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Mimetic Resentment's Violent Somatechnics in Permacrisis Times: Critical Cartographical Contours & Coordinates

Evelien Geerts and Delphi Carstens

Abstract:

Our current era of crisis and neo-fascist revanches (see Lawtoo 2019) is rife with desires-driven mimesis, and more specifically, mimetic resentment or conflictual copycat behaviour. Traditionally conceptualised in relation to ressentiment, mimetic resentment (see Nietzsche [1887]2006; Girard [1961]1965, [1977]1992, and [1978]1987) is seldom analysed as a somatechnical phenomenon that meshes the corporeal and the technological (Sullivan 2005; Sullivan and Murray 2011), involving pre-personal and affective micropolitics, as well as social and environmental macropolitical characteristics. This article therefore seeks to map out resentment's contemporary somatechnics by attending to its violence-engendering micropolitics in addition to the macrolevels of the permacrisis times it is said to be operating in. The burgeoning environmental crises that are currently unfolding on top of it all furthermore indicates that such a mapping exercise must consider both the micro- and macropolitical nuances of how *zoē*/*bios* classifications and resultant gaps between non/human actors are created and sustained. Finding such a nuanced eco-focused framework in Deleuzoguattarian philosophy (see Deleuze [1969]1990; Deleuze and Guattari [1980]2005; Guattari [1989]2000 and [1992]2002), as well as contemporary critical new materialist thought (see Cooper 2008; Braidotti 2013; Haraway 2016; and Yusoff 2018), we first examine these permacrisis times before presenting a critical cartography (Braidotti [1994]2011; Deleuze and Guattari [1980]2005) of the contours of mimetic resentment's violent micro- and macropolitical

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somatechnics, to then explore several eco-focused Deleuzoguattarian and critical new materialist pathways that could lead us out of the spiralling vortex of violence that characterises this time of planetary trouble.

Keywords: critical new materialisms, Deleuzoguattarian philosophy, ecosophy, micro-/macropolitics, neo-fascism, permacrisis, somatechnics of mimetic resentment, violence

Introduction: Permacrisis Times

> In urgent times, many of us are tempted to address trouble in terms of making an imagined future safe, of stopping something from happening that looms in the future, of clearing away the present and the past in order to make futures for coming generations. Staying with the trouble does not require such a relationship to times called the future. In fact, staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings.
>
> **Donna J. Haraway 2016: 1**

The times of crises that we appear to be inhabiting right now have somatechnical residues that are characterised by 'a chiasmatic interdependence of soma and techné' (Sullivan and Murray 2011: vi). Permacrisis – which differs from the often-used notion of polycrisis that stands for the combined effect of a variety of entangled crises – is said to describe 'the dizzying sense of lurching from one unprecedented event to another' (Shariatmadari cited in Turnbull 2022: n. p.). This affectively overwhelming and seemingly ever-lasting crisis – that was named Collins Dictionary's word of the year in 2022 (see Bushby 2022) – is pushing us towards a future that might not even come into being. Permacrisis could therefore be regarded as the 'structural

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signature of modernity' (Spicer 2022: n. p.) – a sense of wreckage piled upon wreckage, from 'economic crises [to] to existential crises, energy crises and environmental crises' (n. p.). And it is this permacrisis situation – a product of both the molar and technical organisation of a pitiless economic system as well as the resentful somatic microformations (attitudes, perceptions, and expectations) it has engendered – whose "troubling" nature we urgently need to attend to, as is also emphasised in this introduction's opening vignette taken from critical new materialist Donna J. Haraway's *Staying with the Trouble* (2016).

The idea of crisis has of course been around for a long time: crisis is the inevitable corollary of linear progress stories (such as those of free-market capitalism, Marxism, and liberal humanism), often celebrated by presidents, public intellectuals, and corporate pundits. Contrary to popular dogma, however, the experience of crisis does not necessarily make for greater resilience or an increased individual, communal or even planetary capacity to embrace disastrous and/or novel events. As Jim Bohland and colleagues also assert in *The Resilience Machine* (2018), resilience might well be rhetorically employed as a neoliberal 'routine prescription for coping with the conditions of modern existence' (1) in the present, yet "bouncing back" is not always a readily available option. Nor should it be, considering the fact that out of the nine planetary boundaries regulating planet Earth's stability, six have already been crossed ("Planetary Boundaries" 2024).

While the link between new technologies and inappropriate consumer lifestyles, sweeping societal changes, the destabilising lurches of capitalist boom and bust cycles, political upheavals, refugee disasters, pandemics, and an assortment of anthropogenetic pollution and climate crises (wildfires, droughts, floods, hurricanes, sea-level rise, and so forth) are well documented, less so are the links between budding resentments (increasingly spilling over into violences) and the state of permacrisis engendered by the drive to keep up with the narrative

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of progress. Even though the dangers of exceeding the aforementioned planetary boundaries have been well-understood since the 1970s, outdated Enlightenment narratives of human mastery – referred to by Haraway (2016: 40) as illusionary 'god trick[s] […] to resolve the troubles' – form an integral part of the attitudes, perceptions, and expectations engendered by economic liberalism, despite the latter's obvious eco-social hazards. Faced with mounting external threats in permacrisis times then, human subjects appear to have become more, and not less, manipulable by dangerous neo-fascist populist pundits and apocalyptic technocratic schemes for keeping economic growth perpetual.

