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Keywords: situated knowledge; relational ontology; objectivity-in-parentheses; provincializing Europe

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Not just theory: a plaidoyer for theoretical activism

Philipp Quell¹

Abstract

Donna Haraway suggests that traditional Western knowledge is inherently linked to the marginalization of non-Western visions. Similarly, Walter Dignolo criticizes the “colonial matrix of power” that dominates not only epistemology but also excludes incommensurable perspectives. He embraces Humberto Maturana’s idea of “objectivity-without-parenthesis” to highlight the exclusive nature of Western knowledge and its aspiration toward universality. On this basis, this essay argues that the traditional view of academic authors as impartial and detached needs to be reconsidered. Academic practice must move beyond this framework to create a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of knowledge. To achieve this, the text will explore the concept of “queer writing,” which views the context in which academic expression occurs as the necessary condition for its possibility. Therefore, the text will (1) specify the image of Western knowledge and universality, (2) identify the crucial shifts in the course of its development, and (3) outline possible interventions.

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Introduction

The world is burning. The frequency of new maximum temperatures is increasing rapidly. The growing number of people falling victim to natural disasters does not seem to end. The air of our being together is enflamed, too. Ukraine and Gaza are two prominent examples. How should Western humanities re-act? Is it enough to release statements but otherwise remain in stunned silence?² Is relying on Western governments to follow climate sciences’ findings sufficient?

In a recently published article, Hamid Dabashi strongly criticizes Western politicians and scholars for consistently overlooking colonialism’s deep-seated influence when discussing the Gaza conflict. He assesses that the “world at large is narrowing in on the barbarism that has long sold itself as ‘Western civilization.’” In this critique, Dabashi challenges the Western canon of thought, which has long imposed a Eurocentric perspective on what was supposed to be impartial and unbiased fundamental principles and assumptions.³

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²Cf. for example the recently published statement of Habermas and others, in which the authors justify the acts of Israel’s government in an unilateral manner, not displaying any ambiguities and thus being totally blind to a situation, that has in fact many layers. [Habermas et al., “Grundsätze der Solidarität. Eine Stellungnahme – Normative Orders.”]

³Dabashi, “War on Gaza.”

In this context, [the] focus of our thinking must forever be shifted away from a European philosopher's speculative fantasies and toward actual facts. [Hence, we must reconsider the history of Western violence to understand that the] horrors of Nazi Germany and the slaughter of millions of people during World War II were not an aberration in [Western] history, if we recall [the] genocidal record in Africa.⁴

Dabashi clarifies how deeply Western historically developed beliefs are influenced by a cruel and violent history and how scholars have implicitly and explicitly attempted to justify this cruelty through their concepts. This leads to a precarious situation, prompting the question: How should I react as a scholar? Can I react at all?

In this text, I claim I cannot not react, and this double negation is of a different kind than Hegel's sublation as a negation of a "determinate negation [...] which results in a new form [...] immediately arisen".⁵ The double negation I talk about is an irreconcilable contradiction that compels us to confront the historical void beneath the foundation of Western self-assurance. However, this self-assurance is essentially what the Western subject is, as it forms the basis of our understanding, emotions, motivations, etc. The certainty of my existence, my sense of place in the world, is evident in everything I say and do. However, it is also influenced by a tumultuous history. As a result, every choice I make, whether in my writing or my actions, is tainted by the violent legacy of the Western world.

Are there any alternative routes of thought or action that have not been paved with the bloody flagstones of Colonialism? The situation is a double bind: every time I choose a route, I further embed the flagstones into the

ground, contributing to their naturalization, but at the same time, I cannot not walk. The hidden, unpaved paths seem rare. I am uncertain whether they exist at all. A thin layer of earth might cover the flagstones, and the potential alternative could be an illusion that tricks me into accepting what I am trying to overcome. Every alternative route could be absorbed and become part of the bloody logic that shaped my perspective and motivational outlook.

