



# EXPLORING CONTRADICTION BEYOND ART AND DICTION

**First International  
Conference on  
Contradiction Studies**  
University of Bremen  
February 11–14, 2025

## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Preliminary version, Feb 10, 2025  
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Keynote #1  
**Power-Structures and their Implementation**  
—Graham Priest & Anna Malavisi

Keynote #2  
**Tackling Contradiction Studies Through Hegel:  
Philosophical Meditations on the Politics of Identity**  
—Rozena Maart

Keynote #3  
**Who Counts? Living in an 'Overpopulated'  
and 'Underpopulated' World Today**  
—Shalini Randeria

Keynote #4  
**Gramsci's Southern Question:  
'An Infinite Contradiction'**  
—Ranabir Samaddar

CONTRADICTION

 University  
of Bremen

 WOC  
Worlds of Contradiction

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# Content

Keynotes Addresses .....	2
General Panels GP #1–8 and General Cross Panels #1–4 .....	3
Special Panels.....	39
Roundtable .....	48

## Keynotes Addresses

**Keynote #1**Tue, Feb 11, 2025, 02.30 p.m.  
U Bremen · HS 1010Graham Priest & Anna Malavisi  
**Power-Structures and their Implementation****Keynote #2**Wed, Feb 12, 2025, 09.00 a.m.  
U Bremen · HS 1010Rozena Maart  
**Tackling Contradiction Studies Through Hegel: Philosophical Meditations on the Politics of Identity****Keynote #3**Thu, Feb 13, 2025, 09.00 a.m.  
U Bremen · HS 1010Shalini Randeria  
**Navigating Contradictions: Addressing Wars, Pandemics, Climate Justice at Universities****Keynote #4**Fri, Feb 14, 2025, 09.00 a.m.  
U Bremen · HS 1010Ranabir Samaddar  
**Gramsci's Southern Question: 'An Infinite Contradiction'****WOC Lecture**Thu, Feb 13, 2025, 07.00 p.m.  
House of Science · Haus der  
WissenschaftBanu Subramaniam  
**Botany of Empire: Plant Worlds and the Scientific Histories of Colonialism**

# General Panels GP #1–8 and General Cross Panels #1–4

## #01

Silvia Adler & Ayelet Kohn

### Negotiating Contradictions: The Response of an Artist

Understanding contradictions holds significant importance across various disciplines, including philosophy, mathematics, logic, and practical reasoning in everyday contexts (Febel, Knopf & Nonhoff: 2023). In logic, contradictions entail a set of statements that cannot all be simultaneously true in the same sense or assert both truth and falsity. They often signal inconsistencies, incongruities, or absurdities. Likewise, contradictions in actions, behaviors, and situations arise when they conflict with previously held or professed values and intentions. Such contradictions reveal a misalignment between professed beliefs and actual behaviors or their consequences. While art often embraces and juxtaposes contradictions to convey specific messages, suggesting that both aspects of a contradiction can hold validity, exploring the motivations, manifestations, and mechanisms behind contradictions in art, particularly in activism, remains an intriguing endeavor (Footnote 1: On art in times of war, see Bourke (2020); On activism concerning migrant societies and refugees, see Mekdjian (2017). Zeev Engelmayer, the activist under examination in the present study, is a celebrated Israeli and international illustrator, performance artist, and activist. He often wears the persona of “Shoshke”, a comic, grotesque, nude female bodysuit, based on one of his well-known cartoon characters. Through Shoshke, a sort of alter ego, he orchestrates performances and activist initiatives aimed at fostering equality, tolerance and openmindedness. According to Lemoine & Ouardi (2010), Suchet & Mekdjian (2016), and Mekdjian (2017), activism—activism through and by art—integrates diverse forms of expression such as verbal or visual signs, graffiti, installations, etc., with the aim of instigating social change. It represents not merely a simple response or a novel approach to familiar social realities, but rather the creation of new realities and the enactment of new actions. Thus, activism can be understood as a critical process that destabilizes social norms. Shoshke consistently participated in the widespread anti-reform protests that erupted since January 2023, in response to the judicial overhaul advocated by the newly appointed Israeli government. Let us recall that the implementation of the judicial reform posed a threat to various aspects, including the authority of the Supreme Court and the government's legal advisors. This would be achieved by granting the ruling coalition a majority on the committee responsible for appointing judges. Since October 7th, 2023, the context in Israel has changed, and civilian protests have adopted new forms of expression. Similarly, the work of Zeev Engelmayer underwent a transformation as around mid-November, when he began depicting the traumas associated with Hamas' attack on Israel.

### Keywords

*Zeev Engelmayer · Activism · Political and Social Crisis*

## #02

Klaas Anders

**Im Widerspruch zwischen Inklusion und Exklusion: Tschechoslowakische Migration in Österreich zwischen Antikommunismus und Antiosteuropäischem Rassismus**

In diesem Paper wird die tschechoslowakische Migration nach Österreich zwischen 1968 und 1989 untersucht, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf dem Verhältnis von Antikommunismus und Anti-Osteuropäischen Rassismus liegt. Nach der Invasion der Warschauer Pakt Staaten in der Tschechoslowakei 1968 kamen über 162.000 Tschechoslowak:innen nach Österreich. Obwohl Österreich oft als Zufluchtsort für diese Menschen gilt, war die Aufnahmepolitik des Staats von widersprüchlichen Kräften geprägt. Während die Staatsräson des Antikommunismus Österreich dazu veranlasste, „politische Flüchtlinge“ aus der ČSSR willkommen zu heißen, führten tiefsitzende Vorurteile gegenüber Ost(mittel)europäer:innen oft zu deren Marginalisierung. Durch die Untersuchung der österreichischen Migrationspolitik zeigt dieses Paper, wie das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen politischer Motive und rassistischen Vorurteilen darüber entschied, ob Migrant:innen aufgenommen oder abgelehnt wurden: Migrant:innen aus der Tschechoslowakei wurden zeitweise selektiv „weiße“ Privilegien gewährt, die es ihnen ermöglichten, sich in die österreichische Gesellschaft zu integrieren, wenn dies der politischen Agenda Österreichs diene. Dies steht im Gegensatz zur härteren Behandlung von Migrant:innen aus anderen osteuropäischen Ländern wie Rumänien, die mit Ausgrenzung konfrontiert waren. In diesem Paper wird argumentiert, dass die österreichische Migrationspolitik nicht von humanitären Impulsen geleitet wurde, sondern im Kontext des Kalten Krieges instrumentalisiert wurde. Der strategische Wert der tschechoslowakischen Flüchtlinge, die den Widerstand gegen den Kommunismus symbolisierten, überwog oft die rassistischen Gefühle, die sonst zu ihrer Ausgrenzung geführt hätten. Dieses Paper betrachtet die nuancierte und widersprüchliche Natur der Migrationspolitik im Kalten Krieg, in der sich politische Ideologien mit rassistischen Hierarchien überschneiden und die Erfahrungen ost(mittel)europäischer Migrant:innen in Österreich zentral prägten.

**Literature**

- Kalmar, Ivan. 2022. *White but not quite: Central Europe’s illiberal revolt*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Lossau, Julia. 2019. (In)Visible and (Un)homely: Underground Infrastructures as Spaces of Dissension. In Julia Lossau, Daniel Schmidt-Brücken & Ingo H. Warnke (eds.), *Spaces of Dissension: Towards a New Perspective on Contradiction*, 237–256. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Nieswand, Boris & Heike Drotbohm. 2014. Einleitung: Die reflexive Wende in der Migrationsforschung. In Boris Nieswand & Heike Drotbohm (eds.), *Kultur, Gesellschaft, Migration. Die reflexive Wende in der Migrationsforschung*, 1–37. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Oltmer, Jochen: Migration aushandeln: Perspektiven aus der Historischen Migrationsforschung. In Andreas Pott, Christoph Rass & Frank Wolff (eds.), *Was ist ein Migrationsregime? What Is a Migration Regime?*, 239–254. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Scherr, Albert & Karin Scherschel. 2019. *Wer ist ein Flüchtling? Grundlagen einer Soziologie der Zwangsmigration*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

**Keywords***Migration · Cold War History · Lifeworld*

**#03**

Eva Arnaszus &amp; Lindokuhle Shabane

**Fear of Explosion: Or, How Logical Contradiction Can Be Weaponized Politically**

The principle of contradiction is an axiom in classical philosophical logic which asserts that if a contradiction is accepted as true, anything can follow. This paper seeks to investigate how accusations of self-contradiction and the principle of explosion are instrumentalized in political contexts in order to deny minority rights. One analyzed context is the colonial undermining of African worldviews, and the other is the parliamentary denial of state recognition to a minority religious community in contemporary Lithuania. The authors find that the recurrent use of the mentioned axioms of classical logic represent a deliberate strategy rather than mere coincidence, aiming to discredit and silence divergent belief systems from a hegemonically superior position. This paper shows how this tactic is a weaponization of the accusation of contradiction before seeking alternatives to challenge the political use of the principle of explosion.

**Literature**

- Latour, Bruno. 1988. The Politics of Explanation: An Alternative. In Steve Woolgar (ed.), *Knowledge and Reflexivity: New Frontiers in the Sociology of Knowledge*, 155–177. London: Sage.
- Nongbri, Brent. 2013. *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- Priest, Graham. 2006. *In Contradiction: A Study of the Transconsistent*, 2nd edn. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wiredu, Kwasi. 2002. Conceptual Decolonization as an Imperative in Contemporary African Philosophy: Some Personal Reflections. *Rue Descartes* 36(2). 53–64.

## #04

Rebecca Carlson

**Problematic, Ambiguous, Humbling: Between Scientific Ethos and Everyday Experimental Practice**

While scientific practice draws on ideals for reproducibility and objectivity (Daston/Galison 2010), in everyday practice scientists engage directly in the negotiation of ambivalences that emerge between these stated values and actual experimental work. For example, when bioscientists seek to incorporate new experimental methods developed by others, they face continual obstacles as even slight differences in equipment or technique may make it difficult to reproduce outcomes. More broadly, scientific models are used to produce data that bioscientists acknowledge hold slippery connection to the biological “realities” which they are meant to represent. For example, commenting on a visualized experimental output at a conference one bioscientist asked, “Does that ever really happen in nature?” Yet within these practical considerations, researchers hold fast to the notion that their work, however contradictory, is targeted towards uncovering foundational biological truths. At the same time, they engage in the production of “inscriptions”—data artifacts, publications and more—to situate scientific objects and knowledge as autonomous and “objectified evidence” (Born 1997: 142; cf. Woolgar & Latour 1979). Such contradictions then are neither resolved nor considered explicitly incompatible in practice, but are instead embodied and lived in (Febel/Knopf/Nonhoff 2023). As one scientist described: “I think chromosomal sex is ‘real’ (yes still problematic, yes can be ambiguous, yes to be approached humbly) in some ways that gender isn’t (of course problematic, of course ambiguous, of course humbling)”. How then do scientists live the contradictions which appear within the materials and “discourse networks” (Kittler 1990) of their experimental practice? Drawing on two years of ethnography in a genetics laboratory near Tokyo and interviews with bioscientists in and out of Japan, this paper argues that scientific research is a practice full of contradictory usefulness. As contradictions are anticipated, they are also interrogated and recalibrated when they cause ruptures; within this process, scientists also activate notions of the social good and work towards biological truth which they define as incomplete, and at times hesitant, but nevertheless useful.