This brings us to the main topics of this article, mimesis, mimetic resentment, and mimetic resentment's micro- and macropolitical somatechnics. In this piece of writing, our intention is to map the historical vicissitudes of these somatechnical phenomena, as well as the critical theoretical responses to them, before presenting a critical cartography of conceptual weapons that might be deployed against them. For this introduction, it suffices to note that micropolitical resentments often carry enough power to eventually accrue into macropolitical events with dubious outcomes, as the Arab Spring, Brexit, and the January 6th Capital Insurrection all aptly demonstrate. Conversely, macropolitical events, economic policies, technological platforms, and widely disseminated ways of thought create a potent atmosphere in which micropolitical resentments brew. The micro- and macropolitical are basically enmeshed and co-engender one another; or, as Deleuze and Guattari ([1980]2005: 213) state, 'every politics is simultaneously a *macropolitics* and a *micropolitics*'. While a comprehensive analysis of permacrisis times is well beyond the scope of a single paper, this article extends the arguments made in a previous essay on the micropolitics of fascism (see Carstens and Geerts 2023) to argue that mapping out mimetic resentment requires a situated understanding of the permacrisis times it is currently propelled by. In the rest of this article, we therefore zoom in

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on mimetic ressentiment's violence-engendering micro- and macropolitical somatechnics. This critical cartographical (Braidotti 2011; Deleuze and Guattari [1980]2005) exercise will be undertaken while practicing a grounded and eco-focused "staying with the trouble" by means of Deleuzoguattarian (Deleuze [1969]1990; Deleuze and Guattari [1980]2005; Guattari [1989]2000 and [1992]2002) and contemporary critical new materialist thought (see Cooper 2008; Braidotti 2013; Haraway 2016; and Yusoff 2018).[1]

Critical Cartographical Contours: Mapping Mimesis, Resentment, and the Violent Somatechnics of Mimetic Resentment

To map out these somatechnical contours and pathway coordinates, we first need to say something more about the methodology of critical cartography. Critical cartography, especially in its power-critical Braidottian ([1994]2011) form, has its roots in Foucauldian ([1971]1977; [1975]1995) and Deleuzoguattarian thought ([1980]2005): '[O]perat[ing] on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times' (Foucault [1971]1977: 139), critical cartography partly overlaps with the methodology of genealogy. Like critical cartography, genealogy does not revolve around 'the search for "origins"' (139), nor is it about the creation of 'indefinite teleologies' (139) or recovering history's 'unbroken continuity' (146). Cartography starts from the here and now, providing us with 'a theoretically based and politically informed reading of the present' (Braidotti [1994]2011: 4); a reading that presents us with 'both analytic and exegetical tools for critical thought, and also creative theoretical alternatives' (4). Mapping somatechnical contours and pathway coordinates via critical cartography is meant to happen with an eye for detail and situated power analyses, again overlapping with Foucauldian genealogy, as it conceptualises the rise of a given discourse by examining the institutions and regimes that co-

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engendered it. However, critical cartography simultaneously demands more from us as knowledge producers than creating a history of the present through genealogies: there also needs to be a certain openness toward the future, as well as a clear, accountable engagement with the mapmaker's geopolitical situatedness. The latter reveals critical cartography's Deleuzoguattarian roots: whereas tracing is all about trying to fixate certain phenomena by means of a neatly organised structure, mapping in the eyes of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (and consequently Braidotti) is seen as rhizomatic in nature. A map is basically 'open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification' (Deleuze and Guattari [1980]2005: 12). Apart from its methodological openness and emphasis on situated positionality and networks of power, critical cartography has the capacity to methodologically map out both the micro- and macropolitical, making it an ideal tool to analyse somatechnical phenomena, or said differently, 'corporealities as always already technologised, and technologies as always already enfleshed' (Sullivan and Murray 2011: vi; also see Sullivan 2005), with.

Critical cartographies are thus lively power-aware assemblages; networks with a multiplicity of materially-grounded nodes and an eye for the somatechnical, bringing new, formerly unseen connections and flows into being – as we try to do here with mimetic resentment's somatechnics.

Mapping Mimesis and Resentment

Modern economics, the ideology of progress, and dreams of the perfectibility of "Man" were hatched together in 18th-century Europe before being transplanted in waves of expansionist violence and industrialisation. In these apocalyptic permacrisis times, however, we find ourselves floating through time, unmoored from both past and a future that might not even

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arrive. Part of this unmooring derives from the fact that most humans are unsuited to the relentless unrestrained pursuit of wealth accumulation that capitalism has been so aggressively promoting since the late 18th century. Today almost everyone on planet Earth is encouraged to identify with excessive, obscene, and unobtainable planet-trampling consumption and wealth. As the 2016 Presidential victory of Donald J. Trump (together with another potential victory-to-come) proves, this desires-driven mimesis could even be subordinated to capture the votes of middle-aged working-class men for a potty-mouthed 'billionaire property developer' (Fisher 2020: 158).

