

Feminism and the Early Frankfurt School

Studies in Critical Social Sciences

Series Editor

David Fasenfest (*York University, Canada*)

Editorial Board

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (*Duke University*)

Chris Chase-Dunn (*University of California–Riverside*)

William Carroll (*University of Victoria*)

Raewyn Connell (*University of Sydney*)

Kimberlé W. Crenshaw (*University of California, Los Angeles/
Columbia University*)

Raju Das (*York University, Canada*)

Heidi Gottfried (*Wayne State University*)

Karin Gottschall (*University of Bremen*)

Alfredo Saad-Filho (*King's College London*)

Chizuko Ueno (*University of Tokyo*)

Sylvia Walby (*Royal Holloway, University of London*)

VOLUME 271

The titles published in this series are listed at brill.com/scss

Feminism and the Early Frankfurt School

Edited by

Christine A. Payne
Jeremiah Morelock



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Cover illustration: © Alinabuzunova via Dreamstime.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Payne, Christine A., editor. | Morelock, Jeremiah, editor.

Title: Feminism and the early Frankfurt School / edited by Christine A. Payne and Jeremiah Morelock.

Description: Boston : Brill, [2024] | Series: Studies in critical social sciences, 1573-4234 ; Volume 271 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023044888 (print) | LCCN 2023044889 (ebook) | ISBN 9789004686717 (hardback) | ISBN 9789004686830 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Frankfurt school of sociology. | Feminism.

Classification: LCC HM467 .F46 2024 (print) | LCC HM467 (ebook) | DDC 301.01-dc23/eng/20231005

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023044888>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023044889>

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1573-4234

ISBN 978-90-04-68671-7 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-68683-0 (e-book)

DOI 10.1163/9789004686830

Copyright 2024 by Christine A. Payne and Jeremiah Morelock. Published by Koninklijke Brill nv, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill nv incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Schöningh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Brill Wageningen Academic, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau and V&R unipress.

Koninklijke Brill nv reserves the right to protect this publication against unauthorized use. Requests for re-use and/or translations must be addressed to Koninklijke Brill nv via brill.com or copyright.com.

This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

Contents

Preface	IX
Acknowledgements	XLII
Notes on Contributors	XLIII

PART 1

Culture and Class: the Libidinal Politics of Authoritarianism

- 1 Sex, Hope, and Rock and Roll
Radical Feminism and the Freudian Left 3
Kristin Lawler
- 2 Fascism and the Patriarchal Family
The Studies of Authoritarianism at the Institute for Social Research 24
Ryan Moore
- 3 Family and Authoritarianism 45
Caio Vasconcellos and Rafaela N. Pannain
- 4 Rethinking “Toxic” Sovereignty?
On Horkheimer and Adorno’s “Second Nature” between Nietzsche’s “Bad Conscience” and Freud’s “Death Drive” 60
Karyn Ball

PART 2

Power, Truth, and (Non)Identity

- 5 Marcuse’s “Feminine Principle” and Non-binary Subversions 93
Mary Caputi
- 6 Towards a Critical Identity Politics
Butler, Adorno, and the Force of Non-identity 113
Tivadar Vervoort
- 7 Adorno, Foucault, and Feminist Theory
The Politics of Truth 133
Lambert Zuidervaart

- 8 The Disintegration of Autonomy
Jill Johnston's Anti-criticism 162
 Frida Sandström

PART 3

Intersectional Investigations

- 9 Historical Traumas in the Critiques of Theodor Adorno and
 Joy James 195
 Jana McAuliffe
- 10 Beyond One-Dimensional Theory and Praxis
A Marcusean Alliance with Black Feminism 212
 Nicole Yokum
- 11 Herbert Marcuse and Intersectional (Marxist) Feminism 231
 Sergio Bedoya Cortés
- 12 Rethinking Astrology as Feminist Re-enchantment
A Reading of Adorno's "The Stars Down to Earth" 251
 Jennifer L. Eagan

PART 4

Socialized Nature: Essential Categorical Questions in Science

- 13 Negative Dialectics and the Force of Matter
*Theodor W. Adorno and Karen Barad: towards a New-Material Feminism
 for Thinking Contemporary Crises* 277
 Simon Reiners
- 14 Theorizing beyond the Man
The Frankfurt School and Post-humanist Feminism 300
 Mario Mikhail
- 15 The New Man Is a Woman
Marcuse and the Question of the New Anthropology 315
 Cristian Arão

- 16 Reification and Forgetting
Thinking the Domination of Nature and of Women with and against Adorno 333
Lea Gekle
- 17 About Mules, Divas, and Other *Specifically Feminine*
Characteristics 352
Imaculada Kangussu and Nathalia N. Barroso
- Index 373

Preface

1 Why This, Why Now?

On June 24th, 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States overturned *Roe vs. Wade*. By a 5-4 margin, the constitutional right to abortion established in 1973 was struck down, effectively instituting a ban or very severe restrictions on abortion in approximately half of the fifty states in the nation. Warnings of future court rulings that would overturn the constitutional rights to contraception, same-sex marriage, and interracial marriage have been sounded. Violent threats, actions, and policies against the safety, medical care, bodily autonomy, and very lives of transgender individuals are occurring with horrifying frequency. Cynically manufactured moral panics about queer ‘groomers’ are repeatedly taken up with deadly seriousness. Under the rhetorical banners of ‘Western’ or ‘Cultural’ Marxism and ‘critical race theory,’ school boards and college review committees are gaining alarming ground in their efforts to scrub K-12 and higher education of ‘woke’ curricula and careers that have the audacity to identify and explain histories and current relations of racial, gendered, and capitalist inequalities and unfreedoms. White supremacist terrorism is overt. Christian fascist nationalism is increasingly embraced and explicitly declared as the goal of a growing number of fundamentalists. So-called ‘traditional’ marriage, gender roles, sexuality, and family structures are declared to be ‘under attack’ and in need of both personal defense and government enforcement. Screeds decrying declining birth rates couched in explicitly eugenical rhetoric about racial ‘replacement’ are widely broadcast and taken seriously as a threat to the literal and symbolic health and strength of nations. ‘Men’s Rights’ mouthpieces, misogynistic ‘incel’ culture, right-wing and ‘libertarian’ militia movements, and near-constant mass shootings proliferate. Paeons to technocratic culture and near hagiographical renderings of autocratic heads of state and heads of corporations ring out. Military and police brutality, mass incarceration, and surveillance technologies abound. Anti-democratic ‘populist’ leaders have amassed power and leadership positions across scores of countries.

The status of truth is itself a central ideological weapon, with cynical and nihilistic intellectual relativism and ‘radical’ skepticism serving as seemingly sophisticated battering rams against all facts and norms that center on collective freedom and flourishing. At the same time, *the Truth* of the world – the reified ‘truth’ of political, cultural, and economic repression and domination – is not only embraced but violently imposed as the normal, necessary, even natural way that the world is and must be. All of this in the context of a climate

crisis that rages exponentially, a staggeringly deadly and disabling global pandemic that has been normalized in political, media, and many everyday circles, and an ongoing accumulation crisis in global capitalism that, by design, means acute and chronic misery for the masses in concert with nearly untouchable profit and power for the few. The decades-long fusion of neoliberal market fundamentalism and neoconservative ‘family values’ fundamentalism has long been a symptom of, and has predictably resulted in, the current situation of authoritarian modern society.

This brief accounting is of course not exhaustive – though it is exhausting and overwhelming. This compounding reality feels like a series of infinitely nested dolls of despair and death. The current moment requires an immediacy of very critical collective action. Many and frequent have been the voices sounding alarm bells about this literally lethal series of situations. Varied and ongoing social movements, protests, and refusals of the fatally repressive status quo exist and gain strength across admittedly fractured fault lines of class, race, gender, sexuality, and nationality. Mass labor unionization from service industries to higher education, serious discussions about police and prison abolition, student and medical debt cancellation, environmental justice, reproductive rights and justice, bodily safety, integrity, and autonomy: these and related movements and their associated demands are growing in number and in explicit support. Such urgent and connected fights for liberation are very much reason for more than cautious optimism.

At the same time and in tandem with social movement organizing, careful critical reflection is necessary to make sense of and to meet the urgency of the current moment. The collection of writings presented in this volume were born out of a desire to address significant components and relations tied to the troubling situations of our times. Addressing the contemporary social-cultural and political-economic landscape requires an ‘all-hands-on-deck’ approach spanning critical scholarship, practical policy and legislation, and large-scale popular activism; within the realm of critical scholarship, the moment likewise requires varied but overlapping disciplinary lenses and analyses. It is our aim and hope that this volume fruitfully contributes to just such an overarching project of scholarship in solidarity with many others. In particular, the chapters in this edited volume address historical and ongoing ideas, values, practices, and relations related to gender, sex, and sexuality in light of the alarming amplification and acceleration of inequality and unfreedom impacting our lives. To this end, two central threads of critical analysis and emancipatory world-building are brought together: key elements of feminist scholarship and the scholarship of members of the early Frankfurt School. With these key elements and prior to an outline of the specific thinkers and works addressed

in this volume as provided in the 'Chapter Summaries' section below, a brief outline of the volume's major themes and central analytic throughlines will serve as a helpful overarching roadmap.

2 Motivating Questions and Guiding Frameworks

Members of the early Frankfurt School including Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Eric Fromm, and Herbert Marcuse were pioneers of interdisciplinary social science, bringing together ideas from philosophy, sociology, and psychoanalysis to examine the woes of capitalist society in an expansive and integrated way, bridging micro and macro levels of analysis. In the same broad theories, they addressed capital accumulation, dialectics, epistemology, alienation, the social psychology of fascism, popular culture, and the liberatory potentials of aesthetic experience, among other things. Prolific and innovative, the Frankfurt School continues to inspire many among the political Left, and they remain well worth consulting even 90 years later.

Yet in the contemporary period, Leftist theory must dialogue meaningfully with issues of sex, gender, sexuality, and feminism. The Frankfurt School is not well-known for doing this, and in this respect, they often fall out of – or fail to win – the favor of thinkers who are specifically concerned about questions of sex, gender, sexuality, and feminist thought. For this reason, scholars of the Frankfurt School and scholars of feminist theory tend to be different scholars, and their academic clusters of affiliation are typically distinct from one another.

In the interests of building genuine and productive academic dialogue, as well as in the interests of practically building a more informed, comprehensive, unified Left, this divide is very problematic. It is also unnecessary. While the Frankfurt School did not centrally and systematically focus on issues of sex, gender, and feminism, they very much did write on these issues, and when they did, their allegiances were clearly marked with many key feminist precepts. In other of their theories, the extension beyond their focus to issues of feminist concern is a very small, very easy stretch. In other cases, their ideas, insightful as they were, would benefit from the insights of feminist analysis. Reciprocally, the power of the early Frankfurt School could be an enormous intellectual asset to understanding sex and gender relations and serving movements for feminist empowerment – if they are productively and critically synthesized with current feminist theories and insights.

This edited volume presents an original collection of precisely such overdue syntheses of scholarship. Chapters included in our volume articulate and explore ideas from the early Frankfurt School that were explicitly focused on sex, gender, sexuality, and feminism, apply ideas from the early Frankfurt School to a new focus on sex, gender, sexuality, and feminism, and bring ideas from the early Frankfurt School into productive dialogue with historical and contemporary feminist theory.

