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The Tropological Animal: Beyond the Body and the Sovereign[1]

Keywords
biopolitics, necropolitics, tropes, human-animal relations, sovereignty, multitude, flesh

Abstract
Biopolitics and necropolitics have used animals as a concept to illustrate a particular human biopolitical situation, much in the "tradition" of Aristotle's provisional biopolitics. In the Western context, not only our understanding of politics but also tropology and the conceptual apparatus itself are haunted by this ancient legacy, which underlies a vertical ontology tied to processes of spatialization and containment, a vertical ontology that enables an intelligibility of figurative translation. The article considers tropological systems as systems embedded in particular forms of governmentality, forms of the violent administration of life and death. To show how certain bodies are marked as animal or animal-like and used in the (metaphorical) processes of exclusion/inclusion, it focuses on Giorgio Agamben's thoughts on Carolus Linnaeus and Zakiyyah Iman Jackson's analysis of metaphorics in the most recent (r)evolutionary theory, symbiogenesis, developed by Lynn Margulis. Moreover, to radically disturb the graduated ontological premises of traditional stylistics and tropology, we move beyond existing conceptualizations of the body and the sovereign, all of which are based on de-borderization, intersections, movements, and transfigurations.

Tropološka žival: onkraj telesa in suverena

Ključne besede
biopolitika, nekropolitika, tropi, človeško-živalski odnosi, suverenost, multituda, meso

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Povzetek
Biopolitika in nekropolitika uporabljata živali kot koncept, ki služi ponazoritvi nekega človeškega biopolitičnega stanja, sledeč »tradiciji« Aristotelove preliminarne biopolitike. V zahodnem kontekstu je naše razumevanje ne le politike, temveč tudi tropologije in samega pojmovnega aparata še vedno bistveno zaznamovano z antično zapuščino in njeno vertikalno ontologijo, temeljno zvezano s procesi omejevanja in prostorskega razmeščanja, vertikalno ontologijo, ki omogoča jasnost figurativnega prevoda. V članku tropološke sisteme obravnavamo kot sisteme, vgrajene v določene oblike vladnosti, oblike nasilnega upravljanja z življenjem in smrtjo. S pomočjo misli Giorgia Agambena o Carolusu Linnaeusu in analize metaforike Zakiyyah Iman Jackson v najnovejši (r)evolucijski teoriji, simbiogenezi, ki jo je razvila Lynn Margulis, skušamo prikazati, kako so določena telesa, označena kot živalska ali živalim podobna, uporabljena v (metaforičnih) procesih izključevanja/vključevanja. Še več, da bi radikalno destabilizirali vertikalne ontološke premise tradicionalne tropologije in stilistike, se premikamo onkraj obstoječih konceptualizacij telesa in suverenosti, ki temeljijo na deborderizaciji, stičiščih, gibanjih in transfiguracijah.

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The Persistence of Smooth Violence

The prevailing view of the link between the animal question and biopolitics in the context of animal studies and critical animal studies focuses on the analysis of human-animal relations through biopolitical tools. Agamben's concept of bare life and the conceptualization of the animal as the ultimate bare life, for example, have proven particularly useful. A notable example of a departure from this prevailing logic of addressing human-animal relations in the context of biopolitics and animal studies can be found in James Stanescu's 2013 "Beyond Biopolitics: Animal Studies, Factory Farms, and the Advent of Deading Life" and Dinesh J. Wadiwel's 2015 *The War Against Animals*.[2] The latter, while using an existing biopolitical framework and the concept of war to think about human-animal relations, acknowledges, like Stanescu, this crucial conceptual

[2] James Stanescu, "Beyond Biopolitics: Animal Studies, Factory Farms, and the Advent of Deading Life," *PhaenEx* 8, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2013): 135–60, https://doi.org/10.22329/p.v8i2.4090; Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel, *The War Against Animals* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2015).

flaw when thinking about human-animal relations in the context of biopolitics and beyond.

This may be a kind of filling in of conceptual gaps, a kind of "corrective," for Foucault, Agamben and Mbembe. As they have largely used animals only as a "ground of thought,"[3] a concept used to illustrate a particular human biopolitical condition, much in the "tradition" of Aristotle's preliminary biopolitics.

Wadiwel points out that the commonalities between the forms of violence used by humans against humans and those used by humans against animals primarily concern shared techniques and logics of violent management of life and death, which "involves understanding the way in which developments in means for killing and containing animals flow to the human sphere, and vice versa," while cautioning against using existing metaphors of human-on-human violence such as "slavery," "colonialism," "holocaust" or "genocide" in describing what we do to animals.[4] Since "biopolitical theory was mostly developed around thinking through issues of human genocides, particularly the Nazi *Lager*,"[5] Stanescu suggests thinking in part with and outside of biopolitics, when analyzing human-animal relations, particularly the factory farm.[6]

My aim in this article, following what I have explained so far, is to consider tropological systems as systems embedded in certain forms of governmentality, forms of violent management of life that are "smoothed in such a way that it does not appear as violence," the result of this smoothed-out, seemingly bloodless and opaque epistemic violence being a complete transformation of "an animate sentient being into a 'thing.'"[7] This occurs as and through tropological modes of figurative speech, as a compilation of tropes. In this context, Wadiwel recalls the "absent referent" of Carol J. Adams, which arises from the process of

3 Joseph Pugliese, "Terminal Truths: Foucault's Animals and the Mask of the Beast," in *Foucault and Animals*, ed. Matthew Chrulew and Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 19

4 Wadiwel, *War Against Animals*, 81.

5 Stanescu, "Beyond Biopolitics," 136. See also, for example, Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Michel Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the College de France, 1975–76*, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003).