Mimesis then, derived from the Ancient Greek verb *mīmeisthai* (to imitate), has played a central role in Western thought and culture: From Plato's *Republic* ([375 BC]2007), where the arts are negatively labelled as mimetic or producing inferior copies of real-life objects, to René Girard's ([1961]1965, [1977]1992, and [1978]1987) idea that mimetic desire eventually leads to violence; and from Luce Irigaray's ([1974]1985) strategic-mimetic reappropriation of the woman-as-hysteric, to Homi K. Bhabha's (1994) subversion of the coloniser/colonised relationship through mimesis. Critical theory, however, is not only packed with references to the negative connotations of mimesis, but also to its potential. This mimetic doubleness has been perfectly summarised by Nidesh Lawtoo in *(New) Fascism* as something that 'cuts both ways' (2019: xliii) – toward the 'imitation of good, rational, and ideal [behavioural] models' (xvii) and toward the 'irrational power' (xvii) of affective contagion. For Lawtoo, humans and mimesis are ultimately intimately connected:

> Humans are, in fact, thoroughly mimetic, not only in the sense that we create aesthetic representations of reality (though we do that too), but in the more fundamental psychological, sociological, and political sense that we mimic the behavior of others (xliii).

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Interestingly, Lawtoo also identifies a very contemporary type of mimetic condition, that is, 'hypermimesis' (2019: xlvi). Theorised to point at the "novelty" of what he calls '(new) fascism' (xlii)[2], which boils down to a combination of fascism's age-old populist 'mimetic techniques' (xlii) and deployment of technological media (such as television), amplified in the present by algorithms-driven social media and related information networks, hypermimetic subjects come into being when social media and technological networks start blurring the 'ontological distinctions between fiction and reality, copy and origins, truth and lies' (xlvii). '[G]enerating hyperreal shadows without any referent' (Lawtoo 2019: xlviii), 'collective pathologies that catch the new media consumer in a widening spiral of virtual simulations that are not simply hyperreal and disconnected from reality [but that also possess] the hypermimetic power to bring (new) fascist phantoms into real life' (xlix), arise.

Hypermimesis and hypermimetic subjectification could thus be seen as symptomatic of these "new" fascist post-truth times. Already prone to desires-driven copycat behaviour, humans are now also in the thrall of digital hyperconsumption and hyperreal simulation. Continually exposed to '"breaking news" (true or fake)' (Lawtoo 2019: xlviii) through new social media platforms, digital devices, and technologies, people are getting increasingly trapped in algorithms-propelled filter bubbles and echo chambers that are making it close to impossible to engage with worldviews that do not confirm their own. These conditions, in combination with the affective despair these permacrisis times are bringing about, are leading us right into a neo-fascist algopopulist era that philosopher Chantelle Gray describes as an 'algorithmically aided politics' (2022: 157) that is transforming 'the "we" into the "they" through […] the digital exercise of power' (157).

Given the fact that 'one is not born a fascist' (Lawtoo 2019: 1), but one could easily

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become one under certain crisis conditions – such as the currently unfolding permacrisis situation – we need to investigate these conditions and map the contours of mimesis and mimetic resentment in more detail. This brings us to philosopher Friedrich W. Nietzsche's ([1887]2006) conceptualisation of resentment as *ressentiment*[3] – a complex emotion combining anger, disgust, and disappointment flowing from the weak towards the strong and from the self to the other. In his *On the Genealogy of Morality* ([1887]2006), Nietzsche claims that all moral values stem from resentment whereby members of one social class are stuck in the process of eternally comparing themselves to those of a higher ranking one, plagued by affects that invariably involve self-deception. Only the Nietzschean *Übermensch* has the willpower – or the *will-to-power* – to become conscious of his own resentment and to eventually deploy it as a source of self-actualisation.

Historian René Girard, who was strongly influenced by Nietzsche but also by Sigmund Freud, produced another popular theory of resentment, this time based on desires-driven mimesis and interpersonal rivalry. Throughout Girard's rich oeuvre ([1961]1965, [1977]1992, and [1978]1987), Girard conceptualises human desire as conflictual exactly because it pushes for mindless imitation and the repetition of actions of others, that is, longing for certain objects that others possess. Desires-driven mimesis always leads to outbursts of violence for Girard, as subjects will keep imitating one another, generating chaos when wanting the same object, eventually leading to the creation of a scapegoat. The mimetic desire for objects – which is the desire extractive capitalism is propelled by – then transforms into violence, as responsibility for the chaos is transferred to the scapegoat.

While resentment has always been a category deployed by the rich to justify their privileges and rationalise the denial of these privileges to others, simmering resentment about what others have has also been the unconscious fuel of political revolution. The desire to create

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scapegoats as objects of resentment, or conversely, to hold pure resentment as a torch for revolution, however, is not enough to map out the implications of mimetic resentment in permacrisis times in which the rise of the modern neoliberal extraction-based economy has further widened the gap between bare life (*zoē*) and privileged life (*bios*), or put more concretely, the gap between 'grievable [and] ungrievable lives' (Butler 2020: n. p.). This gap has further engendered categories of gendered-racialised-sexualised subjects – ranked from human to nonhuman, or from human to dehumanised/animalised others, and pushed the most marginalised of these beings further toward disposability, nonmattering, and killability. In the context of mediated technologies that characterise these already extractivism-based times, this disposability has been further entrenched by mimetic resentment, now fuelled by algorithm-driven conspiracy theories taking shape in spaces and places 'outlawed by reason and rationality' (Blackman 2019: 151), where they further widen gaps between lives and engender violently negative somatechnical fascinations. At the same time, the rise of networks has provided the means of 'enacting political critique outside of established parameters,' to cite affect theorist Lisa Blackman (152) again. It is in this liminal zone where the important work conducted by Deleuze and Guattari can be situated. In their combined and separate oeuvres, these critical philosophers provide a sustained, comprehensive, and nuanced political critique of the contemporary world of integrated world capitalism. Not only does their work take place outside of established parameters of critique (whether Marxist, Freudian or even post-structuralist), but it also anticipates the rise of networks, algorithms, and post-Fordist forms of extraction-/exploitation-based capital. Before turning to a more sustained discussion of their important contributions (as well as to those of the critical new materialist feminist philosophers), however, we first need to take a critical cartographical detour that places the critique of integrated somatechnical capitalism into sharper focus.