In order to treat these key elements, we have divided this edited volume into four parts. The first part examines a series of analyses concerning questions of power and the stubborn persistence of authoritarianism in both its explicitly political formations as well as its insidious presence in nominally private areas of life – including the family. Processes of socialization and their subsequent internalization with respect to normative gender and sex roles, ideals, and relationships are examined, alongside the proliferation of explicitly fascist and authoritarian political ideologies and movements that serve as both reflections and reinforcements of relations of domination.

The analyses below concerning the cultural politics of authoritarianism pivot around the dynamics between capitalist class politics and the politics of culture. Historical and contemporary forms of authoritarianism are seen to be strongly rooted in assumptions and expectations regarding relations of domination and repression within particular family structures which are themselves predicated upon assumptions and expectations concerning gender and sexuality. The structure and character of bourgeois family formations hinge in no small part upon presumed lines of authority and submission – lines of authority that reflect and reinforce broader political-economic forms of domination and unfreedom. As concerns gender, sexuality, and, arguably, age, particular roles and associated ‘responsibilities’ are rendered prescriptively normal, functionally necessary, and natural (in either or both the theological or biological sense). Certain ‘kinds’ or ‘types’ of gendered and sexual selves *ought* to – because they seemingly simply *have* to – adhere to pregiven/unquestion(ed/able) positions and practices. The bourgeois nuclear family appears as a model of society in miniature, complete with all the trappings of gender naturalization common to similarly naturalized accounts of “The Market.” In its current neoliberal instantiation, the naturalized market, shorn increasingly of any state supports serving as a social wage, works to lock in so-called traditional family roles and values. To the extent that gendered reproductive labor in a wide sense is bereft of public safety nets, such unwaged labor falls to the family, reinforcing the apparently natural and necessary dichotomy between public vs. private and associated masculine vs. feminine spheres. Second and third shifts of labor for women (particularly working-class women and women

of color) working outside the home are rendered practically necessary, while at the same time, calls for 'traditional' family structures aiming to restrict women to the 'private' home are common.

Naturalistic fallacies – what ought to be the case presumed to follow from what naturally is the case – are doing at least double work in such frameworks: what is 'naturally' the case in terms of gender, sexuality, and family as well as what is 'naturally' the case vis-à-vis capitalist markets and class relations more broadly. However, these cases are *not* natural kinds or cases to begin with. Such compounding layers of reified assumptions in both the public and putatively private spheres act back upon one another, solidifying and justifying both family and class repressions in a stubborn loop. Forms of public and private life seem to support the fatalist position that 'it just is what it is.' Those in positions of power take for granted the seemingly natural and thereby correct submission of others to their will and whims. Additionally, such apparently natural/necessary and normal/good demands for submission and repression affect those in positions of power and authority as well; in the interests of securing a relative sense of security and order, the viciousness of authoritarianism perversely attracts and attacks its own purveyors and perpetrators.

The doubly false naturalistic fallacy undergirding patriarchal authoritarianism finds a supremely stubborn anchor in biological determinist accounts of gender and sexuality. The second part of this volume addresses questions concerning personal and group identity. The chapters in this part focus on the liberatory potentials of challenging or subverting taken-for-granted gender, sex, and sexuality identity categories and roles, including their intersections with racial, ethnic, and class-based identities.

From a biological determinist standpoint, social relations, including all manner of social inequalities, ultimately reduce down to and serve as reflections of biological differences, where differences – real or imagined – by extension explain and justify inherent inequalities.¹ Insofar as biological determinist accounts falsely presume gender and associated gender roles to be synonymous with a falsely presumed biological sex binary – which is then/also falsely presumed to be synonymous with heterosexuality – the naturalness and normalcy of heteropatriarchy appears beyond dispute.

1 It is worth noting that putatively biological/secular claims regarding the 'inherent' nature of gender, sex, sexuality, and associated inequalities and unfreedoms can and do merge with religious claims concerning the necessity of heteropatriarchy. Whether couched in secular or sacred frameworks, the always-already denigrated status of those who are not cisgender, not straight, not men proves stubbornly persistent.

Within this ideological loop, and often in concert with fundamentalist – indeed theocratic – religious imperatives, patriarchy is justified by recourse to apparently essential (and unequal) biological features and functions, while such features and functions are made to explain the how and why of patriarchy. On such an account, to argue against heteropatriarchy would be to argue against nature – a feat seemingly both practically futile as well as morally suspect. Coupled with a falsely naturalized and often teleological conceptualization of capitalist economic relations, the possibility for critique and transformation of the existing socio-cultural and political-economic states of affairs are falsely and unnecessarily foreclosed.

That the entire chain of reasoning relied upon in such determinist accounts is factually inaccurate seems not to dissuade those committed to the rationalization of the social status quo by recourse to ‘nature.’ The concrete consequences of assuming a biological determinist or essentialist approach vis-à-vis gender, sex, and sexuality are clear and dire. The assignation and expectation of ‘properly’ masculine and feminine gender expressions are maintained. Entire groups of human beings are rendered ‘unnatural,’ ‘immoral,’ or ‘non-existent.’ Forced assimilation to the social and sexual status quo, as well as calls for outright genocidal eradication occur. Authoritarian force in the name of natural/necessary/normal heteropatriarchy also underwrites ideologies and practices concerning divisions of labor – in particular, reproductive labor. Insofar as women are understood to be essentially and primarily the bearers and raisers of children, demands to equitably share reproductive labor face resistance. The human right to decide if and under what conditions pregnancy is desired remains insecure when not stripped away entirely. Indeed, forced pregnancy and childbirth are the necessary consequences (one suspects the explicit or implicit goals) that result when the freedom and right to abortion and contraception are restricted or revoked.

Analyses in this volume bring feminist and early Frankfurt School work to bear on the myriad aspects of individual and collective life falsely biologized and/or falsely essentialized – in other words, rendered static and ‘stuck.’ Gender, sex, and sexuality are unconfused and understood as layered but distinct components of self, identity, and social relations. The empirically false and ethically – indeed existentially – harmful assumptions of gender, sexuality, and sex binaries are demonstrated, while the social and historical mediations of such identities are centered; this, in order to demand radical reconceptualizations and radically different – liberatory – experiences. Beyond such critiques of reductive determinism, several chapters also consider the usefulness of the concept of ‘non-identity’ in the technical sense of inherent contradiction and

necessary incompleteness in comparison to senses of self (and other selves) anchored in seamless synthesis or completion.

In addition to its central role in the critiques of biological determinism vis-à-vis gender, sex, and sexuality, questions concerning essentialism recur in several chapters below that are centrally concerned with questions of knowledge. In the third part, the significance of standpoint and intersectional analyses are taken up, with a focus on the real and potentially emancipatory role that imagination, desire, and creative expression serve in relation to the repressive, exploitative, and alienating social structures, identity schema, and political ideologies identified and challenged in the volume's adjacent parts. Alongside analyses of political economy, social and natural scientific schemata, and constructions of modern subjects, this series of reflections on the power and necessity of standpoint and intersectional analyses gesture towards projects guided by cautious optimism – critically-grounded hope for new understandings and practices of self and society amid the all-too-common contexts of modern repressions and dominations.

In order to identify, critique, and transform reified conceptions, beliefs, and practices, it is necessary that the perspectives of particular individuals and groups be taken seriously; specifically, those perspectives that are grounded in particular lived experiences of domination, exclusion, and unfreedom must be shifted from their economic, social, and political positions of marginalization to the center of accounts and analyses of truth. This political-epistemic shift is partially captured in a turn towards feminist and other forms of standpoint theory; with such an approach, the standpoints of variously and multiply marginalized people are recognized as potentially providing more objective understandings and accounts of reality, insofar as said reality is suffused with unequal relations and experiences of power. Those individuals and groups who experience oppressive forms of power as a brute fact of their everyday existence are potentially well-positioned to know and to critique such facts of power relations. Such epistemic vantage points born of lived experience are rarely singular in character, meaning that intersectionality as theoretical approach and as lived reality is crucial. As demonstrated in a number of chapters in this volume, the multiple and compounding forms of unfreedom across gender, sex, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, disability, etc. allow for both specific critiques of particular oppressions as well as more general assessments of the systemic failures and harms at work in the contemporary world.

Crucially, such intersectional standpoints neither rely upon nor seek any sort of 'return' to essentialized selves. To be sure, standpoint and intersectional analyses and critiques of social reality are grounded in the specific experiences of gendered, racialized, and classed selves; nevertheless, such

selves and associated situations and standpoints demand that the historical and material conditions of (im)possibility from which such selves emerge and coalesce in the first place be located front and center in analyses. That there are essentialized assumptions regarding different groups of people, and that such essentialized assumptions have and continue to repeatedly serve as grounds and justification for unequal and oppressive lives, precisely inform and motivate many intersectional standpoint analyses. To the extent that different groups are 'essentially' different from other groups in society as concerns lived experiences, the marshalling of said experiences as epistemic warrants for critique ultimately serve as emancipatory tools against the essential(izing) experiences of unfreedom themselves. Simply put – there is no 'essence' to, for example, femininity or womanhood that grants women special access to truths. It is rather that unique experiences grounded in historical material reality provide relatively unique and useful perspectives from which to see and challenge seemingly universal or hegemonic truths and relations.

A word of caution is in order in light of standpoint and intersectional frameworks; namely, that the burden of doing epistemological, practical, and political-ethical work should not be shouldered solely by those most marginalized in society. The use of intersectional standpoint theories as necessary tools for enhancing the objectivity of accounts and critiques of society should not result in assumptions or calls for the most unfree people and groups to do the most or heaviest lifting with respect to transforming society. The demands made, and made possible through, specifically situated standpoints require – both practically and ethically – that broad-based collective actions be undertaken.

The fourth and final part of this volume offers a series of reflections on the real, the presumed, and the potential relationships between the spheres of culture and nature, as well as the gendered typologies frequently associated with these respective spheres. Drawing on early Frankfurt School thought, feminist theory, and potent interdisciplinary scholarship in the field of science and technology studies, the chapters in this part variously highlight and challenge a pair of frequently intertwined assumptions concerning the dualistic relationship of nature and culture, as well as the gendered traits and characteristics assigned to these seemingly distinct areas of life.

Authors in this and preceding parts draw attention to the ongoing significance of one of the early Frankfurt School's most enduring series of analyses – those concerning the dialectic of Enlightenment and the domination of nature via one-dimensional instrumental reasoning and technological rationality. Spanning the analytic spheres of political-economy, culture, epistemology, and

ontology, Frankfurt School and feminist work is brought into particularly fruitful dialogue as concerns the long-standing associations in the modern West between women and/as nature and men's mastery of nature. Predicated upon figurations of nature – including non-humans – as essentially brute matter that is nonetheless prone to 'irrational' or 'violent' dynamics in need of taming by humans/culture, centuries-long efforts to not only schematize, order, and predict but to also dominate nature are taken to be the prerogatives of our own – somehow related, somehow different, but also superior—human nature. The radical separation presumed to exist between humanity and the natural (and, ironically, often the social) contexts, in and by which humans take and have their existence, supports demands for the ever-increasing scope and scale of scientific and technological progress; 'progress,' here understood in part as bringing the natural world increasingly under the direct command of humans.