**Literature**

- Daston, Lorraine & Peter Galison. 2010. *Objectivity*. Princeton: University of Princeton Press.
- Febel, Gisela, Kerstin Knopf & Martin Nonhoff (eds.). 2023. *Contradiction Studies: Exploring the Field*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Kittler, Friedrich A. 1990. *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*. Transl. by Michael Metteer & Chris Cullens. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Woolgar, Steve & Bruno Latour. 1979. *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

## #05

Jody Danard

**The North Writes Back: Contradicting and Correcting the (Imagined) North in Innu Literature**

The North, as a discursive and imaginary construct (Henningesen 2021), originates from myths created by Westerners, resulting in a series of stereotypes, representations, and images. For centuries, the North has fascinated and served as a space for projection. On one hand, it embraces romantic projections tied to the vastness of the landscape, ice, and snow, embodied in the myth of Ultima Thule, the Romantic imagery in the works of Victor Hugo and Jules Verne, and more recently, in popular culture through series like *Game of Thrones* and *Vikings*. On the other hand, the North reveals a more xenophobic and performative dimension, tracing back to antiquity and the invention of pseudo-scientific physiognomy, as well as the creation of human zoos in the 19th century, which displayed Indigenous peoples of the North, such as the Sámi and the Inuit. But these so-called representations ‘from the outside’ are today contradicted in northern literatures, ‘from the inside’, with northern people’s very own experiences, perspectives, epistemology and aesthetics (Chartier 2018). Among them, francophone Innu literature, which has been emerging in Quebec’s literary field since the early 2000s, represents an important textual source for observing these ambivalences arising from acts of contradiction. In my presentation, drawing an analogy with the concept of writing back, I would like to analyze how Innu writings from the North contradict/counter in literature the constructions of the North elaborated by Westerners. To this end, I will carry out a wide reading of the following works: *Manikanetish* by Naomi Fontaine (2017), *Un thé dans la toundra* by Joséphine Bacon (2013) and *Kukum* by Michel Jean (2019). My paper will, among other things, identify the (1) narrative, (2) aesthetic, (3) semiotic and (4) linguistic strategies employed that testify to a contradiction in the imaginary of the North.

**Literature**

- Bacon, Josephine. 2013. *Un thé dans la toundra: Nipishapui nete mushuat*. Montréal: Mémoire d’encrier.
- Chartier, Daniel. 2018. *Qu’est-ce que l’imaginaire du Nord? Principes éthiques*. Montréal et Harstad: Imaginaire|Nord et Arctic Arts Summit.
- Fontaine, Naomi. 2017. *Manikanetish: Petite Marguerite*. Montréal, Québec: Mémoire d’encrier.
- Henningesen, Bernd. 2021. *Die Welt des Nordens: Zwischen Ragnarök und Wohlfahrtsutopie. Eine kulturhistorische Dekonstruktion*. Berlin: Berliner Wissenschaftsverlag.
- Jean, Michel. 2019. *Kukum*. La Roche-sur-Yon: Dépaysage.

**Keywords**

North · Imaginary · Myth Correction



**#06**

Jan Dittrich

**What to Do Next? Dealing with Contradictions and Dilemmas in Ongoing Activities**

Recent approaches in the study of contradiction have started to consider the situatedness of contradictions, that is, that they are “phenomenon and thus as a social fact whose deontic power can only unfold once it has been declared.” (Lossau et.al 2019: 9). I want to follow a situated approach, yet one not focused primarily on language but on everyday activities and ask: What happens when a situation contradicts expectations or belief? If such troubles remain undeclared as contradiction, they might not be contradictions proper, but they would need to be dealt with, nevertheless. As stopping, declaring and discussing or convincing is often not appropriate in such situations. How do people manage the situation given that they need to answer Garfinkel’s “... practical question par excellence: “What to do next?” (Garfinkel 1967: 12) in the midst of ongoing concerns? I will review phenomenological and pragmatist perspectives as well as empirical studies of everyday activities. This includes my own research on the use of instructions where contradictions between situation and instruction, and situation and the instruction user’s understanding can arise. I will show, how contradictions are often neither solved nor accepted but managed or dissolved (Lave 1988: 120); often by continued acting upon provisional commitments in the situation rather than reflection upon the contradiction itself.

**Literature**

- Garfinkel, Harold. 1967. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Lave, Jean. 1988. *Cognition in Practice. Mind, Mathematics and Culture in Everyday Life*: Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Lossau, Julia, Daniel Schmidt-Brücken & Ingo H. Warnke. 2019. *Spaces of Dissension: Towards a New Perspective on Contradiction*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

**Keywords***Dissolving · Situatedness · Abstractions*

## #07

Chinaza Justine Egere

**Navigating Contradictory Identities: The Role of Contradictions in Diasporic African Literature**

In diasporic African literature, contradictions often shape the lived experiences and identities of characters grappling with displacement, migration, and the legacies of colonialism. These contradictions manifest in various forms, from the clash between traditional African value systems and Western cultures to the conflicting allegiances between national, ethnic, and diasporic identities. This paper aims to examine how diasporic African writers, such as Chris Abani in his novel *GraceLand*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her short story “The Arrangers of Marriage,” and Chika Unigwe, *On Black Sisters’ Street* have employed contradictions as a narrative device to explore the complexities of postcolonial identity formation across geographic and cultural boundaries. In *GraceLand*, Abani explores the contradictions arising from the dissonance between the protagonist's African roots and diasporic experiences, challenging notions of belonging and cultural authenticity. Adichie's “The Arrangers of Marriage” poignantly depicts the contradictory pressures faced by Nigerian immigrants navigating traditional familial expectations and modern individualistic desires. Similarly, Unigwe's novels, such as *On Black Sisters’ Street*, unveil the contradictions inherent in the lives of African immigrants in Europe, exposing the fault lines between their aspirations and the harsh realities they encounter. Drawing on theoretical frameworks from postcolonial studies and contradiction studies, I will demonstrate how these literary works resist the imperative to resolve contradictions, instead embracing them as inherent to the diasporic and postcolonial condition. By highlighting the ambiguities and tensions within their characters' identities, these writers open spaces for alternative understandings of selfhood that transcend binary oppositions. Ultimately, this paper argues that diasporic African literature offers a rich terrain for exploring contradictions beyond the traditional Western paradigm of logical incompatibility. By embracing contradictions as a generative force, these literary works invite readers to rethink the boundaries of identity and challenge the hegemonic narratives that have historically marginalized African perspectives.

**Literature**

- Abani, Chris. 2004. *GraceLand*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. 2012. The Arrangers of Marriage. *The New Yorker* 23. 104–115.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Lossau, Julia, Daniel Schmidt-Brücken & Ingo H. Warnke (eds.). 2019. *Spaces of Dissent: Towards a New Perspective on Contradiction*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Unigwe, Chika. 2009. *On Black Sisters’ Street*. London: Jonathan Cape.

**Keywords***Diasporic Identity · Postcolonial Literature · Cultural Hybridity*

## #08

Juliane Gamböck-Strätz

**Sensitive Encounters: Tracing Embodied Modes of Sense-Making in Paul Bowles's Writing**

The Maghreb has held a special place in the U.S.-American imagination since the eighteenth century. This region epitomized the “exotic,” an encounter with a world that seemed utterly different, but it also offered spaces for meaning-making, oftentimes against a constructed Other. Especially Morocco inspired many American writers and artists to reflect on the individual's relation with the world. The larger research project “Aesthetics of Disorientation” explores depictions of American-Maghrebi encounters and adds to previous studies by casting an aesthetic-phenomenological perspective that particularly focuses on the portrayal of how the individual's experience of an alienation from their own perception affects the encounter with alterity. This presentation aims to open the conversation to the forms of sensing and sense-making that are reflected in the aesthetic rendering of the literary encounters with the Maghreb in Paul Bowles's work. In his writing, Bowles exceeds orientalist negotiations of the encounter with alterity by conflating contradictions through a focus on exploring the mechanisms of embodied modes of sense-making. Tracking “the sensations that some bodies feel in the presence of other bodies” (Siebers 2006: 1) and alien environments, this project examines the texts' aesthetics as a texture that contains and produces knowledge. It thus, using Jacques Rancière's words, “concerns the sensible fabric of experience” and the “modes of perception and regimes of emotion” that are addressed in the texts. Therefore, the presentation wants to question how these texts evoke, formally reflect, and discursively negotiate experiences of the presence of alterity outside of preconceived dualist categories. In doing so, it will expand the critical negotiation of contact zones by inquiring into the means of coming to know and negotiating them. As Michael Staudigl writes, taking such a phenomenological perspective bears the potential to “articulate the as yet mute experience ... without all too soon incorporating it into preconceived conceptions, definitions or essential determinations” (Staudigl 2014: 9; my translation).

**Literature**

- Bowles, Paul. 2022. *Collected Stories & Later Writings*. Ed. by D. Halpern. New York: Library of America.
- Bowles, Paul. 2006a. *The Sheltering Sky*. London: Penguin Books.
- Bowles, Paul. 2006b. *Without Stopping. An Autobiography*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Rancière, Jacques. 2019. *Aisthesis. Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art*. Transl. by Zakir Paul. London & New York: Verso.
- Siebers, Tobin. 2006. Disability Aesthetics. *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 7(2). 63–73.
- Staudigl, Michael. 2014. Leitideen, Probleme Und Potenziale Einer Phänomenologischen Gewaltanalyse. In Michael Staudigl (ed.), *Gesichter der Gewalt: Beiträge aus Phänomenologischer Sicht*, 9–50. Paderborn: Fink.

**Keywords**

Aesthesis · Contact Zones · Paul Bowles · U.S. Americans and the Maghreb

**#09**

Miriam Gutekunst

**Between Reflection and Action: Dealing with Contradictions in Feminist Practices of Postmigrant Societies**

In the 1990s, 'female genital mutilation' and 'forced marriage' became new fields of interest for certain feminist organizations and groups in Europe. These phenomena are regarded as forms of gender-specific violence that are primarily localized in the group of migrant women and understood as being based on cultural difference – as so-called 'culture-related' violence. Through their deconstructivist readings, postcolonial approaches have made very clear how the debates surrounding these phenomena lead to a culturalization or ethnicization of gender-specific violence and are repeatedly used to prove the 'backwardness' and patriarchal violence of the 'others' – especially by conservative and right-wing actors to legitimize restrictive migration policies. Thereby other violent relationships such as racism and economic inequalities as well as patriarchal relationships in one's own society are rendered invisible. From a materialist and more utilitarian perspective, criticism has been levelled in recent years that such a postcolonial approach leads to a new form of 'cultural relativism' and would in turn conceal the gender-specific violence to which migrant women are exposed. Feminist initiatives which are engaged in the field of 'female genital mutilation' and 'forced marriage' are thus confronted with various dilemmas and contradictions in their everyday practice. This paper aims to analyze the contradictions feminist activists in the field of 'female genital mutilation' and 'forced marriage' – which I understand in this context primarily as objects of knowledge – are dealing with. I will also reflect on the conflicting tensions between theory and practice. I draw on empirical material that I have collected ethnographically in the context of feminist initiatives that are active in these fields in Germany. The research is part of the project 'Ambivalent Gender Knowledge: Negotiating cultural difference in post-migrant societies' (DFG, 2022–2027).