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Mapping the Violent Somatechnics of Mimetic Resentment

Philosopher Sylvia Wynter ([1992]1994; 2003) exposes us to even more cartographical contours of mimetic resentment with her critique of exclusionary Eurocentric systems of intelligibility and representation. According to Wynter, as she explains in her 2003 article "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom", space in Western (and, increasingly, in global) discourse has only been made for two phases or configurations of being human: Man1 (political "Man" or the conquering subject that emerges during the Renaissance) and Man2 (bio-economic "Man" or the self-proclaimed racially superior economic subject that replaced Man1 from the 18th century onwards).[4]

Wynter's configuration of Man1 and Man2 comes into clearer focus when read in tandem with the critique of philosopher Jorge Santayana, who a century prior to Wynter had found himself equally troubled by the Euro-American project to sustain the "Man" of modernity. Living in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century, Santayana witnessed the genesis of an aggressively individualistic capitalist society filled with impotent mimetic rivalries, brimming resentments, and 'overpowering compulsions' (Santayana cited in Mishra 2017: 41), in which even the enviable wealthy upper classes of society lacked 'moral security' (41) or 'happy freedom' (41). It was precisely these conditions, 'in which human beings seemed to have no higher aim in life than the diligent imitation of the rich, and leaders in higher education as well as business, politics and the press were judged by their ability to make that opportunity widely available' (41). It was the institutionalisation of these resentments and compulsions in both public and private life, as Santayana wrote, that would henceforth incite 'lava wave[s] of blindness and violence' (41).

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World Wars and the brutal 20th-century (neo-)colonial experiments to duplicate the West's extraction-based values elsewhere followed in the wake of Anglo-American ideals, institutions, and systems of representation. Resentments multiplied as ordinary people living all over the globe found themselves not only temperamentally unfit, but also institutionally constrained, from imitating the aggressive individualism and delusions of individual wealth that had originated with American *laissez-faire* capitalism. In the neoliberal extractive capitalist era that marks this violent present, alienation (via hyper-individualism and hyper-consumption), or the ideal that "Man2" had finally and violently attained for himself, is now aggressively being demanded from just about *everyone*. Much of the post- and neo-colonial world has become a test site of Western-style socio-economic emulation, creating a surge of extractive violence fuelled by desires-driven mimesis for earth-destroying lifestyles, objects, and upward social mobility premised on the hyper-individualised "god trick" of meritocracy. Another dose of *pharmakon* from – and of – the West.

Neoliberal extractive capitalism's persistent disarticulation of group consciousness, its denial of oppression and/or privileges-engendering socio-economic structures, its relentless biospheric commodification-destruction, and its libidinal anti-social wealth ethos have engendered the 'presently exploding netherworld of political rage, conspiracy theory, and paranoia' (Mishra 2017: 45; also see Giroux 2020) – all characteristics of present-day neo-fascism. While bloody revolutions, nationalistic warmongering, genocide, and ecocide are the existential bedrocks of the project to create the modern individual – or the myth of Man1, and later, Man2, as Wynter (2003) would put it – alienation is what really seems to be propelling mimetic resentment. The violent technocratic estrangement and expulsion of human, nonhuman, and dehumanised bodies from their lifeworlds and environments (see Sassen 2014), as well as the brutal economising of life itself (see Cooper 2008), are the brutally affective and

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embodied somatechnical legacies of modernity. Humanist paradigms, caught up in a fabrication of gendered-racialised-sexualised *zoē*/*bios* distinctions[5], exclusions and inclusions, as well as a destructive mythos of boundless resources and planetary mastery, tend to not pay much heed to the nonhuman and the dehumanised. Yet, it is the very diversity and raucous animacy of this entangled more-than-human situation called the planetary biosphere that makes continued living and flourish possible. Around the world, as wildfires, droughts, and floods further eradicate biodiversity and fuel human (as well as nonhuman) refugee crises, thanks to the toxic overload of capitalist extraction, the drive to emulate the idealised norm of the wealthy individual/consumer grows ever-more pressing, resentful, and prone to violence, creating grotesque mirror images of the modern West's own foundational revolutions, wars, pogroms, genocides, and ecocides.

In a troubled permacrisis present, beset with violent revanches in diverse geographical settings, an affective current of fear circulates, percolating in a potent brew of hate speech, misogyny, anthropocentricism, intolerance, warmongering, and post-truth information-overload driven by mimetic resentment. Both affectively and effectively, communication networks have herded together 'individuals from very different pasts' (Mishra 2017: 13) into a new proximity – a 'negative solidarity [of] resentful comparison' (13) driven by 'the devastating contradictions' (13) of a dynamically pitiless capitalist system that first defiled Europe before it transplanted its 'grossly unequal distributions of wealth and power and humiliating new hierarchies' (13) around the world. Today, no thanks to new media and information technologies, a bleak neoliberal somatechnics grounded in the violence of extractive capitalism and alienation has come to have a pervasive 'stranglehold over the public imagination' (Klein 2019: 291); a view 'that we modern individuals are unable to do anything of value *together* except to wage war' (291), both on each other and on the body of the Earth

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itself.

