

## BOOK REVIEWS

Smith, Andy (ed.): *Politics and the European Commission. Actors, Interdependence, Legitimacy*, London: Routledge

This book offers a detailed look at what the authors identify as a significant ‘black box’ in the study of EU institutions – a close look at the insights of the European Commission and especially its relationship to politics. With an overall more sociological approach than previous studies of the European Commission, the individual chapters provide detailed empirical data embedded in different theoretical approaches. Tied together in a social constructivist interpretation of the institution and its work, the volume’s contributions tackle a very important and indeed under-researched aspect of the Commission’s work – the question of whether the European Commission’s activities are driven by technocratic or political motives. The individual contributions take this underlying interest up in refreshing ways. At large, they deliver interesting insights into the sociology of individual commissioners and commission officials who together constitute and shape the Commission’s character.

Essentially, the book follows Claudia Radaelli’s (1999) thesis of a differentiation of politics and technocracy along the three lines of competition, publicness, and value judgements. This structure is helpful when tackling the technocracy/politics divide. Unfortunately, however, this argumentation-guiding thread is only disclosed in the conclusions of the book. The introduction lacks a clear definition of what is meant especially by the political motives of the European Commission, which makes it difficult for the reader to understand the selection of the individual contributions from the outset.

Instead, the book is divided into two separate parts, of which at least the selection of the second part is not an obvious choice to the reader. The first part deals with institutional relations at large and, except for some inconsistencies in how the chapters speak to each other, gives straightforward information on what the reader would expect to get from a volume on European Commission actors. First, Cécile Robert looks at the distribution of financial aid to Eastern Europe, starting from the hypothesis that the Commission acts politically although it tries to ‘camouflage’ such intentions – it uses financial aid programmes as a means to gain access foreign policy issues beyond its authority. She concludes

that the Commission drives itself into the need to pretend not to have a political agenda. The result is a problem of legitimacy and the inter-institutional games of the institutions.

The next three chapters stand in closer connection to the overarching aim of looking at the politics/technocracy divide. In the second chapter, Jean Joana and Andy Smith assess the way Commissioners structure their cabinets with regard to non-portfolio issues and conclude that a technocracy- or politics-based interpretation of their activities is under-complex. Hussein Kassim looks at the role of the Commission's Secretariat General from its origins in 1958 until the Prodi Commission and concludes that the Secretariat General has played an important role in the development and operation of the Commission, and that its performance is rather impressive when compared with national counterparts, especially with regard to inter-institutional relationship-management. Jarle Trondal examines national officials seconded to the commission, and whether the Commission manages to transform the loyalties and identities of national civil servants seconded on short-term contracts to the European Commission. He argues that of the two reference points of national officials – the supranational Commission and the national administration – the affiliation to the national central administrative system is the primary one national officials seconded to the Commission obey, even after being hired on fixed term contracts with the Commission.

Then, two chapters follow which deal with policy-making by the Commission. Véronique Dimier assesses the creation of the Directorate General for development. She observes a crucial political role of top civil servants of DG VIII in their dealings with African and European political officials and in their contribution to the construction of a new political order whose ambition was also to be international. Sébastien Guigner then argues with a study on the public health activities of the Commission that the body rarely relies solely on a technocratic mode, and that political and technocratic ways of functioning should therefore not systematically be opposed.

The second part is on the Commission's public information. This choice of topic is not entirely clear to this reader. The authors and editors of the book do not clearly explain their theoretical basis for why this part deals with the Commission's relationship with the media, instead of other potentially interesting issues. However, the individual chapters contain interesting insights into the communication policy of the Commission in various policy fields. Didier Georgakakis sketches a changing communication strategy of the Santer Commission, which contributed to the Santer Commission's resignation. While the initial allegation, namely that poor communication is a core argument to explain the Santer Commission

which the chapter seeks to examine, does not really correspond to the general scientific and journalistic perception of the resignation's background, Georgakakis convincingly argues that this development constitutes an example of how a European public space is created. Olivier Baisnée examines the Commission as an information source with a thorough analysis. He maintains that the ability to shape news concerning the EU is a major political tool for the Commission, which, however, is highly fragile in times of crisis. François Fôret uncovers structurally conditioned communication weaknesses of the Commission and concludes that the Commission is not able to fulfil its task of developing a general discourse about Europe for the general public. Jeannette Mak concludes the same with a look at the background of publicising the euro, where interests were apparently more closely linked to the respective Directorate General missions than to the euro. According to Mak, the fragmentation of Commission opinions adds to the body's legitimacy crisis. Finally, Helen Drake looks in a very interesting chapter at Jacques Delors, as one of the most prominent and influential figures among the Commission presidents, and at his impact during and especially after being Commission president through the think tank 'Notre Europe'. She detects an Europeanising influence on domestic elites and the shaping of the Commission Presidency's role all successors have to deal with.

This leads to a mixed recommendation of the book to readers. Criticism is mainly directed at the overall structure of the volume. In both parts of the book, the succession of chapters is not self-explanatory. The effort to bind the chapters together under a social constructivist umbrella appears too ambitious for what the book actually provides. To this reader, a more logical order of these chapters might have been the grouping around three implicit central themes: a look at actors within the European Commission, at Commission activities with regard to certain policies, and at the Commission's communication strategies. These three areas are indeed covered with sound empirical data and their interpretation.

Additionally, the theoretical frameworks of the individual contributions sometimes appear slightly construed. A strength of this book, however, is the provision of detailed empirical insights into the institution under examination. The individual chapters of the book, especially those of Helen Drake and Olivier Baisnée, live up to the initial promise of a different look at the European Commission, and deliver valuable empirical findings on this body which may lead to more differentiated interpretations of the body's activities.

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Mau, Steffen: *The Moral Economy of Welfare States. Britain and Germany Compared*, London/New York: Routledge, 2003

The changing welfare state is a current topic – its' importance amongst others can be seen in its' prominence in this journal. The welfare state is an institutional arrangement that realizes large redistributions between social groups in a society. One of the most basic questions of social science is why people are willing to support the welfare state. A common answer to this question is that this willingness depends on the benefits they gain. Another answer is that people want to help others. In opposition to this, Steffen Mau argues that people do not act solely on the basis of selfish or, respectively, altruistic motives. By introducing the concept of moral economy he shows that people tend to reason reciprocally. The acceptance of welfare exchanges depends on shared moral assumptions and shared beliefs of social justice and fairness.

Mau starts by presenting the state of the art of welfare-state legitimacy theory. First, he concentrates on those strands of discussion that focus on personal advantage as *the* motive for welfare state support, sharing the assumption of the self-interested citizen who supports the welfare-state because of its material rather than his moral value. Those holding this view can be found in the realms of political science, economic theory and social theory and – as recent welfare reforms in a number of countries show – in practical politics, so that it has become a 'trend' in social policy to modernize the welfare state by strengthening individual responsibilities and market elements in order to reduce 'dysfunctional' unconditional welfare measures.

However, Mau, like a range of other authors, does not agree with this narrow view on motivation for welfare state support. Accordingly, he sets out to develop his conceptional framework that aims at '[overcoming] the behavioural assumption of the self-interest-model and [taking] the normative underpinnings of welfare transfers into account [, too]' (20).