**Keywords***Feminism · Cultural Difference · Gender-specific Violence*

**#10**

Lilli Hasche

**Aushandlungen gesellschaftlicher Widersprüche in Verträgen**

Die Moderne hat eine Form arbeitsteiliger Produktionsverhältnisse hervorgebracht, die sich als globale Produktionsnetzwerke (GPNs) beschreiben lassen. Ein großer Teil der Produktion wurde in Länder des globalen Südens ausgelagert, wo Arbeiter:innen unter prekären und ausbeuterischen Arbeitsbedingungen Produkte des alltäglichen Konsums für die Bevölkerungen des globalen Nordens herstellen. Gesellschaftliche Widersprüche durchziehen diese Produktionsverhältnisse, insbesondere der zwischen Arbeit und Kapital. Verträge und Vertragsnetzwerke als Spiegelbild zu den Produktionsnetzwerke regulieren diese Form der globalen Arbeitsteilung, etwa Arbeitsverträge oder Zuliefererverträge. Deshalb werden in diesen (individuellen, kollektiven oder Musterverträgen) gesellschaftliche Widersprüche ausgehandelt. Das Konzept der Rechtskämpfe ermöglicht die Analyse von im Recht geführten gesellschaftlichen Auseinandersetzungen als Strategien zur Mobilisierung des Rechts. Durch die Übertragung des Konzepts auf Aushandlungspraktiken rund um Verträge untersuche ich Rechtskämpfe um Verträge als Praktiken des Umgangs mit den gesellschaftlichen Widersprüchen globaler Produktionsverhältnisse. Anhand empirischer Fallbeispiele zeige ich auf, welche gesellschaftlichen Aushandlungen in Verträgen geführt werden, wie Aushandlungen um Verträge als Strategien von Rechtskämpfen genutzt werden und welche widersprüchlichen Effekte die Bezugnahme auf Verträge hat.

**Literature**

- Beckers, Anna. 2023. Unternehmerische Lieferkettenpflichten und Vertrag. *RW Rechtswissenschaft* 13(4). 492–517.
- Eller, Klaas Hendrik. 2021. Transnational Contract Law. In Peer Zumbansen (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Law*, 513–530. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zumbansen, Peer. 2007. The Law of Society: Governance Through Contract. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 14. 191–233.
- Buckel, Sonja, Maximilian Pichl & Carolina A. Vestena. 2023. Legal Struggles: A Social Theory Perspective on Strategic Litigation and Legal Mobilisation. *Social & Legal Studies* 33(1). 1–21.
- Buckel, Sonja. 2007. *Subjektivierung und Kohäsion: Zur Rekonstruktion einer materialistischen Theorie des Rechts*. Weilerswist: Velbrück.

**Keywords***Contracts · Global Productions Networks · Legal Struggles · Rechtskämpfe*

**#11**

Sophia Haude

**Balancing Pairs of Opposites: Murray Gell-Mann's Conception of Science**

Murray Gell-Mann is best known for his contributions to elementary particle physics and, in particular, for introducing quarks to the field in the 1960s, thereby unifying and radically simplifying the description of a large variety of particles known at that time. Throughout his life, he was also interested in complex systems and the relation between the simple and the complex, and he spent the last decades of his life working on these topics. This is only one example of a more general theme in his approach to science and his conception of it: both are defined by an attitude towards pairs of opposites (like simplicity and complexity) and by the endeavour to describe them in a common formalism. In his view, problem solving involves finding the right balance between opposing principles, perspectives, or areas of application. One component of such a pair cannot be understood by itself but only in synthesis with its counterpart. In this talk, I intend to sketch a scientific guiding principle based on Gell-Mann's position, comparing the role that tensions between pairs of opposites play in it, with the role of contradictions in dialectical idealism.

**Keywords***Murray Gell-Mann · Scientific Guiding Principles · Dialectics/Synthesis*

## #12

Ieva Höhne &amp; Simon Clemens

**Widerspruch und Repräsentation: Gedanken zum ontologischen Ansatz des Neuen Materialismus**

Im Anschluss an die Beobachtung der Konferenzorganisator\*innen über die dominante Präferenz für Kontinuität und Konsistenz (sowohl in der Theoriebildung als auch in der historisch-interpretativen Arbeit) sowie im Einvernehmen mit dem Vorschlag, eine negative Beurteilung der Widersprüchlichkeit und den Zwang ihrer Auflösung zu hinterfragen und zu dezentrieren, nehmen wir in unserem Beitrag jene Widersprüche in den Blick, die sich aus der Reflexion des Verhältnisses zwischen **Begriff/Theorie und Wirklichkeit/Praxis** ergeben. Dabei gehen wir von dem Problemkomplex aus, wie er für die (post)cartesianische Epistemologie zentral ist, und veranschaulichen zeitgenössische Umgänge und Verstrickungen hinsichtlich des repräsentationalistischen Paradoxes. Exemplarisch machen wir dies entlang des sogenannten neomaterialistischen Zugangs greifbar, wobei wir nicht nur seine Kritik am Repräsentationalismus herausarbeiten, sondern zugleich zeigen, dass sich der in diesem Zugriff dominierende ‚ontologische‘ Ansatz wiederum in dem Repräsentationalismus strukturell analoger Widersprüche findet. Hierfür nehmen wir zunächst Jane Bennetts Konzept der „thing-power“ als einen für Teile des neuen Materialismus exemplarischen Lösungsansatz auf. Bennett versucht hierbei die Differenz von Wirklichkeit und Begriff zu überkommen, indem sie die „negative power or recalcitrance of things“ (2010: 1) in den Mittelpunkt stellt, um so die Einteilung der Welt in passive Natur und aktive Kultur einzureißen. Nach einer kursorischen Rekonstruktion dieses Ansatzes diskutieren wir, inwiefern ein solcher Zugang Gefahr läuft, den repräsentationalistischen Widerspruch mit einer Überbetonung der Materie zu beantworten, die zum einen epistemisch unplausibel ist, zum anderen durch die Fixierung auf die Widerspruchsauflösung einen weiteren Dualismus etabliert, indem es der repräsentationalistischen Grundidee von dem erkennenden Subjekt und einem von diesem trennbaren und sich ihm stets entziehenden Objekt verhaftet bleibt. Den Ansatz Bennetts kontrastieren wir im Anschluss mit weiteren neomaterialistischen Vorschlägen, die von dem Fokus auf die Widersprüchlichkeit der Idee-Materie-Dualität abrücken und dadurch der ungewollten Perpetuierung cartesianischen Grundmusters besser widerstehen. Zu nennen wäre hier etwa der Ansatz Karen Barads, der durch sein Konzept der „intra-action“ (2007: 129) den immer schon verwobenen Charakter der Wissensproduktion hervorhebt und postuliert, dass Relationen den Relata vorgängig sind. Im letzten Schritt werfen wir einen Blick auf den Pragmatismus Richard Rortys als eine Alternative zu den Ansätzen des Neuen Materialismus, die aufgrund ihrer ontologischen Prämissen die gleichen erkenntnistheoretischen Fallstricke reproduzieren, die Rorty in seiner Auseinandersetzung mit der Aufklärung und dem für das letztere Paradigma zentralen Konzept der Natur kritisiert. Wir tun dies, erstens, durch eine skizzenhafte Erinnerung an seine Positivismus- und Essenzialismuskritik, die Rorty im Rückgriff auf die sprachphilosophischen Überlegungen sowie, allgemeiner, die die idealistische Tradition der Philosophie kritisierenden Denker entwickelt; zweitens mit dem Fokus auf seine Unterscheidung von systematischer und bildender Philosophie. Dabei gehen wir der Vermutung nach, dass Rortys Infragestellung sämtlicher Wahrheits(findungs)verständnisse und sein Gegenvorschlag von interpretierenden Gemeinschaften als Trägern des Diskurses jener Konsequenz zu entkommen vermag, der die Theorie Bennetts unterliegt, und benennen den wichtigsten Preis, der dafür zu zahlen ist, nämlich der Status geisteswissenschaftlicher Fragestellungen.

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**Keywords**

*Repräsentationalistisches Paradox · Neumaterialismus · Essenzialismuskritik*



## #13

Nils Kohlmeier

**Contradiction-Responsive Law: A Search Formula for Just Sustainability Transformations**

As part of the European Green Deal, the EU aims to decarbonize its economies, in particular by switching to electromobility. An important building block for this is the mineral lithium, which is used in the production of electric batteries. The largest lithium deposits are found in the “lithium triangle” between Argentina, Bolivia and Chile. The EU secures legal access to the lithium deposits by means of the EU Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA) and a Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Chile (EU-Chile FTA). The legal structure of both the CRMA and the EU-Chile FTA is based on the concept of the classic sustainability triangle, i.e., the interweaving of environmental, economic and social aspects on an equal footing. However, this does not lead to a harmonization of any tensions in the course of securing raw materials, but rather to socio-ecological crises, as the practice of lithium mining in the lithium triangle shows. In addition to water shortages and damage to biodiversity, the destruction of the territories of the local indigenous population should especially be considered here. These crises can be traced back to fundamental contradictions between capitalist economics on the one hand and ecology and social issues on the other. In terms of systems theory, various differentiated global social rationalities collide here. These contradictions and collisions have inscribed themselves into the norms of the CRMA and the EU-Chile FTA. The follow-up question here is whether the law reacts to these internal legal reformulations of the contradictions in the sense of just socio-ecological (legal) transformations. In response, a negotiation standard must be implemented in the respective standardizations based on internal and external observations of the law, based on approaches of internal and immanent criticism. Self-observations of the law question the system of law as to whether the reactions to its reformulations of the contradictions of lithium mining in the CRMA and the EU-Chile FTA meet sustainability requirements under international and European law. External observations of the law reflect the fact that the law simultaneously promotes and inhibits transformation and enable a radical critique of the legal sustainability requirements themselves. To this end, the law must transcend itself and transfer findings from outside the law, for example from post-colonial theories, into its standardization.

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**Keywords**

*European Green Deal · Sustainability Transformations · Critical Legal Theory*

## #14

Natascha Joselita Kröcker

**Icons of Contradiction: Parallels and Contrasts of American First Ladies on Magazine Covers**

This paper examines the (cultural) history of first ladies through controversial and contradictory covers of their time: From 1933 to 2023, fifteen first ladies held one of the most visible yet ill-defined offices in the United States. Over 90 years, more than 350 magazines feature the first lady on their cover contributing to the representation and image as well as the collective memory of the individual as well as the first ladyship. Descriptions of the role consist of words such as “paradox” (Watson 2000: 31) and “anachronistic” (Brower, 7) and describe the office as “part of [American] national folklore” (Marton 2001: 7). In 1933, Eleanor Roosevelt is portrayed in front of a plane along the headline “America’s Most Travelled First Lady” and about 30 years later, Jacqueline Kennedy is featured on *Cosmopolitan* as “America’s Symbol of Loveliness”. In the 1970’s the public image of Betty Ford remains that of a “Free Spirit in the White House”, while Barbara Bush is portrayed as the *Silver Fox* on *Time* in 1989. In periodical studies, magazines function as ‘writings of time’, and journals are understood as “time capsules” (Scheiding & Ernst 2023: 12). One prominent contradiction regarding American first ladies and their coverage in magazines is the inconsistency between their celebrated public image and the intense scrutiny and gendered expectations placed upon them. While first ladies are repeatedly portrayed as paragons of style, grace, and charitable endeavors, magazine covers can also be inexorable and perilous, focusing on their appearance, fashion choices, and personal lives in ways that often overshadow their accomplishments and contributions. Therefore, magazines frequently “generate possibilities of meaning, not realities of meaning” (Scheiding & Fazli, 17). When Michelle Obama entered the White House in 2009, she was the first African American first lady of the country and by the time the Obamas left the office in 2017, she had become a “beloved pop-culture icon” (Schupf 2017: 52). During the Obama’s first electoral campaign, she had stressed her “improbable role” by stating: “the truth is, I’m not supposed to be standing here. I’m a statistical oddity. Black girl, brought up on the South Side of Chicago” (Taglianetti 2019: 65)—throughout her eight-year tenure in the White House, however, Michelle Obama has graced dozens of fashion-, news-, women’s and special interest magazines. This paper explores the visual narratives in the framing of the first ladies on the covers of American magazines; see exemplary covers below. I argue that first ladies are regarded as (pop) culture icons and mythical symbols of American Woman- and Motherhood; her appearance and body persistently being subject of contradicting expectations. By presenting a selection of covers, this paper aims to firstly, identify and secondly, explain the contradicting narratives that are associated with the first lady myth. The evaluation of covers intends to reveal how the first lady embodies cultural myths and ideals for their respective terms of office and which social norms and gender-specific expectations of their role are displayed. Recurring motifs include illustrations of the first lady as a personification of femininity, and (Republican) motherhood. The contradictory visual and textual narratives constructed around the ideals of the institution of the first lady create and shape how the nation envisions these women even years after their tenure has ended.