6 Stanescu, "Beyond Biopolitics," 136.

7 Wadiwel, *War Against Animals*, 13.

meat production, where the absent referent is a concrete person, a living animal. I will elaborate and develop this important aspect in the following lines.

In the spirit of a cognitive theory of metaphor that does not limit its stylistic analysis to the literary as the exclusive site of tropology, I will trace the internal caesura of humanity "through developments in the biological and evolutionary sciences"[8] with my first stop being Giorgio Agamben and his thoughts on Carolus Linneaus and my second Zakiyyah Iman Jackson's analysis of metaphorics in the most recent (r)evolutionary theory, symbiogenesis, developed by Lynn Margulis.

The latter example in particular will show how our understanding and use of not only politics, but also rhetoric is still indebted to ancient residue. Since "imagining a new world, [. . .] demands the reimagining of the [. . .] body,"[9] I will show at the end of this section that efforts have already been made to reconceptualize, reinvent, and, more importantly, go beyond existing conceptualizations of the body and the sovereign in order to more accurately grasp present (and future) conditions. All based on de-borderization, crossings, movements and transfigurations.

"For man does not belong to every animal, but animal belongs to every man"[10]

Aristotle has already been recognized by several authors (see, e.g., Roberto Esposito, Cary Wolfe, Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel)[11] as the cornerstone not only of biopolitics, but of what is characteristic of Western politics itself: "The grounds for the contest between humans and animals."[12] This simultaneously answers

8 Wadiwel, 76.

9 Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World* (New York: New York University Press, 2020), 158.

10 Aristotle, "Prior Analytics," trans. A. J. Jenkinson, in *Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation,* ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 25a14–27.

11 Roberto Esposito, *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, trans. Timothy Campbell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Cary Wolfe, *Before the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Wadiwel, *War Against Animals*.

12 Wadiwel, *War Against Animals*, 65.

the question of why the animal question has from the beginning been primarily a political question and only secondarily an ethical one.

The word politics, originating from the ancient Greek *polis*, denoting both the administrative center of ancient city and its citizens, was defined as a space, to which neither plants nor animals, women nor slaves had access. Early in the "Politics" Aristotle sketches the figure of a man who is on one hand "both beyond the animal, yet absolutely captured by the animal: the human is an entity that extends beyond what it is, yet at the same time is what it is" and on the other hand introduces a vertical ontology, "a graduated scheme by which human animals may be distributed across varying positions along the long trajectory between the animal and the idealised human subject."[13] Somewhere in-between is the figure of the slave, or with Aristotle "indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life,"[14] that is sometimes also replaceable with animal: "For the ox," writes Aristotle, "is the poor man's slave."[15] And this status is biological, given *by nature*, "through a biological schema of classification."[16] It is worth noting that Aristotle was very interested in animals, as evidenced not only by his writings on politics, but also by his anatomical work on animals.[17]

The point here is that for Aristotle, "'man' is not a transcendent being, unrelated to the animal life; rather, 'man' is defined as an animal with a surplus ability over and above other animal life,"[18] or, with Aristotle's words from "Prior Analytics": "For man does not belong to every animal, but animal belongs to every man."[19] In "Prior Analytics," Aristotle uses the example of animals or human-animal relations to illustrate a logical argument. It is no coincidence, then, that when Aristotle needs an example in "Prior Analytics," it is an animal which, as "the first metaphor"[20] is an example *par excellence*.

13 Wadiwel, 68.

14 Aristotle, "Politics," trans. B. Jowett, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1254a24–1255a3.

15 Aristotle, 1252b10–27.

16 Wadiwel, *War Against Animals*, 70.

17 Wadiwel, 68.

18 Wadiwel, 66.

19 Aristotle, "Prior Analytics," 25a14–27.

20 John Berger, "Why Look At Animals?," in *About Looking* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 7.

Referring to the fact that violence against animals is constantly thought of in terms that refer to human violence against other humans, Wadiwel writes of our "absolute poverty of language,"[21] but does not explain this further. One reason for this absolute poverty of language is a logic in which the animal is trapped, a logic in which the animal almost always stands as an example of something else, to illustrate a human condition (biopolitics and necropolitics are a perfect example of this), that this human condition can be thought of at all. Which points all the more to the need to move away from the dominant concepts that originally refer to violence against humans when thinking about violence against animals, to the need to work not only with what is supposedly our poverty, but also with what is really just another form of ongoing smooth violence, of speciesism, of making an animal handless, just because we need it to be handy.

This origin of the political in the ancient polis, which still haunts political theory in the West, as a "deficiency within the tradition of politics itself,"[22] is also, according to Wadiwel, why animals are still excluded from the question of the political and, consequently from the biopolitical. But tropology and the conceptual apparatus itself, are also haunted by the same measures, with a vertical ontology at its base, a vertical ontology that enables an intelligibility of figurative translation. Following Jovita Pristovšek, who states that "in the (Western) philosophical tradition, aesthetics is the terrain on which subjectivity was/is formed—much less it is explicitly talked about that certain subjects are *de*formed in it,"[23] that certain subjects *must be de*formed in it, in order for certain other subjects to be formed.

