelfs in het hypothetische geval dat er binnenkort veel vooruitgang zal worden geboekt met het beperken van de broeikasgassenuitstoot. Het beperkt houden van de stijging van de gemiddelde temperatuur van de wereld tot twee graden heeft een zekere symbolische betekenis. De rijke westerse landen hebben meermalen te kennen gegeven dat dat het minimale politieke doel is omdat, als dat zou lukken, de ecologische gevolgen van de opwarming van de aarde binnen de perken zouden blijven. Twee graden is de officiële *target* van de Europese Unie. Volgens Hamilton schijnen politici te denken dat de gemiddelde temperatuur van de wereld geregeld wordt door een soort thermostaat, met kooldioxide-uitstoot als de knop waaraan je zou moeten kunnen draaien. Een tijdelijke *overshooting* zou dan niet erg zijn, als je er dan alsnog maar op tijd bij bent. Maar het probleem met kooldioxide is dat het zich *opbouwt* in de atmosfeer en dat zal het voorlopig blijven doen, zelfs in het hypothetische geval dat de wereld in 2015 grotendeels overschakelt naar zonne- en windenergie. De twee graden zullen dus wel gepasseerd worden met als verwacht probleem dat het aardse systeem heel vreemde dingen gaat doen. Het IPCC gaf aan in 2100 een stijging van maximaal ongeveer vier graden te verwachten. Klimatalogen zeggen nu tegen elkaar een verhoging van vier graden in 2100 als de benedengrens van hun verwachting te zien, een minimum dat mogelijk veel eerder bereikt wordt dan in 2100. De jongeren van nu, met andere woorden, zullen de *four-degree world* dus meemaken.

Het boekje van Hamilton is een nuttig pamflet over waarom de mensheid de waarheid van klimaatverandering niet onder ogen wil zien, en wat voor uitvluchten ze voor zichzelf bedenkt om de broodnodige actie uit te stellen. Ook *Why we disagree about climate change* van Mike Hulme is zo'n boek, behalve dat het geen pamflet is maar een zeer gedegen en genuanceerd overzicht van alle aspecten van klimaatverandering, niet alleen de natuurwetenschappelijke. Misschien speelt mee dat Hulme een Brit is. Er is in Engeland niet zo'n gepolitiseerde cultuur rond *global warming* als in de Verenigde Staten. Margaret Thatcher zelf was overtuigd van de ernst van de klimaatproblematiek, anders dan haar politieke geestverwant en tijdgenoot Ronald Reagan, en ook na Thatcher hebben de opeenvolgende Britse regeringen een zekere prioriteit toegekend aan het klimaatvraagstuk. Op instigatie van de regering-Blair kwam in 2006 de *Stern Review* tot stand, een studie naar hoe de aanpak van *global warming* verenigbaar is met economische groei, en deze ook kan bevorderen. Hulmes boek bevat een mooie bespreking van de voordelen en beperkingen van de Stern-aanpak (net als *Requiem* overigens), maar alles bij elkaar laat Hulme veel meer kanten zien dan Hamilton en ook Gardiner over de kwestie waarom het zo moeilijk is om *global warming* te lijf te gaan en waarom er zoveel meningen over zijn.

De discussie met de klimaatsceptici zelf gaat Hulme vrijwel alleen indirect aan. Maar van de hier besproken schrijvers zijn hij en Gardiner de enigen die toekomen aan de vraag hoe het komt dat er überhaupt ontvankelijkheid bestaat voor de boodschap van de klimaatsceptici onder diegenen die geen persoonlijk belang hebben bij het ontkennen van het bericht van het front van de klimaatwetenschap dat een klimaatsverandering bezig is zich

te voltrekken. Hulme pakt dat overigens veel breder aan dan Gardiner, wiens focus vrijwel uitsluitend bij de intergenerationele ethiek ligt. Hulme gaat daarnaast ook in op het verband tussen wereld- en natuurbeeld enerzijds en risicoperceptie anderzijds, en ook zijn diagnose van de *governance*-mogelijkheden in onze hedendaagse wereld is veel specifieker dan Gardiners simpele vaststelling dat onze instituties blijkbaar tekortschieten.

Het is ook nogal wat, wat de wetenschap lijkt te vragen van de mensheid. De hint van Hulme is om afscheid te nemen van de technocratische visie op wetenschap, het idee dat uit de resultaten van de wetenschap als vanzelf volgt wat de sociale en politieke implicaties zijn voor menselijk handelen. Als je die persé onacceptabel vindt, dan móet je de wetenschap die de implicaties ingeeft ook afwijzen. De klimaatsceptici volgen dus eigenlijk een technocratische logica. Hulme zegt het niet, maar hij had het kunnen zeggen. Want, en dat zegt hij wel, er is nog zoveel meer aan mogelijkheden om te handelen tussen enerzijds de centralistische respons van het Kyoto-protocol, en anderzijds gehoorzamen aan het moreel appèl om zuiniger te leven. Goed voorbeeld zijn de sociale bewegingen van allerlei soort die het thema van klimaatverandering hebben verbonden aan een ander thema: duurzaamheid. Maar Hulme dringt niets op. Zijn boek is een verfrissende bijdrage aan een van de meest beladen vraagstukken van onze tijd.

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Krisis

Tijdschrift voor actuele filosofie

AUKJE VAN ROODEN

OPTISCHE MACHINES

Recensie van: Jacques Rancière (2011) *Aisthesis. Scènes du régime esthétique de l'art.* Parijs: Galilée, 307 pp. Vert. Jacques Rancière (2013) *Aisthesis. Scenes from the aesthetic regime of art.* New York: Verso, 262 pp.