Western subjectification, thus, presents a paradox, as it combines stability and flexibility. On the one hand, it embodies a bloody logic of self-manifestation, evident in the self-assuredness of purportedly accountable individuals. On the other hand, any criticism of this logic can only be articulated by these individuals, making self-critique inherently destined to fail as the bloody logic inherently excludes anything that fundamentally threatens its endurance.

I hypothesize that one way to achieve Dabashi's claim of shifting from "speculative fantasies towards facts" is through the practice of "queer writing." This practice consists of re-reading the established body of humanities while considering the cultural and historical context in which the texts are situated. For this subject, it is essential to pay attention to the introduction, transitions, and examples in a text in order to ask: "What, then, if something else had occurred, something totally other, something entirely unforeseen and absolutely different from all that has happened?"⁶

Consequently, I choose not to oppose the bloody logic but seek subversive ways to transform it – by uncovering the unexplored spaces and gaps in the canon, creating new paths. In this sense, thinking of theory as a practice only conducted in an academic setting is revealed as perpetuating a precarious and

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, 53.

⁶Malabou, "The possibility of the worst: on faith and knowledge," 51.

colonial-influenced status quo. To further elaborate on the context and the idea of “queer writing,” I will (1) specify the image of Western knowledge and universality, (2) identify the crucial shifts in the course of its development, and (3) outline possible interventions.

The god trick

What characterizes Western logic as violent? Humberto Maturana, a biologist and philosopher from Chile, authored an insightful text implicitly addressing this question. Maturana argues that knowledge and forms of life are inextricably linked. Therefore, scientific explanations of phenomena and things are not just a neutral enterprise that states what the thing objectively is. Instead, every claim for objective knowledge implicitly or explicitly involves a struggle for “privileged access to the real.”⁷ Every explanation is based on a particular observation, and this observation is made by an observer, who is, in some form, a living system. Therefore, every explanation is a response from a subject situated in a form of life and is necessarily contingent. So, when people communicate their explanations, they negotiate their presence together. As an observer, one never listens in a vacuum but always applies specific criteria to what we hear, see, touch, smell, or think. We accept or reject information based on whether it meets these criteria.⁸

On this basis, Maturana defines “objectivity in parenthesis” as accepting one’s particularity as an observer, comprehending cognitive faculties as “biological phenomena.” Thus, “if [one] wants to explain [one’s] cognitive abilities as an observer, [one] must do so showing how they arise as biological phenomena in his or her realization as a living system.”⁹ In contrast,

Western knowledge manifested as “objectivity-without-parenthesis” developed in a way that it “is constitutively blind (or deaf) to the participation of the observer in the constitution of what he or she accepts as an explanation.”¹⁰ Hence, Western knowledge overcame an observer’s “natural” limitations by changing how observations and explanations were approached.

- (1) It established a path of explanation that locates its cognitive truth in an independent domain of reality, remaining unaffected by the biological realm.
- (2) It globally monopolized its path of explanation and so became universally valid.

According to the framework provided by Maturana, any observation is situated according to the observer’s nature as a lived system. Therefore, monopolizing a universal path of explanation exceeds the realm of knowledge and explanation. For instance, monopolization (2) cannot be a purely explanatory action; to bring it to life, one must interfere in the structure of the life process. Thus, Donna Haraway defines this interference as a “god trick” and asserts:

I [...] insist on the embodied nature of all vision and reclaim the sensory system used to signify a leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from nowhere. This is the gaze that mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, which makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation. This gaze signifies the unmarked positions of Man and White, one of the many nasty tones of the word “objectivity” [...]. Nevertheless,

⁷Maturana, “Reality: the search for objectivity or the quest for a compelling argument,” 28.

⁸*Ibid.* 28.

⁹*Ibid.* 28.

