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Introduction

Libby Anker and Cristina Beltrán

As we enter a fall season shaped by new possibilities alongside ongoing and unexpected losses, this issue of *Theory & Event* takes up issues of work, labor, and value, inviting us to consider questions of dehumanization, disappearance, knowledge-making, and belief.

In “Wages for Housework Redux: Social Reproduction and the Utopian Dialectic of the Value-form,” Beverley Best offers a critique of recent tenets and tendencies in social reproduction and value-form theory by turning to the international network of radical feminist activists and intellectuals whose demand (*Wages for Housework!*) challenged Marxist orthodoxy in the 1970s. Exploring how globalized social reproductive labor (both waged and unwaged) involves gendered and racialized migrant subjects taking on highly exploited care-labor, Best returns to the tricky question of value at the heart of capitalist accumulation to show how the call to wage domestic and caregiving labor exploits the dialectical and utopian elements of the value-form itself. For Best, such scenarios allow us to ask: What might social reproduction look like if domestic and caregiving work were both everyone’s work and no one’s work in particular?

Questions of value and loss operate in a different register in Luke Donahue’s “Survival and Extinction: Deconstruction, Extinction Studies, Paleontology.” Donahue considers the deconstructive logic of Extinction Studies, asking what insights might be gained through deeper engagement with traditional concepts of evolutionary extinction. Constructing a methodological strategy immersed in the empirical findings and deductive explanations of paleontological and evolutionary literature, while also bringing together philosophical argumentation and literary readings of scientific research, Donahue demonstrates how extinction challenges our more familiar intellectual frameworks of survival or life-in-death, complicating our usual understanding of traces, remainders, and constitutive entanglements.

A different alternative account of traces, remainders, and constitutive entanglements emerges in David Baumeister’s “Black Animality from Kant to Fanon.” Exploring the logic of Black animalization in the political thought of Immanuel Kant, Baumeister’s examines the philosopher’s place in the history of racist and colonialist thought. Taking seriously the distinction-driven nature of Kant’s thinking, Baumeister

invites theorists to consider how the animalization of Black human beings relates to other facets of Kant's comprehensive and systematic approach to epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and aesthetics. Turning to Frantz Fanon's critique of Black animalization and dehumanization, Baumeister draws our attention to Fanon's account of how colonialist animalization inevitably backfires as Black/native humanity is made manifest through revolutionary action. Encircling colonized and colonizer alike, Fanon's engagement with discourses of Black animality are central to his effort to destroy such dehumanizing projects.

In "Appraising the 'Greek Truth Committee' in the Age of Debt," Joshua Bowsher examines the construction of political knowledge in Greece's recent Truth Committee on Public Debt. Arguing that the production of indebted entrepreneurial subjects is central to neoliberal governance, Bowsher explores how the GTCPD was itself a knowledge-making project that challenged this centrality. The committee both delegitimated neoliberal policies around indebtedness and cultivated new subjectivities that work for debt cancellation and democratic deliberation as key practices of political subjectivity.

Questions of political subjectivity are also present in Pinar Kemerli's "Thomas Hobbes and Political Secularism: A Critical Engagement." Kemerli brings contemporary critiques of secularism into debates about toleration in early modern political thought, and offers a different origin story of secular power than standard arguments about early modern toleration in the work of John Locke and others. Reading Thomas Hobbes through the lens of Talal Asad and other critics of secularism, Kemerli argues that Hobbes theorizes secular power as a mode of disciplinary governance. For Hobbes, secularity entails not the separation of church and state but a refashioning of religious sensibilities that requires the civil sovereign's continuous intervention in the religious sphere.

The October issue also features a symposium on the topic of work—a timely subject to consider as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to make clear the need to radically rethink how we value, organize, and compensate labor. Organized by Ben Turner and Lucas Van Milders, this symposium draws on feminism, Marxism, social reproduction theory, labor republicanism, and decolonial theory to offer readers a rich range of approaches regarding how political theorists might productively engage the changing nature of work. Reflecting on the role of colonial and racial violence alongside emerging and longstanding debates regarding automation, the gendered and racialized dynamics of domestic and care labor, sex work, academic labor, and the politics of whiteness and precarity, these essays offer a rich exploration of the many ways this pluralist and protean category affects our individual and collective lives.

This issue concludes with four reviews: Kennan Ferguson reviews Zakiyyah Iman Jackson's *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World*; Montserrat Herrero reviews Miguel Vatter's *Divine Democracy: Political Theology after Carl Schmitt*; Paul Martorelli reviews Harini Amarasuriya, Tobias Kelly, Sidharthan Maunaguru, Galina Oustinova-Stjepanovic, and Jonathan Spencer's *The Intimate Life of Dissent: Anthropological Perspectives* and Hagar Kotef's *The Colonizing Self Or, Home and Homelessness in Israel/Palestine*; and John Seery reviews Nadine Ehlers and Shiloh Krupar's *Deadly Biocultures: The Ethics of Life-Making* and Sara Rushing's *The Virtues of Vulnerability: Humility, Autonomy, and Citizen-Subjectivity*.

And finally, we at *Theory & Event* mourn the loss of our editorial board member, friend, and comrade Lauren Berlant. Lauren was a generous and vital member of our board who helped to shape the journal's interdisciplinary focus—and was one of the leading theorists of our times. Their pathbreaking work on the affective force of social worlds, on the sentimentality of national belonging, and on cruel attachments to fraying fantasies of the good life influenced a generation of scholarship in the humanities and humanistic social sciences. Lauren emphasized the importance of what is too often dismissed as “ordinary” navigations of everyday life: intimacy, neighborhood relations, mundane labor, and even the ordinariness of crisis within daily life under late capitalism. They rigorously attended to the emotional work that constructs and sustains our everyday worlds, as well as improvised adaptations to experiences of precarity, disappointment, and struggle across gender, sexuality, race, class, and ability. Lauren's use of fiction, film, art, cartoon sitcoms, and consumer brands to elaborate these attachments, and the sense of belonging they cultivate, opened new archives for theoretical scholarship. These archives and arguments were often extended, interrogated, and remade in the pages of *T&E* by a generation of theorists inspired by their formidable interventions. Their death is a loss for us all.

We will be celebrating Lauren's legacy with conference panels by fellow board members, and a symposium on their work in *T&E* later this year. We will deeply miss Lauren and could not be more grateful for the pleasure shared in working and thinking with them.