The Biopolitical Animal: Carolus Linneaus

In *Systema naturae*,[24] Carolus Linnaeus places *Homo* in the order *Anthropomorpha*.[25] In the introductory chapter of *Systema*, Linnaeus identifies the only dis-

21 Wadiwel, *War Against Animals*, 81.

22 Wadiwel, 66.

23 Jovita Pristovšek, "Necro-Aesthetics, Deading Bodies, and Performativity of Flesh," in *Re-Activating Critical Thinking in the Midst of Necropolitical Realities: For Radical Change*, ed. Marina Gržinić and Jovita Pristovšek (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2022), 293.

24 Carolus Linnaeus, *Systema naturae, sive regna tria naturae systematice proposita per classes, ordines, genera, & species* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Johann Wilhelm de Groot for Theodor Haak, 1735).

25 Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 24.

tinguishing characteristic of human as the capacity to know himself, which consequently means that "*man is the animal that must recognize itself as human to be human*."[26] Agamben derives from this one of his key ideas, that *Homo sapiens*, which appears in this formulation in the tenth edition of *Systema*, "is neither a clearly defined species nor a substance; it is rather, a machine or device for producing the recognition of the human. [. . .] *Homo* is constitutively 'anthropomorphous' animal [. . .], who must recognize himself in a non-man in order to be human."[27]

Anthropogenesis, whose fundamental driving force is the dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, is thus, according to Agamben, the process by which the living being becomes human, and this becoming "results from the caesura and articulation between human and animal. This caesura passes first of all within man."[28] Anthropogenesis is a crucial political conflict that precedes all others in Western culture, and biopolitics ultimately emerges from anthropogenesis. In this respect, following Stanescu, "the line drawn between the human animal and other animals is one of the, if not the most, important divisions in the biopolitical terrain."[29]

And in this sense, to return to Linnaeus, there is another important aspect of his work that Agamben mentions only briefly in *The Open: Man and Animal* in the context of Linnaeus's obsession with apes, but which is in fact crucial to understanding his work, even and especially in the context of biopolitics. In the same breath that Linnaeus revolutionized the continuity between man and animal in his work at that time, he had, on the other hand, already introduced a gradation within the human species, a tendency that was only reinforced by Georges Cuvier's anatomical work in the nineteenth century.[30]

Linnaeus's logic closely resembles that of Aristotle. And the work of both shows that "raciality is not a derivation of 'species' but is homologous and contigu-

[26] Agamben, 26.

[27] Agamben, 26–27.

[28] Agamben, 79.

[29] Stanescu, "Beyond Biopolitics," 135.

[30] Matthew Senior, "Classify and Display: Human and Animal Species in Linnaeus and Cuvier," in *Animals, Animality and Literature*, ed. Bruce Boehrer, Molly Hand, and Brian Massumi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 167.

ous with biological constructions of species and evolution and, therefore, not simply a by-product of 'speciesism' but rather an interdependent, coterminous, co-articulator of 'the animal question.'"[31]

The Contained Animal: Protected Lives and Dead(ing) Referents

Stanescu, in his article "Beyond Biopolitics," sets out "a genealogy of forms of life"[32] from Agamben to Butler and Benjamin etc., adding to this the concept of life, "a deading life," which he sees as an effective framework for thinking about human-animal relations in the factory farm context. One of the most important aspects of his concept of deading life is "a sense of life meant as pure production, pure use-value,"[33] and if Stanescu is referring here to the use of dead bodies for profit in the meat processing industry, this is no less true of the discursive, tropological level of the use of bodies previously designated as inhuman and thus designated as material for use, for it is only when living beings are rhetorically transformed into objects and things that we can dispose of them as inanimate objects and things, which means that they can be removed and not murdered or killed.[34] In this sense, is it possible to answer in the affirmative the (rhetorical?) question, "Could metaphor itself be the undergarment to the garb of oppression?"[35] posed by Carol J. Adams in her now classic work *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*? A question that, ironically, is also formulated through metaphor and is even one of the key tropological meta-toposes of costume and clothing.

One of the key concepts that emerges in her work is the aforementioned "absent referent," which refers to the person who is made into meat in the meat processing industry. And since it is more difficult to kill a concrete person, a sentient being, than, say, an object or a quality or projection detached from that being, it is necessary to replace that concrete being with something, e.g. a fox must be

31 Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 156.