¹⁰*Ibid.* 28.

this view of infinite vision is an illusion, a god trick.¹¹

So, for “objectivity-without-parentheses,” the lack of awareness of its biological involvement is not a sign of its inadequacy. Instead, demonstrating itself liberated from its biological bounds was essential for its dominant status on a global level. Consequently, a former local perspective became universal, dissipating with each attempt to grasp it. Thus, Western objectivity was a process that transcended its particularity. The monopolization of Western reason for actual knowledge – in other words, the transcendence of its situatedness – is fundamental to comprehending what is understood as objectivity nowadays.

However, demonstrating its distinctiveness has not been an explanatory effort but a forceful intrusion into global life. Referring to Hannah Arendt and Mignolo, I will outline the shifts leading to the worldwide hegemony of knowledge.

The invention of self-satiated vision

According to the former distinction, two positions require clarification to get a grip on the issues at stake.

- (1) What developments established “objectivity-without-parenthesis,” an explanatory path independent of biological needs?
- (2) What historical events led to the monopolization of “objectivity-without-parenthesis”?

Walter Mignolo identifies the core of “objectivity-without-parenthesis” as a “structure of enunciation.”¹² A detailed elaboration of this structure would exceed the remit of this essay. However, an illustrating example should be offered: Aristotle defines the subject (*hypokeimenon*) as a thing’s substance in *Categories*. According to him, if one knows a thing, one knows its substance. However, Aristotle distinguishes between two types of substance. The first type is indeterminate, representing the mere existence of the thing as it is immediately perceived.¹³ The second type is the substance, which Aristotle defines as the name a thing possesses due to its affiliation to a species.¹⁴ Thus, the essence of something is indeed based in a higher realm beyond its physical appearance. This realm comprises conceptual names organized in a hierarchy of species and kinds. Therefore, Aristotle shifts the truth of physical reality to a metaphysical structure of intellectual names, and pursuing knowledge becomes the quest to find the correct names. Thus, according to this perspective, every knower is a “metaphysical representer,” as Terry Pinkard puts it.¹⁵

According to Mignolo, defining truth as the expression of universal names of intellectual nature is equivalent to the “original formal apparatus of enunciation on which zero-point epistemology has been built.”¹⁶ This apparatus aims to achieve stable knowledge beyond biological reality.

However, if one sticks with Maturana’s “objectivity-in-parentheses,” the paradigm of intellectual names would be one way to explain observations without others necessarily accepting it. It may be established over time

¹¹Haraway, “Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective,” 581f.

¹²Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: global futures, decolonial options*, 45.

¹³Cf. Aristoteles, *The Categories*, 2a 2f.

¹⁴Cf. Aristoteles, 2a15ff.

¹⁵Pinkard, *Hegel’s Phenomenology: the sociality of reason*. 21.

¹⁶Mignolo, Op. cit., 122.

in a local context, but it would remain linked to the observations and developments of that context. Therefore, conceiving the truth as an event caused by an entity independent of worldly developments would be one paradigm among many others before and after that. One could certainly wager “that [this truth] would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.”¹⁷

In this context, Hannah Arendt argues that the transition from the Greek to the modern explanatory paradigm was not just a paradigm shift but a fundamental sublation. This transition revealed the universe’s secrets previously hidden to human cognition “with the certainty of sense-perception.”¹⁸ It led to a change in the pursuit of knowledge, which shifted from proving an explanation that fits the observation to proving the reality of the explanation in a perceptible manner. By embracing previous speculations about the infinity of the universe, Galileo transformed inspired theorizing into demonstrable facts. This allowed humanity to shape the world based on laws discovered on the strength of its cognitive abilities. The human mind placed itself at the center of its cosmos, a cosmos freely moving in an infinite universe. As a result, knowledge was no longer based on observations but instead derived from human reason, which became the new foundation of knowledge.