To be sure, it is not scientific or technological progress as such that claims the critical attention of early Frankfurt School or feminist thinkers. Rather, what gives pause are the underlying ideologies and subsequent practices that presume seamless or total human knowledge and control are either possible or necessary. More centrally and alarming is that mastery over nature – even if not 'yet' total – increasingly serves as a taken-for-granted 'end' rather than 'means' towards liberatory human ends. Horkheimer and Adorno's 'Dialectic of Enlightenment,' in part, names the historical dynamic whereby human desires for safety and security through mastery of the world necessarily pivot around scientific positivism and technological rationality as ends-in-themselves, which reign supreme in a myth-like fashion. In seeking to escape superstition, illusion, chaos, and lack of control, modern Western science and technology ironically function increasingly as reified ideological projects that humanity must submit to regardless of substantive content, practices, and goals. The repression of nature in the service of humanity acts back in a repressive fashion upon humans insofar as the human elements (themselves, of course, part of nature) lose significance vis-à-vis fixations on brute positive facts, calculating and predictive logic, and increasingly refined scientific and social methods rigorously employed for their own sake. Or, not simply for their own sake; such reified conceptions and practices serve ends or goals beyond themselves, namely, the ends and goals of capitalism (often couched in the language of 'pragmatism'): profit, productivity, efficiency, competition, and thus better lives for all. The reified dynamics of capitalism, in combination with the reification of instrumental rationality leads to (a one-sided form of) human progress eating its own tail.

As many members of the early Frankfurt School as well as feminist and other critical thinkers have and continue to stress, such a conception and series of

practices of humans vis-à-vis nature is neither necessary nor desirable. The radical separations made between humanity and nature, the reification of science and technology as ends-in-themselves (shorn of their actually critical and emancipatory potential), and the desire to dominate rather than understand and work with the world around us are historically specific ways of being in the world that can be critiqued and transformed. Of particular interest in many chapters collected here is the radical potential of technology to help rather than hinder our collective desire for freedom and flourishing. Eschewing reactionary pulls 'back to nature' as well as pragmatism-as-progress pushes towards 'technoscience as salvation,' contributors to this volume use early Frankfurt School and feminist thought to stake out alternative visions and ways forward. Rather than assert false naturalizations of what are in fact social relations, and rather than engineer and enforce social unfreedom and inequalities, we can instead seek to cultivate human – humane – ways of being in the world within and across the natural-social contexts that are our lives. In the absence of smooth seamless selves or reassuring security via total knowledge and control, what are desperately needed and what must be insisted upon now and moving forward are second 'natures.' The near and distant futures are not yet realized; radical desires for radically different selves, societies, and social relations demand our attention.

Within and across each of the four parts, central concepts and arguments developed by both early Frankfurt School scholars as well as feminist theorists are provided, along with ample historical and contemporary examples serving as concrete touchstones and illustrative elaborations. Readers will encounter ideas from critical race theory, queer theory, science and technology studies, and cultural studies, in conversation with the volume's two central strands of scholarship. Taken as a whole, this volume serves as a timely and fruitful illustration of the significance of reading and thinking with feminist and Frankfurt School analyses, together.

3 Chapter Summaries

This volume is organized into four parts, each investigating a central area of intersection between the work of the early Frankfurt School and critical feminist scholarship. The first part explores relationships between class politics and the politics of culture, with a particular focus on the cultural politics of authoritarianism. The second part examines characteristics and instantiations of power in relation to the creation, reproduction, and transformation of identity – identity in terms of personal and group identities, as well as identity

thinking vis-à-vis concepts, categories, and classification schema. The third part considers the centrality of intersectional analyses for critical theory, highlighting the significance of analyzing gender, sex, and sexuality in relation with race and class in particular. The fourth part turns to a series of ontological, epistemological, and political-ethical concerns in the domain of science and technology studies regarding the concept/category of 'the feminine;' the authors in this final part consider the creation of conditions of possibility for thinking and experiencing 'human nature' in radically different ways.

Part 1: Culture and Class: the Libidinal Politics of Authoritarianism opens with Kristin Lawler's *Sex, Hope, and Rock and Roll: Radical Feminism and the Freudian Left*. Lawler revisits the Freudian Marxism of Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse, in connection with the radical feminist thought exemplified by Shulamith Firestone and Ellen Willis, to demonstrate the 'explosive' potential present in taking seriously the biological-libidinal bases of our human desires for freedom, creativity, and pleasure. Against approaches that would identify, explain, and seek to transform social relations under modern capitalism by way of a singular focus upon class exploitation, Lawler reminds us of the centrality of repressive authoritarianism present in the institution of the nuclear family and associated cultural roles, norms, and values related to gender and sexuality. Noting that cultural conservatism, expressed as unquestioned support for productivist work ethics and 'family values,' persistently permeates the political right *and* many politically left projects otherwise aimed at critiquing capitalist alienation and exploitation, Lawler contends that those seeking truly liberatory ways of being in the world instead revisit and revive an historical materialist, psychoanalytically-informed radical feminist approach that aims to rip out the foundational roots of repression; namely, the taken-for-granted sexual division of labor (and labor in general) and all associated social relations that radically restrict our basic libidinal drives for pleasure, gratification, and autonomy. The repression and authoritarian structures nurtured within the family both reflect and reproduce the repression and authoritarianism of the culture of modern capitalism writ large.

Lawler fuses anti-authoritarian Critical Theory and radical feminism in order to imagine and demand a truly 'libidinal morality' cut free from the ideologies of material scarcity and sexual asceticism. She follows early Frankfurt School analyses in demonstrating that the rifts presumed to exist naturally and necessarily between sexuality and civilization, pleasure and responsibility, are in fact false dichotomies that need no longer be mistaken as transhistorical truths against which human life and desire must contort to find a semblance of security and connection. The desire for freedom is a universal human need – a need that has been repeatedly stamped out historically by way of reference to

a series of naturalized, normalized, reality principles. Universal human emancipation surely requires that capitalism and class exploitation be overcome; more fundamentally still, so too must sexual repression in its myriad manifestations be uprooted in the most radical – both biological and cultural – fashion. The stakes Lawler identifies are clear: “In the culture wars, half measures, then, are political suicide ... a little liberation without full liberation sends people running for cover in authoritarianism ... As we continue to be engaged in the political battles around working class cultural and economic emancipation that both the early Frankfurt School and women’s liberation feminists analyzed, and as the left continues to eat itself alive in battles over the universal vs. the particular, class vs. identity, mainstream vs. radical, we would do well to take their counsel to heart.”

Ryan Moore likewise draws attention to the central role played by the patriarchal family in priming individuals for the acceptance and perpetuation of repressive authoritarian social relations. In *Fascism and the Patriarchal Family: the Studies of Authoritarianism at the Institute for Social Research*, Moore traces the series of arguments put forth by Wilhelm Reich in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, as well as the collection of essays by Max Horkheimer, Eric Fromm, and Herbert Marcuse in *Studien über Autorität und Familie* (Studies on Authority and the Family). Across these works, Moore identifies a common concern to understand the “subjective factor(s)” at work in the formation of character types and personality-structures amenable to fascism. Recognizing the inadequacy of a strictly class-based analysis, these early Frankfurt School thinkers sought to identify the social psychological components partially responsible for the stubborn reproduction of authoritarian political, economic, and social relations in modern society. Fusing Marx’s critiques of the inherent contradictions of capitalism with Freud’s insights into the libidinal economic theory of drives, Reich, Horkheimer, Fromm, and Marcuse each attempted to pinpoint exactly how and why fascism, Nazism, and authoritarianism in a broad sense had been able to secure the alarming foothold they had. Individual and collective desires for at least relative security and certainty, coupled with the cultivation of unquestioned respect-qua-fear of authority secured – in the context of modern capitalism and its inherently exploitative dynamics – a fatal basis for both submission to domination and wielding domination over others.

In contrast to the reductive analyses provided by orthodox Marxists focused on ‘objective’ economic factors, Reich and members of the early Frankfurt School took equally seriously the ‘subjective factor’ of ideology; a comprehensive explanation of nationalism, fascism, and Nazi race ‘science’ required careful attention to the everyday structures of power incubated within patriarchal

family and sexual relations. Failure to recognize or reckon with the role that gender, sexuality, and the family play vis-à-vis the creation and reproduction of authoritarian-primed personalities, is to be left wondering, with Reich, why so many who are exploited fail to resist their exploitation – or, more troubling still, actively support economic, political, and social structures of domination and repression. In concert with Lawler, Moore makes clear the connections between Critical Theory and feminist theory. His unflinching focus on the patriarchal family's gendered and sexual structure demonstrates 'internal' dynamics of authority-obedience, fear-aggression, and desire-repression that mimic and make ready in fatally repetitive fashion the 'external' realities of fascism. Moore's concluding insights drive home the connections between and continuing relevance of both the thought of the early Frankfurt School and critical feminist theory in the present moment: "The theoretical analyses and empirical studies from the early years of Nazism have much to offer for contemporary critics of fascism. However, their categories and methods cannot simply be replicated in our present context, especially in light of the changing social relationships of gender, sexuality, and family. Horkheimer, Fromm, and Marcuse all observed that the classic ideal of the bourgeois family was deteriorating under the conditions of postliberal monopoly capitalism. The pressing challenge for anti-fascist scholars today is to understand how the changing landscapes of gender, sexuality, and family continue to create authoritarian personalities in an age of digital media and commodified data science [...] Just as we need a typology of the Authoritarian Personality 2.0 upgraded for our new media and niche markets that have made theories of mass society obsolete, current mutations of patriarchy and misogyny demand updated models for understanding how fascism continues to spawn in this diversifying, increasingly "unconventional" landscape of gender, sexuality, and family."

Such a contemporary investigation is taken up in *Family and Authoritarianism* by Caio Vasconcellos and Rafaela N. Pannain. Here, Horkheimer's essay in *Studien über Autorität und Familie* (Studies on Authority and the Family) is analyzed alongside Melinda Cooper's *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* in order to bring into focus the continuities of authoritarian familial and social relations across distinct historical and political contexts. Pivoting from Horkheimer's analysis of the role of the bourgeois patriarchal family in the context of the rise of fascism and Nazism towards Cooper's investigations into the ideological overlaps between more recent neoliberal and neoconservative political-economic projects, Vasconcellos and Pannain make clear that contemporary Critical and feminist work must continue to focus explicitly upon the family and its associated roles, norms, and

values when aiming to make sense of and challenge broader social patterns of exploitation and domination.

As Vasconcellos and Pannain remind us, Horkheimer's analyses of the patriarchal family demonstrated that "misogyny is the anteroom of fascism" – a succinct and sobering summation of material-psychical dynamics that have, in different but deeply related fashions, survived and taken hold with fervor in the wake of neoliberalism's rise to global dominance. Indeed, the authors' inclusion of Cooper's strikingly insightful account detailing the history and current forms of both neoliberalism and neoconservatism leave little doubt regarding the deeply intertwined – "Janus-face" – relations between 'free-market' economic dynamics and 'family values' cultural imperatives. Vasconcellos and Pannain persuasively demonstrate the forgotten (repressed?) interdependencies at play between economic elites' promotion of unregulated market competition and cultural conservatives' promotion of traditional family – and by extension gender and sexuality – roles and functions. Free market ideology, premised upon the idealized presumption of atomized and autonomous individuals exchanging goods and services absent public/government intervention of any sort, quires a very deeply regulated entity in the form of the bourgeois family as its support. 'Free' individuals are able to 'choose' if and how they will act vis-à-vis the market, all the while shouldering full personal responsibility for their good or bad lot in life. At the same time, in the absence of any social wage or safety net, the family unit serves as a hit-or-miss substitution for material and emotional support. Neoliberalism's free market fundamentalism and neoconservatism's traditional family values fundamentalism serve individual ends and work in reciprocity to reinforce each other at the expense of actual human freedom and flourishing.