32 Pristovšek, "Necro-Aesthetics," 288.

33 Stanescu, "Beyond Biopolitics," 151.

34 James J. Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 51.

35 Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 26.

replaced by a threat, a pest, so that it can be killed,[36] a refugee by an animal that can be removed, deported or even killed with impunity as a potential threat, a pest, or as Syrian refugee Ahmad Shamieh says: "Politics treats me as if I were an animal."[37] And if Marina Gržinić, in her 2016 article "'Afterwards': Struggling with Bodies in the Dump of History" places the body of the refugee as "the body that centrally entangles materiality and power today in Europe,"[38] it is this body, the body of the refugee, as a racialized body, marked by the signifier that "has historically been essential to producing classes of abject humans."[39]

Gržinić cites Joseph Pugliese,[40] who states that the entanglement of "racism and speciesism" is of such proportion that "at every turn in the documentary history of racism, the spectre of speciesism, the species is used to inscribe and reinscribe the racialized other,"[41] and as Jackson points out, we must not overlook the role of enslavement and coloniality in the emergence of the discourses of nonhuman animals and animalized humans, seeing them as "forged through each other for the purposes of producing an idealized and teleological conception of 'the human.'"[42]

The key point regarding the absent referent is the way in which this referent, this particular body, is absent, because Adams's absent referent's absence is an absence caused by death, by killing, more specifically butchering, so that the absent referent is actually a dead referent or more precisely, the dead(ing) referent, since this death occurs as deading, it is not so much an event, but a continuous process, that does not cease to reoccur after the act of slaughter.

36 Vesna Liponik, "Antropomorfizacija: Kritična analiza (ne)tropa" (master's thesis, University of Ljubljana, 2022), 14.

37 Boštjan Videmšek, "Portret tedna: Ahmad Shamieh," *Delo*, November 17, 2017, https://old.delo.si/sobotna/portret-tedna-ahmad-shamieh.html.

38 Marina Gržinić, "'Afterwards': Struggling with Bodies in the Dump of History," in *Body between Materiality and Power: Essays in Visual Studies*, ed. Nasheli Jiménez del Val (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2016), 163.

39 Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 2.

40 See Joseph Pugliese, *State Violence and the Execution of Law: Biopolitical Caesurae of Torture, Black Sites, Drones* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

41 Gržinić, "'Afterwards,'" 182.

42 Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 23.

In this "graduated scheme"[43] this "constant verticality"[44] we have "protected lives,"[45] at the apex of the vertical line, a group in which not only all the faculties of human physiology, sentience, intelligence and language in general are implicit, but also of "maleness, adulthood (but not old age), bourgeois financial and social standing (including standard bourgeois-level education) [and] membership in the white race,"[46] and on the other side—everything else, "the raw material for exploitation and for metaphoric borrowing."[47]

What we witness along this deadly verticality are "two co-supplementary movements of the biopolitical, both inherently violent and imperialist."[48] One move renders someone as inhuman and therefore disposable, and the other as human and, therefore necessary to eliminate all traces of the inhuman.[49] The latter is related to the "critical spatialization of the distance between human and animal through the use of both symbolic and physical bars," that Pugliese in his text about the position of animality in Foucault's discourse on madness, calls "crucial in enabling the operation of the biopolitical caesura and its systems of division."[50] He understands this spatialization as a result of colonial power in the classical period, which "in the context of the asylum, the zoo and the exhibition grounds with their segregated and barred spaces—ensured that the sane, reasoning, white human subject 'would not compromise itself by too close a resemblance.'"[51] Which, again, just shows an awareness of the uncertainty of the human, of the fact that the "human" must always be reaffirmed and, delineated by all the (non-)human means at our disposal and that "the human is produced, and is the site of great struggles, violence, and hierarchy."[52]

This spatialization and containment, borderization, has two functions in Mbembe's work: first, it prevents mixing, uncontrolled crossing of boundaries, con-

43 Wadiwel, *War Against Animals*, 68.
44 Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), xi.
45 Stanescu, "Beyond Biopolitics," 136.
46 Paxson, *Poetics of Personification*, 50.
47 Adams, *Sexual Politics of Meat*, 26.
48 Stanescu, "Beyond Biopolitics," 141.
49 Stanescu, 141.
50 Pugliese, "Terminal Truths," 27.
51 Pugliese, 27.
52 Stanescu, "Beyond Biopolitics," 137.

tamination of *pure reason*, *miscegenation* and, second, it allows unhindered identification and manipulation of the observed space, "which the observer isolates from the surroundings by some principle, so that in this isolation he is able to have complete control over it."[53] The consequence of this way of seeing is a reactionary connotation (of the animal).[54]

In this sense, we can return once again to Linnaeus, who loved apes so much that he built himself a zoo,[55] a paradigmatic space of "optical asymmetry."[56] The zoo is an institution built on the foundations of imperialism and emerging capitalism in the 19th century. However, the history of animal zoos is no less the history of human zoos or so-called colonial exhibitions, or as Mbembe puts it, "life under the sign of race has always been equivalent to life in a zoo."[57]

Mbembe cites three key processes as the basis for constituting a zoo: abduction, capture, and caging. Animals are not there to be killed and for direct consumption, but to live in a confined space, their lives dependent on the interventions of their keepers. They are not domesticated and a distance is created between humans and animals, and this distance is crucial for their relationship, for the zoo as such.[58]

Symbiogenesis or Miscegenation of Beastly Bacteria

Lynn Margulis' symbiogenetic theory of evolution is, first, a counter-position to Darwinism and neo-Darwinism, and, second, a theory that challenges the very concept of individuality and subjectivity and also shows how we adapt to and cooperate with others (species). According to Margulis (1938–2011), symbiogenesis means "the origin of new tissues, organs, organisms, even species, with the formation of long-term or permanent symbiosis."[59] Through symbiosis,

53 Jure Detela, *Orfični dokumenti: Teksti in fragmenti iz zapuščine*, ed. Miklavž Komelj (Koper: Hyperion, 2011), 290. All English translations of Detela's work are my own.