The self-satiated vision was created in this course of events, manifesting the conviction that “knowledge is only possible where the mind plays with its own forms.”¹⁹ Furthermore, modern science was no longer focused on observing and explaining nature but on

finding laws allowing one to command nature by obeying her, as Bacon famously stated.²⁰ Hegel identified this shift in Descartes’s work and wrote:

[A]ll the philosophy which came before this, and specially what proceeded from the authority of the Church, was for ever after set aside. [...] By this Philosophy is at one stroke transplanted to quite another field and quite another standpoint, namely to the sphere of subjectivity. Presuppositions in religion are given up; proof alone is sought for, and not the absolute content which disappears before abstract infinite subjectivity. [...] Thought is the entirely universal, but not merely because I can abstract, but because ‘I’ is thus simple, self-identical.²¹

Of course, there are fundamental differences between an empiricist framework like Bacon’s and Galileo’s and a rationalistic framework like Descartes’s. However, they all share the “universal standpoint of subjectivity,” enclosing universal reason within themselves and transcending situatedness.

According to Arendt, the first socially significant event of the “new universal world” was the liberation of labor power. In this way, the laws of modern sciences opened the path to prosperity, in which wealth was accumulated and reinvested to generate greater productivity. Due to this acceleration of life and the reduction of spatial distance, society’s entire life process was reorganized,²² leading to the Western matrix underlying every worldly event.²³

¹⁷Foucault, *The Order of Things: an archaeology of human sciences*, 422.

¹⁸Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 260.

¹⁹*Ibid.* 265.

²⁰According to Bacon, humans can comprehend the world without limits by utilizing modern technological innovations and strictly adhering to positivist methods. [Bacon, “De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum,” 590–600; Bacon, *The New Organon*.]

²¹Hegel, *Hegel’s Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Volume 3*, 224–228.

²²Arendt, *Op. cit.*, chap. 36.

²³I will exemplify this topic in the last passage when reconstructing Chakrabarty’s thoughts on globalization.

After every technological innovation, Western civilization increasingly controlled nature, separating itself from it. “And even at the risk of endangering the natural life process, we expose the earth to universal, cosmic forces alien to nature’s household.”²⁴ The enormity of this risk has become our reality. It is a reality in which the world is burning, and at the same time, leading politicians are convinced that global capital is a product of quasi-natural evolution. Meanwhile, many acclaimed Western scholars defend the universality of the Western subject.

Self-satiated vision and academic response-ability

By focusing exclusively on the connections between knowledge and society in the European region, I have omitted another essential aspect, namely, the rise of colonialism, which is also a result and a necessary condition of the global reach of self-satiated vision. Therefore, Mignolo correctly identifies the “colonial matrix of power [...] as the complex web resulting from historical developments leading to Modernity. [Nowadays, they guide global actions] in the domain of economy (exploitation of labor and appropriation of land and natural resources), authority (government, military forces), gender/sexuality, and knowledge/subjectivity.”²⁵ Hence, the magic of this matrix lies in its ability to influence every action or event, invisibly shaping a future that either maintains the status quo or exacerbates existing asymmetries.

Accordingly, the actual agent, the underlying matrix of actions, remains invisible and anonymous. This means that dealing with par-

ticular social asymmetries is worthwhile. However, it does not address the actual forces driving the events if the matrix itself is also not considered.²⁶ Solely focusing on the real problems is like shutting all your windows to prevent the hurricane from getting in while wrongfully assuming that the building’s foundation is secure.

Following the ideas of Arendt and Mignolo, it has become clear that the West’s violent colonial history is closely linked with its epistemic standards. This means knowledge is not neutral and cannot simply state the facts. Rather than a critical perspective, the connection between the dominance of Western knowledge and its colonial history is a historical fact.

At the same time, opposing the universal validity of this episteme, mindlessly aiming for its dismissal, is equally naive. As mentioned in the introduction, the framework that shapes scholars’ understanding simultaneously defines them to a great extent. Scholars cannot simply speak, think, and feel differently because even the other options they seize are also shaped by their form of life, or at least it must be regarded with suspicion.

