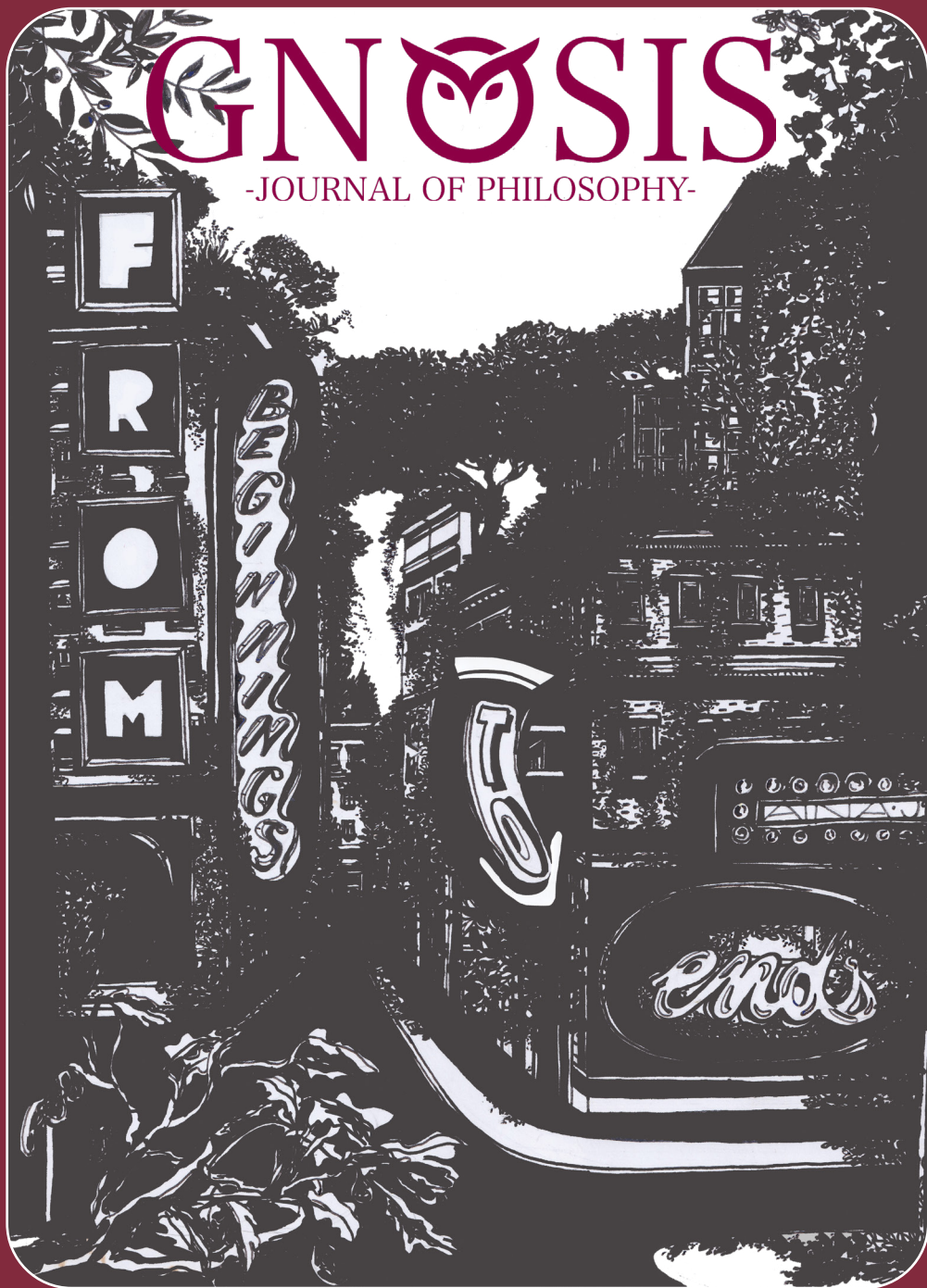


GNØSIS

-JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY-



Graduate Journal of Philosophy
Concordia University
Vol. XX, Fall 2022

GNOSIS

Graduate journal of Philosophy
Concordia University
Fall / Printemps 2022
ISSN 1927-5277

FROM BEGINNINGS TO ENDS



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 Cover of the first edition of *Gnosis* (1973), courtesy of Michael Ross.

FORWARD I: 1973

This issue is entitled ‘From Beginnings to Ends’; that seems an appropriate title under which to make my contribution as one of my favourite quotes comes from Eliot’s ‘Little Gidding’:

*We shall not cease
from exploration,
and the end of all
our exploring will
be to arrive where
we started and
know the place for
the first time.*

So, here we are in 2022, 50 years since *Gnosis* was conceived and 49 years since it was launched in 1973. Allow me to explore this theme in a personal manner.

When I retired a couple of months ago, I set about surveying a lifetime of collecting with an aim to junk a lot of it. While doing so I came across two copies of the following Journal:

Back in 1973 I had been a student referee for this first edition of a new journal, and I wondered whether it had survived. I searched the Concordia website and was surprised to see that it indicated that, while the Journal had survived, it was only about 20 years’ old. So, I emailed the University and offered them one of the two copies I had of this ‘first’ edition. They were surprised as they had no idea that the Journal went back so far. What happened between 1973 and the early 2000s is a mystery yet to be solved. What I do find interesting is that when it re-appeared it bore the same name – *Gnosis*.

Although I was initially enrolled at Sir George William’s University [SGWU or ‘Sir George’] in 1967, I ‘dropped out’ to explore the world around me. As anyone familiar with the 1960s knows, these were heady times, not only in Montréal but across Canada, the USA and, indeed, the world. I took night courses for a few years and was admitted back into the ‘day’ program at Sir George in the fall of 1971. I am forever indebted to Professor Dallas Laskey from whom I took two courses: ‘Epistemology & Metaphysics’ and a seminar in Kant’s ‘Critique of Pure Reason’. Helping Dr. Laskey mark our weekly submissions was a young lady by the name of Rosanna Stall who was doing a qualifying year at Sir George in order to have sufficient credits in Philosophy to begin her M.A. Rosanna was also in my Epistemology & Metaphysics class. As things turned out, we rather liked each other. On February 3rd this year we celebrated our 50th anniversary together.



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It was in 1972 that ‘Gnosis’ first emerged at a time when Sir George was in its death throes and about to amalgamate with Loyola College to form ‘Concordia’ or as it was termed by some at the time: ‘Con U’. In the late fall of 1972 Robert (Bob) Carter, an Associate Professor in the Philosophy Department, had an idea. Why not put out a journal that would “*provide students of Sir George with a continuous opportunity to express themselves on philosophical problems and have their views reach a larger audience than has hitherto been possible*”.

It really was a *tabula rasa* at this point, but under his guidance an editorial team of three and a ‘referee’ team of four – 2 professors and 2 students – was assembled. For reasons which escape me, I was one of the student referees. Then, in an act of shocking conflict of interest, one of the ten articles chosen for inclusion was by me. That apparently not being sufficient conflict, there appeared in the Journal an article by the young Ms. Stall. Somehow all of us escaped unscathed by scandal. At the end of 1973, I ventured West to do my M.A. in Philosophy at the University of Alberta. Rosanna remained behind to complete her M. A. at Sir George, now Concordia. And, for the 1974 edition of Gnosis, she became one of the editors; sadly, we cannot find a 1974 journal and all she recalls is being “*roped in to be an editor*” by Max Layton. Yes, Irving’s son.

And what, you may ask – if you are polite – did the years ahead have in store for our intrepid editor/referee pair? Were their Masters of Art in Philosophy of any ‘use’.

Well, Rosanna went on to become a supervisor and trainer of social workers in Vancouver and then an officer of the BC Legislature working in the Ombudsman Office and investigating governmental malfeasance.

For my part, jobs in Philosophy being hard to come by in the mid-70s, I went back to school – Law School, this time. I practised law for several years before joining the Ombudsman Office. I then became a judge with the Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada in Vancouver. Eventually, when I left, I was hired by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees [UNHCR] to do several contracts. In that capacity, Rosanna and I lived in Europe off and on for a dozen years where I ran ‘quality’ projects in 18 countries aimed at improving the quality of decision making in refugee cases and training judges in the correct interpretation of refugee law.

One never knows where a training in Philosophy can lead, but there is no doubt in my mind that the analytic – and synthetic – skills one learns has a wide and very welcome application in many fields. While ‘law’ presented the opportunities, my background training in Philosophy was the ‘magic’ ingredient that made the projects successful.

And so, Rosanna and I had our ‘beginnings’ at SGWU/Concordia, and 50 years later we revisit those beginnings by looking on at a Journal and a training that was inspirational to us then and has helped lead us down a fascinating life’s journey. We now know just how important to each of our lives SGWU/Concordia was in 1972 and is in 2022. May the Journal and your own training continue to inspire and lead you forward down some wonderful paths ahead.

Michael Ross

Graduating Class of 1973

FORWARD II : 2022

I mean by philosophical questioning an existential process that is carried out in the core of the soul, an urgent, spontaneous act of our inner life from which one cannot desist. Thus it probably also requires a shaking up of our everyday “normal” understanding of the world, which – naturally and quite rightly – dominates man’s workday; it requires a violent shove, a shock, so that that questioning which aims at the totality of human existence and the world and which bursts forth from beyond the realm of mere subsistence – the act of philosophizing itself – can be set in motion.¹

—Josef Pieper,
A Plea for Philosophy

This year’s theme, *From Beginnings to Ends*, felt even more fitting once we received a message from Michael Ross, who was present at *Gnosis*’s conception almost 50 years ago. I’d like to thank him for contributing to this year’s issue by writing a forward, giving us a glimpse into history’s unfolding. The original issue from 1973, graciously passed onto us by Mr. Ross, is now safely on display in the Philosophy Department at the Sir George Williams Campus here in Montréal.

It is my sincere belief that we have kept Robert Carter’s goal (cited in Mr. Ross’s forward) in founding *Gnosis* alive and well: A means for graduate students to showcase the determination necessary to seriously think and write about philosophical problems – To provide a space wherein a wide range of autonomous voices can be elevated, celebrated and, most importantly, heard.

1. Josef Pieper, *For the Love of Wisdom: Essays on the Nature of Philosophy*, trans. Berthold Wald (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 92.



Quête personnelle, Avignon 2022.
Felt-tip pen illustration,
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As the epigraph above states, the philosophical act is by no means trivial nor mundane. It requires a certain kind of vulnerability, an openness, that can only be described as existential freedom – an ineffable transcending of our outer lives of “mere subsistence,” allowing our “inner life” to spontaneously urge forth into expression through a questioning of the very boundaries of human existence and experience. This expression is not always comfortable, familiar, nor painless because it dislodges our current assumptions and understandings of the world, of our relation to this world and to others. Pieper is apt in describing this initiation of the philosophical act as a “violent shove, a shock” which is “carried out in the core of the soul.” To philosophize means to face the indeterminacy of our existence with a freedom and vulnerability that makes possible a questioning, a rethinking, a reworking of our own most inner selves.

Michael’s thoughtful forward reveals just how indeterminate life on this Earth is. I like to think that philosophy helps bring this indeterminacy into perspective. In other words, we never truly know what path we will end up on, nor where studying philosophy will take us (as Michael’s personal story tells us), but the ups and downs of the journey itself is what truly brings meaning to our experiences and the relationships we form with others. As someone who grips tightly to hope in an increasingly disparate world, creating a sense of community and solidarity are core values. My hope is that *Gnosis* has helped in creating an opportunity for students of philosophy to come together in the spirit of open expression, and that it will continue to do so well into the future – long after I’ve moved forward down the yet to be known path of my own journey with philosophy.

Last, but most certainly not least, I’d like to extend heartfelt gratitude to my Co-Editor-in-Chief, Emmanuel, to our editorial team, and to our external peer reviewers. Considering that *Gnosis* is run voluntarily by graduate students, I am extremely grateful to our entire team for the invaluable skills and perspectives that they brought with them. Thank you for your hard work in making this year’s journal happen!

A special thank you is warranted for our talented artist and graphic designer, Aina, whose work has beautifully brought together the very different essays that comprise this issue of *Gnosis*. You’ve truly provided this year’s journal with a layer of expression not previously experienced with Concordia’s graduate journal of philosophy. Thank you!

Sara Elianne Fortin
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Y penser m’apaise, Marseille 2022.
Felt-tip pen illustration,
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FORWARD III : WHAT IS TRAUMA ?

This is what Trauma feels like: entering the now as if it were hell, wishing for the world to be real again **(1)**. What is this hell? It is “living-*missingly*” or “being livingly-troubled.” Not being tuned correctly – harmoniously – with the real as much as with ourselves, thinking (believing? No – *knowing*) it is not right. It has changed. It has all changed somehow. The frames are not right, chairs are more crooked than before, floors seem to be leaning – all of this despite all the science and rationality available **(2)**. The now is not experienced as it had to be **(3)**. Everything is unforgiving: our mind, other people, time, and the facticity of life in general. What’s more unforgiving is forgiveness itself: it has lost its initial meaning. Forgiving oneself for what happened does not reset every clock in the world no matter what. *It* happened: The bomb *detonated* – she *died* – he was in the crowd when bodies fell on the ground **(4)**. Trauma is permanent and the only thing for which empathy from others becomes a Sisyphus who sightlessly generates a movement of social back-and-forth. It is a mental tattoo. No amount of emotional distance will make us go back in time and prevent the unforgiving. Though we may find comfort over time and attempt to re-serialize our memories **(5)** to tune ourselves harmoniously back with time and space – *this* now, *this* space, of the *right now*, – the off-putting feeling evinced by what is real remains continuously. The French have the word “fatalité” to beautifully describe the unforgiving characteristic of time, but Trauma knows no language. Trauma is a mental assault. It knows nothing but to assault our intellectual and physical capabilities – the tandem juxtaposition of the experience and the phenomenon that precedes Trauma goes above and beyond the agency of self-awareness **(6)**. Far from happening in the now, as it becomes a then before we know it, it strips us of all we have and makes us naked in the face of it all. I become as naked in front of anyone as I am when placed in the midst of my fright – as I am when I sense a presence in my back and the fear of torture, physical or intellectual, gives itself to my perception before it has even been me(an)t by my senses.

It can be everywhere and inside everything, and for this reason it does not even know itself. I am not a hero of my own self for staying a-live (7) and resisting against my struggles (8). I am an observing participant astonished by the powerful upholding force of facticity. What's more is that I can be astonished by my consciousness creating its own facticity – dividing itself up into powerful cycles of toxicity and social disfunction, creating this *me-who-wasn't-as-such* even though I am whole in flesh and bones. But to say that consciousness engenders its own facticity is to misunderstand its intersubjective nature – we then forget about the dynamics within the infamous structure we call *being-in-the-world*. Either with or without reciprocity, Trauma is a free interplay between both sides of the same coin, between environment and “consciousness.” It pervades the chiasmic, embedded, constitution of us. And my embodied consciousness that I can touch – this body I can feel – I feel it as something changed and losing its vividness. We all lose at staying a-live because we shall die no matter what (9) – our dispossession of time is inevitable. Only those traumatized seem to be dispossessed earlier than others. It is impossible to win against the sinking feeling that succeeds the first and determinate acknowledgement that “it won't be as before – it won't be as before – it won't be as before – it won't be as before – it won't be” and repeat ad infinitum. *This, that, here, there, now* and *then* will be different – as words; as phenomena – : A new sunset, a new face, a new voice with new thoughts – and the thoughts correlating with a new corporeal habituation into the lifeworld. Another house and perhaps another weapon. Perhaps this is a new car – perhaps this is a new mother (and her helplessness might be *sans précédent*). Perhaps there is a new love (10). Singular objects from before rise to attention in a different way and we apprehend this difference on the top of an experiential edge of imm/a/i/nence. What is this immanence? We don't know – we *cannot* know a thing whose limits are defined by limitlessness. But *that thing that could be* creeps and plays with our affectivity that is imm/a/inent itself in the aftermath of Trauma. This apprehension of imm/a/i/nence emerges in the form of another birth: the illegitimate mental birth resulting from this assault. The coping mechanism in its entirety is in the question “How will you do?” The action of asking is itself the coping mechanism.

Coping is beyond Heideggerian ontology and traditional metaphysics. It is further past coffee table existentialism and straitjacket-inducing CBT – because CBT is the most forceful attempt to attach personhood to one's most existential limit, the fear of death and the encounter of that which we can't accept, in the hope that the situation becomes akin to inverted magnets – that perceived exposure turns this transcendental, existential, limitation into a mere contingent fact of Being. You are born in a fearful world now. You enter hell, as you leave what you now think was heaven, and the remaining ἀλήθεια (*truth*) is that only you can grant your wish to make the real *real* again (11).

* * *

We generally believe that trauma begins through an event. But psychotherapy reveals to us that this traumatic event is no more important than life-long momentums we had set up for ourselves so it could explode at this now. For psychology, this now is the collection of a few hints and the clues were *what we've been* all along. “He did this because of his physique” – “she was bound to end up in this mess” – “you neglected yourself because you're worthless to your parents.” As such, there is in psychology a slant that the end is always near but the beginning is farther than we thought (12). Like the night sky is as much a window on time, trauma breaks our conceptual boundaries of time. They call it flashbacks for a reason. It appears and reappears, sometimes it also modifies your past so that you endlessly live backward – so your death becomes your actual birth – unable to witness time “kicking the door a thousand times” (13) – and sometimes you live sideways when your trauma is your whole life in a flashback with your death on the receiving end and your birth subduing you from it. In this way, the intruder is a reminder that you are at home wherever it feels uncozy in the various layers of life – perceptual, existential, interpersonal (14). So there's no time to have trauma because it's trauma that has it all: Your future prospects become as valuable as your greatest fears – the slightest newer now takes the same imminence as your own death – the origins of morality are just a matter of unconceptualized timing. It remains unclear how it makes you lose your ability to receive meaning from the outside.

Things may no longer tell you the way to go and how to dispose of them. This keeps you on your toes because you never know what this traumatic time – overarching what you’ve lived and what you might – has for you. And it’s painful, tiresome – tiresome – so excruciating that you create your own end with an existential suicide. Trauma kills each measure of space and time that’s ever given to you – your plane of existence becomes a cliff and *l’appel du vide* a Kantian categorical imperative – it *must be* universal that I can get rid of my fears by getting rid of myself. We mistakenly think that suicide is a form of distancing oneself from our life-worms when, in fact, it’s a sacrificial gift to honor what’s unfair. I’ve met this patient for whom swallowing her medical pills all at once was the transcendental condition to create her own beginning. She understood that her freedom was so hinged on the forceful guilt she had suffered and that she could not live like Antigone at Thebes if she did not claim her five senses on her own terms while honoring the overkill facticity of her fears (15). Once her suicide was over she began again again and again to perceive at her own pace. “Commencing” and “finishing” are not the correct ways to shape out traumas. Intervals can be labeled everywhere just like breathing can begin whichever way you want. But when the light reaches your eye and when weight of the air gives you a glimpse of how cold a corpse can be, your wish for “real” is wished for good because Trauma and Real take off when your body perceives.

Emmanuel Nounours
Co-Editor-in-Chief



*Célibérement (1/3),
Montreal 2018,
Black and white analog
photography,
© Aina J.*

ENDNOTES

(1) In proper phenomenological terms, time is an atmosphere envahissante – intrusive and pervasive – in which we continually get immersed into. Our body’s mechanistic activity with the physical world generates a temporality, the now, the present moment, that provides an access to this atmospheric temporality. We constantly enter the now, but this entrance is always one now too late, as Bergson tells us (see *Matière et mémoire*), since the present is always perceived as a past – and the use of “atmosphere” is only pedagogical here, because spatial terminology doesn’t accurately reflect what time is.