De gemutileerde Torso van Belvedere, Murillo's *Jongens die meloen en druiven eten*, Loïë Fullers serpentinedans, Charlie Chaplins pantomime – een heterogener opsomming van kunstuitingen is moeilijk denkbaar. En dan is dit nog maar een kleine greep uit de door Rancière belichte werken. Jacques Rancières *Aisthesis. Scènes du régime esthétique de l'art* – dat vorig jaar in Engelse vertaling verscheen – behandelt in totaal veertien 'scènes' die alle aan een specifieke plaats en tijd gekoppeld zijn, in Fullers geval bijvoorbeeld 'Paris, Follies-Bergère, 1893'. Het resultaat is een veelzijdige reis die bijna drie eeuwen beslaat. Een aantal van de door Rancière uitgelichte werken dook al eerder op in zijn oeuvre en uit het dankwoord leren we dat verschillende hoofdstukken oorspronkelijk voor andere gelegenheden zijn geschreven. Dit had kunnen leiden tot een wat gratuit verzamelwerk zonder eigen noodzaak. En inderdaad is dit boek vooral – met veel enthousiasme niettemin – onthaald als een verdere illustratie van het 'esthetische regime' waarvan Rancière in eerdere werken al de contouren schetste. Maar *Aisthesis* is meer dan dat.

Het esthetische regime is een van de drie regimes van zintuiglijke waarneming die Rancière doorgaans onderscheidt (Rancière 2000). De ordening van onze zintuiglijke waarneming – van dat wat algemeen zichtbaar, zegbaar, denkbaar is – bepaalt volgens hem in de meest fundamentele zin onze gemeenschappelijkheid. Die bepaling is zowel esthetisch als politiek. Of beter gezegd: zij is een esthetische aangelegenheid die in de kern politiek van aard is. Uiteindelijk gaat het namelijk om de bepaling wie en wat deel uitmaakt van onze gedeelde ruimte. Rancière onderscheidt in dit verband dus drie regimes, die ieder een eigen logica hanteren om het zintuiglijke te organiseren. Hoewel deze regimes volgens hem naast elkaar kunnen bestaan, hebben zij elkaar qua invloed opgevolgd.

Voor Rancière is met name de overgang van het tweede naar het derde regime van belang, een overgang die hij aan het begin van de negentiende eeuw situeert. Het gaat hier om de overgang van het 'representatieve regime' naar het 'esthetische regime'. De opkomst van het esthetische regime interesseert Rancière al vanaf zijn vroegste geschriften over de arbeidersbeweging omdat hierin het volledige emancipatoire potentieel van een samenleving wordt blootgelegd. Daarvóór – vanaf kortweg Aristoteles' *Poetica* tot het begin van de negentiende eeuw – was de verdeling van het zintuiglijke niet 'esthetisch' maar 'mimetisch'. Zij stond in het teken van *representatie*. Doel van dit regime was het opstellen van regels ter weergave van de werkelijkheid. Het gevolg was een strikte hiërarchie die sociaal-politiek van aard was en die in de kunst gerespecteerd en bestendigd diende te worden. De te verbeelden onderwerpen waren bovendien beperkt en vermenging van lage genres, zoals de klucht, met hogere genres als de tragedie was uit den boze.

De overgang naar het esthetische regime – dat nog steeds van kracht is – vormt in dit opzicht een revolutie, omdat hier als enige stelregel geldt dat men moet breken met de regels van het representatieve regime. Niet alleen kan *alles* vanaf dit moment als onderwerp dienen, maar dat onderwerp kan ook op alle mogelijke manieren behandeld worden. Doorslaggevend voor het ontstaan van dit esthetische regime zijn volgens Rancière schrijvers als Flaubert en Balzac, die in hun romans geen onderscheid meer maken tussen het alledaagse en het verhevene, tussen banale en nobele personages. Exemplarisch hiervoor is de openingspassage van

Balzacs *La peau du chagrin* (1831), die een antiekwinkel beschrijft waarin oude en nieuwe, nutteloze en waardevolle, heilige en profane voorwerpen zonder enige ordening door elkaar zijn opgesteld. Balzac, aldus Rancière, 'smeedt [hiermee] een nieuwe rationaliteit van het banale en het onbeduidende die indruist tegen de hoogstaande aristotelische ordeningen' (Rancière 2007: 59). Volgens Rancière is het uiteindelijk deze rationaliteit van het onbeduidende, deze rationaliteit die geen ordening oplegt maar de radicale *equivalentie* van het ongeordende blootlegt, die een emancipatoire kracht heeft.

Het is diezelfde rationaliteit die kunst vanaf het begin van de negentiende eeuw autonoom heeft gemaakt, paradoxaal genoeg dus door de grens tussen kunst en leven op te heffen: volgens de wetten van het esthetische regime kan het hele leven immers tot het domein van de kunst behoren. Deze paradoxale beweging van het esthetische regime vormt een centraal thema in Rancières latere werk en wordt door hem in *Aisthesis* als volgt verwoord: 'Kunst bestaat als een afgescheiden wereld vanaf het moment dat willekeurig wat er deel van kan uitmaken' (Rancière 2011: 10). Vanaf dat moment is het namelijk de kunstenaar en niet de maatschappelijke orde die bepaalt wat er op het doek of tussen de kaften terechtkomt. Dit is ongetwijfeld ook de reden waarom Rancière stelselmatig spreekt over 'esthetica' in plaats van 'kunst'. 'In mijn boek wil ik niet zozeer de esthetica als discipline verdedigen, als wel aangeven dat de discipline van de esthetica zich niet zou moeten bezighouden met kunstwerken. Esthetica is een regime van waarneming, van denken', aldus Rancière in een interview met *Libération* naar aanleiding van het verschijnen van *Aisthesis*.[1] De leidraad van *Aisthesis* vormt dan ook de vraag naar 'hoe het mogelijk is *dat* iets op een bepaald moment denkbaar wordt . . . Hoe kan het dat een met doeken zwaaiende danseres of een acrobatische mimespeler paradigmatisch worden voor grote kunst? Hoe is het mogelijk dat Charlie Chaplin, toch een soort zot, paradigmatisch wordt voor de moderne kunst?'[2]