There are many ways to begin transforming this globally dominant form of life; indeed, only multiple paths allow for any change. While globalization is a worldwide phenomenon exported from Europe, its effects and processes in Europe differ from those in Asia, Africa, America, and other regions.²⁷ In short, the colonial present is an undeniable fact that will never be rectified and must not be forgotten. It is our heritage to address the irreversible shift our ancestors passed on to us; it is indeed our “response-ability.”²⁸

²⁴Arendt, *Op. cit.*, 262.

²⁵Mignolo, *Op. cit.*, 144.

²⁶Mignolo, *Op. cit.*, 122ff.

²⁷Mignolo states: “If one does not make an effort, they will hardly notice any colonial influence in Munich. In contrast, in Bolivia or in La Paz, one recognizes it everywhere and all the time. It is in the air, and it is stuck in the bones. [Translation P.Q.]” [Mignolo, *Epistemischer Ungehorsam*, 194.]

²⁸Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: making kin in the Chthulucene*, 11.

The focus is not on opposing the advantages of the irreversible shift to the Western world. Instead, the challenge for Western hegemony lies in a different area. It is essential to consider how response-abilities could be developed to recognize and respond to the violent actions necessary to establish the dominance of the Western world. What ideas must be employed to “think other ideas”²⁹ rather than simply rehashing existing ones in a secular or neoliberal guise? “It matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledges know knowledges.”³⁰

Mignolo argues that as long as disputes and interpretations adhere to the existing rules of engagement, the control of knowledge is not challenged, and the colonial matrix continues to be perpetuated with new knowledge. Instead, Mignolo presents five different trajectories that can lead to alternative futures. He then differentiates “dewesternization” from “decolonization,” explaining that while decolonization seeks to dismantle locally imposed colonial structures in order to reclaim an authentic identity free from the colonial matrix, dewesternization focuses on critiquing the universal status of the Western subject.³¹

Dewesternization involves questioning the dominance of Western colonial power while keeping in mind its influence on every transformation. It is a paradoxical undertaking since it attempts to blast the ground from under its own feet while being convinced that something more desirable will flourish from the debris. As Nancy asserts, it is a gesture of writing refusing “to come back to itself, [so that] all thinking is the finite thinking of these infinite excesses.”³²

It is a form of self-critique for the Western

subject of knowledge, which does not analyze itself from a distance to develop another theory of subjectivity. Instead, it operates within itself, i.e., through and within the discourse in which it is situated. However, instead of focusing solely on the content of what is being said, attention is paid to how it is being said. Taking a dewesternization perspective means questioning the authority and validity of Western discourse from within. Gilles Deleuze’s distinction between a “theological plan” and a “plan of immanence” can help illustrate the crucial difference between dewesternization and external interventions.³³ Deleuze argues:

There are two very contrary conceptions of the word ‘plan,’ [...]. Any organization that comes from above and refers to a transcendence, be it a hidden one, can be called a theological plan [...]. Thus, it is a plan of organization or development. Whatever one may say, it will always be a plan of transcendence that directs forms as well as subjects, stays hidden, never given, and can only be divined, induced, or inferred from what it gives. [...] On the contrary, a plan of immanence has no supplementary dimension; [...] It is a plan of composition, not a plan of organization or development.³⁴

Thus, dewesternization attempts to compose new routes by decomposing the status quo of the colonial matrix of power. These routes are not compelling within a theological setting because they are unthinkable within a framework that claims to have a universal standpoint of subjectivity. Thus, transforming the “structure of enunciation” involves questioning the

²⁹*Ibid.* 12.

³⁰*Ibid.* 35.

³¹Cf. Mignolo, *Op. cit.*, chap. 1.

³²Nancy, “A finite thinking,” 8.

³³Deleuze, *Spinoza: practical philosophy*, 128.

³⁴*Ibid.* 128.

relationship between truth and enunciation by immersing oneself in discourses, reproducing knowledge as objectivity-without-parentheses to transition into objectivity-in-parentheses.