(2) Thus, by living-missingly and being-livingly-troubled we try to get to an understanding of everyday experiences of life where the phenomenological presuppositions of these experiences are damaged by Trauma. In the experience of misunderstanding something there is a sensation (mental or physical) that accompanies our awareness that we don’t understand that thing. This feeling gets replicated on a larger scale throughout our apprehension of life in general in the aftermaths of traumas.

(3) Notice how we cannot even say “as it should be” or “as it should have been.” All understanding of objectivity gets lost in Trauma. Real justice becomes subjective, which is why the now had to be experienced this way – but it did not.

(4) Reference to the Paris Terrorist Attack at the Bataclan on November 13th, 2015.

(5) In Husserl’s way: See his *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins* (Lectures on Phenomenology of Time-Consciousness) and *The Time of Trauma: Husserl’s Phenomenology and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* by Mary Jeanne Larrabee.

(6) A conceptual understanding of Trauma doesn’t do justice to the reality of this experience. Offering a mere intellectual outlook on what Trauma is would make this text irrelevant. Trauma is a tantalizing experience, and my phenomenological method is to fight against the misquotation between concepts and experiences. The only way we can put on paper what the experience of Trauma is by confronting it to a similar, tantalizing and overwhelmingly disturbing experience. Assault, violence, is one of these, and by mentioning mental assault I also intend to allude to the intricate and close relationship between body and mind. Our sexuality is embodied in the mind-body compound, which makes assault a mental reality as much as it is a physical one (see also Sara Heinämaa’s *Toward a Phenomenology of Sexual Difference* as well as Merleau-Ponty’s *Phénoménologie de la perception*). This also accounts for those whose non-sexual traumas have undermined their sexuality – and those whose sexuality has been a coping mechanism for their non-sexual traumas as well. The goal is also not to just create analogies for the sake of it, as that would also be useless. The goal is to expose an experience to another to get to a *phenomenological dialectic*, a dynamic and temporal description of what is going on. The belief I hold is that experience can be “bracketed” by being exposed – not compared – to another in such a way that the resulting transcendental features we find in it do not become as much static, systematic, and subject to a *lebenswelt*-attitude in the aftermath of the phenomenological analysis.

(7) Here we use the hyphen to highlight the directional and funnelling character of being endowed with life (as the etymology of the word shows as well), the same character that participates in the traumatic experience.

(8) What does it mean to be the hero of one’s mental disorder? To be a hero is to act outwardly what we wished to be internally, as Merleau-Ponty tells us (See *La guerre a eu lieu*). To experience the repetitive cycles of everyday life contrasted against the absence of life-narratives. It’s not to be posed against an enemy inside of us – to be placed against the “enemy-disorder.” We *are* the disorder – just as we embody the world that takes a grip on our skin to rub it against the walls of its horizons. This would be dividing up the being that we are, when in fact there is nothing heroic in doing what we *have* to do. There is no heroism in me when I respect a person’s dead body on the scene or when I disrespect *my* desire to be dead instead of them – when in fact Trauma never gives a choice. We simply read the writings on the wall because, the traumatic

event, as it happens, it ultimately tells us what to do before we can even understand the meaning of it all. Heroes, instead, are meant to be always a step ahead and they're known for their sacrificial decisions that they make deliberately. But the victims of Trauma never have the chance to deliberate.

(9) In a way a-live refers to "having life" which allows us to put it in conjunction with losing and loss in general. This links back to the idea that to be traumatized is to be endowed with experienced loss.

(10) Our phenomenological attitude in life organically channels itself in this difference that creates this sensation of "perhaps." In the aftermath of Trauma, our perception of those differences is closely tied to an awareness of the horizon of possibilities we face. Most people experience the anticipation and widening of this horizon when they are on the brink of a "breakthrough" in therapy.

(11) The first sentence of this essay refers to wishing for a comeback to reality, as it disappears in the moment of Trauma. In our perception of reality we attribute a belief that it is as such, and this belief gets confronted with the state of the world in the aftermath of a traumatic experience. In this way the duel between modern psychology and life's facticity is to resolve that confrontation – which most of the time is done by altering that belief and attuning the traumatized to their phenomenological experience of that belief.

(12) See Marycatherine Macdonald's *Merleau-Ponty and a Phenomenology of PTSD*

(13) *Phénoménologie de la perception* p.498

(14) In Heidegger's *Hölderlin's Hymne »Der Ister«*, Dasein is at home in the unhomely.

(15) Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, §437, §457



Who are you, Montreal 2018,
Digital colour photography,
© Aina J.

STABILIZING BOUNDARIES WITH NATURE

JASON STOCKER

Introduction

In this paper, I turn to Nancy Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi's conception of crisis in *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory* in hopes of better understanding our current climate crisis. They conceive of society as upheld by a kind of normative *Gestalt*, as a struggle of relations between different normative domains or boundaries—beginnings and endings, spaces and times where normative boundaries interact. On this view, society is crisis-prone not when its *Gestalt* violates an external, transcendental standard, but when its boundary struggles encourage contradictions, epistemological blockages, or lifeworld destabilizations which lead to disillusionment and undermine societies own conditions of possibility. And so, in order to address our climate crisis, Fraser and Jaeggi engage in what they call the Marxian method, which turns to the social actors and their normative claims at the heart of society's boundary struggles. In unearthing the contradictions afoot, they hope not only to reveal that which is buried beneath, but new paths toward emancipatory, stable boundaries.

Although illuminating, Fraser and Jaeggi's conception of crisis reduces boundary struggles to struggles *between* human subjects and *over* the human/nonhuman boundary, neglecting the ways in which many social actors consider nature to take part in such struggles in a fundamental way. As an act of unearthing, I explore the views of two such actors, Kimmerer's animacy and Morris' situated meaning. In my interpretation, each view offers an expression of the way in which our very being and identity, our lifeworld, our knowledge and theories of normativity are all grounded in what I call a co-originary movement with nature.

This co-originary movement with nature is itself a condition of possibility for any theory or subject in the first place, and *vice versa*. Co-originary, then, would challenge Fraser and Jaeggi's conception of crisis, I argue, not simply because it marks their failure to address the claims of some social actors, and not simply because it destabilizes their framing of crises as strictly between humans, but because in taking co-originary for granted, they risk the very undermining of the conditions of possibility which they claim trigger crisis. This, I suggest, leads us to an inseparable coupling of normative imperatives. On one hand, we must reconsider Fraser and Jaeggi's concept of crisis in light of co-originary. On the other hand, if we are to give co-originary its due, then any rethinking of crises, whether on Fraser and Jaeggi's account or not, demands an actual and intentional experiencing, situating, or moving with nature with co-originary in mind.

Route du Sud, South of France 2021,
Black and white digital film still,
© Aina J.



■ *Vie aquatique & domestique*, Montreal 2017,
Black and white digital film still,
© Aina J.

[I] Crisis as Destabilization and Disillusionment

Global warming, climate change, climate destabilization, however it is put, there is a shared sense in which life on Earth, for humans as well as for countless other species, is in the midst of a crisis. But on what grounds are we to judge our situation as a crisis? According to some measurable level of suffering, unfairness, or existential threats faced by past, present, and future Earthlings? But what is it about any such measure that calls for a crisis? In *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory* (henceforth *Capitalism*), Nancy Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi's dialogue offers an illuminating approach to these questions. They conceive of society as a kind of *Gestalt*, as a function of relations between different domains or boundaries. In this view, a crisis cannot be determined by measuring something like suffering or unfairness against a transcendental standard. Rather, society is crisis-prone when its own boundary struggles encourage contradictions or blockages which undermine its own conditions of possibility, and thus the stability of its *Gestalt*.

Exploring their notion of crisis in *Capitalism*, Fraser and Jaeggi focus on the boundaries between production and reproduction, economy and polity, and human and non-human nature. For the sake of illustrating their particular concept of crisis, let us consider the first. As they point out, capitalist frameworks are grounded on a boundary between production and reproduction in a way that foregrounds production and backgrounds reproduction.

In focusing on production, they tend to neglect reproduction. But as it turns out (who could have known), reproduction, and reproduction of a certain kind, is a condition of possibility for capitalist production.

In favouring production *over* reproduction, capitalist frameworks tend to take reproduction for granted, and thus risk undermining the relationship between production and reproduction on which they depend. And hence, the *Gestalt* of capitalism manifests boundaries that “destabilize [their] own conditions of possibility” (Fraser 154-155), thus promoting crisis. This is clear, for example, when we think about the ways in which capitalist societies fail to provide sufficient childcare resources, thus inhibiting the efficiency of many workers, and so undermining capitalism's very ability to function.

However, there is more to Fraser and Jaeggi's concept of crisis. To move beyond a mere descriptive or functionalist assessment towards a normative judgment of crisis, Fraser and Jaeggi emphasize that boundary struggles must be understood as unfolding in and shaping our lifeworld. In this sense, when Jaeggi says that boundary struggles are crisis-prone when they “erode their own resources for sustaining themselves” or when they “run up against problems or contradictions they cannot resolve” such that “practices and institutions ‘no longer function,’” (Jaeggi 178-179), by this she means not mere material resources, but normative resources, lifeworld functions, practices, or institutions. In this sense, the climate crisis cannot be reduced to something merely material or functional, like a change in temperature or even complete ecological collapse, but is dependent on there being an agent experiencing the “normative experiential/epistemic shifts” (Fraser 30) of their *Gestalt* as such.

As Jaeggi puts it, crises manifest “blockages of experience” (Jaeggi 158) that not only stall our learning processes and disable us from coming up with adequate solutions, but block us from the very resources we need to fully understand the problem as a problem in the first place (Jaeggi 158). In crises, Jaeggi explains, social actors experiencing these blockages become “disillusioned” (cite), losing faith in the stability of the boundaries that maintain society’s *Gestalt*. Disillusioned, they feel the need to take matters into their own hands to enact change (cite). And so, they draw the normative resources that make up society’s *Gestalt* “in a different and potentially explosive way – not just to dispute specific actions within a given, ‘proper’ sphere, but to impugn social relations elsewhere, in the ‘wrong’ sphere, or to problematize the divisions between spheres” (Jaeggi 179). To illustrate, consider the way in which capitalist frameworks long took for granted the conceptual distinction between state and family, between paid labour and unpaid labour. Challenging this distinction, then, meant drawing on resources, not from some external transcendental source, but from a contrary sphere: dispensing resources from the sphere of paid labour in order to make claims regarding unpaid labour, thus challenges the stability of both. Another example is the way in which the distinction between the public workplace and one’s private sex life was long taken for granted, so much so that despite the occurrences and experiences of sexual harassment, the boundaries of our normative spheres blocked the language to identify it as such.

In this sense, we might be better off speaking of a normative crisis or lifeworld crisis, rather than a climate crisis. In order to think through our climate crisis, then, we must turn not only to our material resources, but to the real social actors at the heart of society’s boundary struggles – to the ideals, values, and principles they invoke (Jaeggi 179). Our focus should turn to the ways in which people’s normative resources lead to contradictions, standstills, or blockages. To do so, Fraser and Jaeggi propose the “Marxian method,” which calls us to dig beneath the surface of our socio-historical *Gestalt* and its foreground/background relations, to uncover the contradictions, blockages or sources of the destabilization at play in our *normative* struggles, in hopes of stabilizing their underlying conditions of possibility (Fraser 30). In highlighting the background conditions that make our *Gestalt* possible, the hope is to “make visible something that was previously in the shadows” (Fraser 30), not only to better understand our current condition, particularly our crises and contradictions, but to reveal new possibilities for stability and emancipation.

[2] The Human/Non-Human Nature Boundary

With regards to the human/non-human nature boundary, Fraser and Nancy focus on the ways in which capitalism relegates nature to the background. With nature in the shadows, capital’s free riding on nature, its annexation of nature to mere instrumental roles, to a tap for production and a sink for waste, tends to go unchecked (Fraser 35). Capitalists have been free to expropriate nature without cost or compensation, mistaking nature to be infinite (Fraser 35-36), and this, as we see today, has quickly “undermined the very inputs on which they rely” (Fraser 154).

In taking nature for granted, capitalism undermines its own condition of possibility. This, under the motif of *Gestalt*, means that it destabilizes the very relationship with nature on which it depends, inciting what Fraser calls a “metabolic rift” in the “rhythms of social life” (Fraser 36) that had previously been adapted to the rhythms of non-human nature. This rift is so great that it marks not only our climate crisis but perhaps even, as some claim, a new geological era in the Anthropocene, or for Fraser, the Capitalocene.

To begin to think of the way in which taking nature for granted undermines our society’s *Gestalt*, we might consider the way in which the oil industry, for example, is depleting the material resources it needs to function, and thus undermining its own conditions of possibility. However, we must re-emphasize Fraser and Jaeggi’s insistence that their view rejects a reduction to any such functionalist critique. The mere fact that the oil industry is depleting its own material resources does not entail a normative claim. Rather, as Fraser and Jaeggi show, any critique with respect to the human/non-human boundary is a normative critique that necessarily passes through normative claims of social actors experiencing the instability of the human/non-human boundary. Hence, again, when Jaeggi says that boundary struggles are “motivated by problems and crises such that existing practices and institutions ‘no longer function,’ because they erode their own resources for sustaining themselves or they run up against problems or contradictions they cannot resolve” (Jaeggi 178-179), we must not think of natural resources, water, soil, air, oil etc., but normative resources.

And indeed, in light of our normative struggles over the human/non-human boundary, we readily find today an overstepping of human and nonhuman spheres. Consider movements regarding the rights to nature. Historically, justice has been exclusively a matter for humans, while nature has been relegated to a mere means to our human ends. But in the rights of nature, we find an imputation of what once was a merely human sphere into the sphere of nature, and, in light of the climate crisis, new and seemingly irresolvable commitments to both human rights and the rights of nature.

[3] Between or Over Nature?

Now, in following their approach we run into a serious, unexplored, normative contradiction arising from within the concept of crisis here and the current climate crisis talk. When we say that capitalists expropriate nature, who is harmed? If we consider existing social actors and the normative resources at play in the boundary struggle between human/non-human nature, we find a monstrous issue left lurking in the background and largely taken for granted by Fraser and Jaeggi. According to them, the struggle over the boundary between humans and non-human nature is a struggle *amongst* humans and *over* nature. That is, it is a normative struggle amongst humans, between their opposing normative claims *over* nature, over nature as property, development, or whatever our normative claims may impose on nature.

However, according to others, our normative boundary struggles are not only amongst humans and over nature, but also, in a fundamental sense, between humans and nature, and thus not simply ‘over’ nature. For some, nature should be considered as part of our normative boundary struggles, as taking part in the shaping and creating of normative resources, or even owed some kind of normative consideration similar to people. Thus, in contrast to humans struggling over nature, we now have humans struggling with boundaries—humans struggling with nature. Movements motivated by the latter are at play in twenty-eight countries across the globe, including Canada, Ecuador, New Zealand, the United-States, Bolivia, Columbia, India, Australia, and the list continues to grow. In these countries, various forms of normative considerations for nature have been raised; from legal personality for the Whanganui River to rights for *Pachamama* (Kauffman 2020). These movements contradict the idea that boundary struggles are between humans, deploying notions of human rights within the sphere of nature, hence in a disillusioned and explosive way. Thus, if, as Fraser and Jaeggi say, we must look to the actual people behind the actual social struggles, we cannot ignore the serious challenges posed by the social actors behind the rights of nature movements.



■ *Route du Sud (2), South of France 2021,
Black and white digital film still,
© Aina J.*

[4] Two Views of Co-Orignarity with Nature

How do we approach such a grave impasse? If there is any truth to the society as *Gestalt*, then there is little hope for settling this debate through some metaphysical, ontological, or epistemological objective measure. At the very least, starting with objective principles does not seem like the way to start. I do not think we need to solve debates like those between animism and scientism before addressing these pressing questions of the climate crisis. Some will never find issue in the destruction of the earth, the human species, plants, or animals. In this sense, I agree with Fraser and Jaeggi's call to begin by listening to the voices who pose the problem. However, I propose that we do so with less focus on struggles between individual human subjects, but instead explore our voices as arising from our co-originary movement with nature. Here, I focus on two views of our relationship with nature as arising from a co-originary dance with nature. Each offers their own way of thinking of nature as part of our struggles in a much more fundamental way than Fraser and Jaeggi's conception of crisis allows, suggesting that taking co-originary with nature for granted would amount to the undermining of our *Gestalt's* conditions of possibility.

The first view is *animacy*. For many, nature and natural entities such as plants are better understood as active agents. Not only do plants have problems and intentions of their own, but they play out intersubjectively. In "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants," Robin Wall Kimmerer offers several beautifully written examples of how she has come to understand animacy in nature. Having grown up in the country, when she approached university to study botany, she carried with her a unique perspective, including an affinity and bewilderment towards asters and goldenrod. She was ridiculed when she told the university official that she wanted to study botany to learn why asters and goldenrod looked so beautiful together and was instead told that science does not ask those sorts of questions. But it turns out, Kimmerer was onto something. It's no coincidence that she was more transfixed by these flowers than by others. Not only are asters and goldenrod commonly found growing together, but they grow together purposefully in order to attract pollinators' attention. Together, two flowers are more enticing to pollinators than one, two different colours are better than one, and two complementary colours even better still. Thus, working in tandem they have grown together much more prosperous than they would have alone.

But for Kimmerer, this should not be understood to be a competition for survival between individuals spawned by random mutations, as some evolutionary biologists would have it. It's more than a mere interdependency, rather, it's a kind of intersubjectivity, wherein each plant works in tandem with the other, while their tandem works alongside pollinators and the rest of nature. For Kimmerer, the plants and pollinators are aware of each other – of their respective intentions and desires; they anticipate each other. Importantly, this intersubjective relationship in turn shapes the kinds of subjects they are. In this sense, plants are not only active beings. Their active relationship with each other is co-constitutive of their very being; it colours and shapes their bodies, abilities, and needs.

The second view of our relationship with nature is *situated knowledge*. Kimmerer's animacy is not the only way to think of nature as, in some sense, part of the struggle. Nature need not be animate or active in the sense of a subject in order for it to take a more substantial role in our struggles than Fraser and Jaeggi admit. Regardless of our stance on the subjectivity of plants, nature is integral to human normativity. It is not merely some material resource which we physically draw upon at will. Rather, our relationship with nature, our co-originary movement with nature, grounds our normative resources as their condition of possibility. In this sense, not only our concept of crisis, but our theories of nature, morality and justice are nothing without our co-originary movement with nature. Again, when we say nature is integral to our normative resources, we do not simply mean that nature provides us with a body and a sustainable environment from which we can store or extract meaning freely. Rather, the very meaning of normativity is tied to nature in a much more fundamental, dynamic way. This is revealed in the ways in which the meaning we find in and through place depends on our particular movement through place.

To illustrate, in "Casey's Subliminal Phenomenology: On Edging Things Back into Place," David Morris explores ways in which these phenomena shape our experience and understanding of a song. We notice that earth, or nature as a place, is always already co-constitutive of our experience and meaning. Examples like one's home being inverted, or one's sense of left and right being reversed, shows how such a sudden change would disorient us such that what was once familiar becomes unrecognizable. This is because we never have access to the objective coordinates of a house, rather, they are always approached from a particular side or angle, and each approach reveals new meaning.