54 Detela, *Orfični dokumenti*, 111.

55 Agamben, *The Open*, 32.

56 Olivier Razac, *Ekran in živalski vrt: Spektakel in udomačevanje od kolonialnih razstav do Big Brotherja*, trans. Sonja Dular (Ljubljana: Maska, 2007), 91.

57 Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 167.

58 Mbembe, 167.

59 Lynn Margulis, *Symbiotic Planet: A New Look at Evolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), 6.

bacteria gave rise to eukaryotic cells (those of protoctists, fungi, animals, and plants).[60] Margulis' theory of evolution emphasizes that it is through coexistence that more complex structures become possible, that none of us would be possible without the simple concept of cooperation, community, merging, and that life itself is first and foremost symbiotic.

Symbiogenesis is already widely used (as a metaphor) in philosophical discourse by such diverse authors as Donna J. Haraway and Graham Harman, building on the already widely accepted idea of symbiosis as a paradigm for understanding (human) relations.[61] Narratives of common origins of this kind, which even have their scientific, even *natural* foundations, find their special place of reference precisely in a period that is essentially characterized by the "crisis of the commons" and thus the "crisis of the community" and, lastly, the crisis of (also conceptual) excavations from these states. As Gržinić states in the afterword to the Slovenian translation of Mbembe's *Critique de la raison nègre*, it is characteristic of the contemporary condition that "it is increasingly difficult for us to state with clarity the reasons for which we constitute the common world. These reasons are no longer obvious: instead of patiently reconstructing the reasons for living together, we are creating a situation in which it is important to search for the things that divide us."[62]

Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, in her 2020 *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World*, has shown how Margulis's theory "emerged against a backdrop of hierarchical racialization,"[63] how not even the most "radical theorist of evolution" as Haraway called Margulis,[64] is not only nonimmune to antiblack and colonialist histories that have always "informed *evolutionary discourses on the origin of life itself* and our ideas of cellular biology,"[65] but also shows that this is still the case.

60 Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, *Acquiring Genomes: A Theory of the Origin of Species* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 55–56.

61 Donna J. Haraway wrote about symbiogenesis in her book *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), and Graham Harman in *Immaterialism: Objects and Social Theory* (London: Polity, 2016).

62 Marina Gržinić, "Svet kot so-pripadanje," afterword to *Kritika črnskega uma*, by Achille Mbembe, trans. Suzana Koncut (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2019), 282.

63 Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 151.

64 Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 60.

65 Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 122.

Margulis and Dorion Sagan, her son, an American science fiction writer with whom she later collaborated, "present their theory in highly racialised terms, even occasionally referring to symbiotic cells as 'miscegenated.'"[66] The term miscegenation was coined by a proslavery prosegregationist Civil War propaganda pamphlet from 1863 titled "Miscegenenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro." The pamphlet was a hoax, but it nevertheless gained widespread circulation in the United States and popularized the term, which referred to fears of "race mixing" and the disappearance of a "distinct white race" as technologies of antiblack politics.[67]

Moreover, Margulis and Sagan "likened symbiogenesis to slavery,"[68] and, in addition to that Margulis called her text about the most famous symbiogenetic bacteria *Mixotricha paradoxa* "The Beast with Five Genomes,"[69] which has been symptomatically overlooked in the further implementation of the theory in other discourses.

Symbiogenetic theory employs the most basic repertoire of discourse on Africa, particularly the slave narrative with "recursive investments in figurative [. . .] narratives that conceptualize blackness as trope, metaphor, symbol."[70] As Achille Mbembe in *On the Postcolony* observes, "Discourse on Africa is almost always deployed in the framework (or on the fringes) of a meta-text about the *animal*—to be exact, about the *beast*: its experience, its world, and its spectacle."[71]

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66 Jackson, 153. "The co-opting of strangers, the involvement and infolding of others [. . .] into ever more complex and *miscegenous* genomes. The acquisition of the reproducing other, of the microbe and its genome, is no mere sideshow. Attraction, merger, fusion, incorporation, cohabitation, recombination—both permanent and cyclical—and other *forbidden couplings*, are the main sources of Darwin's missing variation." Margulis, *Acquiring Genomes*, 205; emphasis added.

67 Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 154.

68 Jackson, 153. "In both merged and free-living forms the descendants of all four kinds of bacteria still live today. Some say the four types are mutually *enslaved*, trapped both in the plant and as the plant." Margulis, *Symbiotic planet*, 34; emphasis added.

69 Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, "The Beast with Five Genomes," *Natural History Magazine*, June 2001, https://www.naturalhistorymag.com/htmlsite/master.html?https://www.naturalhistorymag.com/htmlsite/0601/0601_feature.html.

70 Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 2.

71 Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 1.

The first reason for the use of this "all-too-readily available metaphor and even metonymic link between race and species"[72] as discussed above, is the persistent logic of "the black body, held captive as a 'resource for metaphor,'"[73] but the second reason is, that the metaphor *heavy ornament* has traditionally and still is widely perceived; evolutionary biologists brighten up and *color* the dull scientific discourse; this is especially important when dealing with a controversial new theory of evolution that has taken hold to erase the old theory, and thus the equally controversial topos of mixing, of miscegenation is excellent for the task.