Beyond global transplantations of the West’s own brutalising experience of alienating and hyper-individualising modernity lies the uncanniest spectre of all: the individual of modernity that is ‘taking the world to pieces in ways and speeds beyond his control’ (Royle 2009: 11). A sinister and quite possibly apocalyptic outcome of the noise generated by the race to catch up with and sustain the eco-social horrors of the West’s modernising project, has been the systemic inability to act on, or even agree upon, the pressing environmental concerns (cascading biodiversity/ecosystem destruction, and the transgressing of planetary boundaries) that have resulted from the very project to create and sustain the modern individual as well as the modern economy. In the Anthropocene, the geological age of “Man,” we are continuously reminded that ‘the two ways in which modern Man can self-destruct – civil war on a global scale, or destruction of the natural environment – are, in fact, rapidly converging’ (Mishra 2017: 27).

Critical Cartographical Coordinates: Deleuzoguattarian and Critical New Materialist Pathways

Permacrisis is the spectre that haunts the modernity of the here and now, just as mimetic resentment is the spectre that haunts the atmospheric haecceity (thisness, hereness, and nowness) of permacrisis; a scenario that, as Deleuze and Guattari point out ([1980]2005), gestures at the fallibility of anthropocentric individualism and its enclosures. Climate change and mass extinction, pandemics, and terrorism, as critical new materialist anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli (2020: n. p.). writes, are symptomatic of the ‘dispossessions, violences and extractions [that] birthed liberalism, [individualism] and capitalism, and alongside them, a massive machinery that disavowed their structural violence.’

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Deleuzoguattarian Pathways: Schizoanalysis and Ecosophy

The work of Deleuze and Guattari – and specifically Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense* ([1969]1990) and their *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* ([1980]2005) – is especially helpful when it comes to mapping out the problematic of desires-driven mimesis and providing some coordinates for pathways out of these permacrisis times. This not only has to do with their minoritarian perspectives but also because their philosophy takes stock of the violent hidden forces, schizoid tendencies, and contradictions that haunt these crisis-ridden times.

Deleuze and Guattari are concerned, primarily, not with the Western modern fiction of the autonomous rational subject and "Man's" universal rights to consume, mimic, and accumulate – but with understanding how matter comes to matter and reconfiguring ethico-politics in line with this endless becoming of beings. As we have pointed out elsewhere as well (see Geerts and Carstens 2019), Deleuze and Guattari's work in that sense overlaps with that of critical new materialist philosophies because both approaches share an eco-ethico-political message: We are not simply beings driven by compulsive mimetic impulses but also lively, entangled assemblages of cosmic things, processes, and materials.

As multiple entangled crises, together with neoliberal economising and mimetic resentment, (re)produce conditions of increasing precarity and violence, Deleuze and Guattari's transversal immanent ontology provides invaluable navigational tools packed with the potential to re-imagine. Their combined work is full of uncomfortable yet productive tensions that diffract contradictory orders of meaning-making. This becomes clear in their schizoanalytical work of which the broad aim is to bypass 'the strange detour of the other,' as Deleuze puts it in *The Logic of Sense* ([1969]1990: 356), whereby desire becomes entangled in

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a polarised politics of identity and mimetic resentment during times of crisis. If, as both Deleuze and Guattari ([1980]2005) argue, actual and virtual neo-fascism can be conceived of in terms of desire, then philosophical projects must work towards mediating desire's pure flows of affective yearning and preventing these flows from violent stratification (*fascism*) or radical destratification (*madness*).

The Deleuzoguattarian approach provides a wide range of perspectives for conceptualising and working with and through the affective and material impacts of the capitalist malaise and its spectres of resentful violences, which continues to replicate 'the foundational and epistemic violence of European colonialism' (Davis and Todd 2017: 769). Deleuze and Guattari – along with subsequent critical new materialist philosophers – ask that, despite this poisoned legacy, we now pay attention to promising new forms of noticing. The production of a 'micropolitics of desire' (Deleuze and Guattari [1980]2005: 422) is one of these forms that synthesise between individual, social, and environmental milieus that, with an eye on posterity, seeks to produce a more consistent relation to the future by orientating itself to an 'audience-yet-to-come' (422). Schizoanalysis, broadly speaking, describes a future-oriented revolutionary onto-ethico-epistemological praxis; a transversal mixture of minoritarian spiritual materialist philosophy, psychoanalytical critique, and political activism aimed at transforming the desultory affects that give rise to microfascisms (such as paranoia, depression, anxiety, apathy, fear of otherness/difference, and so forth) that result from the segmentation, bureaucratisation, and centralisation of societies of control, as well as from the relentless capitalist economising/commodifying and the detrimental pressures of having to resentfully mimic the humanist/liberal ideal. Schizoanalytical becoming is the process of gestating multiperspectival event sites that induce ruptures in habituated and destructive notions of subjectivity, taking place at 'intersections' (Ramey 2013: 178) where 'disparate processes and

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forces at many different levels of complexity and organisation among bodies and minds' (178) converge. The overall aim of Deleuzoguattarian philosophy is to catalyse and coordinate 'a hitherto unimagined number of possibilities of thinking, feeling and acting' (Pederson 2019: 154) otherwise by producing interruptions, intensities, and synergies between disparate domains and divergent subjectivities.