I prefer to think about this through music. Consider the way in which a song played backwards might sound unrecognizable or think of the way in which we hear the final note in a symphony. The way it sounds, and feels is shaped not only through the sequence that leads up to it, but from the very first note to all the rhythms and silences that follow. Add our own sequences to the mix: our embodied and psychological sequences, the shape and material of the walls, the ceiling, floor, the matter in the air, etc. Now consider the way these sequences extend far back in time and will extend far into the future, continuously changing meaning, perhaps ad infinitum. Consider, moreover, how we approach music with our own memories, biases, and expectations. All experience, meaning, and knowledge, thus all theories of normativity as well as metaphysics, epistemology and ontology are situated in this way, through co-originary movements with nature.

Importantly, if the problems of crises stem from co-originary movements with nature, then we might think that bridging the gap between any two camps would be a simple matter of putting oneself in the other's situation. Instead, as Morris helps show, our situation is never determinate. On one hand, meaning for us arises through our movements in nature, but at the same time, our movements depend on the meaning of nature. That is, we don't just construct meaning as we please, but our movement as meaning proceeds along the lines of nature's own procession, and vice versa. In other words, the procession of music, of digits, or painted landscapes, is always an abstraction, a mutation, of our movement along nature's own procession; and vice versa, the sense of nature, its direction or orientation, arises from a meeting with not only our own personal processions, but those of all living organisms. Hence, given co-originary, we do not have human meaning on one side and nature's meaning on the other. Thus, consolidating our views of nature can never be merely a matter of sharing similar movements or situations. Rather, since both humans and nature are dynamically co-constitutive of each other (i.e., co-originary), nature as grounding meaning can never be some "already fully given and determinate foundation, but is subliminal" (Morris 290). It is not as if nature has in and of itself, in advance, a fully determinate essence, yet, nor is it devoid of meaning. In this sense, like in a Gestalt, nature can be seen as a "moving target" (Morris 295).

In this sense, even if we don't agree with animacy, we may nonetheless grant nature a much more substantial role than Fraser and Jaeggi allow. As Morris shows, our movement through nature has ethical implications (Morris 290). When thinking of the metaphysical, ontological, and epistemological status of nature, we must engage in a "hermeneutics of deep responsibility" (Morris 299). Attuning ourselves to the different modes of engagement with nature, for example, via gazes versus glances, "opens us to an orientation from which we cannot quite extricate ourselves, because our orientation is borne of something before and under us that we cannot delimit or determine" (Morris 299). As we cannot quite extricate ourselves, the rhythms of nature demand certain kinds of responses and cannot be taken for granted or left in the background, or else we risk undermining the *Gestalt* which makes any such opening, any such responsibility possible.



■ *Walking in the neighbourhood, Montreal 2018,*
Black and white digital film still,
 © Aina J.

5] Moving Forward

If we wish to stick with Fraser and Jaeggi's notions of destabilization, blockages, and crises, restricting the struggle to one that is strictly between humans risks neglecting, taking for granted, and backgrounding the ways in which our lifeworld develops in co-constitution and situatedness with nature. Many theories posit nature as a condition of possibility for our normative boundary struggles, in a way much deeper and left unacknowledged by Fraser and Jaeggi. Is our relationship with nature not the ultimate background to all that is foregrounded? How, then, might we stabilize our relationship with nature?

To help with our normative blockages, the contradictions and disillusionment amidst the climate crisis, we now have two ways to understand Kimmerer when she says that "plants were once regarded as our oldest teachers" (Kimmerer 2015, 1). We need not see plants as active, subject-like teachers to see how they are integral to our knowledge. Not only what we've learned, but our very ability to learn, the kind of learning we do—our very lifeworld—is shaped by our relationship with nature. Just like asters and goldenrod, the kinds of senses, interests, meanings that make us who we are are inherently relational. Thus, it's not only that we can learn from nature, as if to extract material resources, but our learning is always already a learning and developing *with* nature. Not only our physical development, but our minds develop *with* nature. As both Kimmerer and Morris show in their own ways, nature has tended to us long before we came up with the concept of botany. Therefore, Kimmerer proposes we tell stories of plants to speak up on their behalf, so that "people would fall in love with plants again and honour all that they give us" (Kimmerer 2015, 1) and so that we may learn to be better students. In the face of the climate crisis, Kimmerer proposes gratitude for the gifts of nature first, and allegiance to human institutions second.

Moreover, both Kimmerer and Morris show not only how nature might have its own meaning and normative domains, but how this meaning would be indeterminate, both temporally and spatially, given that it arises through an intersubjective or situated dynamic relationship with nature. This means that even if we are tempted to reject animacy on the grounds that it risks going back to nature, or perhaps it contradicts Fraser and Jaeggi's ideas of emancipation or some other ideal, there is a sense in which we cannot determine once and for all who is right, neither the animistic view nor the mechanistic view. So, like Fraser and Jaeggi, I do not propose any concrete solution.

What I do suggest is that prior to any engagement in ideals, we have an imperative to attune ourselves to our relationship with other natural beings as a co-originary movement through place as well as our situatedness in nature as co-constitutive of knowledge and meaning. This imperative is equally relevant for Kimmerer's animacy as it is for Fraser's de-stabilization. If we stick to Fraser and Jaeggi's account, this means at the very least seriously engaging with the people who carry these views of nature and sorting out the contradictions and blockages between people.

If we stick with accounts like those of Kimmerer and Morris, we will not only have to turn to the people behind the views, but to nature as well. In either case, to approach the question of the role of nature, we must not only attune ourselves to past experiences of nature, but also to the ever-unfolding new ones. Before anything can really be settled, we must account for the normative role of nature in our struggles, be it as active agents or as co-constitutive of our knowledge. I suggest that as we move through nature, we think of these issues in order to learn better with and through nature. Thus, we have an imperative to experience nature with an open mind, otherwise we silence or take for granted the ways in which nature opens our minds. This may seem like an abstract or even humble claim; either experience nature with an open mind or listen to those who have, but my point is that the way we even begin to approach such struggles, the way we make sense of them, must be traced back prior to any rational debate between humans, beyond the boundaries of liberal democratic institutions. Before we even begin to juggle around indeterminate normative frameworks, we must think through our normativity with nature.

Finally, the geological effects of the climate crisis highlight the ways in which our situation is something we've inherited, but also something we pass on. That is, we've inherited the earth and will pass it on. This, coupled with the idea that our treatment of nature and our natural situation shapes our very normative resources, means that we have a kind of double responsibility. We are not only responsible for the physical earth, but the normative resources that future people inherit, and the two play off each other, in a co-originary dance. At stake in our thinking with nature, then, is the very condition of possibility for understanding the struggles for future people.

Conclusion

In this paper, I turned to Fraser and Jaeggi's discussion of 'crisis' to try and better understand our own climate crisis. Their conceptions of crisis, de-stabilization, and blockage help clarify what is at stake in neglecting the role of nature in our boundary struggles. That is, in neglecting nature we risk undermining our own conditions of possibility. Again, here we focus on normative resources, so we mean conditions of possibility for our normativity. Reconceptualizing boundary struggles as between humans and nature, rather than merely between humans, not only follows the direction of the Marxian method, but aligns with indigenous and phenomenological views. On all fronts, then, we seem to have an imperative to respect the role of nature in our normativity, and this means attuning ourselves to our natural community, experiencing nature with an open mind, and learning what it has to teach. Or, at the very least, if that is too much trouble, grant some sense of priority to those, like Kimmerer, who have grown up with nature and have inherited situated knowledge developed by working with the land over millennia, and thus, who are much more attuned to the ways in which our natural community shapes us all while also suggesting ways to move forward, to braid together indigenous wisdom and science. This way we can make visible that which Fraser and Jaeggi commit to the background, nature, and reveal the contradictions and blockages at play in our current climate crisis. Perhaps, then, we may gain sight of a path towards a more stable relationship with nature, towards stabilizing boundaries with nature.

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Metro ou la vie souterraine, Paris 2021,
Black and white digital film still,
© Aina J.



■ *Fuite automatique (I)*, South of France 2017.
Colour analog photograph,
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DES COMMENCEMENTS ENTRE LA FIN DE LA PHILOSOPHIE DEPUIS HEIDEGGER ET L'INFINITE DU LANGAGE DEPUIS GADAMER

GUILLAUME BOUCHER

Fondamentalement, ce texte se penche sur la question du commencement en philosophie. Ayant pour ambition l'ouverture d'un dialogue à partir de Gadamer vers Heidegger, nous explorons la manière dont ces deux philosophes approchent le commencement, ainsi que la fin ou l'infinité correspondante. En effet, les deux philosophes s'accordent sur l'idée d'un commencement, mais cette idée ne prend pas la même forme: alors que Heidegger est guidé par l'essence d'un commencement toujours plus reculé qui doit être redécouvert pour être finalement atteint et déterminé, Gadamer est plutôt dans l'esprit d'une infinité langagière rendant la détermination du commencement impossible quoique ce commencement reste bel et bien être reconnaissable lorsque l'on se questionne à son sujet. De même que le commencement fini chez Heidegger se répercute en une fin de la philosophie, de même l'infini au commencement chez Gadamer se traduit en une infinité de la philosophie et ainsi en une impossibilité de déterminer une fin de la philosophie.

Nous entendons le commencement d'abord, dans l'intuitivité de son sens langagier ordinaire, mais aussi dans son sens phénoménologique (la primauté de l'expérience phénoménale), ainsi que dans son sens spéculatif, finalement dans son sens temporel qui comprend nécessairement la temporalité vécue et donc chronologique. Ces multiples sens du commencement sont démontrés tout au long du texte et doivent en bout de ligne être tous compris dans une seule compréhension du commencement philosophique. La contribution philosophique de ce texte est de démontrer l'intercompréhension des partis et de l'unité du sens du commencement.

Plusieurs raisons justifient l'interprétation de ces deux philosophes et du dialogue entre ceux-ci en vue de répondre à la question du commencement. Autant chez Heidegger que chez Gadamer on peut retrouver le souci d'une pensée rigoureuse du commencement à titre de fondement pour l'édifice de la philosophie. Que ce soit à partir de la critique de l'oubli de l'être devant ré-acheminer la pensée vers la question primordiale de l'être² ou que ce soit à partir de la primauté de la question dans tout dialogue philosophique³, la nécessité d'une pensée du commencement est justifiée. Heidegger et Gadamer sont également deux penseurs du temps et de l'histoire de la philosophie: cette forme de pensée les amène tous les deux à traiter à un moment dans l'écriture de leur œuvre du commencement de la philosophie. Enfin, certains textes de Gadamer⁴ à propos de Heidegger qui traitent du thème du commencement permettent l'ouverture d'un dialogue philosophique entre ces deux penseurs à propos de ce thème; en effet, ces textes ne sont pas que des commentaires, ils comprennent aussi un témoignage. Il va sans dire que les biographies de Heidegger et de Gadamer s'entrecroisent et qu'il est donc aussi question d'un commencement existentiel de leur dialogue philosophique. Finalement, on pourrait difficilement s'imaginer la philosophie gadamérienne sans son commencement à partir de l'enseignement heideggerien.

Depuis son intérêt à cultiver le dialogue à partir de Gadamer vers Heidegger, ce texte s'inscrit à la suite de commentateurs qui ont ouvert le chemin des études comparatives entre ces deux philosophes. Pour mentionner ceux qui se trouvent dans l'horizon philosophique de ce texte, il faut d'abord penser aux commentateurs⁵ qui ont étudié la question de l'histoire de la philosophie grecque, plus précisément de Platon et d'Aristote, puisque c'est un champ d'études fondamental autant pour Heidegger que pour Gadamer⁶. Ensuite, plus près du questionnement propre à ce texte, certains commentateurs⁷ ont traité explicitement de la question du commencement et de la fin à certains endroits dans leurs études.

Dans ce texte, nous procéderons à une démonstration explicite de la temporalité de cette question du commencement. Cette démonstration se tâche, non pas seulement d'identifier les conséquences de thèses historiographiques soutenues par Heidegger et Gadamer, mais surtout d'explicitier phénoménologiquement l'implication herméneutique de la temporalité vécue sous-jacente de ces thèses. En effet, partant d'un accord plus ou moins⁸ généralisé dans la littérature⁹, acquiesçant que là où la discontinuité temporelle de Heidegger est opposée à la continuité de Gadamer, nous démontrons les implications herméneutiques de cette opposition en présentant et commentant différentes stations du dialogue entre les deux philosophes.

Il y a dès lors une question d'office : par où commencer? C'est à partir de textes de Gadamer à propos de Heidegger que nous débuterons, en traitant premièrement de repères temporels dans les biographies des deux philosophes, repères qui ne sont pas seulement biographiquement significatifs, mais qui, corrélativement, font aussi office de commencements philosophiques dans leurs pensées. En reculant derrière les moments mentionnés dans ces textes, vers des commencements plus jeunes de Heidegger, nous nous tâcherons finalement de montrer, à la manière de Gadamer, que la compréhension des premiers commencements de la vie de Heidegger se perd dans une infinité. À la lumière de cette première section, où Gadamer fera référence aux premiers écrits de jeunesse de Heidegger, on se tourne vers une exposition du *Natorp-Bericht* de Heidegger (1922), dans lequel l'enjeu philosophique de l'histoire de la philosophie ainsi que la procédure herméneutique pour son accomplissement sont mis au premier plan. Aristote, qui était pour Heidegger en 1922 un commencement adéquat de la philosophie, nous amène, dans la troisième question, à présenter la vision de Gadamer sur le commencement de la philosophie. Cette troisième section présente la thèse de Gadamer selon laquelle la question du « commencement philosophique » et de ses sources dans les Présocratiques, lorsqu'elle est bien comprise, ne peut que ramener à Aristote, mais aussi, et surtout Platon. La quatrième section se retourne vers Heidegger, pour présenter la fin de la philosophie à partir de Nietzsche, qui est comprise en tant que conséquence implicite de son commencement, identifié par Heidegger dans la métaphysique platonicienne des idées. Dans la cinquième section, la $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$ platonicienne, que Heidegger présente en tant que fil conducteur reliant le commencement et la fin de la métaphysique occidentale, est ré-appropriée par Gadamer, pour qui il est plutôt question dans cette activité d'une participation existentielle dans une temporalité de l'immémorial, plutôt que d'une vision théorique de contrôle.



■ *Mémoires incandescentes (1), 1995-2017*
Colour analog photography,
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I. Introduction au dialogue à partir de commencements historiques multiples entre Heidegger et Gadamer

C'est Gadamer, en 1989, qui nous replonge à l'époque de 1922, le moment où Heidegger rédigeait le *Natorp-Bericht*¹⁰. En effet, c'est en faisant référence à ce rapport en tant qu'« Un écrit théologique de jeunesse » que Gadamer en préface la publication ; nous reculerons aux visées « théologiques » dans les lignes qui suivent. Ce rapport pointe notamment au moment où Gadamer a commencé à lire et connaître Heidegger. Si bien que pour la pensée herméneutique gadamérienne, la lecture de ce texte marque un certain commencement, qui est expliqué en des termes de retrouvailles, « c'est comme si j'y retrouvais le fil conducteur de mon propre développement philosophique et devais répéter l'élaboration qui m'a conduit finalement à l'herméneutique philosophique. »¹¹ Dans le même registre des commencements possibles du dialogue de ces deux philosophes se trouverait aussi l'anecdote où Gadamer, à Munich en 1921, entendit pour la première fois le nom « heideggerianisé », dans un séminaire de Moritz Geiger, à titre de qualificatif pour la manière d'un étudiant de s'exprimer¹².

On peut, à partir de là, nous tourner vers d'autres commencements. Par exemple la période prémarbourgeoise, alors que Heidegger était à Fribourg, durant laquelle ce rapport Natorp fut rédigé. C'était un autre commencement que celui de *Sein und Zeit*, au public, en 1927. Car comme Gadamer l'indique, en 1986, la découverte de manuscrits qui étaient inconnus au public on permit un accès à un autre commencement dans la pensée de Heidegger¹³ : *Sein und Zeit* aurait eu des sources aristotéliennes inconnues au grand public¹⁴. Aujourd'hui, on peut aussi penser au commencement de l'enseignement de Heidegger avec le cours « Vers une définition de la philosophie »¹⁵ en 1919, ou bien le « Traité des catégories et de la signification de Duns Scot »¹⁶, qui est un commencement significatif dans la carrière universitaire de Heidegger. On peut reculer jusqu'à 1912, à sa première publication, « Le problème de la réalité dans la philosophie moderne »¹⁷, ou jusqu'à mars 1910, date qui ouvre le GA16, contenant les premières communications de Heidegger.

Des questionnements quant aux commencements théologiques de Heidegger et son influence sur sa pensée philosophique sont aussi légitimes¹⁸ ; il se considérait à l'époque lui-même comme un théologien chrétien¹⁹. Ses débuts dans le milieu catholique et ses rapprochements avec le noviciat²⁰ pourraient acquérir un autre sens et illuminer son parcours philosophique. Pensons à la citation fameuse « *Herkunft bleibt aber Zukunft* » écrite en 1953-1954 dans le texte *D'un entretien de la parole*, présentée dans le cadre de la réponse,

« Sans cette provenance théologique, je ne serais jamais arrivé sur le chemin de la pensée. Provenance est toujours avenir. »²¹, adressée à une question du Japonais concernant les origines herméneutiques de Heidegger. De surcroît il est aussi pertinent de mentionner que Gadamer voit dans ce projet une recherche spirituelle authentique qui cherche à s'émanciper de l'aristotélisme scolastique en théologie²² ; les commencements aristotéliens et théologiques ont vraisemblablement des sources communes.

Finalement, on pourrait aussi, à partir du texte « Mon chemin de pensée et la phénoménologie »²³, penser au début des études universitaires en 1909 à Fribourg, à la première lecture des « Recherches logiques » de Husserl au même moment, ou bien, autre commencement significatif, la lecture du texte « De la signification multiple de l'étant chez Aristote » (1862) par Franz Brentano. Si bien que Heidegger décrit, « Dans sa trop grande imprécision, voici la question qui me mit en chemin: si l'étant est dit dans une signification multiple, quelle est alors la signification directrice et fondamentale ? Que veut dire être? »²⁴ Ici, il ne serait donc rien de moins que le commencement de la question de l'être dans la pensée de Heidegger. Plus loin dans le texte, en expliquant le phénomène de l'Αλήθεια, il écrit :

*Ce que les recherches phénoménologiques avaient redécouvert comme le maintien, le port de la pensée, s'avère le trait fondamental de la pensée grecque, pour ne pas dire même de la philosophie comme telle. [...] Plus je voyais clair en cela, et plus devenait pressante la question : d'où et comment, d'après le principe phénoménologique, se détermine ce qu'on doit éprouver comme « la question même » (die Sache selbst)? Est-ce la conscience et son objectivité, ou bien est-ce l'être de l'étant dans son non-retrait et dans son retrait?*²⁵

D'une part, on peut voir la phénoménologie comme un retour au commencement de l'expérience phénoménale d'une personne subjective [*zu den Sachen selbst*] par la description, dans le but d'en tirer une science rigoureuse de vérités transcendantales. Mais d'autre part, et en réponse à cela, on peut aussi voir l'appropriation heideggerienne, présentant la question de l'être comme sous-jacente à la phénoménologie comme science rigoureuse, recommandant un retour à un autre commencement, celui d'Aristote, qui serait aussi un commencement de la phénoménologie elle-même, mais plus fondamentalement, le commencement de la question de l'être dans la philosophie. Gadamer fait par exemple référence à l'appropriation de Heidegger d'Aristote centré sur le concret humain, notamment depuis l'Éthique et la *Rhétorique*.