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**Keywords**

*Cultural Iconography · Media Framing · Magazine Covers*

**#15**

Jonatan Kurzweily

**Contradiction and Extremism: The Role of Contradictions in Processes of Radicalisation and Deradicalization**

An important aspect of the process of radicalization towards extremism is the striving for consistency and coherence. Individuals gradually adapt aspects of their life to cohere crosscontextually with an overarching ideology. In such a framing, one could argue that a general state of living with unresolved contradictions can be judged favorably in some cases. For example, a common contradiction of holding an essentialist view of social identities—such as an ethno-national, *Völkisch*, view of ‘nation’—while simultaneously not applying that view cross-contextually, could be seen as desirable in contrast to nationalist radicalization. However, visibilizing contradictions and a desire for coherence, a desire to resolve dissonance, also hold a potential for deradicalization of individuals. Empirical examples show that a realization of some sort of broadly defined contradictions between extremist ideologies and other beliefs and attitudes can provide a basis for doubt, disengagement, distancing and ultimately abandoning of extremist ideologies. This presentation will explore the role which contradictions and the desire for consistency and coherence play in political radicalization, allowing for a broader reflection on different kinds and levels of contradictions and on using contradictions as an applied tool.

**Keywords***Extremism · Radicalization · Contradictions · Dissonance · (In)Coherence*

## #16

Philipp Leonhardt

**“It is I and It is not I”: Writing with Tape Recorders**

While the diagnostic strength of the postmodern condition and the loss of the real has run out of steam, one prominent trend in contemporary art has been a “return of the real” (Foster 1996) and a turn towards sincerity. David Shields’ *Reality Hunger. A Manifesto* gave the phenomenon a catchy title capturing how writers are “breaking larger and larger chunks of ‘reality’ into their work” (2010: 3). The search for ways of bringing “reality” into literature has led to a resurgence of autofiction—“it is I and it is not I,” as Gerard Genette described the inherent “contradiction” of combining autobiography and fiction (James 2022: 45)—and documentary fiction: hybrid texts that consist in part of the documentary material that informed the writing process (Bidmon & Lubkoll 2022). The appeal of autofiction and documentary fiction relies on several contradictions: readers encounter a storyworld that is based on documents assembled by the author and often presented as fictional renderings of real-life events. The boundaries between author, narrator and character are blurred and the truthfulness of the text becomes difficult to discern. However, this contradictory projection of a text that emphasizes to be both fake and real at the same time does not present a contradiction that needs to be fixed. Highlighting multiple, contradictory relationships between source material and fictional world building, self and writing, these texts offer a new form of writing and invite for a new mode of being read. Drawing on sound studies and “the acoustic turn” in the humanities, my paper foregrounds the sonic dimension of these writing practices: it traces how contemporary writers employ microphones and tape recordings as compositional tools to document the writing process of their autofictional projects. I intend to examine how authors incorporate field recordings and transcribed interviews into their texts, even though this documentary material may be an invention, a fiction, itself. For example, Sheila Heti’s *How Should a Person Be?* (2010) follows a Sheila-narrator-protagonist who records intimate conversations with her friends as the source material for a play she is commissioned to write, which performatively immerses readers in a novel that exists for the most part as text-as-tape and transcript. Similarly, Valeria Luiselli’s *Lost Children Archive* (2019) consists of multiple sound documentaries that different protagonists performatively conduct on tape recorders in the text. The novel uses sound recording to critically reflect upon the ambiguities of writing about migration and refugees as literary fiction. In both cases, text-as-tape offers a productive contradiction, literary practice, and form of amplifying the writer’s artistic process from an intermedial perspective.

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**Keywords***Literary Sound Studies · Autofiction · Documentary Aesthetics*

## #17

Julia Lossau

**Packing Unpacked: From ‘Spaces of Difference’ to ‘Spaces of Dissension’**

In our daily lives, we are often busy packing. In order to move things from here to there, we are used to pack them in bags or boxes, repack and unpack them by taking them out for use or further storage. As a result, packing is so commonplace that we rarely take the time to reflect on it. A closer look reveals, though, that packing is a specific operation which holds as many prerequisites as consequences. It is not without reason that packing is regarded a problem in a number of disciplines. In logistics, for instance, where packing is a significant concern, packaging solutions are developed which aim at balancing aspects as efficiency, quality, cost, and, more recently, sustainability (Bretzke 2014). As early as 1611, Johannes Kepler speculates that snowflakes owe their hexagonal structure to the packing of their constituents. However, it would take another 387 years to prove the mathematical, packing-related theorem known as ‘Kepler’s conjecture’ (Szpiro 2003). In the history of geographical thought, packing is only explicitly conceptualized in the 1960s when geographers at Lund University promote the idea that ‘space and time are universally and inseparably wed to one another’ (Pred 1977: 218). In what they call time geography, ‘the limited packing capacity of space’ is regarded as one of the fundamental conditions of social life (Carstein, Parkes & Thrift 1978: 218). Together with limited time resources, the limited packing capacity of space is said to lead to constraints which ‘steer the action (...), or score the choreography, of the individual’s daily existence’ (Pred 1977: 208). From a perspective interested in contradiction it can be argued that time geography’s concept of space as equipped with limited packing capacity provides a template for the idea that space ‘serves as the basic model for the development of logic’ (Luhmann 1985: 525, transl. JL): ‘Just as it is impossible to build a house where there is already a house, it must also be impossible to think of a house with the properties of another house’ (ibid.). Following on from this, Peter Fuchs adds a temporal dimension when he writes that ‘space is the scheme of the difference of the simultaneous or the simultaneity of the different (...)’ (Fuchs 2000: 44). By unpacking the hidden workings of packing, therefore, the paper aims at challenging ‘spaces of difference’ in order to make room for ‘spaces of dissension’.

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**Keywords***Packing · Geographical Thought · Time Geography*

## #18

Fiona Makulik

**How a Counter-Discourse Is Constituted: The Feminist Abortion Discourse as a Construct of Contradiction and Positioning**

What is a counter-discourse, how can it be described and which linguistic means are suitable to do so? Can the feminist abortion discourse in Germany be understood as a counter-discourse and if so, how is this expressed linguistically? These are some of the questions that structure my current dissertation project and which I would like to explore in my lecture. To this end, I first discuss my concept of counter-discourse, which is inspired by Michel Foucault's (e.g., Foucault & Deleuze [1972] 2002) statements on counter-discourse as well as by concepts of counter-publicity (e.g., Fraser 2001) and various linguistic works in which counter-discourse has been discussed (e.g., Dreesen 2015; Kaczmarek 2018). Empirically applying this understanding of counter-discourse, I then look at practices of contradiction and positioning that have been used by feminist actors since 1971 to talk about abortion. I pursue the hypothesis that feminist actors constitute a counter-discourse by using these practices to oppose other discourse formations and actors. In doing so, they construct a discursive position from which they are able to speak for themselves rather than be (mis-)represented. In order to explain my hypothesis by means of the aforementioned empirical analysis, I use both archive and online data that I collected as part of my dissertation project *Abortion—Diachrony of a Counter-Discourse*. By focusing on feminist actors in abortion discourses, my paper aims at contributing to closing the considerable research gap within (German) linguistics which is owed to a widespread lack of engagement with the history and speech practices of feminist movements in Germany.

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**Keywords**

*Abortion · Feminist Movement · Counter Discourse*

## #19

Leonie Männich

**The Angry Feminist as a Contradictory Category in Bogotá's Feminist Movement: On the Emancipatory Politics of Non-belonging**

This paper critically engages with the category of the “angry feminist” in contemporary feminist thought from a feminist psychoanalytic standpoint. Parting from the argument made by Todd McGowan, that capitalism, in order to function, depends on “subjects regarding themselves as isolated beings whose identity does not involve otherness” (2019: 33), thus rejecting the existence of contradiction ( $A=A$ ), I demonstrate that the category of the “angry feminist” proves to be one that can challenge this functioning by embracing the necessarily contradictory role that otherness plays in our identity. Informed by field work within the feminist movement in Bogotá (Colombia), I show that by embracing the rage, the angry feminist actively breaks with their context, giving birth to a possible universal out of the rupture with the prevailing system (cf. Eisenstein & McGowan 2012: 82). Connecting this idea to the work of Laura Quintana (2021) on the potentials of “political rage” (*rabia política*) for emancipatory endeavors, I want to point out an important shortcoming, as theoretical work resides in ultimately overcoming the contradiction. Emancipation is thus seen as an endeavor to include (make belong) all identities in order to create a whole without absence. Psychoanalytic theory is able to make a finer differentiation in theorizing the category of the “angry feminist” not as an identity figure, but by considering the act of rage as a rupture, which implies a traumatic cut in the subject, and whose emancipatory value lies in its affirmation. Furthermore, the politicization of this rage in form of the acceptance of contradiction instead of wanting to overcome them ultimately is what enables mobilization and solidarity beyond identity boundaries (cf. Ruti 2018). In this sense, thinking about emancipation in terms of non-belonging, with non-belonging as the source of all universality, makes it possible to reflect on the fact that political rage, and in particular the category of the “angry feminist” as a resistant subject, must not be attributed emancipatory content per se, but must be aligned with the question of (non-)belonging.