Of particular note throughout Vasconcellos' and Pannain's analysis is the clear recognition that the radical unfreedom cultivated in the superficially disavowed alliance between neoliberalism and neoconservatism has repeatedly found support across seemingly stark left-right political divides. The authors trace the trajectories of a number of policies implemented in the United States and elsewhere beginning in the late 1960's and early 1970's with the decline of the Fordist 'family wage.' This historical narrative brings into sharp relief the bipartisan character of the neoliberal/conservative agenda as witnessed in pro-work, pro-marriage platforms and policies. Neither incidentally, nor unintentionally, continuing bipartisan efforts to force work and force family upon all has had the effect of reinscribing and reproducing hierarchies of gender, sexuality, race, and class. That such reinforcements of radically unfree and radically hierarchical social relations have proven 'successful' across political parties allows us to grasp the broader patterns and parallels across time and space

identified by Vasconcellos and Pannain. “In both democracies and dictatorships, the reproduction of the capitalist social order restores patterns of gender domination to preserve economic exploitation between classes – and vice versa. In addition to its theoretical interest, the dialogue between Horkheimer and Cooper can shed light on misogyny as a crucial element for understanding the current rise of far-right leaders and movements – as well as the antagonism and conflicts that characterize periods of democratic normality in capitalism.”

Karyn Ball’s *Rethinking “Toxic” Sovereignty? On Horkheimer and Adorno’s “Second Nature” between Nietzsche’s “Bad Conscience” and Freud’s “Death Drive”* tracks a provocative genealogical account of the character trait/type that is ‘toxic masculinity.’ Ball charts an intellectual history of this increasingly remarked-upon concept by way of Horkheimer and Adorno’s analyses of ‘second nature’ and reification, Friedrich Nietzsche’s insights on guilt and bad conscience, and Freud’s accounts of the death drive. These interlocking strands are woven together in order to provide historical specificity – and by extension explanatory precision – to accounts drawing attention to such dangerous and destructive gendered expressions of rage and *ressentiment*.

What is often referred to today as ‘toxic masculinity’ can perhaps be better understood (which is not to say excused) by situating it within the long *durée* context of heteropatriarchal capitalism. The internal dynamics of capitalism necessarily impose relations and realities of unfreedom, exploitation, and hierarchy upon the vast majority in society. In addition, capitalism supports and is supported by cultural expectations, roles, and values that encourage, to the point of enforcing, rational-instrumental calculation/calculability, ascetic renunciation of spontaneity, creativity, and emotion, and mastery over nature, social processes, and other people. In a final protraction of such alienating and disenchanting logic, the material and cultural imperatives of modern capitalism simultaneously instill and insist upon repeated rituals of repressive ‘self-sovereignty’ – ‘sovereignty’ here in the troubling sense of mastery over one’s basic libidinal drives in the service of a ceaseless, single-minded focus on repetitive capitalist productivity. Crucially, the structural contexts in which such impossible imperatives of mastery arise and gain potency are all-too-frequently taken as simple, brute givens. In other words, social relations are reified – taken for granted as static immutable facts of the matter. If the basic contours of social reality appear as beyond questioning or transformation, then it falls to individuals to adjust themselves to that reality as best they can. Such adjustments to reified reality can and do result in the formation of ‘second’ natures – human natures that are ‘hardened’ to themselves and others. Such hardened second natures serve as defensive adaptation mechanisms, shielding individuals’ inner selves and drives from the systematic pain of existence in relations

of radical unfreedom and domination. Insofar as such self-mastery is at base an impossible imperative, so-called ‘lapses’ in sovereignty lead with predictable frequency to feelings of guilt, fear, and aggression towards self and others. Intersecting across such toxic milieu is patriarchy in its many and multifaceted instantiations. Those in positions of relative or absolute power and privilege, vis-à-vis gender and sexuality, exhibit particularly dangerous levels of *ressentiment* and associated expressions of sadomasochistic aggression when faced with threats – real or imagined – to their status in social hierarchies. Ball’s analysis suggests that what we frequently denote as ‘toxic masculinity’ gestures towards not only this second, hardened, sadomasochistic nature, but to a *third* nature beginning to take revenge on itself in its misery.

“If the will to power is perceived as an expropriated entitlement, then its domestication generates self-loathing, paranoia, and *ressentiment*. At the same time, when Freud portrays the deadening of a primal organism’s cortical layer as a “sacrifice” made on behalf of the system’s capacity for work, this sacrifice loses its presumed nobility when it re-emerges as a death-driven repetition geared toward leveling out the trauma of life itself. To the extent that Horkheimer and Adorno’s critique of bourgeois stoicism lambasts internal hardening as a regression into mimicry in an increasingly automated world, a seething performance of emotional containment might strike us as outmoded, if not also as an uncanny return of the repressed. *In its exaggerated campaign against vulnerability and compassion, toxic masculinity potentially attests to the rise of a third nature taking revenge on a death-driven society that no longer venerates the sovereignty of the sacrifice it requires.*”

Part 2: Power, Truth, and (Non)Identity begins with Mary Caputi’s *Marcuse’s “Feminine Principle” and Non-binary Subversions*. Caputi brings into conversation Marcuse’s conceptualization of a ‘feminine principle’ and Adorno’s negative dialectical approach with contemporary expressions and experiences of gender and sexuality in order to reflect upon the latent and manifest possibilities of living life in and as expressions characterized by an ‘aesthetic’ manner – one of playful ‘polymorphous perversities’ absent the suffocating and unnecessary surplus-repressions of our current capitalistic confinements. In approaching such possibilities, Caputi recounts the second excursus in Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment – Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality*. In this essay, Horkheimer and Adorno bring their powerful concept of the dialectic of Enlightenment to bear on Marquis de Sade’s (in)famous Juliette character. In what may be at least partially likened to today’s ‘power feminism,’ de Sade’s Juliette is characterized by a cultivation and brazen deployment of ‘manly’ as opposed to ‘feminine’ traits. Juliette’s narrative sees her coldly calculating, using people by – and as – any means necessary to achieve her desired

ends. Determined to game and win within a system set against her in terms of class, upbringing, and her gendered position as a woman, Juliette can and has been read as an exemplar of gritty, liberated feminist determination and empowerment – taking up the master's tools against the master(s) in order to craft a place for oneself against the master's world. Caputi's analysis of Juliette contests such a reading, asking if it is not rather that in taking up the master's tools – exploitation, domination, ruthless cunning, 'clever' calculation, and using others as means to one's own self-protective ends – one in fact remains within and reinforces the very systems of power that one 'pragmatically' seeks to subvert. She asks further: is it the case that Juliette's gritty libertine actions serve as an *assimilation to* – as opposed to a *subversion of* – class and gender hierarchies?

Caputi's excursus through Horkheimer and Adorno's own excursions (the first of which, concerning Odysseus is also examined in contrast to Juliette's) leads back to the essay's central considerations – if and to what extent challenges to traditional Western gender and sexuality do or can radically subvert identitarian, binary, and heterosexist roles and norms. Can the limitations of taken for granted gender and sexual identities – including their conceptualization as binary, static, and essentialized 'facts' to be calculated and catalogued in the interests of capitalist-laden contexts of conformity – be truly subverted and transcended such that Marcuse's oft-invoked demand for an aesthetic rationality grounded in Eros may yet be at least partially realized? Caputi contends that there are increasing signs of, and grounds for, hope. "Much work has been done in terms of rethinking these categories both in the realm of social movements and legislation as well as in the area of gender and sexuality studies. Indeed, by any standard our society's interpretation of gender and sexuality has undergone considerable change, often moving in the direction of the negative fluidity promoted by Marcuse's aesthetic, "feminine principle" and Adorno's negative dialectics [...] In its eschewal of formal, identitarian logic, such a "post-identity" politics surely resonates with Marcuse's feminine principle and its embodied optimism. It surely foreshadows the undoing of gender in ways that open up categories of human identity in ways that allow for the joy and generosity that Marcuse envisages. For if something as integral to the human experience as gender and sexuality demand not the use of instrumental rationality, but of its aesthetic counterpart, then a liberationist politics undergoes assimilation into our everyday lives where it can truly have an effect."

The theme of identity is reprised in the context of identity politics in Tivadar Vervoort's *Towards a Critical Identity Politics: Butler, Adorno, and the Force of Non-identity*. In this chapter, Vervoort reads in concert the work of Judith

Butler and Theodor Adorno as concerns (non)identity thinking to highlight both the frequent points of convergence between the two theorists, as well as to champion a form of critical identity politics that recognizes and actively aims to repeatedly work through an otherwise paradoxical puzzle at the core of identity thinking more broadly. Vervoort succinctly presents said paradox: “subordinated social groups need to affirm the identity upon which they are subordinated to question their oppression.” The question: how to affirm one’s identit(y/ies) and one’s recognition without reinscribing and reifying said identit(y/ies) as essentialized, and often naturalized, static brute facts of the matter? Butler’s work on performativity and Adorno’s critiques of identity thinking, respectively, assist Vervoort in gesturing towards a *reflexive* and *critical* identity politics as a possible way through the risks and paradoxes of identity politics and theorizing.

Adorno’s critique of identity thinking rests upon the recognition that universal (and universalizing) concepts are never adequate to the particularities of the objects to which they refer. The multiplicity and fluidity of material lives, bodies, experiences, meanings, and social relations do not admit of seamless – let alone static universal – capture by way of concepts and categories. Nonetheless, Adorno is quite clear that there is no moving beyond concepts or conceptual thinking; instead, what is needed is persistent reflexivity vis-à-vis our attempts to capture, pin down, and organize the material and meaningful multitude that is human life. Adorno’s critique of identity thinking (here, expressed by attempts to seamlessly and comprehensively capture life via adequate universal concepts, leaving no remainder un-catalogued/-contained) gestures towards the ultimately *aporic* character of thought in relation to life. To avoid the pitfalls of reification constitutive of identity thinking, Adorno offers as an alternative the practice of thinking in constellations; within constellations there are no central positions from which to deduce strict and universal covering laws or categories. Rather, constellations demonstrate the relational and non-identical character of concepts to life. Crucially, the poetics of constellations invite us to a relatively open-ended process of resignification, as needed or desired, as contexts and conditions change across historical times and social spaces. In their accounts of performativity, Butler also calls attention to the necessity of reflexive resignification in relation to social identities, paying particular attention to identities of gender and sexuality. Echoing Adorno, Butler likewise recognizes the ultimately inescapable character of thinking, speaking, and acting relative to social identities. Rather than argue for the abolition of identities, Butler maintains that said identities remain open-ended and subject to change as needed or desired. The risk of the original paradox does indeed remain, but now with a significant and hopeful qualifier: “Insofar

as all reification is a forgetting ... the tendency from resignification towards reification demands any form of identity politics to place its categories under constant critical scrutiny.” Critical identity politics can and do recognize and affirm us in our individual and group specificity without succumbing to the trappings of reification and associated desires for representational-only politics – precisely those trappings that critical identity politics seek to critique and subvert.