Het antwoord op die vraag wordt door Rancière zoals gezegd dus gevonden in de radicale gelijkheid van ervaringsobjecten, en daarmee van de ervaring zelf, die het esthetische regime kenmerkt. Dit gelijkheidsprincipe vormt dan ook het kader dat de uiteenlopende scènes van *Aisthesis* met elkaar verbindt. Zoals Rancière niet nalaat te vermelden is dit kader noodzakelijkerwijs open: 'Dit boek is tegelijkertijd af en onafgerond. Het staat open voor verdere uitbreiding, maar ook voor het vormen van andere verhalen, die de afzonderlijke episodes op een andere manier aan elkaar rijgen' (Rancière 2011: 14). Toch zijn de 'episodes' in *Aisthesis* zeker niet willekeurig gekozen. Geen *Fountain*, *Zwart vierkant* of Manet, wel – naast de reeds genoemde werken – Stendhals *Le rouge et le noir,* een essay van Emerson, het *Hanlon Lees Action Theatre*, Ibsens *Bouwmeester Solness*, Rodins sculpturen, Graigs marionettentheater, Stieglitz' fotografie, Vertovs *The man met de camera* en James Agees foto's van armoedige interieurs. Wat Rancière met deze selectie op het oog heeft is naar zijn eigen zeggen niets minder dan een 'contrageschiedenis' van de artistieke moderniteit (Rancière 2011: 13). Hoewel het hier niet altijd minder canonieke werken betreft, schetsen de gekozen scènes volgens Rancière een ander beeld van de moderniteit dan we gewend zijn. In plaats van de moderniteit in navolging van Greenberg te beschouwen als een beweging van verzelfstandiging van het esthetische en het artistieke medium, wil Rancière aantonen dat men in de moderniteit juist het leven in de kunst wilde opnemen. Geen verzelfstandiging dus, maar een vereniging van kunst en leven. Ook in dit opzicht kunnen we *Aisthesis* overigens beschouwen als een nadere uitwerking van eerdere ideeën. Bovendien is juist het feit dat de grens tussen kunst en leven vanaf de negentiende eeuw is opgeheven zoals we zagen de basis voor haar kritisch potentieel (Rancière 2007: 32).

De veertien scènes waaruit *Aisthesis* is opgebouwd vormen volgens Rancière evenzoveel 'kosmossen' waarin de logica van het esthetische regime geïllustreerd wordt. Door de herhaaldelijke en zeer geduldige illustratie van de werking van dit regime, niet alleen in zeer uiteenlopende momenten van de artistieke moderniteit maar ook aan de hand van zeer uiteenlopende kunstvormen, kan Rancières kritiek op het modernisme alleen maar overtuigen, als zij dat niet al deed. Keer op keer weet Rancière de lezer deelgenoot te maken van de wonderlijke geboorte van dit nieuwe regime. *Aisthesis* is daarmee niet alleen een van Rancières meest sprankelende, maar ook een van zijn meest gedegen werken. Maar deze studie is meer dan alleen een goed uitgewerkte illustratie van het esthetische regime. Het belang ervan moet vooral worden gezocht in het begrip 'scène' dat door Rancière van een filosofische lading wordt voorzien. Een

scène is bij Rancière het openschuiven van de coulissen, het al schuivende plaatsmaken voor een nieuwe ziens- en denkwijze door een oude te doorbreken. De oerscène, de scène waarvan alle scènes in *Aisthesis* in zekere zin zijn afgeleid, is ongetwijfeld dit tafereel uit Rancières *La Nuit des prolétaires. Archives du rêve ouvrier* (1981), dat hij ontleent aan het dagboek van een vloerlegger: 'Als het raam uitkijkt op een tuin of een pittoreske horizon, laat hij zijn armen voor een moment rusten om zich in gedachten mee te laten voeren naar de verten en daar zelfs meer van te genieten dan de bewoners van de naastgelegen woningen.'[3] Het is deze interruptie of inertie van gecodeerde handelingen, van 'het verhaal; van oorzaken en gevolgen' dat onze lichamen en ons denken in de gemeenschap voortstuwt (Rancière 2011: 16), die dit tafereel tot een *scène* maakt – en die dit soort scènes exemplarisch maakt voor het esthetische regime. Door te kiezen voor het begrip 'scène' in plaats van het meer gebruikelijke '*événement'* of 'gebeurtenis' maakt Rancière een beslissende filosofische keuze, de keuze namelijk om niet het evenement zelf te onderzoeken maar de *voorwaarden* van het evenementiële. De scène is immers niet alleen de handeling, maar ook het podium waarop die handeling plaatsvindt. Het gaat hier met andere woorden om het dispositief van de verschijning, om datgene *waardoor* een esthetisch moment kan plaatsvinden. En dit is uiteraard ook wat Rancière met zijn beschrijving van de verschillende 'regimes' voor ogen staat.

Dit maakt de status van deze 'tegengeschiedenis' van de artistieke moderniteit wel complexer dan men op het eerste gezicht zou vermoeden. Doordat hij de aandacht vestigt op het dispositief van de verschijning, gaat het Rancière in *Aisthesis* uiteindelijk niet om de behandelde werken zelf, maar om de manier van kijken en denken die hun ontstaan en waardering mogelijk maakt. De 'scène' in *Aisthesis* is dus niet een performance of verschijning, maar is, zoals Rancière ook aangeeft in zijn Prelude, eerder de *enscenering* ervan, 'het interpretatieve netwerk dat het zijn betekenis geeft' (Rancière 2011: 11). Rancière opent zijn veertien hoofdstukken dan ook steevast met een uitvoerig citaat waarin het betreffende werk wordt geduid door een theoreticus: Winckelmann duidt de Torso van Belvedere, Hegel duidt Murillo's *Jongens die meloen en druiven eten*, Mallarmé de serpentinedans van Loïe Fuller, Sjklovski het pantomimespel van Charlie Chaplin, et cetera. Natuurlijk zijn de door Rancière aangehaalde theoreti-

ci – die in sommige gevallen zelf ook kunstenaar zijn – in de eerste plaats toeschouwers van de door hen geduide werken, toeschouwers die de ruimte zagen om bepaalde waarnemingen, affecten en ideeën samen te brengen en het denkbare opnieuw te bepalen, maar dit neemt niet weg dat de *ontsluiting* van de scène uiteindelijk steeds een theoretische is.

De door Rancière uitgewerkte scènes zijn daarom uiteindelijk geen inkijkjes in een alternatief pantheon, maar wat hij met een wat vreemde metafoor 'optische machientjes' noemt. Zij *doen* eerder iets dan dat zij illustreren, zij weven het interpretatieve netwerk, zij draaien ter plekke aan de knoppen van onze waarneming.