Turning now to the words of the Slovenian poet Jure Detela and his problematization and rejection of substitutive metaphor, in light of the above we can read one of his passages in which he problematizes the use of metaphor in relation to non-human beings in a very different way. He states that he "never wanted to call plants, animals, streams, rocks, seas by names that reduce [sic] them to mere emblems and thus use [sic] them in metaphor as the Aristotelian logical form that confines and enslaves beings."[74]

From Sovereignty to Multitude

What is at work in these arbitrary distinctions between the human and the animal is a form of sovereignty tied to the biopolitical caesura, but not a sovereignty as "a right or capacity to rule,"[75] but as "a form of violence,"[76] with Jacques Derrida, a form of stupidity, absurd and excessive,[77] for "how else might we describe a claimed superiority by humans over animals (whether based on intelligence, reason, communication, vocalisation, or politics)"[78] if not as a kind of stupidity, "which in its very exercise confirms a right to stupidity inherent within sovereignty itself."[79]

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72 Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 154.
73 Jackson, 13.
74 Detela, *Orfični dokumenti*, 189.
75 Wadiwel, *War Against Animals*, 261.
76 Wadiwel, 261.
77 Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign*, trans. Geoffrey Bennigton, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
78 Wadiwel, *War Against Animals*, 257.
79 Wadiwel, 257.

At the end of his book *The War Against Animals*, Wadiwel proposes a revision of the concept of sovereignty to think about animal sovereignties and radically reimagine our "fundamental political concepts."[80] He identifies coexistence and plurality as two crucial features of this new, reimagined sovereignty.[81] He proposes a concept of truce, a mutual recognition and consideration of former enemies, and speculates whether it is possible to treat sovereignty as an assembly.[82] Wadiwel also adds veganism to the list, not as a form of biopolitics, but as a challenge to human sovereignty, a break with it.[83]

Fahim Amir's 2020 *Being and Swine: The End of Nature (As We Knew It)* picks up where Wadiwel leaves off. *Being and Swine* "is a plea for politicizing the animal question on the basis of a slightly 'feralized' Marxism,"[84] which Amir calls "zombie Marxism."[85] Amir treats humans and animals as members of the same political species, "the swinish multitude," or even the "mosquito," or "termite" multitude, but most importantly he treats animals as political subjects, agents of their own liberation, showing that any community, any multitude, is always already multispecies, but inevitably shaped by class relations and colonialism. Through an analysis of the functioning of the links between society, history, economy, everyday culture and politics, without which neither nature nor the role of animals can be understood, he traces the flow of the material and discursive techniques and logics of the violent management of life and death from the animal to the human sphere and vice versa.

Similar to Wadiwel, Amir attempts to rework and expand a familiar leftist political (and ontological) concept of the multitude to imagine the multitude as a form of transspecies alliance.[86]

80 Wadiwel, 294.

81 Wadiwel, 21.

82 Wadiwel, 294.

83 Wadiwel, 279.

84 Fahim Amir, *Being and Swine: The End of Nature (As We Knew It)*, trans. Geoffrey C. Howes and Corvin Russell (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2020), 18.

85 Amir, 9.

86 The term interspecies refers to interactions between species, preserving the distinctions between species and the concept of species itself, while the term transspecies aims to question the concept of species itself, attempting to think of relationships beyond species distinctions.

In one of the chapters titled "Swinish Multitude," he introduces a transspecies swine society in 19th-century New York, where people and pigs worked together to resist city authorities and their sanitary measures. He traces the origin of the term to the French Revolution. The term "swinish multitude" was coined by the political conservative Edmund Burke in his 1790 *Reflections on the Revolution in France*[87] for pejorative purposes. Burke at that time was not aware of the extent to which the term would later be used. Burke's swinish multitude is a "monstrous figure," it is mobile and lawless and it abandons the order of things.[88]

It is also important to note here that the swinish multitude refers both to people revolting like hogs and hogs revolting like humans and is therefore not only a term of "political radicalism in troubled times of social conflict,"[89] but radically troubles the graduated ontological premises of traditional stylistics and tropology. Transspecies multitude is thus also significantly shaped through tropology.

In this sense, another notable example in Amir's book is his reworking of the pejorative comparison between man and animal, coined by Frederick Winslow Taylor.

In his most famous 1911 work, *Principles of Scientific Management*,[90] Taylor used a number of parables to convey his idea of scientific rationalization of the work process. His favorite was the story of Schmidt, "a stocky Pennsylvania German who was a pig-iron loader at Bethlehem Steel. Schmidt loaded about 12 tons of the 92-pound iron pigs each day (and then ran home to work on his little dream house). Using Taylor's principles, 'scientific managers' raised Schmidt's output to 48 tons per day, and raised his daily wages from $1.15 to $1.85."[91]

87 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. L. G. Mitchell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

88 Amir, *Being and Swine*, 48.

89 Amir, 49.

90 Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1911).

91 David A. Hounshell, "The Same Old Principles in the New Manufacturing," *Harvard Business Review*, August 31, 2021, https://hbr.org/1988/11/the-same-old-principles-in-the-new-manufacturing.