Brunner and Peterson support Haraway's call for genuinely new ideas and, therefore, embrace Haraway's proposal of "speculative fabulation"³⁵ as a way to "exceed current disclosure of current discourse[s]."³⁶ According to the authors, academic and political debates on apocalyptic future scenarios of prospective climate developments are shaped by objectivity-without-parentheses. Consequently, "the power of naming an end, which implies a power over the future and the present legitimated by a definitive past," manifests and reproduces the Western perspective.³⁷

In this vein, the discourses reproduce the colonial matrix of power to the same degree they successfully exclude alternatively centered narratives and explanations questioning the "finite end." Brunner and Peterson, therefore, opt for "speculations of queer futurity that challenge the capitalist normativity of life."³⁸ In this sense, I will close this argument by providing an example of "queer writing," which, inspired by Haraway, I call "metaphysical fabulation."

In short, queer writing can be understood as an academic practice that seeks to incorporate self-reflection within the context of colonial history and the associated dominance of self-satiated perspectives. Consequently, theory is no longer engaged in explaining the world from the outside and developing objectively valid solutions to problems. Instead, it conceives of itself as a practice and force in the world that relates to other forces. There is no universal framework that governs the interaction of forces. Therefore, every force must

take responsibility for its actions and apply its knowledge to the situations it encounters. In this context, objectivity should be seen as a dynamic interplay of forces. The distinction between theory and practice cannot be universally defined without considering the specific form of life it is rooted in, as all forces represent manifestations of living systems.

Globalization – a grievously incomplete explanation

In *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty examines historical narratives resulting from a Eurocentric perspective on global dynamics, providing a compelling example of 'queer writing.' He asserts:

Historicism is what made modernity or capitalism look not simply global but as something that became global over time, by originating in one place (Europe) and then spreading outside it. This 'first in Europe, then elsewhere' structure of global history was historicist; [it ascribes] at least an underlying structural unity (if not an expressive totality) to historical process and time that makes it possible to identify certain elements in the present as 'anachronistic.'³⁹

Chakrabarty presents the development of the world as a singular unfolding process. The rise of the "new world" led to the European subject gaining absolute self-certainty, positioning the West as the center of a global process while the peripheries were allegedly still developing. As a result, every peripheral experience that resisted the integration into the center became a residual by-product of the world's eschatol-

³⁵Cf. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: making kin in the Chthulucene*, 12 & 22.

³⁶Brunner and Peterson, "Thinking from the end," 45.

³⁷*Ibid.* 45–49.

³⁸*Ibid.* 52.

³⁹Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 9 & 12.

ogy. Accordingly, in the context of India, Chakrabarty asserts, “history, even in the most dedicated socialist or nationalist hands, remains a mimicry of a certain ‘modern’ subject of ‘European’ history and is bound to represent a sad figure of lack and failure. The transition narrative [of India to Modernity] will always remain ‘grievously incomplete.’”⁴⁰ Chakrabarty, then, attempts to reassess the significance of the side effects of colonial history by revisiting Marx from a “peripheral” perspective. It would exceed the remit of this essay to outline Chakrabarty’s queer analysis in detail, but the general idea is as follows.

Chakrabarty’s argumentation can be divided into two steps. First, he reconstructs Marx’s concept of abstract labor and how it can be used to critique capitalist structures through the subjugated proletarians. Chakrabarty emphasizes that abstract labor describes the material manifestation of a common measure in social structures, allowing us to compare human activity and make labor the species of all kinds of human activity. The capitalist turn in European history signifies the becoming real of this standard measure. As a result, the material manifestation of this abstraction, which can be seen as a historic event marking an irreversible gap between past and present, sublates society at large into another form (the description aligns with Arendt’s analysis mentioned earlier).⁴¹

However, while freeing itself from local bounds, abstraction cannot fully detach from the human body, as it is rooted in human activity. “Capital is thus faced with its contradiction: it needs abstract but living labor as the start-

ing point in its cycle of self-production, but it wants to reduce to a minimum the quantum of living labor it needs.”⁴² The more capitalism reifies, the more accessible human energy expenditure becomes, as labor initially consumed a significant amount in pre-capitalist Europe. “This will redound to the benefit of emancipated labor and is the condition of its emancipation.”⁴³ Human energy is eventually accessible to be invested in the developments of science, humanities, and the arts, which leads to the idol of “free individualities” and the capital’s unfolding “towards its own dissolution.”⁴⁴