In *Adorno, Foucault, and Feminist Theory: the Politics of Truth*, Lambert Zuidervaat considers how feminist critical theory fruitfully utilizes the analyses of power and truth found across the work of Foucault and Adorno, while also gesturing towards the necessity of feminist critical theory to go beyond these two theorists in developing a new conception of truth and truth's relation to forms of power – this, in service to critiques of domination and ongoing emancipatory social transformations. In a fashion analogous to Vervoort's discussion of Adorno and Butler, and in conversation with the critical feminist thought of both Amy Allen and Deborah Cook, Zuidervaat demonstrates a series of parallels in the thought of Adorno and Foucault, highlighting in particular their distinct but overlapping projects of connecting truth to power (and vice versa). Foucault's focus upon disciplinary and biopolitical forms of power is placed into productive tension with Adorno's focus upon a 'discontinuous continuity' of domination across historical epochs. Likewise, Foucault's focus upon regimes of truth and Adorno's focus upon negative dialectical and non-identitarian thinking highlight the possibilities for different truths and, by extension, different forms of subjectivity: cracks in seemingly all-encompassing power/truth regimes appear possible (if not always immediately probable), leading both Foucault and Adorno to posit alternative ways of knowing and being in the world. Crucially, neither thinker posits an 'objective' 'outside' to either truth or power relations. Instead, they gesture towards resistant-subversive desubjection and non-identical concepts and truths, respectively.

To Zuidervaat's assessment, what remains to be accomplished in these analyses, and what Zuidervaat sees to be a crucial task for contemporary critical feminist theory, is the development of a sufficiently normative grounding of critiques of power and domination, coupled with the development of a more robust and concrete conception of truth – concepts of power and truth and their interrelations robust, normatively grounded, and dynamic enough to posit productive/positive, non-speculative, and non-counterfactual utopian projects of social transformation and liberation. “Like Foucault and Adorno, feminist critical theorists have offered sophisticated critiques of power. But we have run stuck, it seems to me, because we have not developed a sufficiently

normative critique of power. To do that, I have suggested, feminist critical theorists need to reexamine Foucault's genealogy and Adorno's negative dialectics to ask what forms of power these have ignored or overlooked. And, given the prominence of truth for both Foucault and Adorno, that will also require a new conception of truth, one that neither restricts truth to science nor treats it as a counterfactual idea, but locates it instead in the historically emergent and malleable social domains of power."

Frida Sandström's chapter *The Disintegration of Autonomy: Jill Johnston's Anti-criticism* concludes Part 2 of the volume. In this piece, Sandström takes up questions of identity in relation to self and social movements from the vantage point of Jill Johnston's art criticism. Her proposal "is that Johnston's anti-criticism is a social critique of her own practice ... Johnston's 'overlap' of subjectivities not only questions formal art criticism as a practice, but also the subjectivation of the critic as part of the mediation of the work of art, aesthetically and socially: as autonomous and social fact."

Sandström draws fruitful connections between Johnston's formal art criticism and biographical writings and Adorno's investigations into negative dialectics and the non-identical. Throughout the chapter, a series of reflections concerning the characteristics and the status of identity are layered in such a fashion that stability vis-à-vis one's sense of self is increasingly troubled – though perhaps troubled in such a fashion as to reach a kind of actual liberating transcendence beyond formal and only apparent postures of transcendence in the figure of the art critic. To the extent that Johnston's position as a formal art critic required that she establish distance from her own lived experiences – particularly concerning her sexuality – as well as from the larger social context of the labor of art criticism qua labor and the larger social contexts in which art is performed and assessed in terms of substantive content, then Johnston's increasingly explicit practices of 'anti-criticism' gain clarity. Sandström illustrates Johnston performing a sophisticated series of immanent meta-reflections concerning self-identity, culminating in a radical self-critique – 'self-objectivation' – that both reflects as well as reverberates back 'out' towards the social world conditioning her sense of subjectivity. The conceptual abstractions as well as the abstractions away from material subjectivities and social contexts seemingly required of the art critic are increasingly identified and challenged in Johnston's work. The apparent dichotomy between subject and object, theory and practice, as well as form and content (i.e., between art critic and art criticism, art critic and art; art and social context, and self and social context) seem to at least partially dissolve – to 'disintegrate.'

"If Johnston's sexual subjectivity emerges *in negation* to her art critical subjectivity, which is what in the first place gives it its form as art criticism, then

she is not only immersing her critical autonomy into the social heteronomy in which she lives and works. Her writing also takes form *against* this context, as an opposing social reality residing within the ‘artform’ of her writing. It is from the perspective of the act of giving form to her individuation that Johnston also reflects the social objectivity of her art critical subjectivity, which here in itself becomes an object for her criticism. Yet different from Johnston’s art critical judgment, her anti-criticism is historically specific. By negating the form of her art critical subjectivity *from within* the autonomy that it presupposes, her ‘praxis’ restructures meaning by figuring an individuation that *negates* the social objectivity of Johnston-as-critic.” A complexly mediated liberation from absolute, alienated/alienating identification – in a sense partially in tune with Adorno’s analyses and critiques of identity thinking – results.

Part 3: Intersectional Investigations begins with Jana McAuliffe’s *Historical Traumas in the Critiques of Theodor Adorno and Joy James*. In this poignant analysis, McAuliffe reflects upon how and why engagements with historical traumas are undertaken, particularly in light of a commitment to intersectional feminist theory and activism today. McAuliffe traces James’ analyses of ‘Captive Maternal’ – those groups of individuals who, in light of their racial and gendered subject positions, have and continue to bear the brunt of reproductive and productive labor (continuous, often violent, theft of time, labor, and care) in relation to the development of the wealth of nations (specifically in this reading, the United States). The historical and ongoing founding trauma of slavery in the United States is examined in its continuing assumptions and effects using an intersectional feminist framework. As a point of comparison and instructive contrast, McAuliffe subsequently traces Adorno’s analyses of the historical trauma of Auschwitz. While Adorno does of course treat this trauma at the level of the particular-concrete (i.e., in terms of the all-too-real concentration camps, sufferings, and deaths of millions of human beings), Adorno also treats the trauma of Auschwitz from a broader metaphysical perspective. For Adorno, the horrors of Auschwitz are such that an inescapable, existential condition of guilt necessarily haunts humanity: a guilt that must be – and is repeatedly – forgotten such that human life may continue in the wake of such extreme historical trauma. One takes from Adorno’s accounts that Auschwitz stands for a (the?) singular historical trauma of modern humanity.

McAuliffe is clear that a very great deal can and ought to be taken from Adorno’s piercing and poignant reflections on historical trauma. At the same time, throughout the chapter McAuliffe demonstrates that intersectional frameworks are indispensable in their attention to the concrete particularities of multiple and compounding subject positions (e.g., race, gender, class, sexuality, disability, nationality, etc.) relative to ideologies, practices, and institutions

of domination and exploitation. McAuliffe's attention to James' treatment of gendered racial oppression in the context of U.S. slavery, when placed into conversation with Adorno's metaphysical treatment of the horrors of Auschwitz, leads McAuliffe to a powerful overarching assessment of the how and the why of engaging with historical trauma. McAuliffe recognizes in her analysis of James' thought "at least four implications for understanding the need for feminist social theory that engages historical trauma [...] Intersectionally informed feminist engagements with historical trauma should, first, not represent any one historical trauma as a singular, paradigmatic event; second, engage a raced and gendered attention to historical traumas and their contemporary impact; third, prioritize the agency and action (not just the subordination) of oppressed peoples, especially those most disempowered by Western democracies; and fourth, contest the ways that Western theory has diminished the theoretical contributions of diverse thinkers." In such attention to historical and subject specificity, analyses of trauma, such as those of James, provide a welcome concrete analytical approach for more nuanced understandings of, and possible (only ever partial) reckonings/responses to, the ongoing traumatic past. Simply put: "Feminist engagements with historical violence must expand what theory means in meaningful ways that engender plurality."

In *Beyond One-Dimensional Theory and Praxis: a Marcusean Alliance with Black Feminism*, Nicole Yokum takes up the thread of intersectional feminist analysis along with the early Frankfurt School by demonstrating the fruitful affinities to be found between Marcusean Critical Theory and Black Feminism. Taking cues from radical Black feminist thinkers such as Angela Davis, bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, Audre Lorde, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Brittany Cooper, Yokum makes a powerful case for the necessity of intersectional analyses in the search for objective truths about, and liberatory paths forward through, the social world. Drawing inspiration in particular from Crenshaw's formulation of intersectionality, Hill Collins' concept of the 'outsider within,' and Lorde and Coopers' examination of the emancipatory potential of Black feminist anger, Yokum contends that knowledge of exploitation, domination, and oppression are strengthened – achieving greater levels of objectivity – through the inclusion and centering of those individuals and groups who are multiply-marginalized in society. As Yokum is careful to caution, such 'strong objectivity' does not arise due to any essentialized or a priori epistemological privilege on the part of society's most marginalized individuals and groups; rather, the specific experiences of multiply-marginalized groups afford certain subject-positions particular standpoints or perspectives that, in turn, generate insights on the uses of power that at least partially elide other subject-standpoints who may fail to recognize the full truth of the dynamics of domination due to their

relatively privileged (and therefore relatively partial) experiences of oppression. As Yokum explains in relation to Crenshaw's formulation of the intersecting oppressions of race and gender experienced by Black women: it "is not that more oppression equals more knowledge, in a kind of additive view of how experience of various forms of structurally-based oppression leads to epistemological insight; rather, it's that Black women don't suffer the same illusions as white women with respect to their relationship to white male power, for they can't find comfort in their white privilege to balance out or cover over the pains associated with their gendered subordination. Being subject to oppression along the lines of both gender and race also enables Black Feminists to better understand the links among various systems of oppression, since they are actually all interconnected [...] which sets them up to potentially be more astute critical social theorists."

In addition to reflections on the significance of centering intersectional approaches in the search for more robust, accurate, and useful analyses of domination and exploitation, Yokum also traces a series of instructive examples in the Black feminist tradition that insist upon a fusion of rigorous theoretical work with concrete practical actions and activism. Rejecting 'one-dimensional' or one-sided approaches to interrogations of oppression, Yokum draws inspiration from the ongoing tradition of radical Black feminist work that explicitly demands and delivers on the 'both/and' of theory and practice. Eschewing a focus that rests exclusively upon one of the two poles of praxis – theory without action or action without theory – Yokum instead demonstrates that both components are necessary (insufficient by themselves in isolation) for radical emancipatory projects. The terminology of 'one-dimensionality' is, of course, that of Marcuse, and Yokum's chapter is bookended by a series of key links between the praxis of the Frankfurt School scholar and the intersectionally-oriented praxis of Black Feminism. Reminding us that Marcuse himself explicitly identified those marginalized in terms of race and gender as potentially best-positioned to grasp the full truths of oppressive systems of power, Yokum traces a biographical and conceptual genealogy between Marcusean Critical Theory and Black Feminism, indicating that such an alliance has and will continue to prove particularly helpful in thinking through and acting against domination with productively rage-informed hope for liberated ways of being in the world.