As it is impossible to define objective principles that guarantee the just distribution of benefits, it is essential to establish a socially shared normative consensus on what is a just distribution. Looking for an answer to the question how self-interest and moral motives interact, Mau does not only refer to the moral economy that stands for such a normative consensus on legitimate practices of social exchange and the distribution of collective goods (Karl Polanyi 1957; Edward P. Thompson 1971). In addition to that, Mau takes up a neo-institutionalist perspective by stressing that the organized transfers of resources are embedded into normative ideas and expectations of social appropriateness and fairness. This change of perspective allows him to conceptualize the norm of

reciprocity as a specific connection between social norms and social relationships in the context of welfare transfers, and to show why people endorse some kinds of transfers while disapproving of others (35). This way, Mau rephrases the concept of the welfare state based on norms of reciprocity. The notion of reciprocity stands for a mutuality of giving and taking. However, that does not mean that these exchanges follow the logic of the market; reciprocal exchanges can include material as well as symbolic returns.

Mau connects the willingness to give to the fulfillment of certain expectations of reciprocity. These differ according to the form and determination of returns, the tolerance of material imbalances and the degree of conditionality of granted assistance. Result of Mau's theoretical analyses is a taxonomy of social relations and norms of reciprocity that is appropriate to identify the normative foundations of existing welfare arrangements. He constructs four ideal types that provide information on ideas of social redistribution and collective responsibility. The notion of justice underlying the norm of reciprocity proves to be the *differentia specifica*. Institutional architectures of different norms of reciprocity range from unspecific, temporally undetermined, generalizing (1), to collective socialisation of risks (2), conditioning, binding (3) and returns relational to input (4).

On the basis of his taxonomy, Mau looks into five policy areas (redistribution, poverty, old age, unemployment and health). Mau does so by applying roughly the same steps to each area: he elaborates the specific normative logic of each area, identifying the underlying form of reciprocity. Then he describes the concrete institutional architectures of this area in Britain and Germany. After that, Mau turns to attitudes, examining the patterns of support for the related policy objectives in Britain and (East and West) Germany. Finally, he looks into the factors determining those patterns of support, namely structural determinants and interpretative and cognitive complexes. Due to limited space we have decided to present only one of the five policy areas in this review. We picked unemployment – a choice we consider justified by the current significance of unemployment.

Mau identifies the form of reciprocity underlying unemployment insurance as risk reciprocity or collective risk sharing (128). What is critical about unemployment insurance is that those employed have to shoulder the costs of unemployment. Mass and long-term unemployment are responsible for the formation of rather stable groups of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' with opposing interests. To those inside areas of stable employment, unemployment is a risk that is not as 'close' as, e.g., the risk of illness. As a result, solidarity with the unemployed is weakened – a development that can be observed in Britain and Germany.

While the institutional architecture of unemployment insurance in both countries generates entitlements from contributions, the two systems differ in so far that in Britain, the unemployed receive flat-rate benefits, while in Germany they receive earnings-related benefits. In this respect, the expected differences in attitudes can be found: Britons favor flat-rates because they consider them to be 'fair', while Germans think the same of their earnings-related benefits. These aspects are examples of structural factors influencing public attitudes. As an example of interpretative and cognitive complexes shaping attitudes Mau instances that in Britain, as well as in Germany, considerable parts of the public are concerned about the effects of unemployment benefits. They believe that these benefits discourage recipients from taking up a new job. However, this interpretative pattern rather affects the attitudes towards unemployment provision in general than those towards the concrete system of provision.

By means of his theoretical and empirical analyses, Mau succeeds in showing that only those welfare systems correspond to the normative ideas of the involved that are considered as fair according to their reciprocity. In this line of thought, the central conclusion is that the willingness to finance welfare transfers depends fundamentally on the question if the incorporated ideas of reciprocity and justice are (continually) recognized by the contributors.

The empirical part of the book contains plenty of information. Mau succeeds in elaborating the specific normative logic of the different fields of welfare politics. However, the high density of information creates in the reader a desire for a more explicit and commented presentation of results. An evaluation of the findings based on his taxonomy would have opened the possibility to further examine the institutional arrangements and their normative foundations in two respects: to establish relationships between the different policy fields in each country on the one hand and across countries on the other hand. This proceeding would have brought to light that reforms of institutional architectures lead to a gap between the new institutional arrangement, on the one hand, and public attitudes that are still geared to previous ideas of reciprocity and fairness on the other hand. This way, each reform of the institutional architecture calls the social consensus into question. Mau does not draw this theoretical conclusion any more. This limits our otherwise positive impression of the book.

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Edler, Jakob, Stefan Kuhlmann, Maria Behrens (eds): *Changing Governance of Research and Technology Policy. The European Research Area*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2003

What are specific aspects of the European Research Area (ERA)? In which ways are transnational institutions and research areas joined-up with those at national or regional level. These are the two main questions dealt with in this book, which is – without doubt – a very informative and useful collection of results in the field of multi-level governance research. Eighteen authors from different European countries give a profound insight into present changes and developmental processes of research policies in the European Union. Apart from the introduction, the thirteen articles are organised in three sections: The first part mainly entails articles from a European perspective, i.e., precisely the perspective of European governance (Caracostas, Banchoff, Caswill and Edler). The second chapter includes articles following a sub-European perspective. The authors analyse relationships between processes at European, national and regional levels (Stampfer, Biegelbauer, Hakala, Hilger, Muller/Zenker/Héraud and Hohn/Lautwein), providing the reader with extensive information about specific processes in Austria, Great Britain, Finland, France, Germany, The Netherlands and Sweden. In addition to this, some information about processes in Eastern-European countries is included as well. The last part of the book entails articles (from Dolata, Kaiser and Abels), which are all dealing with developments in the field of biotechnology in Europe (with a special focus on Germany) and ‘demonstrate the importance of certain sectoral and technological peculiarities for the potential impact of European schemes’ (25).

The book provides a good selection of articles. But it also contains some redundancies (for example in the article of Hohn/Lautwein, where we find nearly identical passages on pages 255 and 258 or on pages 256 and 259) and it might have been helpful for readers of this book to shorten some of the longer, rather long-winded articles in the first chapter. In spite of this, the authors offer a balanced point of view. On the one hand the authors show that the multi-level governance approach can be used very fruitfully to analyse recent processes in the EU and its member states and regions at a conceptual level. On the other hand they also discuss limitations to this concept, for example by criticising the lack of attention paid to the interplay of ideas, structural constraints and political entrepreneurship (Banchoff). By combining this concept with others like the ‘principal-agent concept’ (Caswill), ‘territorial innovation concepts’ – for example the ‘(national or regional) innovation system concept’ and the ‘cluster concept’ (Muller/Zenker/Héraud, Dolata, Kaiser) – or the concept of ‘policy learning’ (Biegelbauer, Abels), the authors demonstrate that existing limitations to

the 'multi-level governance' approach can be surmounted if the concept is used as an explanatory tool from a multi-perspective point of view.

In their introduction Kuhlmann and Edler distinguish between three different development scenarios, referring to the question of patterns in transnational multi-level, multi-actor political systems and changing innovation systems in the EU. The first scenario is based on the assumption that there will be a concentration and integration of European Innovation Policies in transnational arenas in the near future. Contrary to this, the second scenario argues that ongoing developments strengthen a process of decentralisation and regionalisation of innovation policy arenas, which will determine the future and which fosters strong competition among European regions. As a mixture of these two scenarios, the third one is based on the assumption that a co-evolution of European, national and regional policy arenas will play a dominant role for future developments, leading to a pivotal but mediated mixture of competition and co-operation in integrated multi-level arenas.