'By what means, in the current climate of passivity,' asks Guattari ([1992]2002: n. p.), could we escape the 'deterritorialized factories' (n. p.) and destructive re-territorialising desiring machines of Integrated World Capitalism (IWC) that 'mass-produce microfascist tendencies and homogenous subjectivities' (n. p.). The task of changing the damaging modes whereby we perceive and produce the human – modes that seek to violently erase diversities that are unlike the purifying image of Western "Man" and Cartesian reason – are more urgent than ever at a time when the IWC has become so 'delocalised' (Guattari [1989]2000: 6) that we can no longer 'locate the source of its power' (6) or the full extent of its harms. Indeed, the IWC has been imprinted inside our minds and ways of relating to others to such an extent (via mass-media and humanist educational paradigms, for instance) that 'without modifications to the social and material environment' (Guattari [1992]2002: n. p.) in which social reproduction takes place 'there can be no change in stupefied [and violently destructive] mentalities' (n. p.) that produce and reproduce microfascist desires and violence.

Guattari's ecosophic project thus extends the broad schizoanalytical programme developed in tandem with Deleuze, seeking to eradicate the homogenising 'fatalistic passivity' (Guattari ([1989]2000: 42) brought on by the smug humanistic self-assurances generated by media platforms and neoliberal educational paradigms in order to 'apprehend the world through the interchangeable lenses or points of view of the three ecologies' (42) that define our mutual existence (the personal/mental, the social, and the more-than-human environment that we are

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inseparably entangled with). Ecosophy[6], as Guattari also writes, is a way of thinking and doing that 'questions the whole of [humanist] subjectivity and capitalistic power formations' ([1989]2000: 52) that predetermine the way we perceive the three ecological registers that determine our macro and micropolitical existence. Ecosophy's manifest goal is to redirect interpassivity and mass-mediated stupefaction toward relational sense/perceptions of subjectivity as interwoven, distributed, and always more-than-human; a process that begins with an acknowledgement of the fundamental interconnectedness of the human and the more-than-human world. The ultimate ecosophic goal for Guattari is one that he shares with Deleuze: to achieve 'heterogenesis' (68) – the cultivation of more fluid subjectivities that can 'ward off the entropic rise' (68) of anthropocentric hubris and environmental destructiveness, mimetic resentment's micro- and macropolitical violence, and the alarming rise of neo-fascism co-engendered by the IWC. Heterogenesis captures the gist of schizoanalytical and ecosophic thought, namely, the crafting of active onto-ethical provocations that draw us toward more fluid somatechnical cartographies, directing our attention toward a people to come. Orientated thusly toward the future, away from the binary logics and violent overcodings of the IWC (that while promising new freedoms invariably replicate past injustices), and the inevitable failure of revolutionary movements (that likewise never appear to leave the binary loop of the gendered, racialised, and sexualised subject), we are directed toward nomadic flows of individual existence and thought, as well as more emancipatory models of collective resistance, organisation, and action.

Critical New Materialist Pathways: Attending to Entanglements

While trying to draw the critical cartographical coordinates of Deleuzoguattarian pathways out of this Anthropocenic mess, we automatically bump into equally eco- and somatechnics-

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focused critical new materialist philosophies that, as anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli (2011: 109) puts it, draw our attention to 'differentially distributed zones of vulnerability and abandonment as places in which, at least potentially, a new ethics of life and sociability could emerge'.

For critical new materialist thinkers, such as Povinelli, but also fellow anthropologist Anna L. Tsing and philosopher Rosi Braidotti, we must become something other than the humanised human-as-"Man" and this task is both urgent and unquestionable. Along with the other thinkers we have alluded to in this paper, Povinelli, Tsing, and Braidotti argue for a renewed capacity to notice the world and attend to its entangled processes of worlding and becoming – a capacity that requires the cultivation of situated perspectives and a feminist sense of objectivity (also see Haraway 1988; 2016) that takes on board interconnectedness and environmental recognition.

Povinelli in an *eflux* piece from 2020 articulates a mode of late liberal power called "geontopower" to express the ghostly – but very much somatechnically experienced and felt – spectres of violence, alienation, and mimetic resentment that haunt Anthropocenic (post-)modernity beyond the limitations of bio-/necropower. The central figures of geontopower – the Desert, the Animist, and the Virus – are conceptualised as shifting spectres that hint at the fallibility of categories such as self and other, human and nonhuman, life and nonlife, and so forth. The most harmful of the viruses in the contemporary situation is not in fact the terrorist, the despotic invader, or, for that matter, the SARS-CoV-1 virus, but rather the cancerous proliferations of Man1 and Man2, plus the extractive capitalist system that upholds these two interlinked subject modalities. Like climate change and mass extinction, terrorism, wars, and pandemics are symptomatic of the alienations, otherings, 'dispossessions, violences and extractions [that] birthed liberalism, [individualism] and capitalism, and alongside them, a