'[De scène] is een optisch machientje dat ons laat zien hoe het denken bezig is om bepaalde waarnemingen, affecten, namen en ideeën bijeen te brengen en zodoende de zintuiglijke gemeenschap constitueert die door deze verbindingen gecreëerd wordt en de intellectuele gemeenschap die deze verbinding denkbaar maakt.' (Rancière 2011: 12)

Deze aanpak lijkt in lijn met de educatieve strategie die door Rancière is uitgezet in *Le maître ignorant* (1987) en meer recent in *Le spectateur emancipé* (2008). De kunstbeschouwer is volgens hem geen passieve ontvanger die door een leermeester voorgekauwde kennis tot zich neemt, maar een actieve participant die op eigen kracht, met eigen ogen, waarneemt. Er is in dit geval ook geen leermeester mogelijk omdat het in de esthetische scène niet gaat om de verbeelding van een Idee, maar om de *wording* van een idee, om 'de creatie van een denken dat nog op zoek is naar zijn formulering' (Rancière 2011: 200). De vraag die *Aisthesis* oproept, en steeds sterker oproept bij elk nieuw hoofdstuk, is echter in hoeverre de eigen scenografie aan deze educatieve eis beantwoordt. De metafoor van de optische machine moet uiteraard zelfwerkzaamheid suggereren, maar men kan zich niet aan de indruk onttrekken dat Rancière als een meesterlijke regisseur aan de knoppen draait. Niet als de passieve *Übermarionette* van Edward Gordon Graig, maar als de soevereine ontsluiter van alle ontsluitingen. Want wat betekent het eigenlijk te zeggen dat de veertien scènes tonen hoe 'het denken' bezig is verbindingen te leggen en zijn formulering te zoeken? Een dergelijke educatieve activiteit is alleen mogelijk wanneer het hier inderdaad 'een denken' betreft dat zich onafhankelijk

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ontwikkelt. Dit is ook precies wat Rancière in *Le spectateur émancipé* suggereert.

'[Een artistieke performance] is niet het overbrengen van kennis of begeestering aan de toeschouwer. Zij is dat derde ding dat niemand bezit, waarvan niemand de betekenis kent, dat zich tussen hen voordoet en zich onttrekt aan elke poging tot identificatie van oorzaken en gevolgen.' (Rancière 2008: 21)

Een dergelijk Bildungsideaal – als het nog zo genoemd mag worden – verdraagt inderdaad alleen onwetende leermeesters. Toch staat dit ideaal op gespannen voet met de positie die Rancière in zijn eigen werk inneemt, een spanning die zich op een heel letterlijke manier toont in de volgende passage uit *Le Spectateur émancipé*: 'Het beeld spreekt voor zichzelf', zo merkt de onwetende leermeester Rancière op bij een afgebeelde foto van kunstenares Josephine Meckseper. Om te vervolgen: 'Dat wat het beeld te zeggen heeft kunnen we begrijpen door de frictie tussen de politieke affiches en de vuilnisbak [die zijn afgebeeld op de foto, AvR] te verbinden met de voor de kritische traditie exemplarische artistieke vorm van de collage' (Rancière 2008: 31). Deze spanning tussen onwetendheid en sturing, tussen ontsluiting en invulling is exemplarisch voor het hele project van *Aisthesis* als contrageschiedenis van de artistieke moderniteit. Als ingenieur van de optische machine schrijft Rancière misschien niet zozeer voor *wat* we moeten zien maar wel *hoe* we moeten kijken. Hij is niet de toneelschrijver, maar de *stage director* – een functie die nog altijd zeer directief is. Dit roept niet alleen vragen op over de verhouding tussen theorie en praktijk in het esthetische regime, maar ook over de hiërarchie tussen leermeester en toeschouwer. Een reflectie hierop zou een welkome aanvulling geweest zijn op deze sprankelende en gedegen studie.

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[1] 'La rupture. C'est de cesser de vivre dans le monde de l'ennemi.' *Liberation* 16 november 2011. Interview met Loret.

[2] Idem.

[3] Gabriel Gauny, 'Le travail à la tâche', *Le Philosophe plébéien, textes choisis et présentés par Jacques Rancière* (Parijs: La Découverte/Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1983), 91.

ROGIER VAN REEKUM

BORDER AS METHOD

Review of: Sandro Mezzadra and Bret Neilson (2013) *Border as Method or, the Multiplication of Labor*, Duke University Press.

Drawing the line … somewhere

Liberalism is such a duplicitous ideology: Agency, but only for humans. Human rights, but only for citizens. Citizenship, but only for the deserving. Recognition, but only for the familiar. Dignity, but only for the civilised. Solidarity, but only for victims. Freedom, but only for the autonomous. Democracy, but only for liberals. Liberalism is the art of withholding something in the very act of providing it. It is this same duplicity, both as a set of political ideas and a set of political practices, that has acted itself out in that ominous thing we call capitalism. Producing unthinkable amounts of stuff and then putting it out of reach through the very relations of production. What a stunt. And we bought it. We bought it all.

What I learned by reading *Border as Method. Or, the Multiplication of Labor* by Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013) is that there really never was any reason to take liberalism seriously at all. Even when talk of universal freedom was earnest, it was disingenuous by being so. Liberalism, the idea that Every Man should be able to do as he pleases, cannot help but draw a line: 'do as you please, but…' Predictably, what comes after the *but* is all that really matters. Thus, I'd like to summarise Mezzadra & Neilson's program as follows: they refuse to treat liberal political thought and its analytical pendants as so many unfulfilled promises, yet to be realised by a more critical version of the doctrine. There is no progressive dialogue to be had with liberalism. Drawing the line was what it was all about anyway. Drawing the line is what gives us 'liberties' if they are any to be had. So let's talk, Mezzadra & Neilson propose, about what really matters in life. Let's talk about drawing the line.