Sergio Bedoya Cortés' *Herbert Marcuse and Intersectional (Marxist) Feminism* echoes certain of Yokum's reflections, noting that "the search of the political subject for revolution was the principal commitment of Marcuse in his late decades." Bedoya Cortés further notes that Marcuse saw in those communities forcibly kept at the margins of an otherwise pessimism-provoking,

one-dimensional mass industrial society reason for optimism: resistance in the form of a Great Refusal was present and poised to achieve still greater strength via the urgency of multiple, compounding, immediate, and ongoing experiences of suffering. Despite sharing these and additional similarities with several authors in the present volume, Bedoya Cortés maintains that Marcuse's analyses remain fundamentally rooted in a Marxist paradigm that ultimately emphasizes the primary centrality of a united working class as the force necessary for truly revolutionary transformations in the present social relations and dynamics of capitalism.

Traces of Moore's earlier examination of the 'subjective factor(s)' either hindering or helping in the development of revolutionary social consciousness, Bedoya Cortés sees in Marcuse's reflections on the radical refusals and resistances of marginalized groups – people of color, women, and students serving as key examples – a hopeful cultivation of radical forms of social consciousness increasingly well-positioned to 'trigger' transformations in the 'objective' coordinates and processes of capitalism. In the apparent absence of a sufficiently revolutionary and unified working class – the proletariat as the key traditional Marxist subject positioned to effect the most fundamental, most thoroughgoing radical change – additional-adjacent social liberation movements such as the Women's Liberation Movement may serve as 'pre-revolutionary' sparks set to ignite a broader revolutionary movement challenging the capitalist world to its core. As Yokum indicated, the experiences and associated knowledge born by multiply marginalized groups may indeed be better positioned than Orthodox Marxism's rarified proletarian subject to recognize, resist, and actively work towards transformation of the ideological and practical relations of modern capitalist society. Against the grain of previous chapters in this collection, Bedoya Cortés contends that, in the last instance, total social transformation is unlikely to arise from particular social movements aimed at securing recognition, representation, or equal rights within the current system for historically marginalized groups. For Bedoya Cortés, the emancipation of particular groups ultimately hinges upon the emancipation of the social totality. "Marcuse finds the category of class to be the transversal axis for contemporary intersectionality [...] Marcuse finds that the principle of intersectionality must be represented in what he called a "united front", where the manifestations of exploitation, as evidenced in the sexual and racial divisions of labour, mobilize the irruption of objective conditions in people's consciousness,' thus generating the possibility for radical transformation."

Part 3 concludes with Jennifer L. Eagan's reflections on Adorno and astrology in *Rethinking Astrology as Feminist Re-enchantment: a Reading of Adorno's "The Stars Down to Earth."* Eagan invites us to examine Adorno's

oft-overlooked essay ‘The Stars Down to Earth’ against his broader theoretical oeuvre. Eagan notes that in comparison with the majority of Adorno’s analyses concerning modern culture and its relations to monopoly capitalism, “Stars” is relatively lacking in conceptual and methodological nuance. Moreover, Eagan finds in Adorno’s content analysis of a 1950s *Los Angeles Times* horoscope column a series of surprisingly derogatory statements about women. In uncharacteristic fashion, Adorno in “Stars” appears to rely upon hackneyed gender stereotypes to arrive at his conclusions concerning the allures, illusions, and dangers of astrology in general. Eagan also asks us to consider how concepts such as reason, rationality, truth, and nature are positioned and functioning in “Stars” relative to Adorno’s treatments of the same concepts elsewhere in his works. As part of his scathing indictment and dismissal of astrology – both in the immediate context of his content analysis of the *LA Times* horoscope column, as well as in the broader context of pseudoscientific occult ideologies – Adorno nonetheless shines perceptive light upon a series of material and psychological symptoms and sicknesses rooted in modern capitalist societies. Taking up the tools of Freudian psychoanalysis (themselves also critically addressed in Eagan’s chapter) in his reading of the newspaper column, Adorno recognizes in the astrological advice series a recurring pattern of assumptions/imperatives pertaining to ‘making it/getting ahead’: that is, cultivating one’s individual self (in the context of societal standards of status), cleverly maneuvering through personal/private conflicts so as to maintain domestic peace in the service of productive professional life, and repetitively fitting one’s apparently uniquely cultivated self into the ‘system’ in the hopes of reposing in a lifetime’s worth of deferred gratification (assuming one lives long enough to get ‘out’ of said system at the end of one’s life).

Adorno’s critiques of the culture of late capitalism are as sharp here as elsewhere, and Eagan uses precisely these insights to ground her ‘counternarrative’ of astrology vis-à-vis Adorno’s exasperated account in “Stars.” Against Adorno and Adorno’s use of reason against astrology, Eagan contends that contemporary women, BIPOC, and queer astrologers gesture towards the possibility of a ‘re-enchantment’ between humans and nature as well as our own human natures. In contrast to astrology as anti-Enlightenment in the sense of complacent acquiescence to soothing illusions or pseudo-individualized practices of self-cultivation in the service of submission to the standardized status quo, Eagan instead invites the possibility of an anti-Enlightenment astrology in the emancipatory sense of a critique of instrumental reason, alienation, and domination of nature, others, and self. Eagan poses the questions: “Could astrology in this new register be a constructive coping mechanism for women and femmes under patriarchy? Could it perhaps be a way of claiming outsider status and

resisting patriarchal views of nature? Astrology is anti-Enlightenment in the sense that it is against the domination of nature. The contemporary feminist/BIPOC/queer astrologers are trying to recoup something lost from an ancient practice and remake it differently ... Astrology could be seen as a way of releasing our desire for domination over nature as well as the desire to control our own nature – to be in tune and in touch with the universe as a larger structure than the material world which has been co-opted by capitalism ... Astrology can provide a powerful counter narrative to break through that hegemony, even if some regard it as fake or flakey.”

Part 4: Socialized Nature: Essential Categorical Questions in Science leads off with Simon Reiners’ *Negative Dialectics and the Force of Matter: Theodor W. Adorno and Karen Barad: towards a New-Material Feminism for Thinking Contemporary Crises*. Reiner provides a careful tracing of Adorno’s analysis between knowing subjects, mediating concepts, and objective material-objects together with Karan Barad’s account of agential realism and the ontological primacy of phenomena in order to suggest a productive, if incomplete, overlap between the concerns of the early Frankfurt School and feminist new materialism in the context of questions of responsibility in the age of the crisis-ridden ‘not-so-Anthropocene.’ Highlighting the partial parallels across Adorno’s negative dialectical critiques of identitarian thinking and Barad’s performativity-based critiques of dualistic subject-object (human-nature) pre-suppositions prevalent in traditional Western science and philosophy, Reiner makes a case for an updated critical historical materialism that takes seriously the de-centering of human subjects in analyses of natural-social relations. In their respective focus upon Being as Becoming, Adorno and Barad each provide compelling frameworks for thinking the subject-object relation as foundationally relational; such a processual understanding of thought and matter shine much needed light on the openings of possibility for thinking and being other than what currently is the case.

Still, Reiner contends that Barad’s feminist new materialism does not (yet) fully account for the normative grounding necessary for subjective critique and emancipatory practices in the face of modern human-nature crises. Adorno’s ultimate grounding of critique in the ongoing immediacy of suffering in domination may serve as a bridge between the non-essentialist historical and feminist new materialist accounts. “‘Western’ rationality must be taken seriously as a real agential, praxeological-historical cut in the phenomenon ‘world.’ It causes exclusions, hierarchies, and suffering, qua its real existence. And yet, this present must be read not as a stable whole but as contingent, conditioned by material-discursive practices. Only such a perspective opens a view upon contemporary relations and entailed crises that go beyond solemn human

means – as relational. Thus, even if we are incapable of comprehending and unable to succeed, we must take up the infinitely abandoned task of reading the present for what these constitutive, material-discursive practices are that close off the space of the possibility of another becoming. This is a task, which therefore cannot succeed through our solemn actions as human subjects, but also cannot succeed without us.”

In *Theorizing beyond the Man: the Frankfurt School and Post-humanist Feminism*, Mario Mikhail identifies and weaves together additional complementary threads across the work of the early Frankfurt School and posthumanist feminism, focusing particular attention on the writings of Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse together with the writings of Donna Haraway and Rosi Braidotti. Mikhail reminds us of the central role questions concerning relationships between humans and nature play across much of the early Frankfurt School's oeuvre. The repeated connections drawn in these accounts between the domination of nature and the domination of women are outlined in order to assert that questions of gender, sex, and sexuality are – albeit in sometimes scattered, fragmentary form – clearly present throughout the thought of the early Frankfurt School. The stress laid upon nature in the work of Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse (as well as in Benjamin's many reflections upon the mediating role of technology), holds a crucial clue for understanding the early Frankfurt School's analyses of gender. The oft-remarked upon link between the domination of nature and the heteropatriarchal domination of (supposedly 'closer to nature') women, is taken up in Mikhail's chapter to demonstrate the fabricated 'nature' of gender classifications and the relations of unfreedom enacted onto and through such supposedly essential categories of life. In critiquing the interconnected dominations of nature, of humans in general, and of ourselves individually, the early Frankfurt School is read in alliance with radical feminist and queer thought and practice.

Mikhail finds in the early Frankfurt School's deconstruction of gender and sexuality categories, as well as in their critiques of domination across forms of life, a strong resonance with work taking place within posthumanist feminist thought. In particular, feminist posthumanist examinations of human-nature-technology matrices, material-discursive practices, and the complexly irreducible entanglements of living and non-living subjects and objects share important affinities with the early Frankfurt School's critiques of reified hierarchical practices and identitarian thinking. In both approaches, the place of humans vis-à-vis the life world is radically reconstructed to make conceptual and practical space for non-essentialized, non-dualistic, non-hierarchical difference – towards playfully perverse reconfigurations of self in relation to other selves and our collective natural-social worlds. Absent assumptions of, or aspirations

towards, seamless syntheses or unifying reconciliations, both schools of thought demonstrate the necessity of ontological and epistemological humility on the part of Enlightenment-saturated modern humanity in the service of humane political, ethical, and libidinal life. Mikhail concludes by contending that such a “radical attitude towards humanity and nature predicated posthumanist feminist thought. The key motifs articulated by posthumanist feminist scholars such as Braidotti and Haraway are found in the thought of Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Benjamin. The destruction of the centrality of man, abolishing the demarcation between humanity and other creatures in the world, and liberating marginalized humans and animals from the instrumental reason of heteropatriarchy were the underlying themes in their thought, despite the variations in their philosophical reflections.”

Exploring further the rich line of thought concerning ontological matters of (human) ‘nature,’ Cristian Arão’s *The New Man Is a Woman: Marcuse and the Question of the New Anthropology* recounts Marcuse’s still-provocative discussions concerning the prospects of ‘feminizing society.’ Drawing upon a series of insights developed by his student Angela Davis, Marcuse (in)famously called for the feminization of humans – men in particular – and of society more broadly. In doing so, Marcuse was building upon and refining earlier formulations in *Eros and Civilization* concerning the overcoming of surplus-repression and aggression, instrumental forms of domination, and the capitalist-cultivated performance principle in favor of liberated erotic drives and desires. Taking key cues from Davis and from the Women’s Liberation Movement of his time, Marcuse increasingly emphasized the significance of feminist socialism in his analyses of radical transformation. Arão contends that, for Marcuse, “ending patriarchy becomes ... as important as taking over the means of production [...]” Paraphrasing the author of *Das Kapital*, Marcuse compares the formation of the proletariat in capitalism with the formation of the feminine in patriarchy.”