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**Keywords***Angry Feminist · Political Rage · Non-Belonging*



**#20**

Samia Mohammed

**Beyond In/Dependence: Freedom in a World of Contradictions**

(How) Can we rethink freedom in an emancipatory way without downplaying the exploitation and ecological destruction that is taking place today in the name of individual freedom – and for the purpose of capital accumulation? Has freedom perhaps simply had its day as a guiding value of social movements and critical theory that strive to overcome relations of domination? Are we perhaps even moving from an age of self-realization to one that follows the paradigm of self-preservation and must focus on existential questions in order to ensure human and more-than-human survival on earth? My current dissertation project is guided by the intuition that, despite – or perhaps especially – in view of existential crises, we cannot do without an emancipatory idea of freedom, which, in contrast to the modern promise of freedom, would be designed to be realized not at the expense of others, but in and through a shared form of freedom. Giving up freedom completely would not only be cynical because so many people are still not free today, but also illusory because, throughout human history, people have always striven for freedom even in places of greatest oppression. In order to think freedom today, however, we must fundamentally rethink it and learn from the deficits that the claim to realization and phantasmatic universalization of liberal freedom under capitalist auspices teaches us. In my presentation at the conference, I want to address one of the various conditions and contradictions of this *rethinking* and *restructuring* of freedom: the field of human-nature-relations. Drawing on ecofeminist and eco-socialist literature, I argue that the repression of interdependencies, articulated in a domination-like relationship to nature, produces a deficient modern idea of freedom, whose *other* and *outside* must sooner or later rebound – and in a differentially distributed form, in which groups of people are affected differentially. For an idea and practice of freedom that detaches itself from this problem, I then propose the re-internalization of human-nature-relations into the idea of freedom itself, which abolishes the hitherto externalizing relationship and holds the promise of an equal freedom for all.

**Keywords***Theories of Freedom · (Eco-)Feminist Thought · Human-Nature-Relations*

**#21**

Brunn Morais

**Postcolonial Theories and Decolonial Methods: Distinguishing Theory and Practice**

My approach recognizes post-colonial studies as a theoretical field for analyzing colonial impacts on several cultures while recognizing decoloniality as a practice to deal with colonial consequences in several cultures worldwide. Through a conversation with decolonial movements in Germany, this paper aims to discuss the relationship between academia and non-academic political organizations self-identified as decolonial from a post-colonial point of view. My hypothesis is disciplinary and suggests that decolonial methods must prioritize political movements and voices from outside academia. While post-colonial theories have been relevant in raising academic debate on political injustice, decolonial activists produce knowledge through their experiences. Post-colonial literature has helped in the argumentative baggage of several activists who deal with matters of utter importance in social fights against colonial injustices. I invite my readers to reflect on how academic habitus can create conditions for respectfully learning from those movements outside academia. Learning with activists, artists, and collectives through interviews, this paper aims to share perspectives from actors experiencing decoloniality as a practice. Theoretically, my argument tries to respond to a common critique from such activist fields that accuse academic habitus' practices of appropriating collaborative methods from outside academia while excluding those actors from debates referring to political injustice in academic fields. Such criticism does not stay unnoticed in the academic debate as in *Reproduction in Education, Society and Cultures* (1990). Bourdieu and Passeron argue precisely that methods of appropriation and inculcation are common practices in the system that produce the producers (educational system). While considering inculcation and appropriation, my argument proposes reflections in given conditions to apply decolonial methods as part of collaborative research practices.

**Literature**

- Bourdieu, Pierre & Jean-Claude Passeron. 1990. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London & New Delhi: Sage.

**Keywords***Decolonial Methods · Political Activism · Post-Colonial Theories*

## #22

Katharina Palme

**Literarische Antagonisten-Figuren der mittelhoch-deutschen Heldenepik im Kontext von Contradiction Studies**

Widersprüche bei Figuren sind in der germanistischen Mediävistik mehrfach aufgezeigt worden. (cf. Lienert 2020). Viele dieser figurenbezogenen Widersprüche hängen mit grundsätzlichen Fragen über Literatur, Literaturpraxis und Wahrnehmung von Widersprüchen im historischen Kontext zusammen und lassen sich als Herausforderung für das moderne Figurenverständnis begreifen (cf. Philipowski 2019: 116–128). Der vorliegende Beitrag möchte die im Rahmen des Dissertationsprojekts umfassender aufbereitete Frage nach einem bestimmten Figurentypus aufgreifen. Antagonisten-Figuren eignen sich in besonderem Maße dazu, die Debatten zu Widersprüchen neu oder weiter zu denken, weil sie sich in einem Nexus befinden, der die Doppelnatur von textbezogenen Widersprüchen, nämlich als kohärenz-fördernd und kohärenzhindernd, widerspiegelt: Antagonisten-Figuren sind, wie auch die meisten anderen Figuren in der Heldenepik, nach modernem Verständnis, *widersprüchliche Figuren*, die „unterschiedlichen Anforderungen genügen müssen“ (Fahr 2017: 184). Sie sind auch, durch ihre Funktion als Gegenspieler, *Figuren des Widerspruchs* und in dieser Funktion tragen sie zur Kohärenzstiftung bei. Die Arbeit an diesem Figurentypus bedingt deshalb Differenzierungsbedarf hinsichtlich unseres Verständnisses und Umgangs mit Widersprüchen, um einen adäquaten Umgang mit diesen literarischen Beispielen zu gewährleisten. Im Vortrag sollen solche Fragen aufgegriffen und anhand von Beispielen aus der mittelhochdeutschen Heldenepik diskutiert werden. Der Mehrwert dieser Auseinandersetzung ist zweiteilig: Zum einen soll ein marginalisierter Figurentypus aufgearbeitet werden, zum anderen wird durch diese Aufarbeitung der Umgang mit Widersprüchen kritisch hinterfragt.

**Literature**

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**Keywords**

*Antagonisten-Figuren · Mittelhochdeutsche Heldenepik · Widersprüche*

## #23

Eva Riedke

**The Irony in Selling to the Poor**

For many the idea behind philanthrocapitalism, to do good socially by doing well financially, is steeped with contradictions. Herein, two seemingly opposed forces appear to be simultaneously present. How can the application of market forces to solve the most significant social and environmental challenges of our day and age be framed by others as the leading causes of those very problems? The paper draws on ethnographic research conducted in and on the solar off grid sector. The aim has been to explore how different actors along the marketing chain of these solar products—namely from those who design and produce solar products to those who purchase and use them in rural Kenya—negotiate the inherent contradictions in different ways. The paper engages in detail with the solar entrepreneurs who do the final point of sale, namely the door-to-door sales agents who sell solar off grid products to the so-called “un electrified poor” in rural Kenya. How do these sales agents fashion solar products to be less contradictory? Describing inadequations as existing somewhere between discourses, ideas, feelings, values, and practices, the paper explores articulations of ambivalent standpoints, contradictory attitudes, incompatible values, and emotional internal clashes. One observation has been that these are often expressed by sales agents through forms of irony (rhetorical and situational) that serve to capture and comment on perceived instance of irreconcilability. Irony, so the paper argues, in many instances appears as a means to capture and comment on the patterns of contrast that people discern when things seem misaligned or out of place. Along what lines, so the question raised, might irony come to be understood as a unique articulation of contradictions? Put differently, how can we rethink the manner that people “live with contradictions” through a more detailed ethnographic engagement with “irony”?

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**Keywords**

*Philanthrocapitalism · Solar Energy · Irony*

## #24

Herbert Rostand Ngouo

**The Politicization of Religion in Post-colonial African Nations: The Contradiction of the Promotion of Christian Nationalism in DRC on the Backdrop of Decolonialization**

There are philosophical and historical positions which connect Christianity to colonialism in Africa, as the former is claimed to have been the instrument used to brainwash Africans into subjecting to the colonizers. Postcolonial Africa has become a pluralist society as it is trapped between many religious paradigms, foreign religions are still promoted in the public sphere to the detriment of the African Tradition. This paper analyzes the prayer proclaimed by President Tshisekedi during the national prayer day (Siphiwe 2021) on 25th June 2019 in order to highlight the politicization of religion in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The interpretation of the president's prayer posits that the recourse to biblical rhetoric through the citation of a biblical passage in his prayer implies a repudiation of the African Traditional Religion (Mbangu 2014), which is an integral part of the African identity. This religious positioning of the authorities of the DRC (just like a number of other African nations' leaders) which moves to establish some form of Christian nationalism (Bloomberg 1989; Goldberg 2007) and civil religion (Bellah 1967) to the detriment of the African belief system is in contradiction with the prevailing views on the Continent where Decolonization, Pan-Africanism and Afrocentricity are emphasized in the African renaissance project to counter Westernization.

**Literature**

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**Keywords**

*Politicization of Religion · Postcolonial Africa · Afrocentricity · Christianity*

## #25

Marie-Esther Schilling

**“She never claimed her space”: Literary (Re)Negotiations of Women and motherhood in *The School for Good Mothers* and *When She Woke***

Current concerns surrounding women’s rights and access to reproductive healthcare have long been subject of discussion. Literary extrapolations have been around since at least Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) and recent developments such as the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* (2022) and the Alabama court’s ruling that frozen embryos are considered to be living children (2024) have renewed interest in the topics, and enabled widespread public discourse. Amidst the looming crisis of reproductive freedom, recent (eco-)feminist speculative fictions have put a particular focus on exploring the intricate connections and contradictions between ideas about motherhood and femininity. Scholars like Adriana Teodorescu have discussed the ‘good mother paradigm’ which fundamentally relies on a glorified women–nature connection, and have also highlighted prevailing contradictions between motherhood and femininity (Teodorescu 2018: 78–80). Novels like Jessamin Chan’s *The School for Good Mothers* (2022) and Hillary Jordan’s *When She Woke* (2011) explore the area of tension that arises between motherhood (and gender) as a social construct and value system, and the idea that “motherhood [...] is a *natural* component of femininity” (Teodorescu 2018: 83). In its very title, *The School for Good Mothers* centers and challenges the good mother paradigm. If being a good mother (explicitly not a good *father* or *parent*) is something that has to be acquired through attending school it cannot then at the same time be something that is inherently, essentialist female. Similarly, *When She Woke* sees its main character physically altered (colored red) as legal punishment for an illegal abortion. The choice of not becoming a mother here directly causes the protagonist’s expulsion from society, and results in various forms of harassment. While one form of harassment depicted here is indeed sexual, it is made abundantly clear that this has nothing to do with perceiving the protagonist as female, and instead everything to do with perceiving her as an easy target due to her skin color and social status. The analogy of skin color used here forces a comparison of contemporary gender discrimination/ misogyny and racist ideologies. Both novels highlight the complexity of their female protagonists, presenting them in stark contrast to a society that more and more operates in binaries. Investigating the role of women, and the paradigm of a “good mother” within these literary works allows insights into the consequences women have to face every day in light of society’s expectations around motherhood, regardless of whether they actually do have children or not.

**Literature**

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**Keywords**

Ecofeminism · Motherhood · Women's Rights

**#26**

Antonia Schirgi

**From Unspecific Ambivalence to Dealings with Ambiguity: Dealing with Contradictions Without Resolving Them**

The concept of contradiction is closely related to the concepts of ambivalence and ambiguity as they were understood by Else Frenkel-Brunswik and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In my presentation I will, *first*, show how the unresolvable character of contradiction can be theoretically founded by drawing on these concepts of ambivalence and ambiguity. Following Frenkel-Brunswik and Merleau-Ponty ambivalence means that one is confronted with unspecific contradictions, whereas ambiguity can be understood as a turn towards these contradictions. *Second*, I will discuss the—at times troublesome—character of contradiction, particularly by referring to Frenkel-Brunswik's concept of the intolerance of ambiguity. It is troublesome because of the repeated confrontation with other moments of phenomena in our perception and affects. *Third*, I will elaborate on practices of dealing with this troublesome character that are not meant to immediately resolve these contradictions. I will do so by drawing on Merleau-Ponty's reading of Frenkel-Brunswik's approach as well as on his further elaboration of the interplay of ambivalence and ambiguity, of perception and expression. Thereby I will show that a turn towards these contradictions does not mean to resolve them, but to be able to integrate contradictions as moments of a phenomenon. Where appropriate I will show the empirical impact of this approach by referring to my empirical work on direct democratic processes, in particular a citizens conference held in Austria in 2023, initiated by the Austrian government and implemented by the Austrian Academy of Sciences as well as the Austrian Institute for Advanced Studies (audio recordings and participatory observation, analyzed based on Grounded Theory Methodology).