À ce titre, on pourrait aussi penser au τὸδε τι aristotélicien qui est une caractéristique principale de la substance première, où l'indéterminé τι est toujours-déjà déterminé par une personne qui la pointe en tant que τὸδε. À cet effet, Heidegger voit dans un retour authentique à la philosophie grecque une compréhension plus adéquate du projet phénoménologique tel que celui-ci devrait être entamé. L'authentique commencement phénoménologique implique donc ici une *Destruktion* de l'histoire de la pensée pour une mise en évidence du commencement de la *Seinsgeschichte*.

II. La question de l'actuel en vue d'une pensée du commencement: Heidegger et l'interprétation phénoménologique d'Aristote

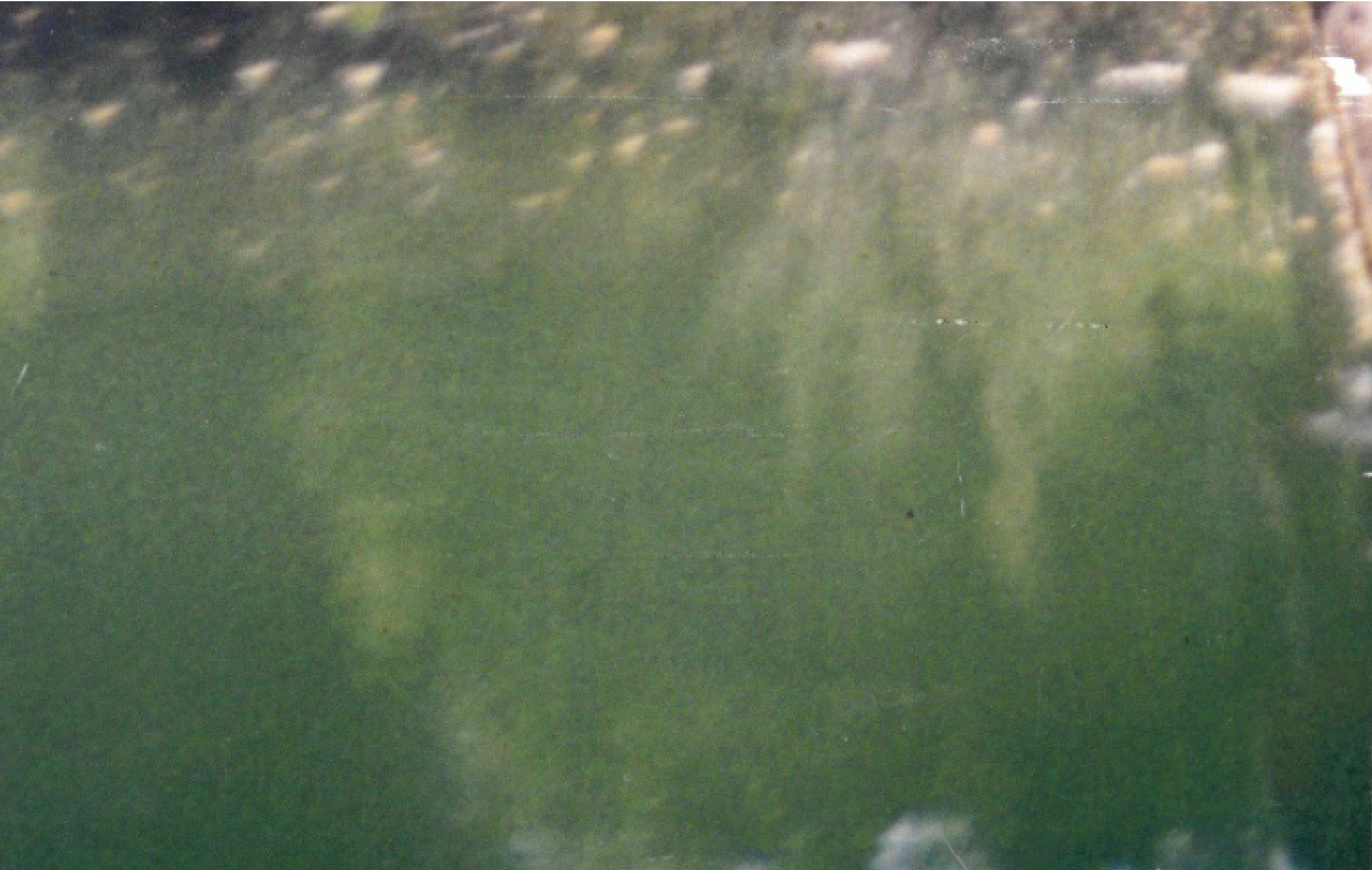
Il y a dès lors une évidence à reconnaître : le commencement qu'est Aristote pour Heidegger n'est pas phénoménologiquement accessible sans une *Destruktion* de la tradition aristotélicienne. Or cette *Destruktion* doit commencer par une analyse de la facticité actuelle telle qu'elle nous apparaît dans toute sa prédéterminabilité. L'interprétation du commencement de l'histoire de l'ontologie qu'est Aristote présuppose une interprétation qui commence par la facticité actuelle du *Dasein*.

Heidegger, en 1922, dans sa section « Tableau de la situation herméneutique », commence son chemin interprétatif vers Aristote en se questionnant sur la manière propre d'y accéder : une herméneutique du présent à titre propédeutique pour une herméneutique de la philosophie du passé.

Or en actualisant cette herméneutique du passé, c'est le présent facticiel qui resurgit, puisqu'on comprend l'effet déterminant du passé sur le présent. Il nomme ce type de projet *Destruktion* : une compréhension des appropriations passées permet de comprendre leurs déterminations d'une compréhension subséquente et ainsi d'atteindre une transparence dans un présent donné.

Cette conscience temporelle ouvre la possibilité de rencontrer une pensée d'Aristote qui nous est adressée directement dans notre situation présente. Quelle est ma situation actuelle, à partir de laquelle le passé se montre à moi ? On ne lit pas un Aristote qui s'adresse à Thomas d'Aquin, ni un Aristote qui s'adresse à Hegel, mais à nous. Jadis Aristote s'adressait à Thomas d'Aquin dans un contexte factuel qui était présent, mais vouloir s'y replonger serait impossible, puisque nous nous trouvons jetés dans un autre présent. Certes, l'Aristote qui s'adresse à nous est un Aristote qui s'est jadis adressé à Thomas d'Aquin et ceci doit être reconnu. Il est en effet question d'une remontée temporelle vers une philosophie du passé en ayant constamment le souci de la rendre phénoménologiquement présente. Gadamer en témoigne en faisant un parallèle avec l'appropriation qu'Aristote, dans sa synthèse du monde philosophique grec, faisait de ses précurseurs:

Même Aristote procédait de cette manière. Cependant, c'est un nouvel Aristote, et qui parlait d'une nouvelle manière, que Heidegger a retrouvé dans ses écrits sur la rhétorique et l'éthique et qui permettait aussi de jeter une nouvelle lumière sur la métaphysique. Heidegger est ainsi parvenu à remonter derrière la terminologie conceptuelle thomiste et néo-scholastique. On comprenait finalement très bien que ce n'est pas donner dans la poésie ou des rêveries que de faire ressortir des potentialités de langage dont la teneur conceptuelle ne peut pas être transcrite au tableau.²⁶



■ *Mémoires incandescentes (2), 1995-2017*
Colour analog photography,
© Aina J.

On peut par exemple penser à la critique de traductions célèbres d'Aristote telles que *l'animale rationale* se tenant pour le ζῷον λόγον ἔχον ou bien de *l'essentia* qui se tient pour l'οὐσία; traductions qui nous sont d'ailleurs toujours présentes dans nos langues²⁷. Cette remontée derrière une tradition philosophique n'aurait pas été possible sans une conscience de la temporalité des différentes répétitions conceptuelles dans des contextes métaphysiques spécifiques. À ce titre, Gadamer fait notamment référence aux étymologies de Heidegger :

*Mais dans bien des cas l'étymologie permet à Heidegger de rendre conscient ce qui n'est que latent dans l'usage de la langue, mais cela peut venir confirmer ou renforcer quelque chose de fondamental. Il parvient alors à reconduire l'usage des mots à l'expérience originare d'où ils sont issus et à les faire entendre d'une nouvelle manière.*²⁸

Pour Heidegger, la pratique des étymologies pour la compréhension n'est pas de chercher à retourner à une signification plus authentique et toujours perdue, mais de mettre en lumière le parcours temporel de certains concepts et leurs expressions dans différentes situations herméneutiques, afin de comprendre en quoi un sens original se répète sous différentes formes. En d'autres mots, le but est de mettre en valeur le chemin parcouru par une pensée exprimée en langage, chemin qui aboutit à la situation herméneutique du présent.

Heidegger indique l'aspect de cette approche interprétative dans la présentation du *Blickstand*, *Blickhabe* et du *Blickbahn*²⁹. Le *Blickstand* articule l'origine à partir d'où [*von wo aus*] l'interprétation se complète. On se tient toujours quelque part lorsque l'on porte un regard vers un autre endroit. Le *Blickhabe* concerne la pré-déterminabilité pertinente à ce qui appréhende l'interprétation; le [*Als Was*]. Le regard que l'on porte nous est toujours d'une certaine manière avec une certaine intentionnalité. Le *Blickbahn* est le trajet en vue pour l'actualisation de l'interprétation qui devient par conséquent tracé par la déterminabilité interprétative; le [*woraufhin*]. Cette tripartition de l'aspect du regard herméneutique mène l'interprétation à s'actualiser. Ainsi se décide la dimension des possibilités de l'approche ainsi que du traitement de l'interprétation. Ces trois *Hinsichten*, ces trois regards vers une interprétation ouvrent un aspect et donc ils déterminent la saisie de l'objet interprétatif en tant que *sachlich*, c'est-à-dire en tant qu'un enjeu ou une affaire interprétative. Bref, elles font de la pratique interprétative une *Sache*. Heidegger écrit notamment à propos de l'herméneutique des situations interprétatives concrètes que,

« Dans elles se décide l'envergure des possibilités du s'approcher vers et du composer avec l'objet thématique. »³⁰ Il confirme ainsi l'importance primordiale d'une réflexion pré-interprétative à propos l'approche herméneutique dans le but de comprendre l'effet de la contingence de la personne qui interprète pour réaliser un projet d'interprétation approprié.

Cette pensée de la situation présente en vue d'un commencement s'ancre dans un *Dasein*, qui est l'entité que nous sommes. Le *Dasein* est spécifique par le fait que l'être est la question principale qui détermine son interprétation, interprétation qui se comprend essentiellement comme auto-interprétation, puisque c'est là où le *Dasein* est, que l'être est. Le *Dasein* a donc un souci constant pour l'être. Or le temps est le sens de l'être et c'est dans le temps que le *Dasein* est, et se comprend. L'histoire est l'historialité de la compréhension du *Dasein* de soi-même dans le temps. Cette histoire de l'être par et pour le *Dasein* est ce que Heidegger comprend en tant que philosophie. Le commencement de la philosophie ici se comprend alors comme la première occurrence du *Dasein* qui se voit questionner par l'être, ce qui pour nous se voit dans les traces écrites d'une compréhension de l'être. Il va de soi que Heidegger retourne à Aristote en partant de sa pensée destructrice, c'est-à-dire qu'il montre un Aristote s'exprimant avec des catégories de l'ontologie fondamentale. Or pour Heidegger, en 1922, il s'agit d'Aristote qui propose le premier une compréhension de l'être achevée. Aristote ne débute pas seulement la pensée philosophique aristotélicienne, mais il ouvre aussi, d'une manière plus fondamentale selon Heidegger, la pensée de l'être. Platon étant, pour lui à ce moment, un précurseur philosophique à Aristote. Cette compréhension de Platon changea notamment avec la publication de *La Doctrine de Platon sur la vérité*, où sa compréhension de l'être est plus clairement présentée.³¹ C'est aussi pourquoi, comme nous pouvons le voir dans le cours de 1924-25 sur le *Sophiste*, Heidegger présente son « *Vom Hellen ins Dunkle* » en tant qu'un « *Von Aristotles zu Plato* ». La réflexion sur la situation herméneutique du présent que Heidegger met en route, à partir du *Dasein* que nous sommes tous, reconnaît à ce moment (en 1922) en Aristote non seulement un précurseur philosophique dans sa pensée de l'étant, mais aussi un commencement d'une pensée de l'être qui est encore la nôtre.

Une vertu phénoménologique de l'herméneutique est présentée par Heidegger sous la forme adjectivale par « *durchsichtig* » et sous la forme substantive en tant que « *Durchsichtigkeit* ». L'idée de la vision, du *Blick* est toujours présente ici. On part de la *Sicht*, à laquelle on comprend l'adjectif *sichtig* et l'ajout de la préposition *durch*, et finalement le *keit* pour substantiver. Cette « *Durchsichtigkeit* » se façonne et s'exerce dans l'herméneutique de la situation. Gadamer y réfère sous sa forme verbale « *Durchsichtigmachen* », en écrivant :

Un mot et un seul, auquel Heidegger ensuite n'a pas voulu se tenir, suffit sans doute à exprimer la problématique de ce premier essai. Je veux parler du terme très souvent employé de Durchsichtigmachen, "clarifier", "rendre transparent". L'éclaircissement que l'être-là humain recherche de son propre chef, consiste surtout en ceci: devenir transparent à soi-même et pouvoir ainsi, en dépit de sa limitation propre, saisir ses possibilités authentiques.³²

L'effet de la temporalité atteint une transparence pour une personne qui projette consciemment une interprétation du passé depuis la vue du présent. L'interprétation du passé se fait toujours dans le présent qui est le nôtre sous toute sa contingence. Ceci est caractérisé par la *Jeweiligkeit* respective. En somme, l'effet de jeter un regard vers le passé depuis la contingence de notre présent doit être transparent pour éviter une confusion des interprétations. L'histoire ne devient donc plus source d'incertitude à reconstituer autant que faire se peut, mais une condition d'accès à d'autres points historiques. Alors que l'incertitude historique se montre dans une approche historiciste, la conscience herméneutique de la temporalité s'efforce de voir les événements historiques comme sources positives de sens.

Le passé se « présentise » dans notre contingence quand il est interprété, mais c'est aussi simultanément le passé qui fait notre contingence présente. La facticité qui est la nôtre, depuis le *Dasein* que nous sommes, se comprend en s'appropriant une histoire qui est la sienne, mais en faisant cela, la facticité devient transparente au fait qu'elle est temporelle. Dans ce registre, Heidegger présente sa phénoménologie de la compréhension, il écrit:

Une telle appropriation tracassée de l'histoire signifie par contre, et notamment pour un présent, dans le caractère d'être duquel la conscience historique est constitutive: comprendre radicalement, ce que, respectivement, une recherche philosophique particulière passée, du fond de son tracassé, posa dans sa situation et pour celle-ci; comprendre, cela ne veut pas seulement dire prendre en tant que connaissance constative, mais répéter originellement le compris dans le sens de la situation la plus propre et pour celle-ci.³³

Par exemple en comprenant la tradition aristotélicienne, on opère une *Destruction* où cette tradition n'est plus obstacle mais chemin significatif vers une compréhension d'Aristote par et pour lui ; à l'inverse, la tradition vient simultanément nous éclairer sur notre présent et tout ce qu'il y en a d'aristotélicien. Cela nous amène à re-saisir [*wiederholen*] l'aristotélisme et de le tenir dans notre présent. En effet, comprendre la tradition implique une auto-compréhension du présent puisque, d'une manière authentique, la tradition n'a plus d'être que dans la manière dont le *Dasein* est tradition. Heidegger réfère d'ailleurs à l'interprétation en tant qu'un « se temporaliser » [*zeitigen*] dans et pour une situation herméneutique.³⁴ C'est une manière non usuelle de rendre le verbe qui signifie normalement engendrer, produire, jusqu'à en venir à maturité. La temporalité de la compréhension cherche à devenir translucide à la personne qui interprète, lorsque la compréhension en vient à se reconnaître dans le temps en tant que compréhension.

III. Gadamer et le commencement de la philosophie

Présentée en 1988 à Naples en Italie, la conférence *Au commencement de la philosophie*³⁵, traduction française de la réinterprétation allemande publiée par Gadamer³⁶ se penche sur la même question qui a affecté la pensée heideggerienne. D'ailleurs, l'influence de Heidegger se remarque particulièrement dans les deux premiers chapitres, intitulés, *Signification du commencement* et *L'Accès herméneutique au commencement*, où Gadamer répond à la conception hégélienne de l'histoire et du commencement. C'est-à-dire que là où il reconnaît le commencement de la philosophie chez les présocratiques, il refuse l'idée d'un narratif englobant, stipulant que la lecture des présocratiques restera toujours teintée de platonisme et d'aristotélisme, puisque c'est par ceux-ci que les présocratiques nous sont présents. Gadamer accepte une compréhension de la temporalité scindée dans la finitude des individus ; on le voit par exemple dans la réponse qu'il adresse à Hegel, montrant qu'on ne peut soutenir que Parménide et Héraclite aient même été en contact l'un avec l'autre, ce qui ferait de la thèse philosophique que l'un répondrait à l'autre une pure impossibilité historique. Néanmoins, Gadamer cherche ici à montrer le pouvoir de l'influence hégélienne dans la conception philosophique de l'histoire de la philosophie, puisqu'on reconnaît parfois le préjugé dont ces deux principaux penseurs présocratiques doivent être compris en relation. Cela aurait notamment influencé la perspective de l'histoire des problèmes [*Problemggeschichte*] où Hermann Cohen aurait vu Parménide découvrant l'identité et Héraclite la différence. Il y a là une impulsion qui cherche à voir de l'unité dans l'histoire de la pensée. Au sujet de la transmission de la pensée présocratique Gadamer écrit :

*J'estime ici nécessaire de commencer par une réflexion méthodologique, qui introduit et, en un sens, justifie le trait décisif de mes cours sur les Présocratiques: ils commencent non pas par l'étude de Thalès ou d'Homère, ou par celle de la langue grecque du second millénaire avant Jésus-Christ, mais au contraire par celle de Platon et d'Aristote. Tel est à mon sens l'unique accès qui soit philosophique à l'interprétation des Présocratiques. Tout le reste est historicisme dépourvu de philosophie.*³⁷

Gadamer, par la description de l'accès aux Présocratiques en tant que philosophique, indique d'une part le type de projet qui guide son interprétation, et d'autre part se différencie d'une approche purement historique qui chercherait simplement les sources les plus anciennes. Ainsi, cette compréhension de la tradition grecque ainsi que notre manière de nous y relier se couple avec une compréhension de la tradition historique en philosophie.

Cette autre tradition dans laquelle une pensée du commencement de la philosophie s'inscrit est celle de Hegel et de Schleiermacher en Allemagne. Ce sont eux qui commencent la tradition du questionnement de l'histoire de la philosophie. Avant eux, Gadamer nous indique qu'au 18^e siècle on n'avait pas coutume de lire les textes grecs dans la langue originale, mais qu'on préférerait étudier à partir de manuels.