Basically, most authors' argumentations are along the lines of the third scenario. With the implementation of the Sixth Framework Program (FP6), fostering so called networks of excellence and integrated projects, we can observe a strengthening development process of transnational research and development structures. But, as Kuhlmann and Edler point out, there is no indication that the European Commission will be able to fill something like a mediating role by joining up relevant institutions and actors on regional and national levels. According to Caracostas, it seems more realistic to understand the evolving multi-level governance system as something 'not [...] based on clear cut distinctions between competencies to be exercised at EU, national or regional levels but rather on co-operation between these levels' (58). And it seems that in many cases neither governance structures on the European nor on the regional level will be more powerful than the existing – but also changing – governance structures and institutions on the national level.

What are changes on the national level according to the third scenario? Stampfer explains that 'national policymaking will remain the strongest factor in the future, even though it will lose some ground to both the European and regional levels' (158). Analysing the impact of the European Commission's activities on Finnish science and technology policy since the 1990s, Hakala argues that the third scenario provides more opportunities for the well-developed, consensus orientated and joined-up Finnish innovation system. It 'offers not only the freedom to make one's own choices but also an overall framework and forums for the mediation of Finnish interests and for extending collaboration networks' (205). But present changes do not only create win-win situations for all actors. Following Biegelbauer, we have to keep in mind that 'the institutional set-

up of the Member States' innovation systems is diverse enough so as to have winners and losers alike in each of the systems' (186). As Dolata points out, it is remarkable that the so called powerful tools of the Sixth Framework, like the networks of excellence, seem to be oversized for specific future technologies like biotechnology (284). Such fields seem to need more diverse and decentralised research and development structures in contrast to the centralisation process, which is fostered by networks of excellence. From a regional point of view, Müller, Zenker and Héraud argue that the development of an ERA may be posing a threat as well as presenting an opportunity for European regions. Their article makes it very clear that the existing gap between economically powerful and weaker regions should not be ignored. As a consequence, the third scenario also includes the danger of favouring some regions. Their conclusion is that 'European research policy setting must take into account the fact that there is no unique or 'one best way' of innovation related development at regional level' (252). Furthermore, Kaiser's analysis of the development of the biotechnology cluster in Munich (Germany) demonstrates the possibility that regions can be autonomous enough to develop their own research and innovation policies and that they have the chance to do this 'especially in collaboration with their national counterparts' (307). It is realistic to assume that the emergence of multi-level innovation policy arenas according to the third scenario will lead to a growing number of more complex policy processes, producing contextualisation problems in the society. In this context, Abels' plea for more 'comparative research regarding social processes of contextualisation in the Member States' (329) is a suitable end for the book.

The articles in the volume offer a good overview of recent trends in research and technology policies in Europe. They also proof the need for more empirical – and to some extent some more theoretical – research, which will enable the multi-level governance research to work out more specific aspects of the emerging ERA and test the conclusiveness of the third scenario. I can recommend it to all researchers and stakeholders dealing with research and innovation policy not only on the European, but also on the national, regional and (not to be forgotten) local level.

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Therborn, Göran: *Between Sex and Power. Family in the world, 1900–2000*, London/New York: Routledge, 2004

Only a few years after the start of the new century, Swedish sociologist Göran Therborn is presenting a book aiming to grasp the features and

changes of 'the family in the world' during the century we have just left behind us. As the title announces, the project is highly ambitious, being designed to cover one hundred years as well as to be a *global* history. Any project comprising such a wide-ranging issue needs to be selective in other ways, by focussing on specific topics or questions, and in Therborn's case, these are the three main contents patriarchy, marriage and the sexual order, and fertility. These three topics make up the three main parts of the book, and are completed by an introduction and a conclusion.

Part I, 'Patriarchy: its exit and closures' looks for evidence of patriarchal structures in the different parts of the world, describes the different degrees and faces of patriarchy, and analyses the way they were affected by historical processes during the twentieth century. Around 1900, one can conclude, all societies in the world were patriarchal, but they were so to different extents and organised around different features of patriarchy. Patriarchy, in the way that Therborn defines it, is characterised by 'the rule of the father and the rule of the husband, in that order' (13). Accordingly, and particularly, Therborn's overview focuses on the influence of older generations on the lives of their daughters (and sons), and on the hierarchical power-relations between husbands and wives.

The author's sharp definition of patriarchy, and his explicit focus on the main aspects of patriarchy according to the definition lead to one of the strong points of the first part of the book. Although a wide range of historical events are taken into account, and although many major and minor areas of the world are included, there is a clear central thread. The vast historical and regional data presented are embedded in the question of their relevance for the phenomenon of patriarchy. Thus, interesting connections between historical events and their meaning for the development of patriarchal structures are pointed out, and various facets of patriarchy in different areas of the world are described. We learn that the changes of patriarchal structures in the last century have not been linear, but often a series of thrusts and backdrops. Furthermore, the impact of processes in some parts of the world on the situation in other areas becomes visible.

However, Therborn's definition of patriarchy is not safe from being disputed. For several decades, and in many pieces of work, feminist scholars have contributed to a detailed description of the many mechanisms of patriarchy, which go beyond the main features of patriarchy presented by Therborn. From a feminist point of view, thus, Therborn's approach might be criticised for being too rough to grasp the complexity of patriarchy, a term of crucial importance in his book.

Part II, 'Marriage and mutations of the socio-sexual order', follows the path of marriage and cohabitation in the twentieth century. Mainly, this part provides an important input for discussions on family plurality and

current tendencies of family life. It makes clear that looking further back than only the past few decades, and to refrain from an exclusive focus on the so-called 'Western world' makes sense, and sheds a different light on apparently new developments. Here, I am referring to the fact that many forms of family, such as informal cohabitation or illegitimate children, are not at all 'new' phenomena, but have been rather common in former times and in certain parts of the world. Therborn's extensive analysis is a valuable correction of short-sighted approaches of recent family changes that only focus on the time after World War II and on industrialised societies. It also helps to put into perspective polemics about the shrinking value of marriage and the 'dissolution of the family'.

What is missing in the presentation, though, are some family models that receive more and more attention in current family sociology, such as friendship-families and LATs (living-apart-together). It has already been noticed that Therborn's presentation of historical connections and his inclusion of often little regarded societies provide a very important background for the evaluation of today's family models. Nevertheless, some recent developments and current issues, having their centre in the industrialised world, would have deserved more attention. Homosexual couples and parents, as well as recent attempts to provide informal cohabitantes with special civil rights, are mentioned, but not discussed in more detail.

Part III, 'Couples, babies and states', deals with the rises and declines of fertility in the last century, and tries to evaluate the factors that influenced them. Two main waves of fertility decline are identified: one from the 1880s to the 1930s, and one after the 1950s. The key word of the 'demographic transition', no doubt important in the debate, is seen from a more differentiated perspective. Again, as in part II, looking at the whole century sheds a different light on the developments we can observe in the last few decades. Above all, this part of the book reveals the complexity of demographic changes, and the difficulty to find causal explanations. Targeted policies, we see, are only one player, and they were applied with different effects. Many other factors play a decisive role, such as schooling, contraceptives or political movements. Also, the global dynamics of the development are made visible. This part, too, is based on large-scale statistical data, but it leaves room for interesting sociological questions. For example, the appearance of new life-course stages, such as the empty-nest couple, the deliberately childless couples, or certain types of singles. Or, the problem of work-life balance, which is linked to a discrepancy between the number of desired children and that of babies actually born.