And, as Taylor points out, Schmidt was able to achieve this success not only because of his science, but also because he was "a high-priced man" who "does just what he's told to do and no back talk."[92] Needless to say, "Taylor was known for his studied disregard for the worker."[93]

If Ford was inspired to set up the first assembly line factory after a visit to Chicago slaughterhouses, which were already using the same processes but in reverse, Taylor saw the result of the rationalization of the work process, he is responsible for, in assembly line turning people into "trained gorillas."[94]

Amir returns to this image at the end of his book, first noting that "communism, as an unredeemed promise of humanity, will let the apes out of the zoos—physically and metaphorically."[95] He then refers to Marx's writing about the relationship between English and Irish workers. What is true of them is also true of the relationship between humans and animals: there can be no freedom while there is still unfreedom. And continues: "We may not yet be able to fully picture what this might mean, but there is no reason we should not begin to imagine it. To use words and images, emotions and deeds, to make reality stutter, as in the seemingly utopian vision of—gorilla guerrillas in the mist."[96]

At the end of his work, Amir points to the temporality of multitude in the form of Taylor's appropriated and subverted "trained gorillas," which Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who are responsible for popularizing the concept, refer to in their work *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, multitude as a concept caught in the strange double movement of "always-already and not yet."[97]

Amir's multitude means something like "quantity" which, in contrast to the "mass" or the "crowd," does not mean a merging into a greater whole, at the same time, it refers neither to the "people" nor to the "population" as the object of biopolitical governance, it is positioned as the opposite of the state and, as

92 Hounshell.
93 Hounshell.
94 Amir, *Being and Swine*, 87.
95 Amir, 173.
96 Amir, 173.
97 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 222.

such, denotes the production of acts of resistance through "irreducible multiplicities."[98]

In this sense, his "definition" of multitude corresponds in part to multitude as understood by Hardt and Negri, with the important difference that while Hardt and Negri emphasize that multitude is also a concept that includes aspects of race, gender, and sexual difference, their multitude consists only of humans.

Hardt and Negri's multitude aims to go beyond the modern concepts like sovereignty. They see the multitude not as of one political body that commands, but as a *living flesh* that governs itself. On the one hand, they stress that this is a new kind of body, a common body, a democratic body, but on the other hand, they foreground its fleshy elementary quality precisely as a departure from the tradition of the use of the concept of the body in political philosophy, following Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty argues that "the flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance,"[99] it is common and is elemental and this elemental flesh of the multitude is "maddeningly elusive, since it cannot be entirely corralled into the hierarchical organs of a political body."[100] Hardt and Negri thus write a kind of monstrous anti-*De Corpore*, which is supposed to oppose all modern political debates about the body and to embrace a new relation between the communal and the singular in the flesh of the multitude. But even if they dissociate the multitude from the concept of sovereignty, in a sense they still understand it as a productive biopolitical figure. So far so good, but let's be clear the biopolitical operates with the body, necropolitics on the other side with the flesh, guts.

Beyond: Political Flesh

In her text "'Afterwards,'" Gržinić follows Alexander G. Weheliye's proposal "that, in the time of necropolitics, we have to elaborate on 'carnality,' 'flesh,' or even 'guts,' as the viscus in the title of his book [*Habeas Viscus*][101] could be trans-

98 Amir, *Being and Swine*, 57.

99 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 139.

100 Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 192.

101 Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

lated."[102] She thus suggests an even more precise distinction between "the body as a device of biopolitics" and the flesh, for which she proposes the term political flesh, which has a "political relevance in the time of the necropolitical."[103]

Not coincidently, after this proposal Gržinić in her article exposes the connection between racism and speciesism, because each time we introduce flesh into the paradigm, we cannot avoid its carnal shadow, its dead(ing) referent, the animal, being constantly reproduced in the process of neoliberal global capital's racialization and precisely for that reason, as Gržinić states, "non-humanity is a category that offers the possibility of a new paradigm of politicisation."[104]

She then also draws a parallel to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's flesh, but with a slightly different emphasis than Hardt and Negri, with flesh "as the source of knowledge, to a point where the perceiver and the perceived cannot be disentangled."[105] But even more importantly she invites us to think about the agency of a political flesh. This being a starting point for thinking of common revolt: the somatic power of a compartmentalized and contained political flesh, since "necro-aesthetics is somatic, all-bodily encompassing. [. . .] Necro-aesthetics produces a bodily reaction, which implies a new way of perceiving and to attune our senses differently: a relation through feeling, the whole body/knowledge."[106]

Jackson in the coda of her book *Becoming Human*, titled "Toward a Somatic Theory of Necropower" extends Mbembe's view of colonial racialization that produces and is produced by the spatialization of populations into "cells." Her aim is to query "how social processes: the prison 'cell,' the political party 'cell' and the military 'cell'—interact with somatic cellular processes, producing alterations to the immediate cellular environment and cellular functioning in a manner that we might also describe as necropolitical."[107]

[102] Gržinić, "'Afterwards,'" 181.
[103] Gržinić, 181.
[104] Gržinić, "Svet kot so-pripadanje," 289.
[105] Gržinić, "'Afterwards,'" 182.
[106] Marina Gržinić, Jovita Pristovšek, and Sophie Uitz, "The Paradox of Necro-Aesthetics" (unpublished manuscript, 2021), quoted in Pristovšek, "Necro-Aesthetics," 292.
[107] Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 205.