Dans cette perspective d'approche vers le commencement par la tradition historique allemande ainsi que comprenant la transmission platonique-aristotélicienne des présocratiques, Gadamer propose la question,

*[...] que signifie le fait de dire que la philosophie présocratique est le commencement, le principium de la pensée occidentale? Quel est ici le sens du terme principium? Il y a bien des manières de l'entendre et elles sont disparates. Il est clair, par exemple qu'en grec le mot ἀρχή renvoie à deux sens différents du mot principium: son sens temporel d'origine et de commencement, mais aussi son sens proprement spéculatif et logico-philosophique. Je ne m'attache pas pour le moment au fait que ce second sens de principium définisse aussi la doctrine des principes, c'est-à-dire selon la pratique scolastique, la philosophie en général. Ce qui retient au contraire mon attention c'est la richesse en facettes et la multiplicité des horizons que présente le concept de principium, entendu comme « Anfang (commencement) ». Le terme allemand de « Anfang » a toujours représenté une difficulté pour la pensée. Ainsi se pose, par exemple le problème du commencement du monde ou du langage. L'énigme du commencement présente beaucoup d'aspects spéculatifs et il vaut la peine d'aller ici au fond des problèmes.*³⁸

La question du commencement de la philosophie chez les Présocratiques en vient à être autant une question à propos de la pensée Présocratique et de son rôle dans l'histoire de la philosophie, qu'une question à propos de ce que l'on doit entendre quand on questionne à propos du commencement que sont les Présocratiques dans la philosophie. D'où peut-être le titre du premier chapitre du livre *Die Bedeutung des Anfangs*³⁹. Gadamer présente trois sources possibles pour approcher la compréhension de ce que l'on entend par commencement. On pourrait voir, depuis Aristote, Thales comme étant le premier Présocratique. Mais il faudrait aussi penser à Homère et Hésiode, qui sont les premiers auteurs « théologisants » [*theologisierenden*], qui eux-mêmes devraient être compris dans une tradition épique, et plus lointain, dans des sources orales intraquables.

Ceci doit donc aussi être compris dans l'esprit général de la langue grecque, qui est un deuxième signe distinctif pour Gadamer. Cette langue, spécifiquement avec son utilisation de la copule et du verbe « être » reliant le sujet et le prédicat, serait déjà précurseur de la pensée de l'être chez Parménide et Platon. Elle serait aussi spécifique dans son type d'alphabet, qui montre une distance réflexive de la parole, contrairement à d'autres langues comportant des pictogrammes. Mais la question du commencement de la philosophie est aussi une question concernant la compréhension de la philosophie, qui elle pointe vers Platon. Mais on sait aussi que le terme « philosophe » était déjà présent avant Platon. Finalement, Gadamer propose, avec une plus grande assurance, le terme *Anfänglichkeit* qui réfère au statut du *Anfänglichsein*. Fruchon traduit le terme par « ce qui n'en est qu'au commencement » et « n'en être qu'au commencement ».⁴⁰ Le terme le plus proche qui fait office dans un dictionnaire est *anfänglich*, adjectif qui veut dire initial, du début, des premiers (non au sens numéral), dès le commencement, qui est parfois mieux traduit sous forme adverbiale. Le « *keit* » ajouté par Gadamer est une particule présente dans les substantivations des adjectifs qui est parfois traduite par 'ité' en français⁴¹. Pour proposer une création, on pourrait donc penser à la « commencéité » de quelque chose. Ce serait l'esprit dans lequel les Présocratiques se trouveraient. L'idée du destin et de la trajectoire historique leur reste bien indifférente. C'est-à-dire un état où on débute sans savoir directement où on se dirige. L'*Anfänglichkeit* d'une personne est le moment où elle a plus de décisions à prendre qu'elle n'en a prises, ce que l'on peut voir par exemple dans la jeunesse.

IV. La fin de la philosophie depuis Heidegger

La pensée de Heidegger qui cherchait à retourner au commencement qu'est Aristote pour la pensée de l'être et de la phénoménologie en 1922 se tourne plus tard vers un autre commencement de la philosophie⁴², qui lui aussi cherche à éclairer une autre situation actuelle. Cette situation est la fin de la métaphysique et donc de la philosophie, qui se traduit en une domination technique universelle des étants. Fin qui doit se comprendre en tant qu'un lieu, ou un stade, où la métaphysique s'achève, et donc, « se rassemble sur les possibilités les plus extrêmes ».⁴³ Une domination technique qui se montre dans la manière dont les étants nous apparaissent, c'est-à-dire en tant que ressources évaluables.

C'est l'essence de la technique moderne que de révéler les choses en les réduisant dans un même ensemble dépourvu de différence qualitative, où le quantitatif règne. La langue nous en témoigne : des ressources, qu'elles soient matérielles, immobilières, naturelles, informationnelles, intellectuelles, financières, ou même humaines, qui doivent idéalement toutes être comparables d'un point de vue évaluatif, dans le but de maximiser le rendement des différents secteurs. Heidegger explique,

*La fin de la philosophie se dessine comme le triomphe de l'équipement d'un monde en tant que soumis aux commandes d'une science technicisée et de l'ordre social qui répond à ce monde. Fin de la philosophie signifie: début de la civilisation mondiale en tant qu'elle prend base dans la pensée de l'Occident européen.*⁴⁴

La métaphysique philosophique qui fonde cette compréhension de l'être est celle de Nietzsche, celui qui est compris par Heidegger en tant que le dernier métaphysicien. Il amène la philosophie à sa fin en proposant une pensée nihiliste de l'étant : celle de la métaphysique de la volonté de puissance. En comprenant l'étant universel dans les termes du pouvoir, il est possible de tout réduire à des relations de pouvoir, qui elles doivent simplement être évaluées pour être distinguées.

À cet effet, la question heideggerienne que Gadamer rapporte est éclairante dans sa simplicité : « d'où cela vient-il? »⁴⁵ Suivant cette question en tant que guide, on retourne au commencement que Heidegger voit chez Platon, qui est compris comme premier métaphysicien en bonne et due forme, notamment dans sa théorie des idées. Qu'y a-t-il de métaphysique, et pourquoi chercher à comprendre la civilisation technique moderne à partir de Platon? Ce serait dans la proposition d'un monde idéal, où règnent des idées immuables, parfaites et éternelles, qui représentent ce qui aurait de plus exact du monde, que la métaphysique se serait mis en chemin vers la pensée du contrôle. Il n'est pas anodin que Nietzsche ait considéré sa philosophie comme un « renversement du platonisme ».

Cette approche centrée sur l'exactitude est la source du problème : les étants qui nous apparaissent dans le monde sont compris à partir de leur correspondance à des idées, qui elles, sont simplement une manière de comprendre l'être de l'étant; or, en faisant cela, on ne pense pas qu'il y a de l'être qui se donne et qu'ainsi des étants nous apparaissent, mais plutôt que les étants sont véridiquement des idées, qui elles sont ce qui est de plus fondamental à la réalité. Il y aurait dès lors déjà la trace de la volonté de contrôle : l'humain proposerait une théorie englobante où les étants pourraient être révélés sur un même palier métaphysique, ce qui permettrait donc à l'humain de sentir une prise sur les étants. Gadamer propose une explication de l'origine de cet événement,

C'est ce commencement que Heidegger a sous les yeux et auquel il pense toujours quand il parle d'une fin de la philosophie. Il s'agit de l'irruption de la *θεωρία* chez les Grecs. La thèse provocante de Heidegger est que ce commencement de l'*Aufklärung* scientifique va de pair avec le commencement de la métaphysique. La science moderne est, bien sûr, née en s'opposant à la métaphysique traditionnelle, mais cela implique qu'elle est aussi une conséquence de la physique et de la métaphysique des Grecs. N'est-ce pas ici qu'il faut trouver le véritable commencement du destin auquel nous sommes suspendus? Heidegger a ainsi posé une question qui préoccupe depuis longtemps la pensée des Temps modernes.⁴⁶

La tâche de Heidegger était de comprendre le fil conducteur dans la pensée depuis Platon jusqu'à Nietzsche qui incorpore la philosophie en tant que métaphysique sous un regard saisissant et contrôlant de l'intelligence. La théorie propose une vue sur le monde où les étants apparaissent selon des règles certaines et établies. En d'autres mots, cette manière de penser permet, phénoménologiquement, le règne du *vorhanden*, c'est-à-dire ce qui subsiste sous la main, depuis une certaine distance créée par la cognition. Ou bien, depuis la contemplation de ce qui est le plus parfaitement étant, une forme du divin, on aperçoit et comprend les étants selon la manière dont cet étant parfait y est en partie présent. Bref, dans tous les cas, les choses ne nous apparaîtraient pas en tant qu'elles-mêmes, mais selon une théorie qui dicte leurs apparitions.

V. L'infinité du langage depuis Gadamer

Dans cette dernière section, on poursuit la question de la *θεωρία* réveillée par Heidegger dans sa critique de la métaphysique à partir d'une réponse gadamérienne provenant de *Vérité et Méthode* : la *θεωρία* est introduite par Gadamer en tant que mode authentique de participation où la personne y est là en contemporanéité dans l'événement du jeu esthétique. Cela doit être compris à l'aide de l'analogie de la fête qui se refête continuellement sans toutefois être une répétition du même, dans le but de se remémorer ou de célébrer un événement, comme le commencement de quelque chose. Les participants y sont personnellement impliqués. Il n'est certes pas question d'une métaphysique de la présence, mais d'une temporalité existentielle participante. La *θεωρία* à l'origine serait une communion sacrée d'où on peut comprendre le terme *θεωρος* comme « celui qui participe à une délégation envoyée à une fête. »⁴⁷ Cette participation implique d'ailleurs une autre forme de temporalité ; la temporalité sacrée qui a un caractère immémorial. Cette participation ne doit pas être comprise comme activité du sujet, mais comme un « être hors de soi (*Außersichsein*) »⁴⁸, une forme de transcendance, ici, dans une temporalité de la contemporanéité. La *θεωρία* signifierait donc quelque chose de bien distinct à ce que Heidegger entend,

*Or il faut concevoir la *θεωρία* non pas comme étant d'abord attitude de la subjectivité, manière pour le sujet de se déterminer lui-même, mais à partir de ce qu'elle contemple. La *θεωρία* est une véritable participation, non un agir mais un pâtir (*pathos*), saisissement et ravissement par le spectacle.⁴⁹*

On pourrait donc, en partant de cette conception de la participation à un événement, participation qui est donc une manière d'être hors de soi, approcher la conception gadamérienne de Platon et de la forme dialogique en réponse à l'interprétation heideggerienne de Platon. Gadamer se distingue d'une manière plutôt directe:

C'est ici que j'aimerais intervenir et dire la chose suivante: Platon a bel et bien foulé un sol qui ne conduit pas nécessairement à la conséquence métaphysique d'Aristote. On peut peut-être l'exprimer plus clairement de la manière suivante: il n'a pas de vision juste qui existerait pour soi ou de manière isolée, comme il n'y a pas ce qui est vu pour soi de manière isolée, à savoir « l'idée ». De fait, il n'y a pas d'idée isolée. Définir une idée, c'est la délimiter. »⁵⁰

Gadamer propose une lecture immanente des dialogues de Platon, où le dialogue en tant que tel doit être compris comme une ouverture dans laquelle des personnes peuvent s'entretenir quant à leur compréhension des idées et se tacher de, peut-être, en arriver à une définition provisoire. Il y a $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\acute{\alpha}$ dans la mesure où les participants du dialogue en viennent à être entraînés dans la conversation qui elle les guide, au fil du jeu des questions et réponses, à contempler ce qui est en jeu dans le dialogue. Cette approche du dialogue ouvre un rôle fondamental pour le langage qui est le médium dans lequel les personnes essaient de se comprendre, se confondent et s'entendent à propos du sens. L'entre-deux de cette compréhension par le langage est une affaire à contempler qui prend forme lorsque l'on y réfléchit et en discute.

VI. Conclusion

Au cours de ce texte, nous nous sommes tâchés de mettre sur pied un dialogue entre Gadamer et Heidegger à propos de la question du commencement en philosophie. L'idée était de démontrer plusieurs sens possibles du commencement et de montrer comment tous ces sens peuvent être compris en un sens unique. À partir de commencements biographiques possibles dans ce dialogue et dans la philosophie de Heidegger présentés un à la suite de l'autre, nous nous sommes tournés plus proprement vers une interprétation philosophique du *Natorp-Bericht* de Heidegger. Cette section avait pour but fondamental de dégager l'accès herméneutique à une interprétation d'un commencement philosophique et phénoménologique. L'infinité au commencement de la philosophie a été la réponse que nous avons rapportée de Gadamer. Cette infinité nous a replongé dans le commencement immémorial, qui a par la suite été suivi de la thèse concernant la fin de la philosophie depuis Heidegger, que nous avons distinct de la thèse sur l'infinité langagière de Gadamer. Tout au long de ce travail, nous avons tâché de rendre par la forme et la structure du texte l'ambiguïté des thèses sur la temporalité du commencement chez Heidegger et Gadamer.





■ *Psychedelic trip, Montreal 2018,*
Digital colour photography,
 © Aina J.

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Endnotes

1 Voir l'*Introduction* de Être et temps.

2 Voir la section concernant « La primauté herméneutique de la question » (pp. 576-602) dans *Vérité et méthode*.

3 On pense aux textes « Le retour au commencement (1986) », « Du commencement de la pensée (1986) » (dans *Les chemins de Heidegger*), « Souvenirs des premiers commencements de Heidegger (1986) » (dans *Herméneutique en rétrospective*) et « Un écrit 'théologique' de jeunesse (1989) » (dans M. Heidegger *Interprétation phénoménologique d'Aristote*).

4 On pense ici à Lammi (1994), Dostal (1997), Smith (1981), Fruchon (1974/94), Gonzalez (2005) et Taminiaux (2009).

5 Il est ici propice de penser à la thèse d'habilitation de Gadamer supervisée par Heidegger rédigée en 1928 et publiée en 1931, *Platos dialektische Ethik*. Son sous-titre — *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zum Philebos* — démontre que la méthode phénoménologique, enseignée par Heidegger à Gadamer, a scellé l'approche interprétative de Gadamer de Platon; Heidegger avait notamment déjà exercé cette méthode phénoménologique comme chemin d'accès authentique vers la philosophie grecque dans ses cours de Fribourg et surtout Marburg, cours auxquels Gadamer a fréquemment participé. Pour une liste exhaustive et compréhensive, voir J. Grondin, *Hans-Georg Gadamer, Une biographie* (2011), pp. 103-158. Voir plus bas dans le texte pour plus d'explications sur la signification de ces cours pour la question du commencement.

6 Voir *Introduction* de Schmidt dans *Heidegger's Ways* (1994), p. xx, xxiii. Voir Dostal (2002), notamment la section « The Greeks and the Antinomy of Beginnings: the Critique of Heidegger », pp. 344-350. Habermas (1979) traitait de « l'urbanisation de la province heideggerienne » par Gadamer, présente celle-ci aussi en tant qu'une construction de pont au-dessus de l'abysse ouvert par Heidegger dans sa critique de la *Seinsvergessenheit* en quête de l'originel. Bernasconi (1986), qui explicite la thèse de Habermas, présente un Gadamer insistant sur la continuité au lieu de la discontinuité qui caractérise la nécessité d'un nouveau commencement chez Heidegger. La *Seinsvergessenheit* n'a pas d'écho chez Gadamer et il n'y donc pas de pensée telle que celle commémorative, qui ramènerait vers l'origine d'un commencement oublié.

7 Voir Bernasconi (1986), p. 9, « It is therefore not quite right to say that Heidegger opts for distanciation and against belongingness, for discontinuity and against continuity. To understand the matter this way has, to express it in a Gadamerian phrase, 'the truth of the corrective'; but it accomplishes no more than a reversal of traditional terms and so renders the issues in only the most fragile manner. »

8 On pense aux commentateurs mentionnés dans la note 6 ci-haut.

9 Texte qui fut rédigé par Heidegger (1922) et remis aux facultés de philosophie de l'Université de Marburg et de l'Université de Göttingen. Connue en Allemand en tant que *Natorp-Bericht*, paru dans *GA 62*, sous *Anhang III. Phänomenologischen Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation)*, pp. 343-421. Heidegger le rédigea pour accompagner sa candidature au professorat. Le rapport comprend une exposition de l'herméneutique de Heidegger et de son application interprétative sur la philosophie d'Aristote. Ce document fut lu par Paul Natorp qui était alors le directeur de doctorat de Gadamer à Marburg; Gadamer eut ainsi la chance de lire ce texte à ce moment. Longue histoire courte, le manuscrit fut perdu et retrouvé beaucoup plus tard et il fut publié dans le *Dilthey-Jahrbuch*, étant préfacé par un texte de Gadamer en 1989. Pour plus d'informations, ainsi que pour une explicitation du contenu du rapport, voir N. Artemenko (2012), *Zu Martin-Heidegger Interpretation von Aristoteles: Der wiedergefundene Natorp-Bericht von 1922*, ainsi que la préface de Gadamer, *Un écrit "théologique" de jeunesse de Heidegger* dans M. Heidegger, *Interprétation phénoménologique d'Aristote*, trans. J.-F. Courtine, 1992, pp. 8-15. Voir note 7 ici-bas pour un témoignage de la réception du texte par Gadamer, ainsi que de l'effet que le texte eut sur Gadamer.

10 Gadamer, *Un écrit "théologique" de jeunesse de Heidegger*, p. 11.

11 Voir *Les Chemins de Heidegger*, p. 130-1, où il écrit, en parlant de l'influence de Heidegger, « Mais d'où cela vient-il? Et d'où cela est-il venu? Je me souviens de la première fois où j'ai entendu son nom. C'était en 1921, à Munich, dans un séminaire de Moritz Geiger, où un étudiant tenait des propos très curieux, pathétiques et d'une terminologie inhabituelle. Quand j'ai demandé à Geiger à la fin du cours qui c'était, il m'a répondu, comme si cela allait tout à fait de soi: « ah! c'est quelqu'un de totalement heideggérianisé! ». N'allais-je pas bientôt le devenir moi-même? À peine une année plus tard, mon maître Paul Natorp me remit un long manuscrit d'une quarantaine de pages de Heidegger, une introduction à ses interprétations d'Aristote. Ce fut pour moi comme si j'avais été foudroyé par une décharge électrique. »

12 Voir Gadamer, *Du commencement de la pensée* (1986) dans *Les Chemins de Heidegger*, 2002. Cet « autre commencement » en question fait référence aux travaux que Gadamer mentionne en ouvrant son texte (p. 219). Par exemple le travail d'édition de Walter Bröcker et de Kate Bröcker-Oltmanns qui a contribué à la publication des cours de Fribourg d'hiver 1921-22 (*GA 61*). Il mentionne aussi les travaux de Thomas Sheehan qui eut accès, grâce à Ernst Tugendhat, à des transcriptions de cours et d'autres documents inédits de la première période de Heidegger. Finalement, il mentionne aussi les travaux d'Otto Pöggeler. Il faut s'imaginer qu'en 1986 le public général avait seulement accès aux œuvres publiées; c'est donc *Sein und Zeit* qui était le premier commencement philosophique de Heidegger; les débuts aristotéliens restaient inconnus au public.