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massive machinery that disavowed their structural violence' (Povinelli 2020: n. p.). Povinelli's *Geontology* (2016) explores the dynamic return to nonlife in this geological age of "Man", where she plays with the threat of extinction that looms as well as our shocking incapacity to care or do anything much to alleviate it. For Povinelli, change is not optional; destructive humanist fallacies and the spirals of mimetic resentment that have perpetuated these fictions may have perhaps already taken us too far. She is scathing about liberalism's dangerous promise that 'we can change' (29) and yet remain 'the same, even more of what we already are' (29). Unless we urgently change our ways of thinking and relating to each other and the world, we will perish in the mass extinction event that our actions, driven by the relentless pursuit to mimic the ideals of "Man," have begun to unleash upon the world. As the concept of the Anthropocene – the so-called geological epoch of the human – makes clear, humans and their extractive economies are leaching elemental forces of unmaking from and upon Earth's ontological bedrock. Yet, ironically, it is the very elusive agency of nonlife that remains beyond our grasp. It is nonlife – the rocks – 'that created what is radically not, Life' (17), just as we are now uncreating it with our planet-altering actions; and it is nonlife, the rocks, that 'will in time fold this extension of itself' (17) – namely ourselves – 'back into itself as it has already done so often and long' (17).

Tsing's (2004) idea of friction – awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnections across cultural as well as naturecultures (also see Haraway 2003) – is another useful concept that queers the underpinnings of the modern Western economisation of life in the Anthropocene. For Tsing, alienation has created what we – (post-)moderns – have come to call economic progress; a simplification by which the bodies of non/human living things have been economised, violently disentangled from their lifeworlds, and transformed into resources. For Tsing, too, the Virus – or rather, *virulence* – underlines this state of somatechnical violence.

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Man erupted in virulent and cancerous colonial encounters, despoiling and then enthralling the colonised with an unobtainable fiction about the universal rights of "Man," including "his" right to consume**.**

While economisation's brutal claws at this point appear to be almost inescapable, a counterresponse to neoliberal capitalism's corruptions of vital life is made via Braidotti's (2006; 2013) formulation of *zoē*-centred egalitarianism. Alongside Deleuze and Guattari, Braidotti draws our attention to the 'schizophrenic double pull' (2006: 3) of the humanist/capitalist project and the capitalist 're-territorialization of desires for the purpose of commercial profit' (3). With her Deleuzoguattarian critical new materialist project, Braidotti demonstrates the connections between all manifestations of lively matter without forgetting the role of geopolitically-laden power relations that play out between differently embodied beings. And although some gendered-racialised-sexualised embodied beings are made to matter less at a much faster rate than others, none of us can escape this deadly telos. We in the end are all (data)mineable materials at risk of exploitation, and, like all forms of life, embroiled in endless processes of becoming and unbecoming. Braidotti's reformulation of *zoē* or 'the dynamic, self-organizing structure of life itself' (2013: 60) critically expounds the risks to life (in all its actualisations) by exposing the *technē* (classification schemes) by which bodies have been violently reduced to brute matter and rendered killable.

Concluding Musings: Against "Purity" Politics - or Moving Along Different (Somatechnics-Accentuating) Pathways

> Purity practices – in ideology, in theory, and in practice – work to delineate an inside and an outside; they are practices of defining a "we."
>
> **Shotwell 2016: 13**

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Following these critical new materialist pathways, critical geographer Kathryn Yusoff's *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (2018) examines narratives on geography and the Anthropocene by bringing in critical race studies perspectives, while scholars such as philosopher Achille Mbembe ([2013]2017) and critical sociologist Denise Ferreira da Silva (2007) engage in intricate analyses of Western philosophy's anti-Black symbolic and imagery, which has materialised such bodies as abject from the outset. All these thinkers, each in their own way, use a critical new materialist, and thus somatechnics-focused, approach via which to delve into the categorical construction of race. Now conceptualised as a biological fiction, they demonstrate how race – often in relation to ethnicity and entangled with gender, class, ablebodiedness, and sexual orientation – continues to be an influential social category and identity marker deployed in bio-/necropolitical forms of state and corporate-sponsored violence.

Race, as Yusoff, Mbembe, and da Silva write, remains – like many other categories and classification schemes – an ideological category, driven by fictions of "purity" hatched in imperialism-driven colonial enterprises, entrenched by economic extractivist regimes, and perpetuated by waves of mimetic resentment and neo-fascist populist politics around the world. These theorists, as T.J. Demos also writes, call our attention to the flawed 'networks of financial, institutional, discursive, and technological infrastructures and practices' (2015: 11) that are implicated in somatechnical violences – and not only toward humans. Simultaneously, as Colin Gardner and Patricia McCormack point out, the scale of this violence, which has penetrated the very bedrock of our planet, requires that we find urgent ways of moving beyond the 'anthropocentric modes of navigation' (2018: 1) – those fictions of the 'sexed, raced, sexualised, economic, labouring human' (Gardner and McCormack 2018: 1) – that are helping

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to perpetuate its continuity.