Patriarchy and capitalism will not – cannot – successfully be rejected and overcome in isolation from one another. As Lawler’s lead chapter in this volume makes abundantly clear, the patriarchy and the capitalist system are deeply interdependent, and a truly radical critique and challenge to one necessitates by definition a radical critique and challenge to the other. In coming to a greater appreciation of these structural and cultural truths, Marcuse came to conceptualize a ‘feminized man’ and ‘feminized society’ as the antithesis and antidote to ‘masculine’ traits and values cultivated and commanded by patriarchal capitalist existence. As Kangussu and Barroso’s chapter in this volume recounts, Marcuse’s notion of ‘feminized society’ did (and does) strike resonant chords and wary nerves alike – particularly among critical feminist

scholars. Consternation in the wake of Marcuse's calls for a 'feminized society' are understandable. Insofar as 'feminine' is taken as a synonym for women, or as a proxy for an essentialized complex of traits, behaviors, or values ontologically rooted in women qua women, Marcuse's choice of phrasing rightly results in charges of biological or cultural determinism. Likewise, assuming 'feminized society' to be a call for an inversion of traditional gendered power dynamics – as, for example, a call to matriarchy – one might again suspect the creep of essentialism and/or the reformism attendant with reversals of roles absent radical reorganizations of social relations writ large. Marcuse is very clear that his conception of 'feminized society' is precisely not a call to matriarchy, nor is it meant to imply the existence of any essentialized attributes to women (or anyone else). Instead, Marcuse's 'female' or 'feminized' society is one that cultivates traits and values expressive of care, emotion, and receptivity – these, in place of the relentlessly hyper-rational, fatally aggressive, and unnecessarily productivist traits and values Marcuse labels 'masculine' in virtue of their preponderance within patriarchy-driven capitalist societies. What Marcuse envisions is precisely not a 'return to' any first natures, gendered or otherwise. To the contrary, Marcuse envisions the cultivation of a second nature – one he calls 'feminine' – amongst human beings in general. In relation to his other works and thought, we might read in this new formulation previous formulations concerning the potential of Eros transcending (or at least significantly subduing) Thanatos.

Rather than elide historical and currently existing gendered roles, traits, and values, Marcuse indicates a way *out* of suffocating systems precisely *through* the re-purposed use of what are, at base, social constructions in the service of systems of domination. As Arão posits: "It is not possible to deny that gender roles exist and are present in our reality. From there, what Marcuse does is to understand that patriarchy, by keeping many women away from the world of waged work and simultaneously making women responsible for reproductive and emotional care, ended up fostering an axiology antithetical to the performance principle and, therefore, may unintentionally create a risk to the perpetuation of patriarchy and capitalism [...] this is not about defending the assertion that women are feminine. For Marcuse, the important movement is the feminization of man. This means that men need to be guided by the gradual abandonment of qualities linked to the performance principle, and recognize the importance of values such as passivity, tolerance, and care. Hence a kind of androgyny may arise. From the moment that men acquire feminine characteristics, the boundaries that mark gender divisions loosen." Arão is thus able to close with the provocative conclusion that, "When looking for the "new man", that is, this kind of figure that represents the denial of the *ethos* of capitalism,

Marcuse finds the image of the woman, because femininity is the antithesis of the performance principle. It is up to man to feminize himself to abandon the culture of brutalization, violence, and the death instinct.”

Lea Gekle's *Reification and Forgetting: Thinking the Domination of Nature and of Women with and against Adorno* provides a partial counter-reading of the connections drawn in early Frankfurt School scholarship between the domination of nature and the domination of women, focusing upon Adorno's simultaneously productive and problematic application of the concept of reification to the historical oppressions born by women within patriarchal capitalist contexts. Beginning from a partial critique of Ynestra King's ecofeminist accounting of women's domination that sees in said domination a 'forgetting' of a primary 'first nature' relation of dependency between men and women (and humans and nature), Gekle goes on to assess the adequacy of Adorno's apparently more historically and socially specific account of women's contemporary domination. King's ecofeminist account (itself aiming to draw from Horkheimer and Adorno's analysis of reification and the domination of nature) seeks to widen explanations of the domination of women beyond a reductive economic account – one that would attribute domination of women to the social relations of capitalism as a mode of production. Gekle demonstrates that this 'enlargement' of the scope of analysis results, unhelpfully, in both de-historization and the reinscription of biologically essentialized understandings of women – as naturally and primarily bearers of children whose vital role in the reproduction of life has been radically devalued to the point of having been forgotten.

Gekle's turn to Adorno's writing directly demonstrates that his are accounts of the domination of women that admirably avoid, indeed explicitly reject, essentialized understandings of gender specifically, and nature more broadly. In this sense, Adorno's analyses serve as a welcome antidote to those essentialized ecofeminist accounts that seek to draw inspiration from the early Frankfurt School. However, Gekle illustrates that Adorno's anti-essentialist account of the domination of women and of nature nevertheless runs into problems of its own – problems that are somewhat surprising given the emphasis Adorno places on the necessity of grounding analysis and critique in historical and social specificity. (One is reminded of Eagan's earlier reflections on Adorno's uncharacteristically less nuanced analysis of astrology, as well as McAuliffe's reflections of the perhaps too sweeping and singular claims made by Adorno in relation to the historical trauma of Auschwitz). Gekle proposes “that the process of reification developed by Adorno, which helps to criticize a primary form of essentialism, needs itself a historization and stronger confrontation in order to maintain its critical capacity.” Gekle finds in Maria Mies'

analyses of social reproduction and gendered divisions of labor – both of which exist within a larger historical horizon of patriarchy preceding modern capitalism – a more concrete and hence more productive line of approach for identifying and transforming the sources of women's domination. For Gekle, Mises' thought "allows a concrete analysis of female subjectivation in a materialist framework without neglecting a larger historical horizon and helps to think about contemporary forms of oppression as having simultaneously a specific historical configuration as well as a longer history than only the recent history of capital." Gekle concludes that "only under a critical backdrop to feminist authors analyzing in an empirically more precise way the reification and integration of women in late capitalist society, can one use Adorno's larger conception of a social theory in order to think about contemporary forms of social domination."

By way of this volume's conclusion, Imaculada Kangussu and Nathalia N. Barroso's *About Mules, Divas, and Other Specifically Feminine Characteristics* brings back discussions of Marcuse's concept of a feminized society and 'specifically feminine' traits and values. Reiterating that the concept of 'feminine' at play in Marcuse's thought refers to an historical and not a metaphysical or biological essence, we are reminded of the central place afforded the biological (in the sense of libidinally instinctual) throughout Marcuse's oeuvre. Human beings' collective "essence" is biological insofar as 'biological' is conceptualized here in terms of drives, desires, and creative expressions of life that are contained and variously channeled (constructed?) in relation to broader social relations. In other words, such a libidinal-biological "essence" is in fact always-already historical (subject to and changing across contexts) insofar as social relations, roles, and values structure – for better or worse – the capacities and even the desires of individuals. That particular human libidinal expressions (and forcible restriction and deadening of particular libidinal expressions) have historically come to be associated with particular genders is an effect of history and culture. The ascription of particular gendered roles and expressions to humans is likewise an effect of history and social relations: biology, in the Marcusean sense of libidinal drives and desires, is fundamental. What is not fundamental, necessary, or liberating are the impositions of static, unequal (often binary), categories and associated roles and traits upon differently situated individuals. As noted in Arão's chapter, Marcuse is directing us across his works to the possibility of a transformed collective human being – a radically new humanity in and through a radically new reality. Kangussu and Barroso are clear: "The confrontation of male reason and female sensibility is a cultural situation, and behind it is hidden the social necessity of harmony and consonance between them. This does not mean that men should become irrational,

nor that women should turn themselves into walking brains. The solution is not to substitute reason for sensibility but to reconcile them in a non-hierarchical relationship [...] the abandonment of patriarchal and capitalist values would undermine the specific masculine characteristics, overcome the stereotypes of gender normativity, and the hierarchical differences between feminine and masculine characteristics [...] The end goal here is dissolution of essentialized/naturalized divisions and distinctions in favor of humane ways of being in the world.”

Kangussu and Barroso go on to consider the many connections drawn in Marcuse’s work between the concept of the ‘feminine’ and his reflections on the vital role aesthetics can and must play in the construction of human ways of being and relating in the world. From a consideration of Marcuse’s frequent stress upon the ‘aesthetic dimension’ relative to liberated life, the chapter moves to consider the historical and ongoing role of music as a vibrant tool of creative expression, pleasure, and subversion of dominant status quos. More specifically, Kangussu and Barroso turn to Angela Davis’ analyses of the Black female Blues tradition; in giving both individual and collective expression to the particular sufferings, desires, and demands of Black women, this rich musical legacy in turn points towards the truths and power located in multiply marginalized subject-positions. In line with Yokum’s explorations of intersectionality, particularly those Black feminist approaches that draw to the center the standpoints and experiences of ‘outsiders within,’ Kangussu and Barroso illustrate the already actual and future potential aesthetic and transformative power of Black female Blues. Here, “expressed desires are thus incorporated – they have a body in the songs – even though it is not yet possible to fulfill them. Notwithstanding that their expression happens in the aesthetic dimension, somehow it is in this dimension that the forbidden desires are lightened and become visible – or hearable, at least.”

As noted in many chapters throughout this volume, Marcuse and other thinkers in the early Frankfurt School tradition stress the significance of the ‘subjective’ factor – the necessity of the coming to and changing of subjective consciousness in order to recognize and revolt against and beyond current reality. In repeatedly underscoring the revolutionary role of aesthetics in conjunction with his increasing conviction that individuals and groups falling outside orthodox conceptions of the proletariat as the obvious or necessary agent of revolutionary change, Marcuse arrives at conclusions shared and developed by Davis; namely, that the collective creative expressions of resistance and reimagining of reality born from the sufferings and the desires of marginalized groups contain the kernels of a truly explosive Great Refusal of current reality. From the standpoint of society’s most marginalized, the truth of current

reality as well as the necessary desire and power to transcend said reality are already prefiguring a radically different, radically liberated set of social relations – a set of social relations that requires as its base a radically different, radically liberated (‘second nature’) humanity. It is this radical ‘qualitative leap’ into liberated second natures that Marcuse and Davis see burgeoning in those social movements aimed at radical gender, sexual, racial, and class liberations.

Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank Brill series editor, David Fasenfest, for his ongoing enthusiasm and patient support in seeing this volume to completion. We wish to acknowledge and thank each of the authors who have contributed their time, passion, and scholarship to this timely project. We also acknowledge and thank our readers – may we continue thinking and acting together in critically creative multi-dimensional fashions about gender, sexuality, liberated selves, and societies!

Notes on Contributors

Cristian Arão

holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from Universidade Federal da Bahia. He is affiliated to the group “Marx no século XXI” and develops research in Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Technology and Philosophy of Psychoanalysis, within the Critical Theory tradition, dialoguing more deeply with Marx, Marcuse, and Freud.

Karyn Ball

is a professor of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta. Her articles have appeared in *Cultural Critique*, *Women in German Yearbook*, *Research in Political Economy*, *Differences*, *English Studies in Canada*, *New Literary History*, *Alif*, the open-access journal *Humanities*, the *Journal of Holocaust Studies*, *Angelaki*, *Law and Critique*, and *History and Theory*. She guest edited a special issue of *Cultural Critique* on “Trauma and Its Cultural Aftereffects” (2000); and a special issue of *Parallax* on the concept of “visceral reason” (2005); with Susanne Soederberg. Ball co-edited a special issue of *Cultural Critique* on “Cultures of Finance” (2007); with Melissa Haynes, a special issue of *ESC* on “The Global Animal” (2013); and, with Stefan Mattessich, a special issue of *Cultural Critique* on “pornocracy” (2018). Other representative publications include the edited collection *Traumatizing Theory: the Cultural Politics of Affect in and beyond Psychoanalysis* (Other Press, 2007) and the monograph *Disciplining the Holocaust* (State University of New York Press, 2008) (paperback: 2009).