**Keywords***Ambivalence · Ambiguity · (In)Tolerance*

#27

Jan Schulze Buschoff

**The Rise of Right-Wing Movements and How to Develop Counter-Hegemonic Strategies**

After Marine Le Pen took over the party leadership from her father in 2011, she introduced to the National Rally a new strategy of communication and conduct respectively. In avoiding an anti-Semitic and homophobic rhetoric, Marine Le Pen, with this kind of political communication, strives for a socially acceptable National Rally to present the party and herself as ready and willing to take over government and respectively presidency. Regarding Marine Le Pen's effort to modernize the party, the *national preference* marks an important aspect. The former head of the party is still of the opinion that it is highly important to strengthen national sovereignty and to reactivate state-controlled borders. In a scientific manner, the work at hand is to be situated in the field of political science. This paper is based on the hypothesis that the National Rally pursues a hegemonic project. Within the context of a discourse analysis, it will be found out how the National Rally is going to manage a hegemonic project in terms Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. When people support a political party, which is able to present its objectives as the best option for a vast majority of the people, hegemonization finds application. In their work *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* published in 1985, the political scientists Laclau and Mouffe present their political theory of radical and plural democracy. In the center of the authors' approach remains the question of power and antagonism as well as the (democratic) opinion referring to the statement that there is never going to be absolute emancipation but only partial emancipation. Thus, the most important question regarding democratic politics is not how to eliminate power, but how to create forms of power, which are compatible with democratic values. Both authors describe hegemony as a system, in which objectivity meets power. The hegemonic theory tries to explain how identities are created in political struggles. In doing so, the authors deny identities a basic (essential) characteristic and they support at the same time the assumption that identities are created by discursive processes of articulation.

**Keywords***Theory of Hegemony · National Rally · Political Communication*



**#28**

Maren Schwarz

**Neighbourhoods: Spaces of Dissension**

Today, the concept of neighborhood is caught in the “sentimentality trap” (cf. Rosenblum 2016): Over time, it has been charged with romanticized and normative ideals of community and solidarity that have found their way into, and remain relevant in, urban planning and development. With my paper, I would like to contribute to breaking down these romanticized notions and instead understand neighborhoods as spaces charged with tensions. These tensions arise from the structural spatial proximity of different neighbors and their relationship, which cannot be negated and can be described as characterized by the “paradox of the uncanny” (cf. Lossau 2017). This paradox is negotiated through “everyday neighborhood-making” (Reutlinger, Stiehler & Lingget 2015: 245), which ultimately explores coexistence and can lead to different forms of living together. Using examples from my qualitative empirical research, I would like to focus on the negotiation of contradictions in this process by understanding neighborhoods as “spaces of dissension” (after Lossau Schmidt-Brücken & Warnke 2019). In doing so, I would like to concentrate on conflictual situations, as their (non-)solution reveals the prevailing power structures and mechanisms of distinction at the spatial micro-level of neighborhood coexistence.

**Literature**

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**Keywords***Neighbourhood · Doors · Ambiguities*

## #29

Benjamin Schweitzer

## Provincializing the Cosmopolitan? The Finnish Avant-Garde Discourse as a Case Study

My approach departs from the axiom that avant-garde art originates with the aim to formulate counter-positions to established and often petrified aesthetic canons and principles. Secondly, it is based on the assumption that an explicit avant-garde discourse—in the sense of talking about art and framing it as avant-gardist, including the construction of avant-garde as contra-diction or counterculture—stems from (Central) Europe, while avant-gardist art as such is not culturally or geographically bound to a specific region (Mitter 2008). Avant-garde may thus be regarded as both a concept of contradiction within the aesthetic universe of the arts, and a contradictory term in the scientific and public art discourse. However, approaches to provincialize, or decenter, the view on avant-garde in the arts appear to conceive „Europe“ as a rather monolithical entity, building upon the opposition between the (North-)West and the notorious „Global South“ (to which a „Global East“ might have to be added in this context). Upon closer inspection, this seems highly disputable, as the boundaries of Europe in the context of aesthetically advanced art are both geographically and historically vague and fluid. My paper examines the Finnish avantgarde discourse under the aspect of the center vs. periphery dichotomy in the arts (Joyeux-Prunel 2015) and a receiver country situation: After its beginnings in the 1920's, Finnish avant-garde art only since the late 1950's more broadly caught up with the international development. Elmer Diktonius' both polemic and visionary appeal *Muualla ja meillä* ('Elsewhere and here'), which can be regarded as a manifesto of the Finnish avantgarde (also beyond literature), locates the Finns at the periphery, claiming that they would become "Europe's Chinese" (Diktonius 1922: 25) if they failed to leave their nationalism behind and adopt advanced Central European aesthetics. Nevertheless, this 'self-othering' construction is contradicted by the title that places the presupposed center in the 'elsewhere' semio-sphere and thus implicitly hints at the possibility of a 'de-othering' of the Finnish periphery: Brown (2008: 557) even goes as far as to claim that the "fundamental principles" of modern art lie in the "elsewheres and the not-yets". This constellation—which contains some Finland-specific ingredients but might be comparable to other 'young and small' European nations in the 20th century—prompts a series of interlinked questions: How is *avantgarde* (note that Finnish language prefers the loanword in arts-related contexts, instead of autochthonous lexemes like *etujoukko* or *etukaarti*) constructed through discourse at the European periphery? Is Finnish avant-garde regarded as independent, or as depending upon movements from the established hot spots? In either case, is its independence or dependence seen as aspect of provincialism? How is the clash of a transnational, cosmopolitan avant-garde with Finnish art that was closely linked to national identification, folklore and mythology, and a Finnish avant-garde that might have been regarded also as contradictory to Central European avant-garde—thus placing it in the crosshairs of a double-contradictory constellation—reflected in the discourse? By comparing and contextualizing utterances on avant-garde art derived from a corpus of Finnish news-paper articles, online forums and scientific literature over a timespan from the 1910's up to today, I seek to analyze this complex constellation linguistically and to outline preliminary answers to the question of avant-garde at the periphery both *as* and *in* contradiction.

## Literature

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**Keywords***Avant-Garde Discourse · Periphery · Culture of Finland***#30**

Nelson Sindze Wembe

**From Here or from Elsewhere: The Dichotomy of Belongingness in Black African Diaspora Literature**

In *The Belly of the Atlantic* (Diome 2005), Fatou Diome delves into the complexities of migrant identities. Salie, the novel's main character, born in Niodior and a migrant in France, continuously reflects on her status as an "exiled" person who no longer belongs to a "home" and neither in Strasbourg, where she resided for several years. By stating, 'I am going home as they go abroad', Salie marks the deep wound of a belonging dichotomy that traverses most migrant characters in diasporic black African novels. The here and there exerts strong pressure on the migrant subject, which derives from the rejections and marginalizations of the other and produces feelings of non-belonging. Belonging is an in/mate and personal feeling of "being at home" (Antonsich 2010) which is subject to politics of belonging that draw boundaries and determine the establishment of distinction between "we" and the "them" (Yuval-Davis 2006). The black African migrant subject, by his condition as a displaced person, traversed by the intersection of racial marginality and the weight of the colonial discourse, finds himself caught in a dichotomy of belongingness; especially when he experiences the rejection of those, he considers his own through communitarian logic. This communication aims to analyze how this dichotomy of belonging is represented in Fatou Diome's *The Belly of the Atlantic* (2003) and *Rebeldía* (Inongo-vi-Makomè 1997), and how the authors manage this contradiction generated by the condition of their characters as *négropolitain*. This concept was used to characterize the new wave of francophone writers since 1980 who chose to write on the conditions of Africans born « here » but who live « elsewhere », focusing on the difficulties of living in an in-between world (Mabanckou 2016). By analyzing two novels from different geographic settings, this communication intends to find the parallelism between the experiences of diasporic subjects in Europe.

**Literature**

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**Keywords***AfroEuropeans Literature · Fatou Diome · Inongo-Vi-Makomè*

**#31**

Helen Stephan

**Beyond the Contradictions of the Gender Binary**

Trans\* lässt sich historisch wie aktuell als Widerspruch zu der als Widerspruch gemachten Differenz zwischen den binären Geschlechtern auch ihrer Beziehung zwischen ‚biologischem‘ und ‚sozialen‘ Geschlecht verstehen. Donna Haraways Forderung folgend, Körper und Materialität als agentuell zu verstehen, und sie so aus dem Bereich der objektifizierten Natur zu befreien, arbeite ich mit praxistheoretischen und neo-materialistischen Ansätzen nach Annemarie Mol und Karen Barad. Damit lösen sich auch die Grenzen der folgenreichen und je binären Trennung zwischen Sex und Gender, die bis heute in der bio-medizinischen Forschung und in Bezug auf die Frage der Gesundheitsversorgung von trans\* Personen eine zentrale Rolle spielen. Eine gute Gesundheitsversorgung im Kontext von geschlechtsangleichenden Hormontherapien ist aber zugleich durch strukturelle Achsen von nation, race, class und gender geprägt samt ihrer Implikationen für die medizinische Selbstbestimmung von Geschlecht. Anhand komplexer Situationen aus meiner empirischen Forschung zeige ich wie im Kontext von materiell-diskursiven Apparaturen die Erfahrungen von trans\* Personen binäre und dominante Ontologien von Geschlecht immer wieder durcheinanderbringen, überschreiten und verschieben.

**Literature**

- Barad, Karen. 2007. *Meeting the Universe Halfway. Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Haraway, Donna J. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.
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**Keywords***Neuer Materialismus · Hormonelle Geschlechtstransitionen · Körperpolitiken*

## #32

Wolfgang Teubert

**Social Media: The Breeding Ground of Contradiction?**

Once every social media fan has found their mecca promising to equip them with a reassuring identity, no one will sacrifice it in a compromise with others. Oppositions, and thus contradictions, boost identity. The hailed Habermasian ideal of a ‘deliberative democracy’ aims at overcoming dissent in an inclusive and egalitarian citizens’ dialogue geared towards finding the ‘common good’. Egalitarian? He distinguishes between “informed elite discourse” and hopefully responsive “anonymous audiences.” But people nudged to stick to their identity will perhaps not accept Habermas’ elitist doctrine of universal rationality as the ultimate arbiter in disagreements if it means abandoning one’s convictions. So, when the deceptive comfort promised by identity politics forestalls arguing for a common ground, will Habermas mind if the Gramscian hegemon takes over and proclaims what is in everyone’s best interest? Identity politics entails the death of democracy. There was a time, though, when many still welcomed social media. Years ago, in 2008, Axel Bruns hoped for alternatives to the traditional mass media, for instance “citizen journalism sites ... within which [people] conduct engaged and lively political discussion and deliberation away from the perceived spin of journalism’s punditariat.” Ten years later, however, he has despaired: “What is it that has so entrenched and cemented [people’s] beliefs that they are no longer open to contestation?” A recent paper by Ali Unlu and Tommi Kotonen also notices “the impact of online discourse on shaping social identities and intergroup relations. ... Echo chambers can perpetuate biases and polarize groups.” Social media are now widely denounced as the hotbeds of contradiction, responsible for a rise in radicalization. For 2023/24, Google Scholar lists 5,600 papers for the search query: “social media” “echo chambers” democracy, almost all bemoaning the effusion of identity-driven controversies. Could it be that our traditional media are shedding crocodile tears when lamenting the role of social media? Are they, perhaps, furtively in cahoots with the social media tycoons in Silicon Valley? If their algorithms are designed as echo chambers, so that their addicts thrive on contradiction, then the mainstream commentariat, claiming to be the voice of reason, feel justified calling for strong leadership to restore unity. Identity politics is the death of a dialectic that can overcome contradictions. But where should people learn to engage in an inclusive and egalitarian dialogue? Our schools don’t teach how to deal with contradictions. By hammering in ‘incontrovertible facts’ and decrying ‘fake news’, they deprive future citizens of the joy of making up their own minds. In the words of Bertrand Russell: “My own belief is that education must be subversive if it is to be meaningful. By this I mean that it must challenge all the things we take for granted, examine all accepted assumptions, tamper with every sacred cow, and instill a desire to question and doubt. Without this the mere instruction to memorize data is empty. The attempt to enforce conventional mediocrity on the young is criminal.” Creative intelligence grows on clearing up contradictions.