Chakrabarty objects to this universal schema of proletarian emancipation based on capital, naming historical differences and capital’s subjugation of India as reasons for criticism. Chakrabarty argues that a different interpretation of Marx is possible when considering his concept of time. According to Chakrabarty, becoming “is not simply the calendrical or chronological past that precedes capital but the past that the category retrospectively posits.”⁴⁵ He suggests that Marx’s idea of proletarian emancipation should be seen as a “perspectival point” within European history rather than a teleology of universal history.⁴⁶

In a European context, capital initially encountered commodity and money already in existence “but not as its own product.” Therefore, it dismantles them “as independent forms” to subordinate them to “industrial capital.”⁴⁷ However, this dismantling of commodity and money must be understood in the dual sense of Hegel’s notion of sublation, which combines negation and preservation to express a present immediacy.⁴⁸ To a certain extent, commod-

⁴⁰*Ibid.* 40.

⁴¹*Ibid.* 51–58.

⁴²*Ibid.* 61.

⁴³Marx, *Grundrisse: foundations of the critique of political economy*, 501.

⁴⁴*Ibid.* 700–705.

⁴⁵Chakrabarty, *Op. cit.*, 62.

⁴⁶*Ibid.* 62.

⁴⁷Marx, *Op. cit.*, 468.

⁴⁸Hegel, *Op. cit.*, para. 113.

ity and money remain foreign to capital and consequently cause inner unrest within capital. It “is as though the ‘not yet’ [of rest] is what keeps capital going.”⁴⁹ Therefore, capital transition into global capital is not simply a reproduction of capital. However, instead, its preservation is simultaneously the negation of the form it possessed from the perspective of European development.

So, Chakrabarty argues that due to globalization, non-Western histories intersect with the universal form of life of the West. These histories do not belong “to [the West’s] ‘life process’ [and therefore] interrupt and punctuate the run of [its] own logic.” Eventually, “what interrupts and defers [Western] self-realization are the various [regional histories] that always modify [the] History [of the West] and thus act as our grounds for claiming historical difference.” Based on this, it becomes possible “to develop ethics and politics [that] take [Western] history [and universal logic] to its limits in order to make its unworking visible.”⁵⁰

Ungrieving universality – affirming factuality

The transformation of Marx and the logic of capital, as it is read and rewritten from the periphery, is a remarkable example of what I previously referred to as “queer writing” in the form of “metaphysical fabulation.” Rather than decolonization, Chakrabarty’s re-reading transforms the traditional canon from within, aiming for a separation. His theory alters its original framework by examining a theoretical work deeply rooted in a Eurocentric perspective through a different lens. As the theory also serves as a central element of this framework, changes and disruptions to the theory can also impact the framework.

Thus, a matrix could detach itself from itself

if read queer to the canonic reception while still within its context. If scholars view theory as a living force, queer writing is not just an academic exercise but an active engagement and a political positioning in the world. Therefore, queer writing can be seen as a self-reflective and processual way to gain knowledge. According to Deleuze’s differentiation between immanent plans and theological plans, it is an immanent type of action without any supplementary objects that can be reified independently of the process. Every absolute *hypokeimenon* that justifies any universal criteria is negated. As a result, queer writing is confronted with a dilemma: Which representation of facts is valid for actual social or legal conflicts if every understanding of a fact is subject to interpretation? What criteria could be used to differentiate between simply denying facts and the impact that different presentations have?

For example, consider the legal cases involving Donald Trump, who denies facts without presenting evidence. This and other cases of right-wing populism challenge a processual account of knowledge because the denial is presented as just another reasonable perspective. A universalistic account of knowledge could argue that specific facts are based on evidence; if the denial is inapt to falsify these facts based on different evidence that fulfills epistemic criteria, it is untrue. Case closed. On the contrary, in self-reflective accounts of knowledge, facts depend on perspective. They are relative, and denial is just the other extreme on a gradual scale, with pure affirmation being the other side.