Nathalia N. Barroso

is a student in Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art from the postgraduate Program in Philosophy at the Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto. She develops the research “The Power of Classic Female Blues evidenced by Angela Davis and Herbert Marcuse” with special interest in the concepts “new sensitivity” and “great refusal”. She is co-author of *Angela Davis, as Mulas do Mundo e a Música: por um novo paradigma* (Angela Davis, The Mules of the World and Music: For a New Paradigm) published in the book *Filosófias* (2021).

Sergio Bedoya Cortés

obtained an undergraduate degree in Political Science from the Universidad de Los Andes, a master's degree from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in Maps and Tools for a New Culture of Citizenship, and a master's degree in

Philosophy and Political Sciences from the Universidad de Los Andes. He currently teaches philosophy, logic and critical theory at the Faculty of Philosophy and Human Sciences of the Universidad Libre de Colombia and is a Ph.D. student in Politics at Manchester Metropolitan University. His research interests focus on Critical Theory, Marx and Marxism of the 20th and 21st centuries, Decolonial Theory, and the different forms of subjectivity (subjectivation) concerning the social movements of feminism and race. He is the Spanish translator of the *Herbert Marcuse Conferences Transvaluation of Values and Radical Social Change: Five New Lectures* (2021) and *Herbert Marcuse's 1974 Paris Lectures at Vincennes University* (2021) published by the International Herbert Marcuse Society. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3606-7605>.

Mary Caputi

is a professor of Political Science at California State University, Long Beach where she teaches courses in political theory, feminist thought, and critical thinking. Most recently, she published *Slow Culture and the American Dream: A Slow and Curvy Philosophy for the 21st Century* (Lexington Books, 2022). She is also the author of *Feminism and Power: the Need for Critical Theory* (Lexington Books, 2013), *A Kinder, Gentler America: Melancholia and the Mythical 1950s* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005), and *Voluptuous Yearnings: a Feminist Theory of the Obscene* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1994). With Amirhosein Khandizaji, she co-authored *David Riesman and Critical Theory: Autonomy versus Emancipation* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2021). She also co-edited and contributed to two collections of essays: *Teaching Marx and Critical Theory in the Twenty-First Century*, co-edited with Bryant Sculos (Brill, 2019), and *Jacques Derrida and the Future of the Liberal Arts*, co-edited with Vincent Del Casino (Bloomsbury, 2013). She is currently at work on the *Research Handbook on Feminist Political Thought*, co-edited with Patricia Moynagh and under contract with Edward Elgar Press. She also served as editor of *Politics & Gender* from 2016–2019. Caputi has taught abroad in Italy on three occasions, and in addition to her Ph.D. from Cornell, she holds a master's degree in Italian Studies from California State University, Long Beach.

Jennifer L. Eagan

is a professor of Philosophy and Public Affairs & Administration at California State University, East Bay. Working at the intersection of theory and praxis, she has published articles in the areas of feminist philosophy, critical theory, political philosophy, ethics, and the philosophy of public administration. Her ongoing research interests include organizing and activism and the works of Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Michel Foucault, and Judith Butler.

Additionally, she has served on the editorial team of the journal *Administrative Theory & Praxis* and as a leader in her labor union, the California Faculty Association.

Lea Gekle

is currently writing a doctoral thesis on Adorno's critique of sociology as an epistemological project, at the University de Picardie Jules Verne and Goethe Universität Frankfurt. She also teaches philosophy at the University de Picardie Jules Verne. Having completed an MA in contemporary philosophy at the École Normale Supérieure and École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, she passed the agrégation in German studies in 2018, before taking her position as a fully funded Ph.D. student in 2019. Since 2020, she is also a co-tutelle scholarship-holder of the DAAD. She is also associated at the Marc Bloch Center in Berlin. Her main research areas are epistemology of social theory, political philosophy, social philosophy, critical theory, and feminist theory.

Imaculada Kangussu

is a professor at the Instituto de Filosofia, Artes e Cultura of the Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto, Brasil. She is the author of *Sobre Eros* (About Eros, 2007), *Leis da Liberdade* (Laws of Freedom, 2008), and *A Fantasia e as Fantasias* (The Fantasy and the Fantasies, 2020). Among her edited volumes are *Katharsis* (2002), *Theoria Aesthetica* (2005), *O cômico e o trágico* (2008), and *Estéticas moderna e contemporânea* (2018). She serves on the board of the International Herbert Marcuse Society.

Kristin Lawler

is a professor of Sociology at the College of Mount Saint Vincent in New York City. Her first book, *The American Surfer: Radical Culture and Capitalism*, was published by Routledge in 2011, and her new book, co-edited with Michael Roberts and David Cline, entitled *Board Studies: the Political Ontology of Surfing and Skateboarding* is forthcoming from San Diego State University Press in 2023. Her work has been published in numerous edited collections, including, most recently, *Back to the 30s? Recurring Crises of Capitalism, Liberalism, and Democracy*; *Nietzsche and Critical Social Theory*; *Class: the Anthology*; and *The Critical Surf Studies Reader*. She is a contributing member of the editorial board of the journal, *Situations: Project of the Radical Imagination*, where her work has also been published, and a member of the board of directors of the Institute for the Radical Imagination.

Jana McAuliffe

is an assistant professor of Philosophy at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, specializing in social-political philosophy and critical philosophies of gender, race, and class. Her research is interested in everyday politics as exemplified in cultural and aesthetic taste, including “She’s Making Profit Now: Neoliberalism, Ethics, and Feminist Critique” in *philoSOPHIA* and “How to feminist affect: Feminist comedy and post-truth politics” in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*. She can be reached at jxmcauliffe@ualr.edu.

Mario Mikhail

is a writer and a researcher interested in political and social theory. He is currently a Euroculture Master’s student at the Universities of Udine and Groningen and a recipient of an Erasmus Mundus scholarship. He has academic publications in the fields of political and social theory. His latest article is “A messianic life can be lived rightly: Democracy contra the capitalist-sovereign order” published in the *Central European Journal of Politics*. He also writes for the Development, Advocacy, and Media Center (DAM) and Masr360.

Ryan Moore

teaches sociology at San Francisco State University and is the author of *Sells like Teen Spirit: Music, Youth Culture, and Social Crisis* (NYU Press, 2010).

Jeremiah Morelock

is a postdoctoral researcher and instructor of sociology at Boston College. He is editor of two published volumes on the critical theory of the early Frankfurt School: *Critical Theory and Authoritarian Populism*, and *How to Critique Authoritarian Populism: Methodologies of the Frankfurt School*. He is also author of *Pandemics, Authoritarian Populism, and Science Fiction: Medicine, Military, and Morality in American Film*, and co-author with Felipe Ziotti Narita of *O Problema do Populismo* as well as *The Society of the Selfie: Social Media and the Crisis of Liberal Democracy*.

Rafaela N. Pannain

received a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of São Paulo and a master’s degree in Political Science from Sorbonne University. She is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of São Paulo and a member of the research group “Intersectional Dialogues and Latin American Epistemologies” (NUPEDELAS). She organized the book *The Consequences of Brazilian Social Movements in Historical Perspective* (Routledge, 2022).

Christine A. Payne

lectures in STS and Women's Studies at San Diego State University and Sociology at University of California, San Diego. Her teaching and research interests include social and political theory, science and technology studies, cultural studies, and the sociology of knowledge. She is co-editor, with Michael J. Roberts, of *Nietzsche and Critical Social Theory: Affirmation, Animosity, and Ambiguity*, as well as a special issue by the same name of the journal *Critical Sociology*.

Simon Reiners

is a research assistant at the Oswald von Nell Breuning Institute for social and economic ethics, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, where he teaches social philosophy. Currently, he is doing his doctorate at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt, Department of Social Philosophy. His research focuses on the nature-culture relations and the role of the body in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, the Frankfurt School, and contemporary Material Feminism. The project he is working on is called *Embodied Knowledge. Material Feminism and Critical Theory*.

Frida Sandström

is a Ph.D. fellow in Modern Culture at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen, supervised by Mikkel Bolt. She is currently working on the Ph.D. thesis, "Art criticism as social critique," focusing on the social critique of art criticism and of revolutionary subjectivity, undertaken by Carla Lonzi, (1931–1982) Jill Johnston (1931–2009) and Adrian Piper (1948–). As part of this research, Sandström is undertaking collective research together with Fredrik Svensk, James Day and Mikkel Bolt, on the "Promise and Compulsion of Art Criticism's Universalism", which during 2020–2021 was manifested in two symposia. Sandström is teaching in the fields of aesthetic philosophy, art theory and fine art practice, at the University of Copenhagen, and at The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen, and during 2021–22, she was a visiting research student at Center for Research in Modern European Philosophy, Kingston University, London, and supervised by Peter Osborne. Since 2015, Sandström is a contributing editor at *Paletten Art Journal* (SE). She writes recurrent essays and art criticism for *Artforum International* and other Swedish and international journals.

Caio Vasconcellos

is an Adjunct Professor at the Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro. He holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of São Paulo and is a member of the

Critical Theory and Sociology research group from the University of Campinas. He also coordinates the Capitalism, Collapse and Utopia research group. He published the book *O Moloch do presente. Adorno e a crítica à Sociologia* (Alameda, 2012).

Tivadar Vervoort

studied philosophy in Amsterdam, Berlin, and Leuven. His current research project is entitled “The Revitalization of Political Subjectivity: Contesting Neoliberal Governmentality and the Reification of Social Life,” and funded by a Ph.D.-Fellowship of the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO). Vervoort is part of the editorial collective of *Krisis: Journal for Contemporary Philosophy* and an editor for *The Dutch Review of Books* (De Nederlandse Boekengids).

Nicole Yokum

is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy at St. Olaf College. She specializes in Feminist Philosophy, Critical Philosophy of Race, and Social and Political Philosophy. She is currently working on her first book manuscript entitled *The Politics of Insecurity*, an investigation into affect, oppression, and political agency through the framework of attachment. Drawing on the concepts of Adornian coldness, Fanonian affective erethism, and Marcusean one-dimensionality, Yokum recuperates an “insecure” style of political engagement as an ethical and politically valuable response to longstanding oppressive conditions. Yokum’s recent publications include work on Fanon and psychosexual neuroses, and Foucault on Sade’s *Juliette*.

Lambert Zuidervaart

is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies and the University of Toronto, and a Visiting Scholar at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he resides. An internationally recognized expert in Critical Theory, especially the work of Theodor Adorno, he is currently developing a comprehensive and transformative conception of truth for an allegedly post-truth society, in three volumes: *Truth in Husserl, Heidegger, and the Frankfurt School: Critical Retrieval* (The MIT Press, 2017), *Shattering Silos: Reimagining Knowledge, Politics, and Social Critique* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2022), and *Social Domains of Truth: Science, Politics, Art, and Religion* (Routledge, 2023). His new book on Adorno, titled *Adorno, Heidegger, and the Politics of Truth* (SUNY Press) will appear in 2024.