One of the strengths of the book, but in some aspects also a possible source of critic, is its lack of value judgement. Of course, a basic ideological standpoint of the author cannot be denied, consisting of the

general rejection of gender inequality. However, apart from the implicit critical view on obvious hierarchical structures, different family models and traditions are looked upon with a remarkable reluctance to judge. The same is true for political influences and religions. In the case of Islam, Communism or Imperialism, for example, Therborn is not afraid to evaluate their role in regard to patriarchy in a way that confronts common stereotypes and ideological taboos. To be more specific, Islam is being identified as less patriarchal than Hinduism, aspects of colonisation which contributed to the improvement of the situation of women are pointed out, and the achievements of Communism in enhancing gender equality are noticed. We can see that the analysis of patriarchy in the world is the main focus of interest for Therborn, and forces that influenced patriarchy are evaluated rather independently from their ideological background. This seems to be a rather courageous way to confront the subject, but also one that is prone to criticism. The same happens with certain aspects of patriarchy, whose sober observation might hardly be approved by feminist scholars. For example, in dealing with illegitimate children, social consequences of being born in this status are largely excluded. Furthermore, different kinds of prostitution are neutrally being observed as common phenomena, but hardly reflected upon embracing crucial feminist critique.

As far as the style of the book is concerned, it is in fact an entertaining reading, in spite of its complex contents. What have to be pointed out are the illustrative examples, quotations and details that make the book particularly interesting. Even if the main basis for the presentations are 'hard facts', that is, official statistics, laws and survey data, there is room for cross-references to culturally and politically influential personalities, to literature and social movements, or, to name yet another example, to important trials that caused a stir at their time. Admittedly, the structure of the book, that is, the choice of chapters, titles and their order, is not always completely clear and consistent, especially in the first part. Nevertheless, Therborn manages to present the vast material he is referring to in a way that conveys broad connections as well as interesting details.

For example, we learn that The Netherlands, in contrast to Sweden, have not always been as liberal and progressive in terms of family policy as they appear today, but rather particularly conservative not long ago. Switzerland, on the other hand, was a pioneer in offering university education for women, while the country can hardly be seen as a vanguard in gender equality in general. Also, we get to know early women's movements in countries outside the so-called 'West'. Furthermore, we become aware of the ambivalent development of the situation of women in Iran after the Islamic Revolution, consisting of harsh discrimination as well as social progress. Not least, simple explanations like the socio-

economic conditions as a one-dimensional indicator for the extent of patriarchy are put into a more differentiated light. At the same time, many questions remain unanswered, as Therborn's detailed descriptions are not always linked to satisfying explanations. Feminist movements, for example, are often named, but it is not clear to what extent they have actually been influential. Important issues, such as the role of immigration with regard to fertility, are only touched upon. Furthermore, it remains unclear why Judaism, compared to the other major religions in the world, receives relatively little attention.

Therborn is, as he states in the preface, not a family sociologist, but a comparative social scientist, and this background, little surprisingly, characterises his book. It presents *one* way in which the story of the family in the last decade can be told, and many other ways, from different starting points and with different foci, can be thought of. The approach chosen is clearly a macro-sociological one, and the main basis is large-scale quantitative data. As a consequence, aspects of the family that can only be grasped by a micro-sociological perspective, and by the use of qualitative data, are largely absent. Also, in identifying changes, the author relies mainly on changes of law, without reflecting the problem of judicial versus practical changes more deeply. However, in the frame of the author's approach, family sociologists as well as comparative sociologists are provided with an extensive and well-written book based on thorough research. Therborn's main achievement is his reluctance to categorise, in spite of having to handle immense amounts of data. He has managed to adopt a global perspective without falling back upon rough generalisations, or in other words: to give a differentiated overview. This way, large-scale connections can be understood, at the same time as fascinating details can be found.

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## REVIEW ESSAYS

Sociology of art remains unable to give a fully satisfactory account of the constructive role of aesthetic form from within its own theoretical horizons. (Tanner 2003: 22)

Jeremy Tanner: *The Sociology of Art: A Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, 265 pp., ISBN 0-415-30883-6

The quote above captures Jeremy Tanner's position on a key debate in the sociology of art: can sociologists approach the study of art sociologically without it losing its specificity and becoming reduced to the collective factors involved in its production? His edited collection, *The Sociology of Art: A Reader*, is an attempt to explore what lies behind the inability of sociologists to address this problem. It includes eighteen chapters divided into five parts, each offering a distinct approach to sociological perspectives on the arts. Part I provides excerpts from the work of classical sociologists Marx, Weber, Simmel and Durkheim. Parts two to five are divided into themes (the social production of art, the sociology of the artist, the study of museums and high culture, and sociology and aesthetics) with contributions by Bourdieu, Elias, Habermas, Mannheim, Witting, and Zolberg, amongst others. The inclusion of another section with empirical studies on audiences and the reception of art would have been a useful addition to that list. Heinich's chapter on Van Gogh could have been one example, but the extract included is not particularly explanatory of her angle on audiences. Nonetheless, the Reader represents some of the approaches by sociologists studying the arts, at least until 1996 (as this is the latest contribution to the book and in itself a source of controversy). Did the sociology of art stop in 1996? What has happened between then and 2003? This collection is also a welcome contribution to an area of enquiry, which has suffered considerable neglect, particularly within Britain where the problem of how to define a sociological approach to art was never the subject of much debate (Bird 1979: 25). In terms of readership, the book is aimed at students in art history and sociology in order to familiarise them with the different orientations of these two disciplines; an attempt, so to speak, to bridge the gap by disclosing 'the potential reward' of gaining access to earlier critical traditions in art history and sociological thinking (Tanner 2003: ix). This is a promising task, although not without its problems.

The book's introduction sets out to explain the relationship between art history and sociology, and to highlight how their concerns have grown in ways that makes them virtually opposites. Before the emergence of modern universities, and the institutionalisation of art history and sociology, art historical writing had a largely sociological character: 'the key issue was the relationship between art and society and the fundamental concept that of art as a *reflection* of society or the nation' (2003: 6). It was only during the second half of the nineteenth century that art history and sociology parted company, with the formation of higher education in Europe and the expansion of universities (2003: 8). This encouraged the differentiation of disciplines, with their own subjects of study and analytical methods. The work of Durkheim led to the formation of a positivistic framework for sociology, as the science of social phenomena,

while Max Weber defined sociology as concerned with the interpretation and causal explanation of behaviour. Art historians such as Riegl, Wölfflin and Panofsky elaborated concepts, which identified 'the irreducibly artistic dimensions of works of art', and were geared towards a focus on 'the constructive role of aesthetic form' (2003: 9). Wölfflin's work sought to give the discipline of art history a purely formal-aesthetic conceptual foundation, rid art from its external sources, and reduce it to those phenomena internal to it, as he pointed out in his categories of pictorial order.