Border as method

By border as method Mezzadra & Neilson designate a methodological approach to the study of borders *and* an activist engagement with border struggles. For them, activism and research are inextricably entangled. Yet over and above this double meaning of the phrase, 'border as method' refers to the idea that borders pose a far more evocative object than is addressed in the fields of border and migration studies. In these fields, 'the border' is still too directly associated with a territorial division. Yet, quoting Balibar, Mezzadra & Neilson pitch the question of borders as a far more rudimentary problem:[1]

'The idea of a simple definition of what constitutes a border is, by definition, absurd: to mark out a border is precisely, to define a territory, to delimit it, and so to register the identity of that territory, or confer one upon it. Conversely, however, to define or identify in general is nothing other than to trace a border, to assign boundaries or borders […] The theorist who attempts to define what a border is is in danger of going round in circles, as the very representation of the border is the precondition for any definition.' (2002, 76)

Thus, *Border as Method* is thereby not so much a book about territorial borders of states and the international management of human mobility, even if it deals with these issues extensively, but rather a book about how the border – as concept, vocabulary, site, concern, tool and weapon – offers ways to actively intervene in and critically interrogate the world in which we find each other. To Mezzadra & Neilson, borders properly conceived are crystallisations of many different processes and concerns and thereby form crucial sites of research and struggle:

'The basic concepts that still shape our political languages, from citizenship to sovereignty, from constitution to representation, are all predicated on "implicit spatial representations" deeply embedded in the history and theories of the modern state, which means in its *borders*…This is also true for the concept of democracy, especially as far as the concepts and institutions of political representation, sovereignty of the people, and the nation are concerned.' (303)

Border as Method seeks to disrupt the duplicitous antinomy that liberalism demands between enclosed unfreedom and disclosed freedom, between internal security and external agency. Thus, Mezzadra & Neilson evade, right from the outset, any program that would frame border struggle as the struggle against borders. They express respect and even support for movements that seek to eradicate borders – 'no borders, no nations, stop deportations!' – yet they seek to go beyond these positionings. As they show, page after page, borders are never dissolved. They may disappear, here and there, but only because they proliferate. What matters, is not, as liberalism would have us believe, the gradual eradication of impediments. The crucial questions are where, when, how, by whom, and with what, lines are drawn. At the heart of *Border as Method* is, then, a triple move: (1) to analyse how certain borderings – territories, cartographies, labor divisions, communities, sovereignties, subjectivities, disciplines, concepts – have come about, (2) *while* extracting out of those accounts new concepts of bordering (3) *without* forgetting that such concepts are themselves always already language evocative of border struggle. Studying borders in this way is always already a politicised mode of boundary work. Of course, denaturalising borders by demonstrating their contingency is hardly enough. Yet, neither is it sufficient to show how

certain conceptions of borders are performative of them and may be critically counterposed by other, more adequate concepts. Both the contingency and performativity of borders are themselves to be explored in view of border struggle.

Multiplication of labor

For Mezzadra & Neilson, it is not just a matter of replacing the outdated, inadequate and deceitful language of liberal discourse – with its neat little narrative of gradually opening up protective enclosures – by a critical theory that *does* know where the divisions in labor and capital can be found. As if it would be enough to unmask the liberal deception of a borderless world by demonstrating that borders are alive and well, that capital vitally depends on borders. The interventions that Mezzadra & Neilson make in a variety of directions actively redraw borders, but never with the aim of settling them as if borders can ever be in their proper place. So when, for instance, they discuss how borders are drawn across living labor, they not only critically assess the concepts of 'international labor division' and 'world market', nor do they merely seek to establish alternative conceptualisations. They aim to create concepts that deliberately foreground the unfixity of borders. The concepts they work out in order to deal with the problems of political economy – multiplication of labor; axiomatic of capital – are not meant to prick through ideological veils and show us where the real divisions lie, but should rather enable us to analyse the dynamics of bordering and instigate particular engagements in border struggles that go beyond a contestation with liberal orthodoxy.

Through the *multiplication of labor* they want to address how extraction of surplus is never merely a matter of imposing divisions onto labor. If this would be so, our critical engagement would stop at their dissolution as if an ever-expanding, 'international' solidarity would be enough. Mezzadra & Neilson emphasise 'how emerging global modes of production work by exploiting the continuities and the gaps – the *borders* – between different labor regimes.' (65). Capital is just as much in the business of imposing divisions as it is in redrawing them because the creation of new kinds of

openings and closings between labor regimes offers ever new ways of extracting value. In political economy, 'there is little attention to the creation and reproduction of labor forces, which is to say that these approaches tend to elide precisely what border as method seeks to highlight and politically explain: the production of subjectivity' (83). Contesting the imposition of divisions onto labor is not nearly enough. There will have to be struggles about who can use which means to redraw borders across labor. Creating the entire spectrum of temp and flex jobs, for instance, is a question of releasing some boundaries and drawing out new ones. It is precisely in the movement from one set of labor arrangements to another that value can be extracted.

Moreover, the importance of capital's constitutive outside is not denied, but it should be conceived in much more varied ways than a merely territorial idea of labor that is not yet taken up in the relations of the world market. Capital's frontiers are not just pushed extensively outward but also at once intensively redrawn:

'[…] the combination of "absolute" and "relative surplus value" in understanding the (extensive and intensive) expansion of capital's frontiers opens up a new perspective on the continuous *production* of this constitutive outside (through the "production of *new* needs and the discovery and creation of new use values") that can continue well beyond the point when territories literally lying outside the domination of capital no longer exist.' (72)

As new technologies of expression and communication develop, new frontiers appear within already commodified lives as certain people already desire these possibilities and others are yet to be won over.

It's not that capital imposes divisions that suit its current phases of development across the world system. It's that it works the borders to continuously reinvent divisions and connections that may proliferate across chains of dependency. The illustrious 'working day' is mined to the nth-degree as ever newer borderings come to produce forms of desire and labor that constitute new frontiers and new value. Far from a gradual homogenisation of the world market to capitalism's most progressive mode,

in which it has supposedly become most like itself, Mezzadra & Neilson propose the concept of an *axiomatic of capital* that understands the expansion of a capitalist world-system as an emerging 'isomorphism between situations and scenarios that are in fact quite heterogeneous in kind.' (81). Capital does not reduce labor to similar subjects the world over, all with merely their labor to bring to market and basically similar desires of sustenance. Nor does capitalism tend towards such a revolutionarily pregnant future. Anyway, it doesn't need to. As long as isomorphic lines can be established, surplus value can be accumulated.

Around the world in 80 ways

I've dwelt here on questions of political economy not only because Mezzadra & Neilson most certainly seek to critique and contest capitalism, but also because their engagement with capital illustrates nicely how *Border as Method* goes about rearranging concepts and arguments in particular fields of inquiry and political struggle. The book is a remarkable, immensely rich exposé across a wide range of debates, research programs, activisms, sites, and issues. In all of these directions, Mezzadra & Neilson seek to show how border struggles can provide lenses through which established ways of understanding politics and subjectivities can be further developed. I'll briefly go into some of what they do.