13 Pour une description de la situation des études heideggeriennes à l'époque et de l'esprit qui entourait la publication de *Natorp-Bericht* on cite H. U. Lessing dans sa Postface de l'éditeur : « Grâce à l'édition complète, qui progresse régulièrement et qui a déjà rendu accessible les premiers cours de Fribourg — pour autant que les manuscrits publiables des leçons sont conservés —, et grâce aussi à l'exploitation d'un grand nombre de notes de cours prises à Fribourg, puis à Marburg, on a pu ces dernières années jeter une lumière toujours plus vive sur le chemin de pensée de Heidegger durant la période particulièrement importante qui va de 1919 à 1927. Et cependant la recherche heideggérienne récente avait toujours à nouveau signalé une lacune décisive, un 'missing link' dans le développement philosophique du jeune Heidegger. Ce maillon manquant, c'était le fameux rapport de l'année 1922 — dit 'rapport-Natorp' — considéré comme perdu, et dans lequel Heidegger faisait le point sur l'état et l'orientation de ses études aristotéliennes, études qu'il avait l'intention de publier en un fort volume sous le titre *Interprétations phénoménologiques d'Aristote*. De la connaissance de ce rapport on attendait en effet la possibilité de pénétrer une phase particulièrement significative de la pensée de Heidegger, puisque, d'après son propre témoignage, c'est dans les années 1922/1923 que furent accomplis les premiers pas qui devaient conduire à Être et Temps. », p. 54.

14 *GA 57/58*, débute sur un cours de fin de guerre exceptionnel (*Kriegsnotsemester*), qui fut délivré par Heidegger en 1919.

15 Thèse d'habilitation de Heidegger déposée à la Faculté de Philosophie de l'Université Fribourg en 1915, publiée en 1916.

16 Traduction de « *Das Realitätsproblem in der modernen Philosophie* » d'abord publié dans *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft*. Hg. C. Gutberlet. Fulda 1912 (25), pp. 353-363., repris dans *GA 1*.

17 Gadamer fait maintes fois référence aux intuitions théologiques de Heidegger qui ont eu une influence considérable sur le développement de sa pensée. Il faut se rappeler que Heidegger entra à l'Université de Fribourg en tant qu'étudiant en théologie et qu'il avait un projet de rejoindre le clergé étant plus jeune. Pour les références de Gadamer, on pense notamment à la caractérisation que Gadamer fait de Heidegger en tant qu'un *Gottsucher* (chercheur de Dieu) dans une entrevue de 1992, *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 26 (1995), p. 117. Voir aussi le texte Être Esprit Dieu (1977) présenté par Gadamer en tant qu'hommage à la mort de Heidegger, dans *Les Chemins de Heidegger*, pp. 203-217, ainsi que *La dimension religieuse* (1981), dans le même ouvrage, pp. 187-201. Pour une analyse académique de la question religieuse dans les débuts de Heidegger, voir P. Capelle-Dumont, *Études heideggériennes*, Paris, Hermann, Le Bel Aujourd'hui, 2016.

18 *La dimension religieuse* (1981) dans *CH*, p. 190.

19 À propos de ces débuts catholiques et du noviciat de Heidegger, on réfère principalement au deuxième chapitre « Le conflit avec la foi des origines » de la biographie de H. Ott, *Martin Heidegger. Éléments pour une biographie*, pp. 47-135. Le premier chapitre de la biographie de R. Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland. Heidegger und seine Zeit*, pp. 15-29, démontre des commencements similaires.

20 Le Japonais à un moment dans l'*Entretien* demande, « Soit, mais pourquoi avez-vous choisi ce nom d' 'herméneutique' ? » à quoi, quelques lignes plus tard, « celui qui demande » (vraisemblablement Heidegger dans cette circonstance), répond « La notion d' 'herméneutique' m'était familière depuis mes études de théologie. À cette époque, j'étais tenu en haleine surtout par la question du rapport entre la lettre des Écritures saintes et la pensée spéculative de la théologie. C'était, si vous voulez, le même rapport — à savoir le rapport entre parole et être, mais voilé et inaccessible pour moi, de sorte que, à travers bien des détours et des fourvoiements, je cherchais en vain un fil conducteur. », p. 95., dans *Acheminement vers la parole*.

21 *Ibid*, p. 192-193. On peut voir ce projet d'émancipation dans la *Destruction* heideggérienne des termes latins pour retrouver l'origine grecque.

22 Texte de 1969, publié en français trad. J. Lauxerois et C. Roëls dans *Questions III et IV*, pp. 325-336.

23 *Ibid*, p. 326.

24 *Ibid*, p. 332-333.

25 *Du commencement de la pensée* (1986) dans *CH*, p. 229.

26 Gadamer traite des étymologies de Heidegger et spécifiquement de la traduction de l'οὐσία par *essentia* qui date de Cicéron à la page 231 de *Du commencement de la pensée* (1986) dans *CH*. Pour une explication de l'effet de la traduction du ζῷον λόγον ἔχον par *animale rationale* voir la *Lettre sur l'humanisme*, dans *Questions III et IV*, p. 78-9.

27 *Du commencement de la pensée* (1986) dans *CH*, p. 231.

28 M. Heidegger, *GA 62, Anhang III*, p. 345. Voir aussi (version allemande légèrement différente; provenance *Dilthey-Jahrbuch*) et trad. française par J.-F. Courtine, *Interprétations phénoménologiques d'Aristote*, Trans-Europ-Press, Mauvezin, 1992.

29 Traduction libre de « *In ihr entscheidet sich das Ausmaß der Möglichkeiten des Zugehens auf und des Umgehens mit dem thematischen Gegenstand.* », tiré de *GA 62*, p. 346.

30 La quête heideggérienne pour un commencement toujours plus authentique se poursuit. Nous n'avons malheureusement pas l'espace suffisant pour y faire justice. En effet, d'Aristote, il recule plus tard à Platon (comme mentionné ci-haut) et il se tournera vers les présocratiques (...) Pour plus d'informations, voir l'excellent ouvrage de Marlène Zarader, *Heidegger et les paroles de l'origine*, publié chez Vrin (Paris), en 1986. Dans celui-ci Zarader propose un commentaire érudit des premières paroles grecques, particulièrement en ce qui concerne leurs appropriations par Heidegger : Φύσις, Ἀλήθεια, Τὸ χρεῶν, Μοῖρα, Λόγος,

31 *Un Écrit "Théologique" de Jeunesse de Heidegger*, p. 14.

32 Traduction libre de « *So bekümmerte Aneignung der Geschichte besagt aber, und gar für eine Gegenwart, in deren Seinscharakter das historische Bewußtsein konstitutiv ist: radikal verstehen, was jeweilen eine bestimmte vergangene philosophische Forschung in ihrer Situation und für diese in ihre Grundbekümmernung stellte; verstehen, das heißt nicht lediglich zur konstatierenden Kenntnis nehmen, sondern das Verstandene im Sinne der eigensten Situation und für diese ursprünglich wiederholen.* » tiré de *GA 62*, p. 350.

33 On pense par exemple à la phrase « Soweit als die Situation, in der und für die sich eine Auslegung zeitigt, nach den besagten Hinsichten erhellt wird, ist der mögliche Auslegungs- und Verstehensvollzug und die darin erwachsende Gegenstandsaneignung durchsichtig. » dans le *GA 62*, p. 347.

34 Traduction de Pierre Fruchon revue par Dominique Ségler, publiée aux éditions du Seuil en 2001.

35 Notamment l'édition de Reclam (Stuttgart), de 1996, *Der Anfang der Philosophie*.

36 *Au commencement de la philosophie*, p.14.

37 *Ibid*, p.17.

38 Traduit en français par « Signification du commencement », dans *Ibid*, p. 13.

39 Gadamer écrit, « Es gibt aber noch eine weitere Bedeutung von »Anfang«, und diese ist, wie mir scheint, die für unseren Zweck ergiebigste und am meisten angemessene. Diese Bedeutung bringe ich zum Ausdruck, indem ich nicht vom Anfangenden, sondern Anfänglichkeit spreche. Anfänglichkeit meint etwas, das noch nicht in diesem oder jenem Sinne, noch nicht in Richtung auf dieses oder jenes Ende und noch gemäß dieser oder jener Darstellung bestimmt ist. » dans *Der Anfang der Philosophie*, p. 21. Trad. française, p. 23.

40 On pourrait penser à une autre création célèbre dans le même registre: de *sprachlich*, on entend *Sprachlichkeit*.

41 À propos de cet autre commencement, voir la note (30) ci-haut.

42 *La fin de la philosophie et la tâche de la pensée*, dans *Question III et IV*, p. 284.

43 *La fin de la philosophie et la tâche de la pensée*, dans *Questions III et IV*, p. 286.

44 *Du commencement de la pensée* (1986), dans *CH*, p. 224.

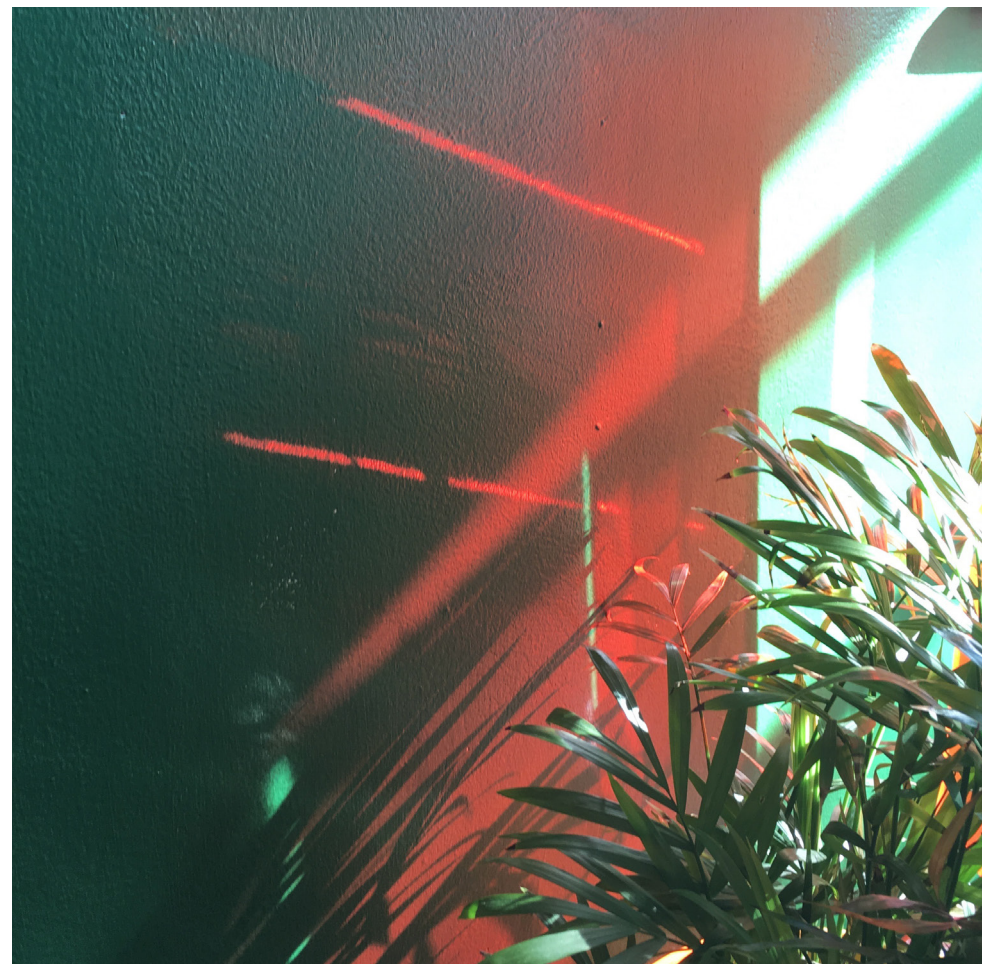
45 *Du commencement de la pensée* (1986), dans *CH*, p. 225.

46 *Vérité et Méthode*, p. 208.

47 *Vérité et Méthode*, p. 210.

48 *Vérité et Méthode*, p. 209.

49 *Le retour au commencement* (1986), dans *CH*, p. 262.



■ *Light experimentation in the kitchen, Montreal 2018, Digital colour photography, © Aina J.*



■ *Culture en temps de Covid, Marseille 2021,*
Digital colour photography,
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THE YOKE OF EMANCIPATION: A REWORKED TOOLKIT FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

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I. Introduction

Emancipation is the action-project toward which critical theories are oriented. However, what ‘emancipation’ entails may not always be sufficiently explored, a demarcation problem that Nancy Fraser seeks to answer in *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*. Fraser’s ‘toolkit’ is her normative solution for what distinguishes “emancipatory from non-emancipatory” proposals addressing the problematic institutions of capitalism (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 178). To satisfy the criteria for ‘emancipatory,’ Fraser argues a proposal must comprise *nondomination*, *functional sustainability*, and *democracy* (178). Any proposal not satisfying all three criteria will be evaluated as non-emancipatory.

I will attempt to demonstrate that Fraser’s toolkit is practicably incoherent. Emancipatory projects that seek to transform capitalism’s institutions will encounter difficulty maintaining the cohesion of Fraser’s criteria, resulting in the satisfaction of one criterion weakening that of others. In view of this, we face three routes forward: (1) offer a new proposal satisfying all criteria practically, (2) abandon Fraser’s toolkit, or (3) reform the toolkit. The first route is the most difficult: if there were a ready-made proposal amenable to action, or one I am capable of conjecturing here, I would have no contentions to offer. Second, abandoning Fraser’s demarcation of ‘emancipatory’ would require constructing a new account or dropping this project, neither of which are desirable outcomes. I will pursue the third route, arguing that an emancipatory proposal need not satisfy all three criteria together, and that accessibility must be considered an additional evaluative criterion.¹ Considering the difficulty proposed social transformations will face in satisfying Fraser’s criteria, my suggestion is that agents must attempt to satisfy them diachronically.² The practical deficiency in Fraser’s approach is then inverted into the effective thrust of my approach.

Section 1 establishes some groundwork on capitalism and crisis, Section 2 lays out my critique of Fraser’s toolkit, and Section 3 presents my diachronic approach to emancipation, also meeting some objections to this approach.

2 Capitalism and Crisis

(2.1) Capitalism

If we require emancipation, what exactly is wrong? Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi conceive of capitalism as a social phenomenon not confined to the description ‘economic system.’ There are four core features which constitute capitalism in Fraser and Jaeggi’s view: “(1) a class division between owners and producers; (2) the institutionalized marketization and commodification of wage labor; (3) the dynamic of capital accumulation; and (4) market allocation of productive inputs and social surplus” (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 28).³ Even reduced to this core, capitalism pervades non-economic spheres of society. For instance, a class division of owners and producers requires relatively rigid socio-economic classes. Accordingly, the productivity of a capitalist labour force is predicated on maintaining that workers do not have high social mobility. Furthermore, the lust for accumulation does not only comprise the object of the firm and the corporation, but it is also a competitive attitude through which individuals’ preferences are adapted or delimited. Financial, social, political, and even family decisions are influenced by capital and buying power as determined, to varying degrees, by these core features. A conception of capitalism reduced to purely economic mechanisms would have little descriptive power in limning the structure of capitalist *society*. To approach *what has gone wrong*, capitalism cannot be understood as merely some set of economic preconditions.

Fraser conceives of capitalism as an “institutionalized social order” (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 2). The core features discussed above involve institutional processes of the “economic foreground” – where exploitation takes place – needing an institutionalized “non-economic background,” and a complementarity between the two to function (29). This background involves *expropriation*. Accumulation of capital through *exploitation* concerns the worker being compensated for only a portion of their labour, and the surplus-value of this labour – valorized in exchange – is pocketed by owners (Marx 1867 (1990), 301-2).⁴ This ‘ex’ (exploitation) operates in conjunction with expropriation (the other ‘ex’), concerning accumulation of capital from deliberate theft. In exploitation, the worker is protected to a degree by rights and regulations: a workday is limited in hours, a wage is legally paid, and the worker possesses some set of fundamental rights. Expropriation involves capital accumulation from unprotected subjects; historically, forms of expropriation had been central sources of growth for military hegemony through slavery or the dispossession of resources from client states. Today, the two exes persist.

Capitalism is transnational in Fraser's conception. Here she invokes her *core* and *periphery* concepts, denoting the "unofficial geography" of capitalism, where hierarchies of interests are drawn on the basis of race, region, class, and gender (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 43). Historically, there is a distinction between the 'heartland' state and the 'periphery' of client subjects. The 'heartland' is the primary interest of the ruling power and its diplomatic periphery, such as colonies, territories, or spheres of influence, serve this core. Domestically, a core, peripheral demarcation exists inside a state as well, which, in one dimension, is racialized: Whites and Blacks, Europeans and natives, *us* and *them* (43). This distinction places primacy on the interests of specific racial groups over others. For the exploitation of protected subjects to operate in the foreground, an appalling, concealed background of expropriation supplements it.

Of course, the list of background conditions I have included here is not an exhaustive description of the background in real conditions. Understanding that capitalism operates on selective injustices - suffering along racial, socioeconomic, geographic, and other lines - emancipation must be oriented towards ameliorating such conditions. Emancipatory change is a project which seeks to unseat the web of injustices which constitute our current conditions. The two axes and the background/foreground complementarity are historically and structurally deep-seated within capitalism. Any transformation of these roots, the four constituents which make up the core of capitalism I am assuming here, or its institutions, will require a gradual process of change, perhaps even generational time frames. However, before moving to an analysis of emancipatory change, I want to review a notion which, for Fraser and critical theory, serves as a central line in critiquing capitalism: crisis.



■ *Italia distorta, Venice 2022,*
Digital colour photography,
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■ (2.2) Crisis

What is this ‘crisis,’ and what does such an evocative word have to do with capitalism? Capitalism has produced, in Fraser’s view, a complex crisis: an amalgam of economic, social, political, ecological, and other crises (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 163). Each particular crisis is a dysfunctional process indicating an incompatibility of capitalism’s institutional functions with “a sense of wellbeing” (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 3). I would suggest that the residue of capitalism’s ‘normal functioning’ forms anxiety, vulnerability, and unfreedom which accumulates in the lives of individuals not well-off so that few may be. Let me briefly review some particular crises generated by capitalism, a critique which Fraser and I agree on, to give credence to the call for emancipation.