I claim every grave self-reflective account of knowledge would deny two things. First, not everything is a matter of perspective; second, perspectivity and relativity differ. Perspectivity and relativity are identical only if *everything* is a matter of perspective. As the etymology

⁴⁹Chakrabarty, Op. cit., 65.

⁵⁰*Ibid.* 96.

implies, facts are things that have been made; they are not fixed instances.⁵¹ The description and explanation of an event will always be partial due to the embodiment of vision and its situatedness in its form of life. Therefore, facts must be understood as chiasms of events and interpretations based on the framework of a form of life. Nonetheless, if the possibility of distinguishing between events and their interpretation vanishes, this should be a clear signal for ideology taking control.

However, the act of queer writing is still a risky endeavor; it embraces the possibility of a “dangerous perhaps.”⁵² If the interpretation influences the facts, causality loses its determination and necessity. Kant already conceptualized understanding as a form of judgment, which is a performance based on subjective categories. It is not a mere instance, but it is “discursive.”⁵³ In contrast to Kant, queer writing understands the categories of understanding as an “empirico-transcendental doublet” of a form of life.⁵⁴ So, the form of life of the judge, his formed attitude (*hexis*), makes a “difference which makes a difference.”⁵⁵ This does not negate the differences that interpreted deeds or events made. Still, it does reject the ide-

ology according to which facts are fixed and unchangeable differences and that they unambiguously reveal their true nature when approached correctly.⁵⁶

This is why this article is specified as a plaidoyer. It is not about rejecting the facts; it is not a new methodology. Instead, it provides a different attitude towards truth. An attitude that radically affirms factuality and, therefore, invites one to recognize that perhaps if attitude is allowed to play a crucial role in the praxis of truth, a new way of being with each other could arise. However, for “this, we must await the arrival of a new breed of [academics], one whose taste and inclination are somehow the reverse of those we have seen so far – [individuals] of a dangerous perhaps in every sense.”⁵⁷ Trump, on the other side, is in no imaginable way part of this breed. His self-satiated vision has intensified to the point where his narcissism can only see a difference if it has the taste of possession.

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⁵¹The word “fact” is rooted in the Latin “factum,” which translates literally as “the subject of a deed.”

⁵²Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: prelude to a philosophy of the future*, 6.

⁵³Cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 204f.; Pippin, Robert B. *Hegel on Self-Consciousness: desire and death in the phenomenology of spirit*, 8f.

⁵⁴Foucault, Op. Cit., 347.

⁵⁵Bateson emphasizes the difference between “hard sciences” being concerned with concrete impacts and forces. In contrast, “when you enter the world of communication, organization, etc., you leave behind that whole world in which effects are brought about by forces and impacts and energy exchange. You enter a world in which ‘effects’—and I am not sure one should still use the same word— are brought about by differences.” According to Bateson, it is crucial to hold up to this distinction as “differences” are the effects of transforming external data into information based on the internal structures, e.g., the neural pathways of the eyes. difference which makes a difference, and it can make a difference because the neural pathways along which it travels and is continually transformed are themselves provided with energy. As a result, the idea of a true nature of fact is irreversibly relinquished, and the unit and the categories or ideas we employ to describe and explain the world make a difference, which makes a difference. The strive for a supplementary independent entity reveals itself to be a narcissistic will for domination. [Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 459-462.]

⁵⁶In this context, Heidegger argues that the consolidation of metaphysical truth, positing truth as discovering the “correct” intellectual name of a thing, was the essential transformation in the image of truth happening in the Platonic tradition. Truth becomes all about the requirement of “correct vision.” [Heidegger, “Plato’s doctrine of truth.”, 231f.]

⁵⁷Nietzsche, Op. Cit., 6.

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