They try to interconnect new *figures of labor* that are apparently very different yet become intertwined when seen from the border. They link up the migrant care worker to the financial traders moving across their highly transnational labor market: "Like the migrant care workers Akalyn studied, traders sell not a predefined set of personality traits but their ability or potential to *become* the right person, the one required by their employers (or by the market) as circumstances change." Solidaristic organisation with regards to these figures of labor could only arise through varied and shifting translations, never comprising a settled class subject. With regard to migration, citizenship and inclusion, they discuss a whole array of temporal borders that place subjects at differentiated remove from effective civic status. Labor is made available at just the right moment, while

denizen migrants are not-yet or partly recognised as citizens, always (de)portable at some future time.

The book also seeks to make considerable contributions in the fields of cartography, critical geography, and the study of borderlands, where they reassess the very notion of area, discuss the formation of new territorial species, sovereignties and legal pluralism. Particularly evocative is their treatment of sovereignty and governmentality. As seen through borders, sovereignty does not necessarily coincide with the state when a multitude of agents are authorised to arrest, to make wait, to let through, to speed up. Only some of these borderings are directly related to state territorial border management. Moreover, there is a governmentalisation of the border when the specific functioning of borders becomes part and parcel of neoliberal governance, mobility control and management of labor power. In Deleuzian terms, sovereignty is an abstract machine that makes territories governable and government territorial without the unwarranted assumption that 'sovereign state' and 'governed territory' refer to the same domain or unit. Thus, it:

'[…] is important to stress that the sovereignty we are talking about is at the same time immanent to governmentality – because it tends to be subjected to its rationality – and transcendent to its devices – because it retains its autonomy, otherwise it would not [be] possible for it to act as a supplement of governmentality. It is this paradoxical and "monstrous" apparatus that we call the *sovereign machine of governmentality*.' (203-204)

Finally, Mezzadra & Neilson draw these engagements together in a re-articulation of the common. Here too, they are unsatisfied by any straightforward attempt to know, seek out and struggle for the common as an open, un-bordered domain conceived to be in opposition to the enclosures, accumulations and particularities of capital. Not only is the common never just something to be found disfigured by power and reclaimed by the people, it is to be actively produced while its access can only be maintained through translations that never fully exhaust what the common is. So not only is the liberal tragedy of the commons rejected, its social democratic is also critiqued as it still conceives of the common as *a*

good. The common is always in excess, there is always more to it, albeit not more of the same. It is the peculiar character of the common that struggle over its production, access and distribution is itself enactive of commons. Only insofar as it is dealt with as one and the same resource – air, water, welfare, time –, ultimately expressible in one coherent language of access and distribution, does it become a good that can be privatised – which includes social-democratic forms of collectivisation – and does struggle over it revert into institutional politics.

In pursuit of everything

Border as Method is more than a sprawling inventory of concepts and a dispersal of interventions. As I've tried to show, I think there is a consistent argument being effected throughout the book, an argument that strikes at the heart of liberalism's duplicity. Indeed, Mezzadra & Neilson are purposefully shifting across a vast variety of questions and issues as it is precisely an appreciation of particularities *and* yet unexpected connections between them that they want to seek out in analysing and engaging with border struggles. Against liberalism's duplicitous dream of a universal political language, *Border as Method* explodes on the scene voraciously combining, re-inventing, pulling apart, putting together, layering, sifting and dissecting contemporary theories and knowledge of what our capitalist world is becoming and how we might change it. The sense of *dis*orientation is, I take it, deliberately evoked in the reader. I'm certainly not unsympathetic to such a strategy, if you can call it that. Yet, it is particularly in the last two chapters, where the discussion centres most on the politics of border as method, that this reader wondered to what extent the method became an impediment to itself.

It is here that the central claim of the book – borders never dissolve, the point is to redraw them – begs for specificity. To some extent, the book resembles Deleuze & Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*. There is a deliberately provoked dizzying effect. *Border as Method* is an apprenticeship in dislocation. It is not that Mezzadra & Neilson fail to illustrate what *Border as Method* might concretely entail in a variety of border struggles, but

that the central argument of the book has the tendency to pack, well, most everything into border struggles. So even if the book foregrounds specific issues in different chapters – on geography, on labor, on temporality, on subjectivity –, the book aims to show how one set of borderings – special economic zones – inevitably leads to others – different theories of capitalism – once approached through border as method. The point is to redraw the lines, yet border as method primarily does so by proliferating them. Border as method, at least as performed in this book, lets specific kinds of borderings cascade into others whereby the specificity of struggles over particular borders becomes untenable.

The dislocatory effect is, indeed, deliberate. The point is precisely to show how it is important to interrelate all kinds of borderings, and seen from a hopelessly divided field of research and engagement that impulse is indeed a valuable one. Yet, it also means that border as method seems haunted by a voracious appetite, a pursuit of everything. In the end, I think this means that *Border as Method* is a book to read, confront, struggle through and, then, put down to hastily proceed with whatever one was doing…and lines will start to be drawn.

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[1] Quoted from Balibar, E. (2002). *Politics and the Other Scene.* London: Verso.

Krisis

KOEN BEUMER

MAATHOUDEN:
DE POLITIEK VAN STANDAARDEN

Standaarden zijn saaie dingen. Het zijn vaak lange lijsten, vol technische specificaties waar voorwerpen, processen of mensen aan moeten voldoen. Leest u zo'n document, dan zal het lastig zijn om u van de indruk te ontdoen dat ze zijn geschreven door wetenschappers en bureaucraten met een voorliefde voor lange zinnen en jargon. Deze ogenschijnlijke saaiheid van standaarden moet ons er echter niet toe verleiden om ze links te laten liggen. Het recent verschenen boek *Standards. Recipes for reality* laat overtuigend zien dat standaarden een belangrijke rol spelen in vrijwel alle aspecten van ons leven. Standaarden geven de grenzen aan waar dingen, processen of mensen aan moeten voldoen om in bepaalde omstandigheden te kunnen functioneren. Ze maken het mogelijk dat consumenten eerlijk prijzen kunnen vergelijken omdat ze ervan op aan kunnen dat een kilo aardappelen bij de ene groenteboer evenveel weegt als een kilo aardappelen bij de andere groenteboer. Standaarden zorgen ervoor dat laboratoriumratten met elkaar vergeleken kunnen worden, dat nieuwe computers oude bestanden kunnen openen, dat voedsel veilig is, dat bouten op moeren passen en kogels in geweren.