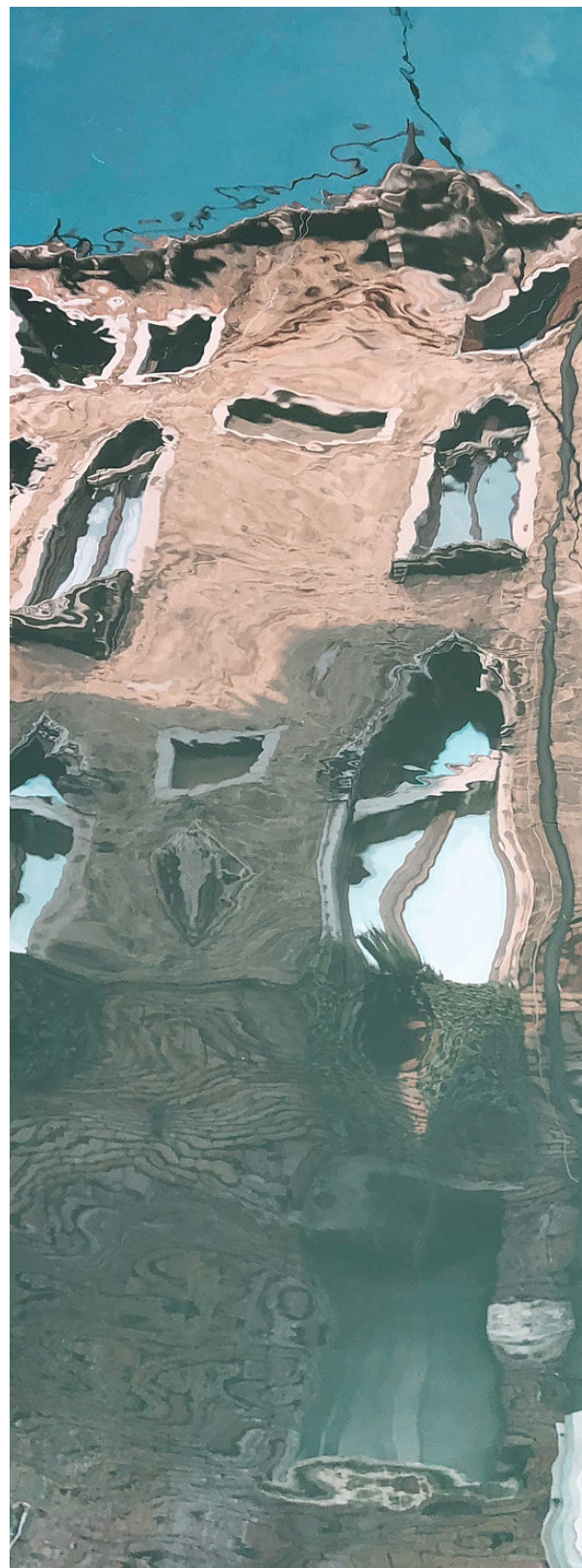
Today, expropriation persists along with exploitation. Expropriation operates under a legal façade and complements the exploitation of vast areas of the workforce. Racialized individuals are overrepresented in minimum wage jobs – *which someone has to work* – that either do not or may barely afford them means of subsistence. Moreover, the prison-industrial complex mainly comprises those with far less access to education, and racialized individuals, a thin legal veil operating on class and racial lines (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, preface viii). Turning to exploitation, capital distribution is hyper concentrated within the pockets of a handful of individuals, and historical trends indicate, as Thomas Piketty has shown, that such wealth inequality is a distribution tendency hundreds of years old in Europe and North America (Piketty 2017, 425). Furthermore, the current magnitude of private debt forces many people to work multiple jobs. Taking on extra hours or an additional job eliminates much of one’s free time and is a consequence inimical to one’s well-being.⁵ I would claim that this institutional undervaluation of free time in capitalist society should play a larger role in critiquing capitalism, especially if we are to take the value of the individual’s sense of wellbeing and purpose seriously.

In addition to the *business as usual* of the ‘two exes,’ the world faces an existential threat of our own creation: the ecological crisis. The continuous growth of capital, population, and industry fuels accumulation for corporations dependent on the production and profit of destructive resources. The promise of the ‘green economy’ has been left unfulfilled, and what mitigation of environmental destruction achieved thus far has, to a great extent, been guided not only by environmental justice, but also by a concurrent will to profit.⁶

One wonders what environmental justice or damage control will be realized within the bounds of capitalism’s current incarnation if it is not profitable. Moreover, capitalism is eroding democracy.

In the wake of the failures of the twentieth century’s communist states, capitalism is left standing, but not on solid democratic grounds. Political matters, Fraser argues, are guided not by the political participation of citizens, but by market forces and private interests, thus excluding individuals from determining their social-economic conditions (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 131). To further develop her point, equality may be *constitutionally* guaranteed in many democracies, but the persistence of the ‘two exes’ raises the interests of specific groups over others, trading turmoil of the many for excess of the few. I would also note that although citizens in Western democracies retain the vote, it is critically drained of the power to effect transformational change, that is, to ameliorate the particular crises generated by capitalism’s institutional processes (Merkel 2014, 124).⁷ In addition to the political plight of constituencies, administrations do not exercise effective control over market forces either, instead, the opposite occurs. We are left with the contemporary antagonism between neoliberalism and reactionary populism under the regime of “financialized capitalism” (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 75). This regime is characterized by rampant financialization: capital accumulation is accrued primarily through capital assets themselves, rather than from production and exchange. A salient example of financialization is the contemporary power of debt and capital ownership: finance institutes exercise power over national economies in need of loans and financing, and the wealthiest class of private owners threatens to “move capital and investment abroad” in response to policies to their disadvantage (Merkel 2014, 120). This effectively nullifies promises of elected governments made to the working-class as well as the political sphere’s ability to control the market. Furthermore, private debt forces individuals into long-term financial strangleholds, ensuring a steady flow of capital for those already well-off. In sum, capitalism’s institutional order “generates constant turmoil” (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 178). It must be remembered, however, that things do not need to be this way.

Amidst the acute inequalities of our age, capitalism continues to echo the fetish common to all its incarnations: “*accumulation über alles*. The answer to your troubles is capital; earn, invest, and work hard!” Now that we have reviewed several crises generated by capitalism, the reply that accumulation is the panacea should strike one as both unsatisfactory and deceptive. The first step towards emancipatory transformation is *agreeing that something is deeply wrong with current conditions*. One defense of capitalism may reply that things are about as good as they can be, or that a social transformation would itself bring about worse conditions. I find this attitude defeatist. If we cannot shake off pessimisms – which I suspect serve chiefly to justify inaction – such as “only the dead have seen the end of...” war, poverty, hunger, etc., then nothing will change, and our pessimism will be self-fulfilled (Santayana 1922, 102). With concern to human suffering, the basic claim of a critical theory is that social conditions are unacceptably poor.



The obstacles to ameliorating these crises are institutional, motivational, and epistemic in nature; we face no logical impossibility to living better lives together. In Erik Wright’s words, capitalism breeds “eliminable forms of human suffering” (Wright 2010, 45). Accordingly, a critical theory is oriented towards unveiling the eliminability of superfluous human suffering as well as seeking to eliminate it (Geuss 1981, 55). In the broadest sense, we may use the unveiling and elimination of suffering as a description of emancipation. We then have two reasons to reject ‘suffering will always be with us’ as a claim to emancipation’s futility. First, this attitude begets careless self-fulfillment. Second, the objection claims that poverty, hunger, etc. are ineliminable, but this is usually intended to mean that every vestige of suffering *globally*, or *nationally* cannot be snuffed out. Emancipation, however, will be oriented towards ameliorating conditions, and realizing this goal requires an arduous process of social transformation away from current conditions.

The eliminability of the forms of suffering generated by capitalism are to be specified in a critique of its institutionalized processes. If we forgo an analysis of human suffering within capitalism and accept that the end of such conditions will never be seen, we risk a self-fulfilling hopelessness, but we also equivocate between the eliminability of suffering on the grandest scales and on the scale of capitalism’s dysfunctions. Our present concern is with capitalism’s general crisis and transforming the institutions generating it. Even with a utopian end, emancipation must be lucid, strategic, and rest on acceptable principles.

The emancipatory process must be lucid in that, to effect transformational change, a consciousness of social conditions unveiling any distortions which represent human suffering as normal or necessary is indispensable. Emancipation must also be strategic in that the feasibility of a transformational project depends on addressing obstacles to bringing about a desirable outcome and effective tactics for doing so on the ground.⁸

■ *Italia distorta*, Venice 2022,
Digital colour photography,
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The starting point of any emancipatory project is in seeking to reveal and resolve superfluous injustices, suffering, and unfreedom. All that is needed to adopt a critical attitude towards capitalism is to accept that capitalist society generates unnecessarily poor conditions. Adopting an emancipatory attitude requires acting on the belief that something ought to be done about it. Let us turn now to a toolkit of acceptable principles for such transformation.

My suggestion is that agents pursuing social transformations cannot maintain a consistent commitment to the criteria Fraser holds are necessary for emancipation. In the path to achieving an emancipatory outcome, agents will necessarily encounter obstacles to realizing their goal. To overcome such obstacles, agents will have to weaken their commitment to the normative principles Fraser demands, or they will risk rendering their goal inaccessible.

So, where transforming social conditions requires a gradual process of action, agents' commitments to the normative principles guiding that process will need to be flexible. A diachronic approach to emancipation then simply means allowing agents to weaken commitments to certain normative principles in order to skirt obstacles to realizing a desirable outcome. There is then a parallel to indicate between the process of social transformation and the normative principles guiding such a project: where social transformations develop over time, so too will agents' fulfillment of the normative principles (criteria) guiding that transformation. Let us now examine what 'emancipation' entails with consideration to projects for social change.

■ 3. The 'Toolkit' and Practical Incoherence

What are we to do in view of capitalism's general crisis? Rather than fiddle with policy configurations, which would at best merely affect the surface of a particular crisis, Fraser calls for "deep structural transformation" and offers her toolkit to evaluate such projects (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 223). The first criterion for emancipation is *nondomination*: a proposal must resolve the hierarchical boundaries separating groups by race, ethnicity, gender, and class, institutionalized in capitalism to foster social, political, technological, or economic growth.⁹ Second, the proposal must have *functional sustainability*: prospective conditions must maintain sufficient harmony in a social order such that the outcome does not devolve into previous or worse conditions. Thirdly, the proposal must be *democratic*: the participating collective must be privy to the proposal, their approval must be considered, and they must be allowed determination in any revisions. The coda, however, is that "the three criteria should be used together... to be acceptable [as] a proposed structural transformation" (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 178).

My claim is that this toolkit is practically incoherent with its addendum requirement that the criteria should all be used *together*. Let me qualify the 'together' requirement I am bringing out of Fraser's account here. That the three criteria making up the toolkit should be used 'together' to evaluate emancipation is, I contend, a *second-order normative claim*. By this I mean that Fraser's 'together' claim imposes a normative demand on a set of normative claims - that set being the three criteria of her toolkit, which we may understand as a set of *first-order* normative claims. So, where the toolkit's set of claims apply to proposals seeking to transform social conditions, the 'together' claim applies to the use of the toolkit. There are two dimensions to Fraser's claim that emancipatory social change must satisfy her three criteria 'together': (i) these criteria must be the principal constituents of an emancipatory proposal *qua* proposal, and (ii) emancipatory projects must maintain their commitment to each criterion as they are implemented through a process, or series of actions, oriented towards a desired outcome.

The first dimension of Fraser's together requirement is *proposal-guiding*. As a proposal, an emancipatory social project must bear a commitment to all three criteria. In other words, when Fraser writes, "a *proposed* structural transformation must satisfy all three [criteria]," her demand pertains to projects which have yet to be institutionalized in our social order, but are proposing transformations to be brought about (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 178; emphasis added).

So, in evaluating whether projects are emancipatory before their desired outcomes are institutionalized, proposals must be committed to the ‘toolkit’s’ normative criteria and thus committed to bringing about social conditions constituent of these criteria. Institutionalizing the criteria means realizing social conditions that are nondominational, sustainable, and democratic. The second dimension of Fraser’s together approach is *process-guiding*.¹⁰ Fraser requires that agents maintain their commitment to the toolkit’s criteria throughout the process of bringing about the desired outcome. A commitment to the democratic and nondomination criteria means maintaining a democratic and nondominational approach to social change at each step of the way. Fraser writes, “any acceptable proposal must be able to be institutionalized in such a way that participants *remain* able to reflect on it” (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 178; emphasis added). So, democracy in emancipation means agents retain active say in the implementation of their project. It would be undemocratic to consult participants once and then subsequently make drastic changes to the way social change is brought about. A sustained commitment to democracy is also related to nondomination in that the pursuit of emancipation must not institutionalize the domination of any groups of people. For social change to be emancipatory, it must not be brought about through a morally unacceptable process, which either dominates its participants or denies them active say. Finally, being committed to functional sustainability means being committed to the resulting social conditions of a transformational project as sustainable. However, to bring about sustainable emancipation, the process through which such conditions are brought about is critical (178).¹¹ Imagine a group of discontented agents rally under the banner of transforming capitalism to eliminate unnecessary human suffering. Imagine also that this group remains democratic throughout the process of implementing their project and, conveniently, all participants agree on what they are doing and how they are doing it. If the democratic criterion is satisfied but this group nonetheless commits morally condemnable acts to bring about their goal, the outcome will not be emancipatory, on Fraser’s account, and its unsustainability will be questionable.

In short, Fraser wants her three criteria to be used together to balance one another and retain emancipation *qua* emancipatory. To use these criteria together means, for Fraser, that the criteria must be constituent of a proposal before its desired goals are institutionalized, and the criteria must not be violated throughout the process of implementing the proposal. I want to review a few proposals for social change, in the form of socio-political projects and movements, which Fraser subjects to the toolkit in order to demonstrate its application.

Fraser’s first salvo is fired at *anarchist* movements, which fail the toolkit’s test on all three counts. As an activist movement, it does not satisfy the nondomination criterion as only those with free time can participate, also violating the democratic criterion, however, Fraser notes that this critique may be uncharitable. Most importantly, anarchism does not have functional sustainability; it is only deconstructive. The basic program of anarchism is to dismantle oppressive social structures. Without substantial elaboration, anarchism offers no sustainable replacements for the structures it seeks to unseat. Fraser’s next focus is *de-colonization*. While paying particular attention to the ethnic and cultural woes of expropriation, this project does not satisfy the functional sustainability criterion: to ‘decolonize’ indigenous cultures dominated by Europeans, meticulous work is required (if at all possible) to undo the centuries of ‘contamination’ which Fraser does not see as a desirable democratic project. Although decolonization seeks to address unquantifiable forms of human suffering imposed by historic injustices, it does not constitute an emancipatory proposal for social change by Fraser’s criteria. *Progressive neoliberalism* shares the same fate, maintaining a precarious “alliance of emancipation and marketization/financialization,” a deal with the devil that is the current capitalist regime (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 193). Initially, neoliberalism deregulated banks, busted unions, proliferated jobs under the living wage, and exacerbated debt to become a pervasive relation of power (Isaac 2019, 1160). *Progressive* neoliberalism only adds feminist and identity politic bells and whistles, effectively enticing the disenfranchised Left to maintain status quo structural inequalities as financialization is left unbridled.¹² Each of these movements deserves a thorough analysis, however, for the purposes of this paper, it suffices to say that a project or movement is not necessarily emancipatory, vis-à-vis the toolkit, just because it intends to be or intuitively seems to be.

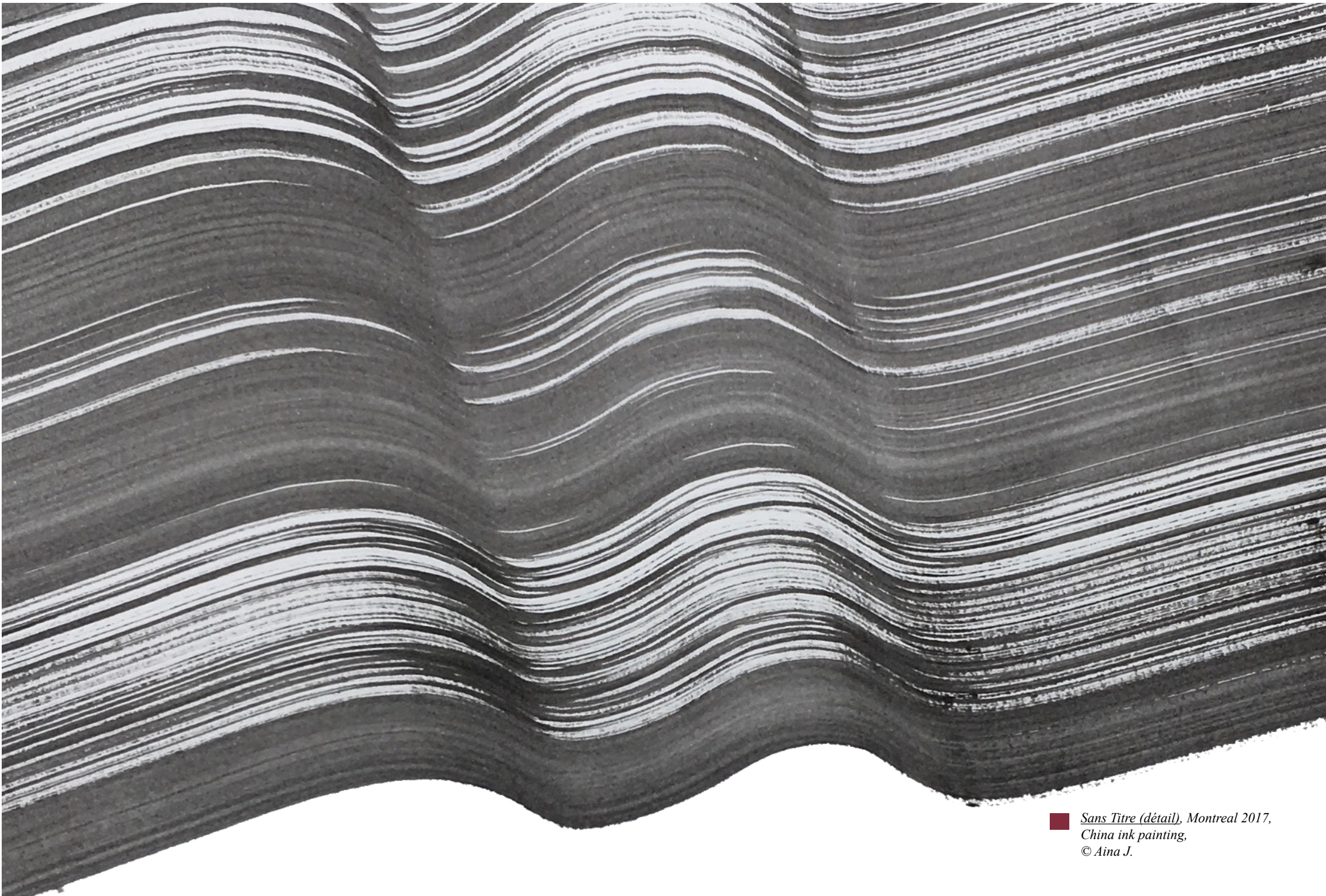
■ (3.1) Practical Incoherence

I have no desire to rescue the above projects from the jaws of Fraser's toolkit, however, the requirement that proposals must satisfy all three criteria together imposes unnecessary limits on realizing emancipatory outcomes. It would be more fruitful to consider projects that seek to satisfy Fraser's criteria *over time* since the metamorphic nature of capitalism appears to possess a resilience shielding it from coordinated change or collective resistance.¹³ My claim is that maintaining an equal and full commitment to each of Fraser's criteria will ignore practical limitations. To demonstrate this, I will review the proposal Fraser endorses, contending that her toolkit and 'together requirement' are not sufficient to evaluate this proposal as emancipatory. Fraser's preferred proposal is a variant of *progressive populism*: an egalitarian, 'pro-working-class' project to institutionalize a non-hierarchical social order, recognizing the grievances of divided groups (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 213).

On the first count, nondomination is the cardinal feature of progressive populism: egalitarianism and non-hierarchy are its most salient elements. With this we may consider the nondomination criterion satisfied, turning to the second. It is not clear how progressive populism would maintain functional sustainability. As a proposition to the working-class(es), a non-hierarchical social order is appealing, but *how* this would function in or as an institutionalized social order is left to be desired, and would surely raise alarms for those who benefit from the current regime. Fraser says more about how to win the hearts and minds of the working-class than what they would do once in a position of power; this is left to be determined by the working-class as they transform the social order. However, such a strategic lacuna, I claim, violates Fraser's functional sustainability criterion: too much room is left for the visions of one disillusioned camp to win out over others, in practice, if a sustainable political alliance itself is not achieved to produce an inexorable *working-class* collective.