What creates confrontation between disciplines is the question of aesthetic value. On the one hand, art history is centrally concerned with aesthetic value, and its ultimate goal is an 'authentic involvement with the individual work of art'. On the other hand, the discussion of value judgements has guided the research interests of sociologists, but this rarely includes a commitment to discuss 'art or particular aesthetic values' (2003: 13). Their interest in aesthetics is limited to an exploration of how aesthetics can be related to the social structures and processes. From an art historical point of view at least, the study of aesthetics falls outside sociology's boundaries. This is why art history and sociology are seen as having irreconcilable differences: 'The distinctively sociological viewpoint on art thus seems to invert the particular value relationships implicit in art history' (2003: 13).

Tanner includes a discussion of the work of Robert Witkin and Pierre Bourdieu as examples of how sociologists have sought to transcend the opposition between internalist and externalist approaches to art, while also giving attention to art's formal analysis. Both authors perceive art and society as a 'functional whole' in which artistic and social structures are homologous. Witkin offers a semiotic analysis of artworks that links art styles to rules of social interaction. He establishes a correspondence between the ordering of sense values in painting, through colours, tonal contrasts, and the ordering of social relations. This allows him to formulate arguments such as the contention that evolution in art styles is parallel to the evolution of societies. As societies become increasingly complex, rules regulating social action become more abstract. Similarly, art styles evolve from those which the internal relations between components are ordered according to simple principles, as in the case of Egyptian painting, to styles in which internal relations become more complex and abstract, as in paintings with perspective and chiaroscuro. Witkin's model, however, poses its own problems because it does not account for 'intermediate cases' (2003: 20) when there is a lack of correspondence between style in art and social relations. This is the example of 'the art of classical antiquity, which Witkin sees as having both naturalistic-abstract elements proper to a more complex society and

hieratic—concrete elements characteristic of a less-urbanised society such as theocratic ancient Egypt’ (2003: 20).

Tanner criticises Bourdieu for his interpretation of art value in a ‘radically relativist way’ (2003: 21). The stylistic distinctions he makes have no substance of their own. Rather they are the product of a system in which artists are distinguished from each other in terms of their struggle to survive in the modern art world. As a result, the motivation of artists is instrumentalised, artistic innovation is ‘folded back into social structure’, while art is ‘continually reduced back into social structure’ (2003: 21). These critiques are relevant although not new, but in this context, they serve to emphasise a view of sociologists as unable to deal with the analysis of artworks, and the disciplinary separation between art history and sociology. Tanner, however, has an alternative, although it does little to overcome the theoretical impasse of the sociology of art he has identified.

### **Towards a general sociology of art**

Given the emphasis on the distinction between art history and sociology one would hope that Tanner’s proposal for what he calls a general sociology of art (2003: 22–5) would resolve some of these issues. Or at least, provide examples of what he calls ‘the best sociology of art’, which ‘places questions of artistic agency and aesthetic form at the core of its research’ (2003: ix). However, Tanner seems to pose more questions than he provides answers because he does not identify the sort of methods necessary to overcome this divide without collapsing one discipline into the other. His view is that we need to go back to the writings of scholars in the first half of the twentieth century ‘before the divide between sociology and art history had hardened’ (2003: 22). Weber’s work is an example of a sociologist who relegated aesthetics to the study of sociological concerns:

[S]ociologists such as Weber [who] are interested in the distinctiveness of western aesthetic culture, and in the erosion of aesthetic value through rationalisation processes. However, this implies an interest in aesthetics only in so far as aesthetics impinges upon and can be related to the social structures and processes which are the primary object of sociological explanation. (Tanner 2003: 13)

And yet it is not always clear which sociologists are on which side of the ‘divide’. Mannheim, for example, was writing much later than Weber but it is perceived as a sociologist who wrote before the disciplinary separation

between art history and sociology. Tanner's suggestion is to return to the writings of Mannheim, in terms of the overall set of questions which should inform the sociology of art. Moreover, Tanner wants to combine concepts from both disciplines: Weber's ideal types of action (purposively rational, value rational, traditional and affective), and Wölfflin's classifications of art styles (linear versus painterly, plane and recession, closed and open form, multiplicity and unity, clearness and unclearness) (2003: 22). Both types of concepts can be used together on the grounds that processes of religious rationalisation are analogous to those of aesthetic rationalisation (2003: 23). This model would enable the classification of art styles into types of structure (2003: 22). Thus suggesting 'affinities or contradictions between types of action orientation, social structure or style pattern' (2003: 23). The work of art historians such as Wölfflin and sociologists like Weber offer the possibility of integration into a single framework as they are both studies of rationalisation, although in different spheres, aesthetics and religion/economy.

Mannheim's classifications of cultural sociology – a pure, general and dynamic sociology – which can be found in his essay, 'The distinctive character of cultural sociological knowledge', complement Tanner's research framework. In short, they would inform our research agenda by asking: what place do society, culture and cultural forms play in human life? (pure cultural sociology), and how do cultures relate to social systems? (general cultural sociology), while a dynamic cultural sociology would focus on elaborating concepts and characterisations based on their relevance to the period under study (2003: 23–4). The chapters in the book can be read as examples of Mannheim's classifications, as Tanner says, Durkheim, Simmel, Mannheim and Parsons are part of a pure cultural sociology, and Becker, Williams, and Bourdieu would go under a general cultural sociology. A dynamic cultural sociology would encompass the work of DiMaggio, Zolberg and Witkin. But Tanner's preference is for a general sociology of art, modelled after Mannheim's general cultural sociology. As he says, even case studies which would be examples of a dynamic cultural sociology 'should really be the means to the end of a general sociology of art' (2003: 25).

## Conclusion

Tanner's collection portrays a view of sociology based on the ideology or doctrine of aesthetic neutrality. There is an underlying belief that sociologists should not be concerned with the question of aesthetics, but restrict their analyses to the social relations governing the production of art (Bird 1979: 30). This is linked to a representation of sociology as a

discipline only concerned with the formulation of general laws, testing concepts in a positivistic fashion intent on the production of causal explanation.

First, whether sociology should deal with the work of art remains unclear in Tanner's book. In the preface he seems to favour a sociology inclusive of aesthetics: '[T]he best sociology of art places questions of artistic agency and aesthetic form at the core of its research' (Tanner 2003: ix). However, the subsequent arguments retain a strong inclination towards maintaining the differentiation of disciplines, due to Tanner's anxiety regarding what he sees as the inability of sociologists to develop ways of analysing the artwork which do not reduce it to an effect of social structure. The dismissal of work by sociologists who have attempted to deal with the analysis of aesthetics serves to reiterate Tanner's view that 'the best sociology of art' is still to take place. As I have suggested, the problem here is not with the critiques themselves. Nor am I trying to argue that the differentiation of disciplines has not actually happened. Instead I am suggesting that these arguments are being used to maintain an understanding of sociology as a positivistic science which should better leave the aesthetic out of its remit. We are also reminded that art history and sociology are 'perspectival'. That is, their claims are relative to their disciplinary contexts (2003: 12). This is a valid point if what we are trying to say is that one given study should not be treated as having less explanatory power because it deals with certain aspects of a phenomenon. In the case of art, we find studies focusing on either the production or consumption side. However, there is a lack of examples of sociologists who have attempted, and succeeded, in their exploration and inclusion of aesthetics in their research agenda. The 'perspectival' nature of sociology is just another way of justifying the inability of the discipline to deal with the analysis of aesthetics.