**Literature**

- Bruns, Axel. 2019. It’s not the Technology, stupid: How the ‘Echo Chamber’ and ‘Filter Bubble’ Metaphors have Failed us. (Paper presented at *International Association for Media and Communication Research IAMCR 2019*, July 7–11, 2019, <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/131675/>).
- Bruns, Axel. 2008. Life beyond the Public Sphere: Towards a Networked Model of Political Deliberation. *Information Polity* 13(1–2). 65–79.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 2006. Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy still Enjoy an Epistemic Dimension? *Communication Theory* 16(4). 411–416.
- Unlu, Ali, & Tommi Kotonen. 2024. Online Polarization and Identity Politics. *Scandinavian Political Studies* 47(2). 1–33.

**Keywords***Identity Politics · Echo Chamber · Neoliberal Hegemony***#33**

Jonas Trochemowitz

**Living in/With Contradiction: Reality or Intellectual Utopia?**

A central idea discussed in the field of Contradiction Studies is the notion that contradictions can be understood as an integral part of everyday life, in the sense that people live in/with contradictions (cf. Febel, Knopf & Nonhoff 2023: 55–61). From this perspective, understanding how contradictions are negotiated, become apparent in social interaction, or shape the way we make sense of the world can help to understand how contradictions function “as an organizing principle of everyday life” (ibid.: 55). Nevertheless, two questions that remain yet to be answered by Contradiction Studies are to what extent people actually perceive their lives as contradictory and how this (un-)awareness of contradictions may influence how contradictions are theorized as part of everyday life. In other words: If people do not perceive their lives as contradictory, is it justified for Contradiction Studies to point this out as a misperception of reality? In my talk, I will argue that in order to answer these questions, Contradiction Studies require a deep empirical as well as theoretical understanding of the processes by which people become aware/unaware of contradiction and what it means to become (un-)aware of contradictions in the first place. From a linguistic perspective, I want to focus on how language influences the way we conceptualize contradictions and how contradictions become intelligible objects of thought by being declared (cf. Warnke, Mattfeldt, Trochemowitz in press). To empirically understand some of the processes in which contradictions become relevant in everyday life, I would like to give insights into my ethnographic fieldwork in the context of queer Christian church services and show how contradictions are negotiated within this liturgical practice.

**Literature**

- Febel, Gisela, Kerstin Knopf & Martin Nonhoff. 2023. Contradiction Studies: Exploring the Field. An Introduction. In Gisela Febel, Kerstin Knopf & Martin Nonhoff (eds.), *Contradiction Studies: Exploring the Field*, 1–74. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
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**Keywords***Law of Non-Contradiction · Cognitive Dissonance · Queerness*

## #34

Caro Zieringer

**Dis/En-Abling Contradictions: Practices and Problems of Contradiction in Radical Democracy**

In this paper, I argue that what I call practices of contradiction become democratic only if they are considered with regard to practices of care that involve reshaping the collectively inhabited world in which people struggle for democratic forms of life. I thereby introduce a radically contingent yet material understanding of the body as body-minds (Kafer 2013) to contradiction studies from the perspective of radical democratic theory and critical disability studies. Practices of contradiction, commonly observed in political demonstrations and debates, counter speech and civil disobedience, are justifiably regarded as central *topoi* of the “democratic adventure” in radical democratic theory. As such, they present the democratic subject with a double challenge: It must be able to endure contradictions as well as it must be able to contradict anti-democratic movements and structures that refuse to engage with contradiction(s). While the importance of such practices of contradiction is widely discussed in the literature, for example as a protection against totalitarian excesses or as the democratization of democracy, less attention is paid to the question of the underlying, enabling structures of care. In doing so, theories of practices of contradictions tacitly disembodify their subjects. Consequently, such understandings of practices of contradiction risk excluding those body-minds from “spaces of dissension” (Lossau, Schmidt-Brücken & Warnke 2019) which fail to live up to these demands, who (are) “misfit” (Garland-Thomson 2011). Simultaneously, they veil the care work that goes into making other bodies “fit” for/in practices of contradiction. As a result, they effectively depoliticize the exclusion e.g., of a majority of disabled people. In problematizing this exclusion, I build on the argument that being able to endure and practice contradictions cannot be assumed as an equally distributed, stable ability in people in contemporary contexts of ongoing governmental precarization (Lorey 2022) and disabling infrastructures (Garland- Thomson 2011). Given these circumstances, practices of contradiction need to be understood as being cared for. I thus transform a classic intersubjective understanding of care into one that is more oriented towards collectively en- or dis-abled access to shared “spaces of dissension” as to dis-/enable diverse variations of body-minds to practice contradiction.

**Literature**

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- Kafer, Alison. 2013. *Feminist, Queer, Crip*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

**Keywords***Contestation · Bodies · Care*

## Special Panels

**SP #1**Tue, Feb 11, 2025, 04.00 p.m.  
GW2 B3.009**Hegel's Idealism as a World of Contradiction**

Lilja Walliser | Tobias Wieland

Chair: Tobias Wieland

**On the Question of the Concrete Universal: The Plurality of Life Forms in a Critical Continuation of Hegel**  
—Tobias Wieland**"The Universal Knowledge of Itself in its Absolute Opposite": Hegel on Recognition, Contra-diction and Reconciliation**

—Lilja Walliser

**Each One Exists by Excluding the Other from Itself, and Thereby Excluding Itself. On the Category of Contradiction in Hegel's Logic**

—Evgenia Sonnabend

In our panel, we aim to explore how Hegel, in different parts of his work, sees contradiction as a productive force in epistemic, metaphysical, and ethical contexts. For Hegel, contradiction does not simply appear as something to be overcome but as an inherent driving aspect of living reality. This is particularly evident in the way he considers contradiction to be essential to his understanding of truth and recognition. Many of the current debates about Hegel's concept of contradiction, however, revolve around how this diagnosis of the fundamental status of contradiction can be made fruitful for post-Hegelian debates, particularly with regard to feminist and decolonial approaches in epistemology and critical theory. Hegel's speculative dialectics offer an account of contradiction—that is beyond any doubt. What remains questionable is its assessment and evaluation. Following the recent dialetheic interpretation (Priest, Finocchiaro, Bordignon, Moss), this Special Panel aims at re-introducing contradiction as truth in response to the need for a critical reassessment and decolonization of classical German Idealism, and Hegel in particular. What is at stake here concerns the conceptual and phenomenological structure of identity, recognition, and epistemic politics. For dialetheism holds, without contradictions, there are no pluralities and no truths. In this light, the proposed panel concerns questions as: How does the notion of contradiction intersect with the conceptual and phenomenological structure of identity, recognition, and epistemic politics? Must Hegel's idealism and his conception of contradiction be understood as being part of a critical thinking of plurality and diversity, and/or are there any limits to this conception in this regard? For our panel, we are particularly considering three contexts in which Hegel's concept of contradiction should be discussed:

**I. Contradiction and Truth**

Dialetheism is an emerging field in philosophical inquiry and invokes questions regarding the social status of contradictions: Is there a systematic connection between contradiction and recognition, in Hegel and beyond? The ethical framework of Western modernity consists of the normative mechanism of granting recognition for work and struggle as contributions to the reproduction of the spirit. Feminist and decolonial critiques show how the heteronormative liberalism of the global north undermines and destructs its own ethical framework. What is at stake here is the modern problem of devalorization and violence by Western predominance in (knowledge) production. This



problem is not to be denied but taken as a critical point of departure for decolonial awareness within a culture of conflict, incorporating an epistemic praxis of recognition in the light of a “normative ideal” of communicative freedom (Theunissen) in the light of a pluralist understanding of contradiction.

## II. **Contradiction and Recognition**

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, contradictions are staged within the arena of spirit’s negativity. In this context, individual subjects experience themselves, among other things, as being part of a practically and normatively structured community with others, characterized by relations of recognition. The logic of these recognitive relations, as Hegel presents it, especially in the famous chapter on *Self-consciousness*, has been taken up by various streams of reception and examined in terms of the role of contradictions, conflicts, and negativity in its understanding. Questions addressed in this regard include: Is recognition the same as or different from reconciliation? Must reconciliation be understood as the opposite of contradiction and conflict? Or are both inextricably linked? Additionally, what role do concepts such as desire and work play in this context? It is especially the interpretations and critical inquiries from the contexts of feminist, psychoanalytic (e.g., Benjamin, Butler, Malabou), and decolonial (e.g., Fanon, Gilroy, Mbembe, Coulthard) perspectives that critique the canonized approaches (such as Habermas, Honneth) as too affirmative; emphasizing that concepts such as negativity and contradiction must be given more weight.

## III. **Contradiction, Life and Communication**

The notion of communication plays an important systematic role not only regarding the phenomenology of trust and recognition, but also with regard to Hegel’s *Logic*. However, this is notoriously overlooked in the debates on the *Science of Logic*. Instead of perpetuating the “basic prejudice” of the unthinkability of contradiction, Hegel turns things upside down: Contradiction is life. Life is a relational unity when it becomes itself in its other. Hegel challenges the traditional notion that contradiction is inherently unthinkable and proposes a reevaluation, suggesting that contradiction is intrinsic to life and that life itself is a dynamic process of relation and communication. Here, the normative mechanism of granting recognition for work and struggle is rearticulated on abstract grounds, showing that reciprocity and communication are the preconditions of life to emerge and flourish. Life is the notion that encompasses the epistemic and practical preconditions of concepts of contradiction: The immanent law of Objectivity is “Communication” (GW 12.138). Hegel presents a structured and abstract elucidation of the thinkability of contradiction through a typology of differences termed *Denkbestimmungen* or determinations of thought. The typology of differences invites us to reassess and rethink the relation of identity and difference. An immanent critique of communication shows why abstraction from reciprocity and communication is possible but fails to reproduce the conditions of life.