In this sense and before the final stage of this trajectory that aimed to demonstrate how humanist construction of the subject is premised on the abjection of non-human, on the abjection of the Black Body, on processes of containment and compartmentalization, I want to emphasize, when rethinking and reimagining the alternatives to the fundamental concepts, such as subjectivity and agency, we must not seek inclusion to the tradition of liberal humanism, but rather think of "decolonial desubjectivation as a politics for the 21st century."[108] Key aspect of this decolonizing work being "seizing or really *taking back* the conceptualization of that bond [between human and non-human], reoccupying and deploying it in terms that continue to reject all settler binaries."[109] To rethink it with Mbembe in terms of "becoming" or "co-agency," as a matter of movement, crossing and transfiguration, following the old African cognitive worlds, in which personhood was always a matter not of ontology but composition and assemblage of a multiplicity of vital beings.[110] This being a base for the new collective subject that is "at the origin of new languages."[111]

Coda: Fast Forward

We have not yet fully grasped the anthropomorphic as a feature of modernity, but what lies ahead is the question of how to think about human-animal relations in the times of the anthropomachinic. According to Mbembe, "Humanity is in the process of leaving behind the grand divisions between the human, the animal, and the machine so typical of the discourse on modernity and on humanism. Today's human is now firmly wedded to its animal and its machine."[112]

Instead of a conclusion, I would like to pose a question and briefly outline some challenges that arise from the question of the animal as a question of the future. The first would certainly be the challenge of the technological, the anthropomachinic of the specular capitalism, with no slaves, where no revolt can take place, a time in which the "surface Negro" is substituted by a "depth Negro," a

[108] Gržinić, "Svet kot so-pripadanje," 297.

[109] Robert Geroux, "Introduction to the Special Issue: Decolonizing Animal Studies", in "Decolonizing Human-Animal Studies", ed. Robert Geroux, special issue, *Humanimalia* 10, no. 2 (2019): 1, https://doi.org/10.52537/humanimalia.9499.

[110] Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 107.

[111] Mbembe, 140–41.

[112] Mbembe, 179.

genus of subaltern humanity,[113] and also a time in which the slaughterhouse, the "world laboratory of capitalist modernity" with Amir,[114] is already starting to be replaced with the old biopolitical space with not-so-new purpose—a laboratory, which Gržinić in the review of Amir's book called "academic slow slaughterhouses."[115] They are now literally becoming one, with their main product, *in vitro* meat, the so-called clean or humane meat, already dangerously (mis)represented as a more sustainable, eco-friendly and cruelty free high-tech alternative to the factory farm and its central processing plant—the slaughterhouse.

As Robert G. W. Kirk observes "the nonhuman animal has contributed to the constitution of a *certain type* of laboratory alongside a *certain type* of politics,"[116] with animals being a key component in the development of the laboratory. Indeed, the laboratory system had long been prepared for this "new" challenge, for the laboratory system is already analogous to the slaughterhouse system, laboratory animals are bred and then used, slaughtered in the laboratory, they are "born to die and live exposed to death."[117] And if, for Latour, the laboratory represents a space "where the future reservoirs of political power are in the making,"[118] then what we are witnessing now is exactly that, but also something else. This "new" form of animal agriculture is a proof of a brutal persistence, not of the animal industrial complex, but of the animal agricultural complex, which today more than ever finds its basis in a specific form of non-direct killing. Gržinić in her extended essay on *Necropolitics* by Achille Mbembe states that the occidental regime of Whiteness demands a development of ad-

[113] Mbembe, 178–79.

[114] Amir, *Being and Swine*, 72.

[115] Marina Gržinić, "From Oppression to Dystopia and Back to Colonialism: Review of Fahim Amir's Book Being and Swine: The End of Nature (As We Knew It) (2020)," *Desde el margen* 4 (February 2021), http://desde-elmargen.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Being-and-Swine-Book-review-byMarinaGrzinic.pdf.

[116] Robert G. W. Kirk, "The Birth of the Laboratory Animal: Biopolitics, Animal Experimentation, and Animal Wellbeing," in *Foucault and Animals*, ed. Matthew Chrulew and Dinesh Joseph Wadiwel (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 193.

[117] Kirk, 217.

[118] Bruno Latour, "Give Me a Laboratory and I Will Raise the World," in *Science Observed: Perspectives on the Social Study of Science*, ed. Karin D. Knorr-Cetina and Michael Mulkay (London: Sage, 1983), 157.

ditional methods to avoid direct killing, which is the most important approach today,[119] and one may add, also the one that certainly has a future.

Since capitalism is not only an economic system, but also "an apparatus of capture and a regime of signs, a certain kind of compulsion, that is, a certain mode of organization and redistribution of power: the compulsion to put things in order as a precondition for extracting their inner value. It is the compulsion to categorize, to separate, to measure, and to name, to classify and establish equivalences."[120] It is therefore expected that vertical ontology will not stop, but will find new ways for the persistence of (smooth tropological) violence.

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[119] Marina Gržinić, "*Necropolitics* by Achille Mbembe: Extended Essay on the Book," *Filozofski vestnik* 42, no. 1 (2021): 244, https://doi.org/10.3986/fv.42.1.10.

[120] Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 158.

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