Second, the separation of sociology from the study of aesthetics is made possible by a view of the discipline which reduces it to the study of context. Its concern is 'not so much with particular individual empirical facts as with types of relationship' (2003: 13). Actions, such as the ways of representing monarchic power, can be classified into types and related to types of social structure and processes. This 'strongly typologising disposition' (2003: 14) means that any involvement of sociologists in the exploration of intrinsic aesthetic values is disregarded. Rather, sociology is at its best when it addresses the context of artworks:

In elaborating the 'context' of an object, sociology by definition seeks to understand the object above all in terms of its functional contribution to social processes, and to define the period being studied in terms of its characteristic

social structure, the groups which compose that structure, and which produce and use the works of art in question. (Tanner 2003: 14)

Third, the notion of a general sociology of art pitches the study of art at a macro level. The analysis of art is described in terms of its 'functional contribution to social processes' (2003: 14), and is orientated towards the formulation of general laws. As Tanner says, his is an 'ideal typical model' which can be applied to a variety of artistic processes – style change in classical Greek or ancient Chinese art (2003: 23). And the form of general (cultural) sociology, which Tanner favours, is focused on the relationship between cultures and social systems. There is nothing wrong with sociologists of art drawing upon generalised theoretical frameworks or seeking to generalise their findings. But, for Tanner, an adequate method of 'relating' macro social processes and micro social processes of artistic production is yet to be devised. This would mean seeing art as more than reflecting social structure, or fitting into a specific form of type of action, which can be made analogous to a certain style in art. But here Tanner retains a sense that sociology does 'macro', rather than 'micro' analysis. This view fails to take account of the work of the contemporary sociology of art, which seeks to move beyond such a macro structural and micro agentic dualism.

One contribution these contemporary sociologists have made to the study of art is to argue that art is not merely an effect and reflection of society, and social structure should not be seen as the backdrop for analysis of artworks (Zolberg 1990; Bowler 1994; DeNora 2003). In this way, the macro (social structure) and the micro (analysis of artworks) are brought into being in a dynamic way that enables specific studies to participate at both levels of analysis. This is particularly the case in DeNora's (2003) study of music. Two main points are worth mentioning here, which are relevant for a sociology of the (visual) arts. First, the study of music's content is seen from the point of view of its constitution through musical practices. This means looking at how agents use and interact with music, and thus moving questions of music as a resource of agency to the centre of her research agenda. What music 'does' to individuals is the key issue, how it is heard and perceived, and how they delineate its meanings (2003: 57). Second, only through empirical work on music as a form of practice can we move beyond a level of theorising emphasising generality to a form of micro-study in which music is deployed by actors, and becomes constitutive of the social. As DeNora says:

[M]usic is much more than a structural 'reflection' of the social. Music is constitutive of the social in so far as it may be seen to enter action and/or conception when 'things' take shape in relation to music; when actors move in

ways that are oriented to music's rhythms (e.g., making the body move 'like' marching rhythm); or when actors employ musical structures as models or analogies for elaborating conceptual awareness. (DeNora 2003: 57)

I suggest that the sociology of art can learn from a sociology of music as exemplified by DeNora. A key issue is to develop ways of rethinking the analyses of artworks outside the remit of art historical approaches. But this involves asking the question: which sociology? And, at what level of theorising? A sociology, as the one portrayed in this Reader, geared towards the formulation of generalising studies through the application of concepts, whether art historical or sociological in their origins, can provide certain answers. But this theoretical framework is built upon the premise that art history and sociology need to reconcile their research agendas and make the disciplines more inclusive of each other. This is one point of view, but there is also the possibility of developing sociological understandings of art works, which offer alternative ways of thinking about the relationship between art and society. DeNora's study of music is a useful example. Dewey (1934): 4) provided a similar orientation in his *Art as Experience* where he argued that the aesthetic, the meaning of artworks, be seen as part and parcel of everyday experience: 'In order to understand the meaning of artistic products, we have to forget them for a time, to turn aside from them and have recourse to the ordinary forces and conditions of experience that we do not usually regard as esthetic'. DeNora and Dewey can be seen to be talking about the reception of art works, rather than their production. But they offer very stimulating starting points that could be taken up by a sociology of art focused on the interpretative practices involved in artistic production.

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### **The Politics of Naturecultures: Republican constitutions and animal manifestos**

Bruno Latour: *The Politics of Nature. How to bring the Sciences into Democracy*, London: Harvard University Press, 2004, 307 pp., 0-674-01289-5 (hb), €50.70; 0-674-01347-6 (pb), €23.10

Donna Haraway: *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, Chicago, IL: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2003, 99 pp., 0-9717575-8-5 (pb), \$10.00

For the last two decades the works of Donna Haraway and Bruno Latour in the Social Studies of Science (STS), have tried to show the impossibility of the modern bicameral order that allocates nonhumans to 'Nature' and humans to 'Culture'. For Haraway and Latour, trying to divide the world into two hermetic containers is an obsolete and futile endeavour: in our world, the scientific and the political, the organic and the inorganic, and the human and the nonhuman, are indiscernibly bundled together. As Latour (1993) schismatically put it: *We have never been modern*, an iconoclastic way of saying that we have never lived in 'Societies/Cultures' distinct and separate from 'Nature'. Indeed, we have always been 'amodern' (Latour 1990): we have always lived in the hybrid space of 'naturecultures' (Haraway 2000: 105). But how can we live and act in a world where all modern distinctions have been imploded? In short: *what are the politics and the ethics of naturecultures?* This is the question that both *The Politics of Nature* and *The Companion Species Manifesto* seek to address. Latour and Haraway have chosen two rather different ways to answer this question. Whereas Latour follows the venerable French Republican tradition in attempting to sketch a constitutional draft for a new amodern Republic, Haraway continues her life-long commitment to activism in devising a new incendiary and combative manifesto. Nonetheless, it is not at the level of style that we can find the main difference between these two books, but at the level of the political and ethical argument itself.

### **A constitutional draft for the new amodern Republic**

For Latour, the major political task to be undertaken if we are to engage with naturecultures, is to extend the old modern Republic. Developing the idea of 'the parliament of things' (see 1993), Latour argues that the extension of the modern Republic requires a new constitutional draft to endow nonhumans with the right and the voice to participate in the

politics of the Republic (87). In order to succeed in this extension, the crucial task is to bring Science into democracy. In the modern bicameral order, Science, taken as the only legitimate representative of Nature, was able to bring public discussion to an end by imposing objective and indisputable 'matters of facts' (30). Public discussion was thus always at risk of being short-circuited by Science. Latour argues that this modern role of Science has become impossible: science can no longer suspend public discussion in the name of Nature. Thanks to STS we know that there are no such things as indisputable, objective and naked facts that belong to a transcendental Nature to which only Science has access. In fact, there is no such a thing as a unified and transcendental Nature inhabiting outside the walls of the Republic that can be used as a court of appeal to settle one and for all political discussions. But then, what is to be done? 'Politics has to get back to work *without* the transcendence of Nature' (56). But where are we to find this new form of amodern politics without recourse to 'natural rights', 'natural laws' or 'objective facts'? Political ecology is Latour's answer.