Het merkwaardige van standaarden is dat ze alomtegenwoordig zijn maar dat ze tegelijkertijd vrijwel geheel aan ons zicht worden ontnomen. Vaak merken we het bestaan van standaarden pas op als ze niet meer goed func-

tioneren; wanneer op vakantie de stekker niet in het stopcontact past, of wanneer we typefout op typefout stapelen op een Azertytoetsenbord. Gebrekkig functionerende standaarden worden dan zichtbaar als hinderlijke onderbrekingen van de normale gang van zaken, die zo snel mogelijk een technische oplossing vereisen. We zoeken naar een ander stopcontact of een adapter waardoor onze stekker toch in het vreemde stopcontact past. Ze komen ons toe als technische problemen en het zijn dan ook voornamelijk experts uit het bedrijfsleven en publieke onderzoeksinstellingen die betrokken zijn bij de totstandkoming van standaarden. *Standards. Recipes for reality* laat echter zien dat de macht van standaarden veel verder gaat dan het opwerpen of wegnemen van praktische, technische bezwaren.

De onzichtbaarheid van veel standaarden maakt het lastig om ze te bestuderen. Lawrence Busch lost dit op door een brede keur aan voornamelijk historische voorbeelden te bespreken, van de ontwikkeling van de scheepscontainer tot het ontstaan van accreditatieorganisaties, en van legeruniformen tot het *Reinheitsgebot*. Door de ontstaansgeschiedenis en het gebruik van de anders zo onzichtbare standaarden te traceren, maakt Busch zichtbaar hoe de wereld zich in verloop van tijd heeft geschikt naar de normen die door standaarden worden voorgeschreven.

De veelzijdige invloed van standaarden wordt ook zichtbaar op het moment dat een nieuwe standaard ontwikkeld wordt, zoals momenteel gebeurt voor nanotechnologielabels. Een label moet het mogelijk maken om in een oogopslag te herkennen welke producten nanotechnologie bevatten. Een aantal Europese landen initieerde de ontwikkeling van deze standaard omdat zij vreesden dat consumenten zich tegen nanotechnologie zouden keren omdat er mogelijk risico's aan zijn verbonden. Een label, zo argumenteerden zij, zou de ergste zorg kunnen wegnemen omdat burgers dan tenminste zelf kunnen kiezen of ze producten met nanotechnologie kopen. Een land als Taiwan heeft echter een heel andere motivatie om de standaard te ontwikkelen. In Taiwan heeft nanotechnologie een dermate positief imago dat het een reden is voor veel consumenten om een product juist wel aan te schaffen. Producenten claimen daarom steevast dat hun producten nanotechnologie bevatten, ook als dat helemaal niet het geval is. Een label kan in dat geval helpen om echte nanotechnologieproducten te onderscheiden van onechte.

In beide gevallen is het noodzakelijk dat er een neutrale standaard wordt ontwikkeld die vaststelt wat geldt als nanotechnologie (en welke producten dus in aanmerking komen voor een label) en hoe kan worden gemeten of een product nanotechnologie bevat. In essentie betekent dit dat er een keuze moet worden gemaakt voor een meettechniek. Op het eerste gezicht lijkt dit vooral een technisch probleem, en de beslissingen hierover worden dan ook grotendeels aan technische experts overgelaten. Maar de keuze voor een bepaalde meettechniek heeft allerlei implicaties die de grenzen van een technisch probleem ruimschoots overschrijden. Veelgebruikte meetmethodes maken bijvoorbeeld gebruik van microscopen die weliswaar zeer nauwkeurig zijn, en dus met grote zekerheid kunnen vaststellen of een product nanotechnologie bevat, maar die ook zeer kostbaar zijn. Hierdoor stijgen de kosten voor de productie van nanotechnologie, in het bijzonder voor ontwikkelingslanden die nog niet over dergelijke microscopen beschikken. Als labels verplicht worden gesteld voor nanotechnologieproducten die in Europa worden verkocht, zou dit de facto een handelsbarrière vormen. Ook hier zijn het vrijwel uitsluitend experts uit het bedrijfsleven en de wetenschap die aan de standaard werken, terwijl de gevolgen van de standaard ver de technische problematiek overstijgt.

Eén en dezelfde standaard faciliteert dus de keuzevrijheid (en veiligheid) van bezorgde burgers, dient als keurmerk voor technologische bekwaamheid en werpt een handelsbarrière op voor ontwikkelingslanden. Wat op het eerste gezicht een technisch probleem lijkt – de keuze voor een methodiek om nanodeeltjes te meten – kan in de praktijk de wereld op ingrijpende manieren ordenen. De lange zinnen waar sommigen de hand van stoffige bureaucraten achter vermoeden, zijn in feite de uitkomst van soms lange en complexe onderhandelingen. Wordt de standaard eenmaal geaccepteerd, dan verandert deze van een heet twistpunt tot een spelregel. Net zoals op sportvelden de discussie zich richt op de interpretatie van de regels (of het buitenspel is of niet) en de spelregels zelf vaak voor lief worden genomen (of buitenspel een zinnige spelregel is of niet), zo worden ook standaarden voor lief genomen. De onzichtbaarheid van standaarden is een getuigenis van hun succes.

De centrale stelling van *Standards. Recipes for reality* is dat standaarden ons handelen structureren op manieren die verregaande gevolgen hebben voor de wijze waarop onze samenleving is geordend. Lawrence Busch stelt dan ook terecht de vraag of we de constructie van standaarden aan deze technische experts moeten overlaten. Hij zet zich daarmee expliciet af tegen een lange traditie van denkers, van Plato tot Locke, die technische vraagstukken per definitie buiten de democratie plaatsten. Tegelijkertijd is Busch zich er goed van bewust dat een dictatoriaat van de leek eveneens onwenselijk is. Voortbouwend op John Deweys notie van een publiek dat pas tot stand komt wanneer handelingen indirecte gevolgen hebben voor derde partijen, oppert Busch de pragmatische oplossing om van geval tot geval te bekijken welke kennis en partijen samen moeten komen om standaarden te creëren. Het uitgangspunt moet volgens hem zijn dat kennis en waarden per definitie gefragmenteerd zijn, verdeeld over verschillende partijen, maar dat er geen gouden formule is volgens welke je standaarden op een democratische wijze kunt vormgeven.