Opposing these constructions and their violent expressions, as Alexis Shotwell opines in *Against Purity* (2015), doesn't mean writing them out of history; rather, it means 'to be against the rhetorical or conceptual attempts' (15) that have attempted 'to delineate and delimit the world into something separable, disentangled, and homogeneous' (15). To reject the arbitrary borders and classifications that colonial and economic frameworks have imposed to divide everything (*zoē* from *bios*, human from nature, self from other, and so forth) involves not only recognising that the past is entangled with the present, but starting from a position that acknowledges 'our [own] implication in this compromised world' (204) as we reach for a better future. Shotwell thereby argues for a recognition of the deep relationship between memory practices, practices of classification, racialisation, and economisation. These practices and categories are not to be confined to an impure past, but rather recognised as enfleshed and continuing in an imperfect present, as well as connected to a compromised future that requires our attention.

Shotwell articulates the ways in which memory practices might be politically transformative and part of an infrastructure of resistance to violence and turns to ways of conceptualising the "toxic" present through practices of queer(ing) temporalities. Yet, while investigating the ways in which normative categories of race/ethnicity, gender, class, ablebodiedness, and sexual orientation continue to be propagated in contemporary discourses, Shotwell emphasises the ways in which more relational forms of theorising, such as those of critical new materialist theorists like Braidotti and Yusoff, have begun to dethrone representationalism, classification, and identity in important ways, thereby offering genuine routes away from the problematic of "purity" politics in the present. As Shotwell tells us, 'we need to make different agential cuts that allow us to generate different narratives and different

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nodes of attention' (Shotwell 2016: 106). 'The new world we carry in our hearts is always a world grounded in the actually existing present in all its impurity, responsible to the past in all its complexity' (193).

With these and other critical cartographical contours and coordinates, we can begin to acknowledge the ways in which the past has determined the present. So armed, we can map the realities of global bio-/necropolitical regimes and the mimetic resentment-driven violences they have engendered, while recognising the shared material vitality of all beings, including the formerly and currently dehumanised, as well as the nonhuman and more-than-human. What is genuinely re-imaginative about the flavours of critical new materialist and Deleuzoguattarian philosophies that we have discussed here and throughout this article, is their shared eco-ethico-political message: We are not just beings driven by compulsive mimetic impulses, resentments, and compulsions but also lively, entangled assemblages of things, processes, and materials, connected by our shared existential perishability. The brief history of mimesis, resentment, and the violent somatechnics of mimetic resentment we have sketched here, instead of further entrenching the Anthropocenic havoc created by "Man" as Man1 and Man2, offers instead an alternative and affirmative starting point from which we might begin to conceptualise a better and more relational future. From this onto-ethical foundation, we might set out to recognise the cancerous growth of mimetic resentment-charged microfascisms-within-ourselves and seek new ways of tackling the macropolitical spectre of violent neo-fascism back on the streets. 'Rather than returning to the same, supposedly foundational structures, [and] the same archetypes' (Guattari [1989]2003: 22), we should reach instead for new 'compositions of the unconscious, [and] contingent topographies evolving with social formations, technologies, arts, sciences, etc' (22). Instead of falling into the same somatechnical habits, resentments, and micropolitical compulsions, we should rather interrogate how we got into this current state of

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individual, social, and environmental permacrisis, as well as what cartography of escape routes we might now plot as we reach for less destructive and more inclusive collective futures.

Notes

1. Important to note is that both Deleuzoguattarian and critical new materialist philosophies – here referring to a particular emancipatory subset of contemporary new materialist thought – could be conceptualised as intrinsically somatechnical. Deleuzoguattarian philosophy and critical new materialisms namely explore 'the technologies of bodies' (Henriksen and Radosmka 2015: 114) and the connection between immaterial and material processes in relation to dehumanising bio-/necropolitical strategies. In this sense, they both build on the somatechnical foundations laid out by Michel Foucault ([1977]1980; *the apparatus*) and Donna J. Haraway (1988; *the apparatus of bodily production*).
2. Fully in agreement with Roger Griffin (1993) and Nigel Copsey (2020), and in contrast to Cas Mudde (2019), we in this article use the notion of "neo-fascism" (and not "post-fascism" or "fascism") to underscore post-war fascism's continuities with the various fascisms from the past, while also making enough conceptual space for contemporary fascisms' "novel" apparitions and transmutations such as the ones Nidesh Lawtoo (2019) with his concept of "(new) fascism" tries to describe.
3. To not needlessly complexify matters, this article uses the concept of resentment (and not ressentiment) as the foundation of mimetic resentment. For more on resentment/ressentiment, see van Tuinen 2020.
4. Also see the conversation between Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick (2015: 9–89) for a more detailed explanation of Man1 (linked to the Western – and racialised,

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anti-Black – conceptualisation of the human) and Man2 (the Western bourgeois conceptualisation of the human linked to free-market capitalism).

5. Expanding on Agamben and Esposito's philosophies, critical new materialist Rosi Braidotti's (2006; 2013) take on the *zoē/bios* distinction is that of *zoē*-centred egalitarianism: *Zoē* is reconceptualised as 'the non-human, vital force of Life' (Braidotti 2013: 60) that is shared by all material beings; beings that are all captured by contemporary bio-/necropolitics. See Carstens and Geerts 2023 for an overview of vitalist philosophies and their historical engagement with bio-/necropolitics.
6. Typically a portmanteau of ecological philosophy, ecophilosophy for Guattari stands for a critical theory-driven praxis that reimagines the idea of by approaching human subjects, society, and the environment – or the three ecologies – as intimately connected from the get-go. Haraway's (2003) ecofeminist naturecultures approach and Åsberg and Radomska's (2023) low-trophic theory perform something similar as Guattari's ecosophy.

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