This answer may seem awkward if we keep in mind the traditional definition of political ecology. The old Political ecology with its claims to respect, care and protect Nature was nothing but a continuation of the modern project by other means. As Latour argues, the old Political ecology was a form of 'Naturpolitik' (19), that is, it used Nature as a regulative ideal to model public life while keeping intact the very idea of Nature. Nonetheless, Latour has another Political ecology in mind, one whose premise is, paradoxically enough, 'to let go of Nature' (9). This new political ecology is concerned, not with Nature, but with proposing ways of collecting and associating humans and nonhumans into a single common world, into a 'collective' (55). To make possible this common world, the first thing the new political ecology has to do is to free nonhumans from Nature so that they can participate in the Republic as fully-fledged citizens (51). But, how are nonhumans going to participate as citizens? Latour's answer is that we have to give them a 'voice' (62). Yet again, how are nonhumans going to *speak*? To answer this question, 'sciences', in the plural and without a block capital, enter the scene.

The amodern task of the 'sciences' is not to speak on behalf of a single and unified Nature, as did the old modern Science. The sciences do not to impose nonhumans as 'matters of facts', with the capacity to short-circuit public discussion, but present them as 'matters of concern' that trigger new public discussions: nonhumans are the beginning of politics, not its end. This is Latour's plea in this book: that we abandon our definition of nonhumans as 'matters of facts', and substitute it for a definition of nonhumans as 'matters of concern' (244). To explain this substitution, Latour recalls how, at the beginning of the mad cow crisis, scientists

proposed prions as the possible cause of the disease. Those prions were not matters of fact with the capacity to silence the collective, quite the contrary: 'prions suffice to induce perplexity' (112). With their appearance, prions brought about a whole new range of political questions: 'Must all European cattle farming be modified, the entire meat distribution system, all manufacturing of animal-based feed, in order to make room for prions and situate them within an order that will array them from largest to smallest?' (113). Prions become relevant political actors that have to be taken into account in the task of assembling the collective. In short: they *matter* to our political discussions. Latour is not simply stating the truism according to which there are prions, tables, trees and a host of other nonhumans in our societies. Rather, Latour's point is that we should *incorporate* these nonhumans into our definition of politics.

Once the voice of nonhumans has been recognised, the toil of bringing the collective together acquires a whole new meaning. The capital question now is: 'Who are you capable of rejecting and absorbing into the collective?' (186) Henceforth Latour dedicates the rest of the book to the Platonic exercise of designing the new separation of powers and the new *métiers* that can bring the Republic together. The new Republic will initially begin to gather the collective through the indefatigable scientists who will be constantly proposing new candidates for citizenship to the collective (137–43). After the scientists, politicians will offer to the collective the capacity of compromise (143–50). The economist will add the capacity to calculate and to commensurate (150–4). The moralist will contribute to the civic virtues by questioning new agreements thus leaving open the possibility to reopen them (154–61). Latour even devises the role of diplomat who, as 'scout and interpreter' (212), will succeed the modern anthropologist in the task of encountering new collectives. Then, at the seventh day 'Night has fallen, the parade is over, the City has been built, the Sovereign has made its entry, the collective is inhabited: political ecology has its institutions' (180). But what is the practical upshot of this platonic tale? Latour is proposing us to redefine both the practice and task of politics. He claims that politics is not about autonomy, that is, about autonomous subjects forever irreducible to the constraints of Nature. Rather, politics is about heteronomy, that is, about ways of collecting and assembling humans and nonhumans into a unified collective. In this sense, politics is defined as a multi-sided negotiation in which a heterogeneous multiplicity of actors is constantly intervening. Prions, cows, enzymes, politicians and economists are involved in the common negotiation through which our reality gets defined. Latour's argument boils to down to the following claim: there is nothing monstrous in mixing humans and nonhumans, facts and values, nature and cultures. This mixing is a virtuous civic practice through which we are able to enlarge the public

arena and engage in the process of defining our common world. This is the practical moral of Latour's argument: once Nature is gone, all that we are left with is politics, that is, the ongoing (and perpetual) process of negotiating and assembling a common world. But, if we are to assemble the collective successfully we cannot exclude nonhumans from politics. Only in this way we can pay attention to the ways in which they sustain, destabilize and enable a host of different political configurations.

The problem, nonetheless, is how faithful Latour manages to be to his own argument. The legitimization of the incorporation of nonhumans into the Republic as fully-fledged citizens is the crucial point in Latour's argumentation. As we have seen, the legitimacy of this incorporation rests on the possibility of *recognizing* nonhuman voices. To avert the obvious charge of hylozoism, Latour does not say that nonhumans have a voice by themselves. It is scientists who, as nonhumans' spokespersons, give them a voice. Nonhumans can be banging the doors of the amodern citadel forever but they can only enter when the scientists open the gates for them. Nonhumans do not *matter* until the scientist *recognizes* them as candidates for citizenship. But then: what is the status of nonhumans as citizens and political actors? It seems that nonhumans are no more than second-class citizens: they can only participate through the mediation of the scientist. In my view, the problem lies in the fact that Latour does not question the modern definition of politics. He still understands politics in terms of a civic discussion and negotiation in the Agora that will keep the Big Leviathan together. This modern definition forces Latour to undertake the oxymoronic task of instituting a nonhuman *voice*. This insistence on the voice of nonhumans entraps Latour in the modern political vocabulary of *representation*, and this ultimately backfires his project. By defining politics in terms of a public discussion nonhumans get automatically displaced from the centre of the Agora. Prions do not talk: they will always need to be subsumed under human spokesperson to be able to 'talk'. Nonhumans, once the scientist has recognised them, and once they have been granted citizenry by the human officers, find themselves 'mobilized, recruited, socialized, domesticated' (38). In short, they are *assimilated*. The amodern collective gets bigger (and better?) thanks to the domestication and assimilation of nonhumans. And if they cannot be subsumed under a spokesperson, if they cannot be represented, 'one would have the right to deny them even existence itself' (207). They become the 'enemy' (Ibid.). It is quite difficult to see in what way nonhumans are participating as fully-fledged citizens in the construction of the common world. Indeed, it seems that the only real actors left in this Republic are the spokespersons, that is, those humans with the capacity to represent. As a matter of fact, throughout the book the only *active* political actors are human ones: the economist, the moralist, the diplomat, the

politician and, of course, the scientist. It is worth noting that, just as in Plato's Republic, there are no artists in Latour's Republic. It is true that Latour does not expel them from the Republic as Plato did, but he does not account for them. There is no need for it: artists do not really *matter* for the politics of the collective, because only scientists are capable of proposing new matters of concern to the collective. It may be argued that, this is probably the case in the Latour's ideal secular and scientific amodern Republic. But what is the purchase of this Republic in a world where politics do not only take place through prions but also through a myriad of other humans and nonhumans agents such as Gods, ancestors, beliefs, corporations, utopias, convictions and political parties? It seems that there are many other agents who can propose new matters of concern to the collective besides Latour's all-too powerful scientists. Indeed, it seems that Latour's love for scientists leads him to commit a very *modern* sin, namely, *scienctrism*: the whole collective depends on the scientist to move, to collect, to breathe.