This leads to the third criterion, democracy. The ambition of progressive populism is to appeal to the masses of the working-class, regardless of their political leanings, and unite them under their mutual grievances against the crisis-ridden institutions of capitalism. It is an admirable characteristic of Fraser's proposal that the gripes of the discontented Left and Right should both be recognized; after all, masses do not complain without reason. However, unless this alliance between camps which are de facto antagonists is successful, and a functionally sustainable model for a new social order is *collaboratively* drawn, the democratic criterion would be left unfulfilled.

Fraser's proposal only seems to practicably satisfy the nondomination criterion and should be evaluated by her toolkit as non-emancipatory.¹⁴ Even if one were to grant that progressive populism is committed to each of the toolkit's three criteria - in the proposal-guiding dimension of the 'together' requirement - we have little reason to believe it will amount to a process with momentum. As a process-guiding claim, the 'together' requirement for Fraser's criteria would result in progressive populism's democratic commitment preventing this proposal from realizing desired outcomes. Considering the intense political polarization which plagues the social terrain today, it is likely that, in practice, progressive populism's fulfillment of the democratic and functional sustainability *desiderata* would dissolve. While going to lengths to appreciate the magnitude of division in the current political climate before laying out this proposal, Fraser subsequently miscalculates how intolerant these groups are of one another. Reactionary doctrines are deeply held and may on principle prefer undercutting their opposition over any alliance with them. Merely proposing they lay down their arms is normatively desirable but ignores a practical incoherence with Fraser's other normative *desiderata*.



■ *Sans Titre (détail), Montreal 2017,
China ink painting,
© Aina J.*

4. A Diachronic Approach

The demand that Fraser's normative criteria be satisfied together is the yoke of her toolkit: a proposal must fulfill all criteria together regardless of whether this introduces practical limitations. Fraser's version of the toolkit provides an index of what is desirable in transformative proposals, what is not, and holds that what is desirable should be sustainable. If we can check these boxes, Fraser argues, then we have an emancipatory proposal. The trouble we face with the toolkit in neglecting the accessibility of a desired end, I claim, is producing a false-positive evaluation. If a proposal fulfills Fraser's normative *desiderata* but is inaccessible, are we prepared to call it emancipatory? I agree that the project of emancipation should identify ineffective or regressive ventures, however, transformations unfold over time. This gradual nature of social change, and obstacles to bringing about such change, demands a flexibility of agents' commitments to their normative commitments if any emancipatory end is to be achievable. To avoid throwing out the baby with the bathwater, I want to propose a revision of the toolkit, a fourth criterion to evaluate whether proposed social transformations are emancipatory: accessibility..

■ (4.1) Feasibility and the Accessibility Criterion¹⁵

Fraser has already introduced some considerations of feasibility, both with progressive populism and in her functional sustainability criterion: a proposal must be sustainable enough not to devolve into previous or worse conditions. Functional sustainability considers only the stability of a proposal which *has been* effective in transforming capitalism's institutions, ignoring whether a proposal's desired end is accessible in the first place. We must also consider all that has to happen to achieve a desired outcome, that is, from a vantage point before a proposal's goals have been institutionalized. I therefore propose an addition to Fraser's toolkit, a fourth criterion holding that for a proposal to be emancipatory its desired end must be also *accessible*.

I understand *accessibility* as whether a desired goal may be brought about. We may say, if some goal *X* can be brought about, *X* is accessible, and otherwise it is inaccessible. I understand *feasibility* according to Pablo Gilabert's description: "whether, and to what extent, the agents [or collective] in the circumstances have the ability or power to bring about the outcomes they might seek" (Gilabert 2017, 97). There is a distinction to be made between the roles played by accessibility and feasibility in my account. In my use, accessibility *simpliciter* will pertain to goals as a criterion for evaluating whether a proposal is emancipatory. Feasibility, then, will pertain to agents, circumstances, and outcomes, and as a consistent consideration for each of Fraser's criteria (97).¹⁶ I now want to apply these concepts to progressive populism to interrogate its effective force as an emancipatory proposal.

Separate collectives, with rival political views or unreconciled relations of domination, must collaboratively seek to bring about some common goal *X*: *unseat capitalism's entrenched dysfunctional, hierarchical institutions*. This requires that collectives, we may call them $C_1, C_2, \dots C_n$, all decide to act collaboratively in a coalition: the *working-class*. It is not the case that every member of society wants to act to transform the social order, which excludes these conscientious objectors to our emancipatory project from the acting collective. Recall Fraser's critique of anarchism: *those without free time cannot participate*, violating the democratic criterion. I consider here that some individuals and groups may be not too busy to participate, but opposed to progressive populism's desired outcome, and others unhappy with present circumstances may not be convinced some project will indeed produce a better state of affairs. This is a significant challenge to each of Fraser's criteria. Despite this, agents who do participate in a collective therefore mutually intend *X*. They must then bring about *X*, at which point a profound transformation of social institutions and conditions has occurred, and those unwilling to have participated should now, nonetheless, have their approval considered. The democratic criterion is put into question here, in practice, to satisfy other criteria. How much approval should a proposal receive to be acceptable, and from whom? We need not hold that democratic social change requires unanimity, but we do need to grapple with the grievances of any dissenting minority. After all, we are not considering policy changes in local or federal governments. We are considering deep structural transformations of our social order, and a group that disagrees with such transformation may call a tyranny of the majority complaint, in the fullest sense of the term.

■ (4.2) Diachronic Emancipation

Having explored only some of the uncharted feasibility of Fraser's normative criteria through progressive populism, one may feel demoralized faced with how infeasible it now appears. However, we need not give up yet. My claim is that a diachronic approach to satisfying Fraser's normative criteria redeems her toolkit by being feasibility- and accessibility-sensitive. The diachronic approach prescribes that we satisfy these normative criteria over time, prioritizing some over others, sensitive to feasibility constraints, rather than outrightly rejecting proposals with transiently unequal commitments to Fraser's three criteria. On this view, the normative criteria making up the toolkit can remain proposal-guiding, while allowing us to weaken its process-guiding role as a second-order normative claim. For a proposal to be emancipatory then, it must seek an outcome that is nondominational, democratic, functionally sustainable, and accessible, and in bringing about a desired end, agents are permitted to transiently weaken commitments to democracy, functional sustainability, and nondomination so that they may be more fully realized (accessed) in or as a social order.

Let us consider progressive populism again. I have demonstrated above how difficult consistent commitments to Fraser's toolkit criteria are to maintain. This is a feasibility constraint: an obstacle to bringing about a desired outcome. The democratic criterion presents *soft* feasibility constraints, which, by virtue of being 'soft,' are surmountable. Soft constraints may be skirted with some actionable revision of the circumstances faced by agents; thus, soft constraints decrease feasibility in degrees, not in principle (Gilabert 2017, 97). Constraints that not only inhibit but preclude feasibility are *hard* constraints. For example, if one's goal is to produce a four-sided triangle, one faces a hard constraint. Luckily, the constraints surveyed above are soft, albeit challenging. I suggest progressive populism must transiently weaken its commitment to particular criteria, sensitive to constraints, if it is to progress towards X. A diachronic approach to emancipation, however, requires that weakened commitments to criteria be restored if agents are to achieve emancipation at X.

On my account, emancipation will retain its identity (as emancipatory) over time, as a *proposal* for social transformation, a *process* attempting to bring about that transformation, and an *outcome* where that transformation is brought about (Gallois 2016).¹⁷ Addressing feasibility constraints in practice will demand a flexibility in agents' commitments to the toolkit's normative *desiderata*.

Here agents are permitted to weaken a commitment to particular criteria at some points in time to more fully realize social conditions constituent of these normative principles at a later time. Agents engaged in an emancipatory project must be conscious of social conditions and address those conditions imposing feasibility constraints effectively. So, supposing that a full and equal commitment to each of Fraser's normative criteria is possible as a process-guiding norm, while also holding that a proposal's goal remains accessible, despite an uncompromising commitment to those criteria, is to greatly underestimate the resistance of existing institutions, and their fervent defenders, to transformation. As the action-project of a critical theory, emancipation is not only a goal, but a process seeking to unveil human suffering, especially as eliminable, as a part of that process. It follows that some agents may not accept or recognize certain existing social conditions as forms of human suffering (Geuss 1981, 2).¹⁸ Some agents may even reject that such suffering is eliminable, or that it ought to be eliminated.

In conditions where agents are unaware of suffering, or opposed to resolving it, democracy acts only as a commitment of the emancipatory few. Consciousness of social conditions, support for social transformations, and action must all be built gradually. A democratic collective, then, must be built over time as well. To evaluate the democratic status of a collective in its nascent stages would be to extend the scope of a democratic principle to only the few participants who currently make up that collective, thus excluding, or speaking for those currently unsympathetic to that collective's aim. The challenge in being committed to a democratic principle, particularly as a criterion for emancipation, is determining which agents get a say. Fraser consistently limits the scope of a democratic principle to include only the *participants* of transformational social projects. This exclusive account of a democratic principle, as we have seen, casts doubt on how democratic a proposal really is. I suggest it be acknowledged that a democratic principle which pertains only to the pasture of one collective is quite a narrow application of 'democratic.' Instead, both the participants of a transformational project and those affected by its action should be considered in an account of emancipation. We cannot expect all agents will be sympathetic to social transformations, yet such dissent should not render non-emancipatory a transformation which resolves superfluous forms of human suffering. In this sense, a proposal's fulfillment of Fraser's democratic criterion either pertains to a minority of participating agents' active say, or we must permit that participating agents weaken their commitment to it as a process-guiding norm to retain an accessible and desirable outcome.

A similar concern holds for nondomination. Consider agents who benefit greatly from unjust, status quo conditions. A social transformation predicated on resolving existing forms of domination must unseat existing hierarchies and this will be highly unattractive for those near the top. We face a dilemma then in waiting for those at the top of existing hierarchies to agree to a more equal financial distribution, healthcare access, education, and so on. If agents of a purportedly emancipatory project remain committed to a nondomination principle, it either extends only to participants or to all those affected, even those unsympathetic with the goal. This again casts doubt on the permissibility of the emancipatory agents' desired action, according to their own standards. If the desired outcome is to institutionalize a social order devoid of domination, do we wait for those in power and excess to level-down the social standing they currently enjoy, or are agents permitted to forcibly take it from them? Furthermore, since nondomination is a criterion of Fraser's toolkit, we must ask if a social order devoid hierarchy or relations of domination is at all practically possible. Intuitively speaking, it may be 'emancipatory' to realize social conditions comprising significantly less domination than current conditions. However, if the nondomination criterion allows no hierarchy, feasibility concerns increase beyond what a *proposal* can address. My suggestion is to retain an intuitive sense of emancipation, where what existing relations of domination are resolvable, are, in practice, resolved, and this is compatible with a diachronic approach to emancipation. A diachronic approach permits agents flexibility in weakening and restoring commitments to normative criteria as process-guiding. To be emancipatory, it is not sufficient that some proposed transformation seeks to resolve existing suffering and injustice, but that it achieves this outcome. So, an account of emancipation which retains the intuitive sense of the word, and is characteristic of my diachronic approach, must hold that in addition to an outcome satisfying democracy, nondomination, and functional sustainability, it be accessible. I now want to turn to functional sustainability.

Functional sustainability pertains, on the one hand, to the sustainability of an outcome that has been achieved and, on the other, to the manner in which it was brought about. Fraser's claim is that the stability of an emancipatory outcome depends on how it came to be brought about, and in this narrow description, we are in agreement. If agents act as if their ends justify any means, the resulting transformation risks being unsustainable, undemocratic, or predicated on dominating others, and will be far from both Fraser's and my account of emancipation. The challenge for a diachronic approach, which permits agents weakening their commitment to particular criteria, is how to balance this permitted normative flexibility in the process of bringing about an outcome, and maintaining that outcome's emancipatory identity.

Let us refer to this concern as *identity decay*. This objection takes the following form: what was initially an emancipatory proposal is no longer identifiable as such in its process or outcome. In this case, the constraints faced by agents in bringing about their desired outcome decrease its accessibility. Agents then respond by transiently weakening their commitments to Fraser's three normative criteria, but the outcome is a pyrrhic moral victory, not identifiable as emancipation. In this case, the diachronic approach to emancipation has produced consequences Fraser's 'together requirement' would have initially rejected. Recall, however, that a diachronic approach holds agents are permitted to *transiently* weaken their commitment to normative principles in the process of emancipation, but that these weakened commitments must be restored if the process and outcome is to be emancipatory.

To meet the problem for how to retain a proposal's emancipatory identity over time, through process and in outcome, the prospective agents must evaluate three concerns: (i) *how to achieve a desired outcome*, (ii) *how normative desiderata may be balanced in navigating the constraints to that outcome*, and (iii) *whether and to what degree restoring weakened principles would sustain the outcome as emancipatory*. We may call these items an *identity index*: a tool to monitor and test the identity (status) of social change as emancipatory over time. I want to note, however, that this tool does not ensure all emancipatory proposals satisfying Fraser's three criteria will have an accessible outcome. In the case that a proposal satisfying democracy, nondomination, and functional sustainability is inaccessible in practice, agents must abandon their project.



■ *Grève d'agriculteurs, Toulouse 2015,
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If navigating the constraints to the desired outcome precludes restoring weakened principles, or renders the outcome undesirable, then the status of the agents' project will also be non-emancipatory. To sum up, a diachronic approach to Fraser's toolkit requires that an outcome satisfies her three criteria and be accessible. Agents seeking to transform existing social structures and institutions must remain vigilant in light of atrophying circumstances during the process of pursuing their goal. If normative principles cannot be restored, a project must be dropped or reworked on pain of pursuing a non-emancipatory, or regressive outcome..

We now arrive at an obstacle to evaluating emancipation of which Fraser's account is incognizant: it may not be determined whether a proposed transformation will be emancipatory from the vantage point of a proposal, that is, before acting on a proposal. To discover proposals' emancipatory potential, agents must pursue their desired outcome and meet the field of constraints constituting real conditions. Feasibility constraints are, to a great extent, determinable only in practice. Constraints may pertain to whether agents remain motivated to continue their project, the resilience of the institutions of capitalism relative to crisis and direct-action, epistemic constraints around agents' strategies and social consciousness, material requirements for achieving a desired transformation, or, of course, how sustainable an alternative to the current incarnation of capitalism will really be.

■ 5. Conclusion

I have attempted to demonstrate that Fraser's toolkit is practically incoherent. The crises generated by capitalism warrant the project of emancipation, but this is no simple task. I contend that Fraser's requirement that her normative criteria be used together imposes an unnecessary, all-or-nothing evaluation on proposed social transformations. To resolve this, I develop a distinction between proposal-guiding and process-guiding normativities, emphasizing the importance of feasibility considerations in normative approaches to social change. The approach I espouse then makes two principal claims: (i) for a proposal to be emancipatory, in addition to satisfying Fraser's criteria, a desirable outcome must be accessible, and (ii) agents may transiently weaken commitments to particular process-guiding norms to access an emancipatory outcome constituent of these *desiderata*. Taking a lesson from transformations past, the targets of concerted, collective action will react to their prospective successors. To meet a resilient opponent, such as capitalism, agents must balance their normative principles with their goals to transform existing social institutions. A diachronic approach to emancipation finds a middle ground between the two, recognizing that unjust social conditions may preclude the fulfillment of our most desirable normative principles in collective projects. The challenge then lies in finding the praxis which moves us beyond our morally corrupt social order without pursuing an inaccessible goal or a pyrrhic moral victory.

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Time, Montreal 2018,
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■ Endnotes

1 For now, we need only understand that the ‘accessibility’ criterion holds that for an emancipatory goal satisfying Fraser’s three criteria to be emancipatory, it must be able to be brought about.

2 Let ‘diachronically’ be understood for now simply as coming to be over time. Familiar examples may be dialects and language or a city or region’s unique culture, each of which comes into being over time.

3 Of course, issues with this description of capitalism may be raised, but that is not the main concern of this paper.

4 For a more recent analysis of worker exploitation built into capitalism, see Wright (2010), 41.

5 I use “free time” with two expressions in mind: (i) time away from work or leisure time, and (ii) time free from work to pursue personal projects. Taken together, free time is critical to maintaining a sense of wellbeing and purpose. The importance of free time in maintaining a sense of purpose is especially salient in cases where one dislikes their work.

6 I choose such a Nietzschean slogan to reveal a boundary or motive which many ‘environmentally friendly’ campaigns operate in accordance with; electric car companies, ‘green’ cleaning chemical brands, and paper bag replacements at grocery chains in particular come to mind, to name a few.

7 In North America, for instance, there are no nationally viable political parties which explicitly seek to replace or transform capitalism, thus leaving those who hold capitalism and democracy to be incompatible without political representation. Wolfgang Merkel also notes that virtually all OECD countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) and “even the strongest welfare states of Northern and Western Europe” have been unable, and in some cases, unwilling, to resist the neoliberal, financialized metamorphosis of capitalism (see discussion below).

8 For instance, some strategies may comprise civil disobedience, direct action, or consciousness raising, and some tactics may come in the form of strikes, blockades, and even verbal and written social critique in protest settings.’

9 Fraser stipulates that any changes to social conditions proposed by a transformative project must not aggravate existing relations of domination. Rawls is not mentioned by name in this section, but one may discern the difference principle at work here. Fraser rejects proposals that worsen conditions for those already worse-off, and in Rawlsian terms we could say any transformative projects must “be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged.” Rawls 1999, 266.

10 One may understand “process-guiding norms” to mean action-guiding norms, but within the context of collective action. I prefer “process-guiding” to denote the several components such a normative claim pertains to: collective-action-guidance, collective-agency, and mutual goals.

11 Note that functional sustainability will mean that any emancipatory outcome, which must of course be democratic and non-dominational, will also need to *remain* democratic and non-dominational as a new, functional social structure or order.

12 Each of the movements reviewed here Fraser evaluates as ‘non-emancipatory.’ There is also a ‘regressive’ category of proposals which are not only non-emancipatory but oriented towards realizing worse states of affairs.

13 Contra the Marxist theory of ‘crisis intensification,’ Wright argues that the position which holds capitalism to be self-destructive and thus prophesies its eventual replacement is deeply problematic. He writes, “Capitalism may be *undesirable*... while still being *reproducible*” (Wright 2010, 103).

14 In practice, progressive populism may overcome some of the feasibility considerations I have raised above, but this must be demonstrated in practice, through organization and action. My conclusion that progressive populism fails Fraser’s toolkit is derived from these challenges it faces in maintaining a commitment to her criteria in real conditions. Little of what is canon to progressive populism as Fraser’s *proposal* provides convincing solutions to these challenges.

15 I am indebted to Pablo Gilabert for helpful comments on how considerations of accessibility and feasibility pertain to evaluating social transformations.

16 I adopt Gilabert’s description of feasibility pertaining to agents, circumstances, and outcomes, however, I extend the use of feasibility here to pertain to each of Fraser’s normative criteria as well. Accessibility and feasibility are conceptual cognates, but my use of accessibility will be as a criterion for evaluating proposals’ goals. My use of feasibility will pertain to considerations of real conditions, constraints relevant to bringing about a desired goal, and practically satisfying Fraser’s criteria.

17 Gallois writes, “By diachronic identity we mean an identity holding between something existing at one time and something existing at another.”

18 Geuss notes that some members of the Frankfurt School held forms of human suffering to be partially self-imposed. This is an important but controversial insight which I only approach in terms of agents perceiving common forms of suffering as ‘normal’ or as unproblematic social phenomena. I consider the claim that agents are partially culpable for their own suffering dubious; such a stance is particularly troublesome when we accept that external forces distort agents’ social consciousness.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This journal could not be made possible without the financial contribution from :



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