Een overtuigend en belangrijk argument, al blijft de aanbeveling op een abstract niveau. Busch formuleert een aantal nuttige richtlijnen op basis waarvan men kan beoordelen of standaarden werkbaar en rechtvaardig zijn, maar het blijft lastig om in te zien wat het betekent om deze richtlijnen in de praktijk toe te passen. De belangrijke vraag hoe niet-experts zich kunnen mengen in discussies die onvermijdelijk *ook* technisch van aard zijn, blijft bijvoorbeeld onaangeroerd. En dat terwijl er wel degelijk voorbeelden zijn van standaarden die mede tot stand zijn gekomen dankzij niet-experts. Zo hadden een aantal medewerkers van non-gouvernementele organisaties zitting in de Nederlandse commissie voor nanotechnologiestandaarden. Een korte blik op deze praktijken biedt al interessante inzichten. De niet-experts hadden bijvoorbeeld veel moeite met het technische jargon. Dit maakte het niet alleen lastig om de maatschappelijke gevolgen van dergelijke standaarden te overzien, ook kostte het bestuderen van die documenten erg veel tijd – iets wat een groot bedrijf zich wellicht kan veroorloven, maar wat voor vrijwilligers bij een milieuorganisatie heel wat moeilijker is. Als men zich dan nog bedenkt dat de inspraak van deze Nederlandse commissieleden zeer gering is omdat standaarden voor nanotechnologie worden vastgesteld op een internationaal toneel waar de overgrote meerderheid van de acteurs expert is, dan wordt pas goed duidelijk wat voor vergaande gevolgen een

dergelijk pleidooi voor inspraak kan hebben voor de manier waarop standaarden tot stand komen.

Het boek van Busch is veelomvattend en diepgravend, maar juist de dagelijkse realiteit van de standaardiseringsorganisaties die licht had kunnen werpen op de wijze waarop standaarden kunnen worden gedemocratiseerd blijft enigszins onderbelicht. Het zou interessant zijn om te zien hoe Busch dergelijke dilemma's zou bespreken vanuit deweyiaans perspectief. De bijdrage van Busch is vooral dat hij zicht verschaft op deze vragen. Het boek reikt handgrepen aan om hier op een productieve manier over na te denken; van simpele oplossingen is geen sprake.

Tegelijkertijd laat het boek ook helder zien waar de grenzen van de macht van standaarden liggen. Busch benadrukt dat de macht van standaarden altijd tijdelijk en onvolledig is, en hij maakt duidelijk dat niet-experts daar een belangrijke rol in spelen. We kunnen een adapter kopen voor onze stekkers en de automatische spellingscontrole helpt om de typefouten te verwijderen die we op een Azerty-toetsenbord maken. Er zijn dus meerdere manieren waarop burgers invloed kunnen uitoefenen op het functioneren van standaarden.

De voorbeelden die in *Standards. Recipes for reality* worden besproken laten echter zien dat de ordening die standaarden opwerpen vaak een stuk moeilijker is te omzeilen. Standaarden kunnen dermate materieel, cultureel of juridisch zijn verankerd dat het vrijwel onmogelijk is je te onttrekken aan de ordening die de standaard bewerkstelligt. Een goed voorbeeld is de breedte van schepen, ogenschijnlijk banaal. De breedte van het Suezkanaal is een bepalende factor voor de standaardgrootte van schepen die goederen van Europa naar Azië vervoeren. Het is weliswaar niet onmogelijk om handel te drijven met Azië als men enkel over een schip beschikt dat te groot is voor het Suezkanaal (men kan bijvoorbeeld omvaren via Kaap de Goede Hoop), maar dit is wel heel lastig. Net zozeer maakt een label voor nanotechnologie het niet onmogelijk voor ontwikkelingslanden om nanotechnologie te exporteren, maar het wordt hen wel een stuk moeilijker gemaakt.

Bovendien is het lastig om standaarden te vervangen als ze eenmaal worden gebruikt. Dat dit niet onmogelijk is wordt wellicht het sterkst bewezen door de invoering van het metrische systeem in India. Meer dan

150 lokale meetsystemen werden succesvol vervangen. Maar tegelijkertijd toont dit voorbeeld hoe moeilijk het kan zijn. Dit was een enorme operatie. Het kostte niet alleen de Indiase bevolking veel moeite om zich aan te passen aan het metrische systeem (denk aan de overgang van de gulden naar de euro), ook waren plotsklaps de meeste weegschalen en linialen waardeloos. Alleen al de Indiase postkantoren hadden meer dan 1,6 miljoen nieuwe gewichten nodig. Evenzo is het theoretisch ook mogelijk om het Suezkanaal te verbreden zodat er bredere schepen doorheen kunnen, maar ga er maar aan staan. Standaarden kunnen letterlijk in steen staan geschreven.

Standards. Recipes for reality is een geslaagde poging om standaarden uit de schaduw te halen. Het vlot geschreven boek, dat uitstekend als lesmateriaal kan worden gebruikt, laat zien dat achter deze droge documenten een interessante wereld schuilgaat. Standaarden vormen een belangrijk deel van de spelregels die bepalen waar processen, dingen of mensen aan moeten voldoen om in bepaalde spelen mee te doen, of dat spel nu de veiligheid van burgers betreft, de geavanceerdheid van technologie of de deelname aan de markt. Het zijn de recepten aan de hand waarvan de samenleving kan worden bereid. Door ze vervolgens enkel als een technisch probleem te zien, op te lossen door technische experts, wordt het zicht ontnomen op de complexe wijze waarop ze de samenleving structureren. De heldere wijze waarop Busch laat zien dat standaarden veel meer zijn dan een technische aangelegenheid vormt dan ook een sterk pleidooi voor een bredere inspraak in de ontwikkeling van nieuwe standaarden.

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