Latour's overriding concern is still the classical problem of modern political philosophy: how can we produce a *single* common world, a unitarian *body politik*? His answer to this modern problem differs very little from Rousseau's and Schmitt's solution: assimilation is necessary for the sake of unity. And as we have seen, this unity can only be attained at the expense of the otherness of nonhumans: they have to be represented and assimilated into the collective. Instead of imagining new forms of politics Latour tries to tuck naturecultures into the old political system of representation in which nonhumans are, and can only be, vicarious political actors. Latour does not contemplate the possibility that, if we are to imagine the politics of naturecultures, it may be better not to do it in the quintessentially modern language of representation. In other words, it may be the case that we need amodern politics for amodern naturecultures. Probably nonhumans can matter politically and ethically without having 'voices'. Probably there are politics outside the discussion and negotiation that take place in the Agora. In short, probably political ecology is not the only possible politics of naturecultures. These are precisely Haraway's hypotheses.

### **A manifesto for significant otherness**

For Haraway, the main theme of the politics of natureculture is not assimilation but *significant otherness*, and the main political problem is not unity but difference. The practical political question, therefore, is not how to devise different mechanisms to assimilate nonhuman others into a single collective, but how we can live with others without trying to subsume

them to us. The way she has chosen to tackle this problem is deliberately provocative: *The Companion Species Manifesto* is about the politics and ethics of dog–human relations. As Haraway remarks in a cautionary fashion, dogs are not ‘an alibi for other themes [...] Dogs are not surrogates for theory; they are not here just to think with. They are here to live with’ (5). Haraway is looking at dog–human relations in particular to show that even there, even in a relation that relates two radical others, two different species, we can find forms of communication, forms of relating to each other that matter politically and ethically. The way in which she illustrates this is by telling stories of ‘co-habitation, co-evolution and embodied cross-species sociality’ (4) at different time–space scales.

The first story she tells us is the wider evolutionary story about how the dog became a companion species. Just as Haraway denies that there is such a thing as an original or primeval wolf-dog before ‘the Fall into Culture’ (28), she denies that there is a primeval and original man. In short, there are no origin-stories; rather, and this is Haraway’s main thesis, there are only stories of co-evolution in which man and dog are constantly shaping each other. As Haraway remarks, it is useless to attempt to disentangle this co-evolution by assigning the changes that dogs underwent to ‘Nature’ and the changes Man undertook to ‘Culture’. The only way of understanding this co-evolution is as a ‘biosocial’ story (5) in which the distinction between ‘Nature’ and ‘Culture’ is continually imploded. The second story that Haraway tells us is the smaller time–space scale story of dog-training. In this story Haraway narrates how through the popular positive dog training method of ‘click and treat’ the dog becomes an obedient and well-mannered *pet*. Furthermore, this training makes ‘a specific kind of freedom for dogs possible; i.e., the freedom to live safely in multi-species urban and sub-urban environments with very little physical restraint and no corporal punishment’ (46). But as Haraway remarks, this is not a story of human domination or imposition because the method is useless unless the dog *engages* in the training (45). The story about two different breeds, the Great Pyrenees and the Australian Shepherds, is the third major story of the book. Haraway uses this story to illustrate how both breeds are neither part of a Natural or Cultural taxonomies; rather, they are products of Naturecultures. Both breeds are biosocial technologies that have been formed by many layers of global and local actors and processes. States, breed societies, cattle, human and dog migrations, foxes ... all of them perform the Great Pyrenees and the Australian Shepherds into what they have become now.

Through these stories, Haraway is extending the task that she began when she engendered the cyborg as her first companion species (see 1991). The reason whereby she now adds dogs to her companion species is to remind us there is ‘a bestiary of agencies, kinds of relating’ (6) that are not

exhausted by the cyborg. For Haraway, the existence of this companion species attests to the impossibility of what she calls 'humanist technophilic narcissism', the idea that Man makes himself 'by realizing his intentions in his tools, such as domestic animals (dogs) and computers (cyborgs)' (33). In this book she shows that humans and dogs need each other to co-evolve in what she calls, following Charis Cussins (1996), 'ontological choreographies' (8). In contradistinction to Latour, Haraway does not need to build a whole Republic to allow nonhumans to matter. She does not need to legitimate or to institute nonhuman *voices*, or scientists who act as the spokespersons of dogs. As one of the breeders quoted by Haraway says: 'I have never had an interesting political conversation with any of my dogs' (37). Haraway shows that dogs, along with the rest of companion species ranging from cyborgs to intestinal flora, *matter* politically and ethically not because they can raise their voices in the public discussion of the Agora but because they 'make life for humans what it is' (15). To put it negatively: human life would be unthinkable and unlivable without these companion species. With this Haraway is not simply re-stating Darwin's argument about co-evolution. She is, indeed, recovering it for the social sciences which have forgotten its relevance in their musings about that autonomous realm called 'Society', which evolves according to its own (human) laws, be they class struggle, the division of labour, phallogentrism or language games. . . . Thus, Haraway's project is to elicit the political and ethical consequences of taking seriously the Darwinian concept of co-evolution. Recovering the long-forgotten truism according to which the Natural and the Cultural are inextricably mixed, Haraway's attempt is to develop a politics and ethics of otherness in which the most urgent question is: how can we get along with these nonhuman others?

Haraway's answer to this question is that 'all ethical relation, within or between species, is knit from the silk-strong thread of ongoing alertness to otherness-in-relation. We are not one, and being depends on getting on together' (50). Unlike for Latour's politics of assimilation in which nonhumans become part of us through *relations of identity*, for Haraway the task is to build relations that *relate difference*. These relations that, following Marilyn Strathern (1991), Haraway calls 'partial connections', enable us to think about ways of relating to significant others without reducing them to us. As Haraway remarks, dogs are not furry children, they are irreducibly other but *at the same time* they are partially related to us. Dogs are neither incommensurable nor commensurable beings in relation to us; they are just partially commensurable. Thus, in Levinasian fashion, Haraway argues that what really matters is learning to be attentive to the demands and to the specificities of these significant others so that we can develop practices of relatedness, such as breeding or dog-training,

through which we can co-evolve and emerge together. As Haraway says, these ontological choreographies are just like a cat's cradle game (49), a cooperative game that 'invites a sense of collective work, of one person not being able to make all the patterns alone' (Haraway 1994: 69–70). But one may ask: are they really like cat's cradle games?

In a sense, it seems that with Haraway we are committing the reversal of Latour's sin. With her emphasis on Cussin's ontological choreographies and symmetrical evolutions, it looks as though there are no differences of power, no encroachments, no subjugations or surrogates in these co-evolutions. The only thing with which we are left is a story of harmonious co-operation and co-evolution in which dogs and people mutually constitute one another. But dogs cannot buy people; dogs do not have cookies to domesticate humans with the 'click and treat' method. Nor do they have the institutions and associations to care for human breeds. In short, it seems that dogs do not have the same capacity to draw humans in relations of co-evolution. This does not mean that we have to go back to Latour's institutionalised asymmetry, where the voiceless nonhumans wait patiently for the spokespeople that let them join the Republic. Probably, it would be enough to make room for the possibility of *asymmetrical* co-evolutions, that is, for the possibility of acknowledging that not all of the members of the relation have the same capacity to affect and relate to the other.

All in all, these are two major works by two of the most challenging and path-breaking thinkers of our days. Both books represent two indispensable readings to engage with novel political and ethical arguments in the amodern world of naturecultures. A world in which we have finally have come to recognize that 'the actors are not all us', and where '[i]f the world exists for us as "nature", [or as "society"] this designates a kind of relationship, an achievement among many actors, not all of them human, not all of them organic, not all of them technological' (Haraway 1992: 297).

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