### **Keywords**

*Dialethism · Recognition · Communication*

**SP #2**

Wed, Feb 12, 2025, 10.30 a.m.  
GW2 B3.009

**Institute for Social Research IFS: Contradictions of Inclusion**

Chair: Stephan Lessenich

**Managing Contradictions: Handling Conflicting Narratives in the Intergenerational Transmission of Work Experiences Among Former 'Guest Workers' from Turkey and Their Descendants**

—Gözde Çelik

**Contradictions of Exit: Prepper and Eco-Individualists Between Self-Sufficiency and Community Desires**

—Anna Rosa Ostern

**Between Criminalisation and Democratisation: A Legal Geography Perspective on the Mediterranean Borderscape**

—Sarah Kruck

**The Dialectic of Emancipation and Solidarity**

—Gregor Berger & Constanze Stutz

**SP #3**Wed, Feb 12, 2025, 02.00 p.m.  
**GW2 B3.009****Dialogizität und Widerspruch (in) vormoderner deutscher Literatur**

Chair: Anja Becker &amp; Britta Bußmann

**Avas Johannes: Widerspruch und Widersprechen in mittelhochdeutscher Bibelepik**

—Anja Becker

**Dialogizität als Strategie: Aushandlungsprozesse über die Rolle Mariens in der späten Rezeption des Mönchs von Salzburg**

—Britta Bußmann

**Die (De-)konstruktion dia-logischer Formen in der ‚Epistel des Rabbi Samuel an Rabbi Isaak‘ Irmhart Ösers**

—Kathrin Chlench-Priber

**Widerstreit und metadiskursive Lücken im ‚Ackermann aus Böhmen‘ des Johannes von Tepl**

—Albrecht Hausmann

Das Denken des Mittelalters ist noch kaum vom aristotelischen Prinzip der Widerspruchsfreiheit geprägt, wichtiger sind Logiken des Sowohl-als-Auch, die sich z. B. im bibelexegetischen Verfahren des mehrfachen Schriftsinns manifestieren (Lienert 2019a: 20). Zugleich sind in literarischen Erzähltexten der Vormoderne Widersprüche im Sinne von logischer, sachlicher und/oder diskursiver Unvereinbarkeit omnipräsent. Während rezente Arbeiten zur historischen Narratologie diese Seite des Widerspruchs vielfach thematisieren, ist die zweite Seite des Konzepts, Widerspruch als kommunikativer Einspruch, als Widerrede in vormoderner Literatur noch weitgehend unerforscht (Lienert 2019b:1f.). Widersprüche können ganz allgemein Türen „into polyphonic conversations“ (Lossau et al. 2019: 13) öffnen, insbesondere in poetischer Rede. Die mittelalterliche Didaktik nutzt zudem dialogische Verfahren, um Wissen perspektivenreich zu vermitteln und die Fähigkeit der eigenständigen Urteilsfindung auszubilden. Da vormoderne Literatur meist (auch) didaktische Zwecke verfolgt, nimmt sie z. B. Verfahren der *disputatio*, des Lehr- und Streitdialogs produktiv auf und integriert zahlreiche agonale Dialoge in ihre Erzähltexte (Becker 2020). Das Panel möchte zur Historisierung von Widerspruchskonzepten und -verfahren beitragen, indem es literarische Texte der Vormoderne untersucht, in denen kommunikativ Einspruch erhoben wird. Agonale Dialogizität kann sowohl in intradiegetischen Figurengesprächen auftreten als auch in der literarischen Gattung des Streitgedichts ausagiert werden; weiterhin interessieren in diesem Kontext Briefkontroversen und intertextuell aufeinander bezogene Textfassungen. Die Widerrede entzündet sich dabei z. B. an anthropologischen Grunderfahrungen, wie dem Tod einer geliebten Person (bei Johannes von Tepl fordert ein trauernder Witwer den Tod selbst in einen agonalen Dialog heraus, der als „Widerstreit“ im Sinne Lyotards interpretiert wurde – Dröse 2013); oder es werden durch Einspruchsverfahren christliche Heilswahrheiten vermittelt (wie die Inkommensurabilität Gottes) bzw. Glaubenswahrheiten diskursiv ausgehandelt (wie die Stellung Marias im Heilsplan); zudem geht es um die direkte Konfrontation der christlichen mit der jüdischen Perspektive. In den behandelten Texten werden Widersprüche fast nie aufgelöst, aber durchaus kommunikativ-literarisch vielfältig ‚bearbeitet‘ und perspektiviert. Dabei treten alteritäre Formen von Logik, Argumentation und Wissen hervor, die neuzeitliche Konzepte des Widerspruchs und des Widersprüchlichen herausfordern.

## Literature

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**SP #4**Wed, Feb 12, 2025, 04.30 p.m.  
GW2 B3.009**Being One**Michael Hampe, Graham Priest & Norman Sieroka  
Chair: Tamo Lossau**Nothing as the Ground for Everything**

—Graham Priest

**On Individuals and Substance**

—Michael Hampe

**On the Coordination of Experience**

—Norman Sieroka

There is an apparent contradiction between having parts and being an integral unity. In philosophy this has often been referred to as “the problem of the one and the many”. The problem comes in many guises and one way to understand it is in relation to the notion of contradiction and what lies beyond. One of the guises of this problem is what Spinoza famously dealt with, namely that there are many objects in the world, while the world is somehow a unified whole. A different guise is dealt with by Whitehead who acknowledges a multitude of types of experience unified in some kind of organic wholes. Or, as a more formal and individualized variant thereof, one might wonder about the temporal parts of a person: There is me as a six-year-old, as a twenty-two-year-old, and so on ... but there never is or was more than one me, it seems. This panel session will treat this (seeming) contradiction between the one and the many along some of these Western lines of thought, but it will also draw on elements of the Asian philosophical traditions, such as Buddhism.

As for the single talks: Graham Priest will address the thought, to be found in both Heidegger and Nishida, that nothingness is what unites the objects of the world into a whole. Michael Hampe will follow the lines of Spinoza and will investigate how viewing the world *sub specie aeternitatis* (i.e., from the perspective of the one substance) liberates us from suffering. According to Spinoza, interests and aims, and with them felt contradictions and sufferings, only arise on the level of individuals. Thus, one way to overcome contradictory demands on an individual level is by decreasing one’s focus on purposes and interests. Norman Sieroka will follow the lines of Whitehead, investigating different types of experience and supporting the claim that the aim of philosophy is to coordinate the current variations thereof. He will touch on the question of individualizing, too, but alongside the notion of events (of which experiences are a particular example).

**Literature**

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**Keywords**

*Uniting Objects into Wholes · the Problem of the One and the Many · Eastern and Western Philosophical Traditions*

**SP #5**Thu, Feb 13, 2025, 10.30 a.m.  
GW2 B3.009**Towards a New Humanist Praxis: Feminist Collaborations Through Contradictions**

Chair: Paula von Gleich

**Combahee River Collective and Black Feminist Critique of Western Bio-Humanist Onto-Cosmology**

—Oluwadunni Talabi

**Re-Centering the Indigenous Lesbian Body and Desire: Contra-dicting Heteropatriarchy with Decolonial Conceptions of Gender and Sex in Ángeles Cruz's Filmography**

—Corina Wieser-Cox

**Caste, Gender, and Lived Experiences: Dalit Feminist Voices in Contemporary Literary Memoirs**

—Krutika Patri

The 1960s anti-colonial, anti-apartheid, and civil rights movements across multiple continents saw an intensification in the critique of Europe's liberal humanist tradition from non-white scholars, writers, and activists. Scholars such as Frantz Fanon, W.E.B. Du Bois, Aimé Césaire, Henry Louis Gates Jr., Paul Gilroy, Wole Soyinka to mention a few, were deeply involved in producing counter discourses that challenged the genre of race instituted by Western modernity to relegate the majority of the world population into a subjugated/dehumanized category. Concurrently, non-white, non-western, postcolonial and decolonial feminist scholars, writers, and activists writing from diverse parts of the globe, would mobilize the discourse of the human into new dialogical directions, ushering in even more contradictions and relationalities. These new humanist praxes developed by feminist scholars and activists such as Sylvia Wynter, Barbara Smith, Gloria Anzaldua, Cherrie Moraga, and Sharmila Rege would engender the unsettling of binary, essentialist, masculinist, heteronormative and mono-humanist perspectives commonly found in Western philosophies and traditional anticolonial counter discourses. Additionally, for many Indigenous peoples from Abya Yala, the 1960s were simply one historical point of revolution that later bled into uprisings in the 1990s (such as the Zapatista movement in Mexico). Indigenous feminist activists such as Comandante Ramona (Tzotzil Maya) and Rigoberta Menchú (K'iche' Maya), not only through their resistance contradicted hegemonic Mestizaje and neo-colonial structures of power and control from imperial nations like the United States with their activism, but their feminist livelihoods also brought to light the consistent murders and suppression of Indigenous women throughout the Americas until now due to heteropatriarchy and machismo. Thus, in an ambitious manner that builds upon these historical moments and feminist contradictions, our panel convened from tripartite cultural and genre contexts (Black, Indigenous Mexican, Indian and Dalit) will examine the concepts and analytical tools used to unsettle modernity's singular subjectivity or as Sylvia Wynter calls it "the overrepresentation of [European] man [as human]" in Western knowledge systems (2003). Our panel will examine the continuum of complex, entangled local and global networks of planetary crisis spotlighted by Black, Indigenous, Indian and Dalit feminist scholars, film directors, writers and artists that develop new and alternative contradictions of humanist praxis envisioned outside of the colonial Western "center." Our papers delve into different, but intersecting topics that highlight the contradictions of feminist praxis when not centred in Western hegemony: Oluwadunni's paper will examine the foundational contributions of the 1970s Black feminist lesbian organization renowned for spotlighting the entanglement of systems of oppression, linking their legacy of problematizing contradictions to our urgent planetary crisis and the contemporary feminist scholarships and activism that have continued to

emerge to shape discussions around planetary justice. Krutika's paper explores two contemporary literary memoirs written by Dalit authors Yashica Dutt and Sujata Gidla. Through their narratives, these writers speak about their personal experiences of being Dalit, both in the Indian subcontinent and the West. By anchoring the analysis within the frameworks of Dalit feminism and Dalit consciousness, the paper discusses caste oppression and resistance within a globalized landscape. And last, Corina will delve into what decolonial feminist film theories entail from a Mixtec, lesbian and female point of view through an analysis of Angeles Cruz's array of films. Through this filmic analysis, an image of decoloniality emerges within the cinematic screen: one of community and Indigenous female rage, resistance and desire. What all three papers focus on specifically, are feminist collaborations that can come out of contradictions. Proposed papers include: 1. Combahee River Collective and Black Feminist Critique of the Dialectical Bio-Humanist Tradition 2. Re-centering the Indigenous Lesbian Body and Desire: Contradicting Heteropatriarchy with Decolonial Conceptions of Gender and Sex in Angeles Cruz's Filmography 3. Caste, Gender and Lived Experiences: Dalit Feminist Voices in Contemporary Literary Memoirs.

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### Keywords

*Transnational & Decolonial feminism · Dialogical Humanism · Literature & Film*

**SP #6****The Contradictions of 'Soft-Authoritarianism': Understanding the Transformations Within Contemporary Democracies**

Ulrike Flader | Nurhak Polat | Lipin Ram | Hagen Steinhauer

Chair: Burcu Nur Binbuğa

**Constitutive Twists: Grasping Soft Authoritarian Government in Turkey**

—Ulrike Flader

**Unpacking (Un)Predictability: Soft Authoritarian Drift and Data Politics in Turkey**

—Nurhak Polat

**The Making of a 'Predatory Identity': Demographic Anxiety and Reactionary Mobilization in South India**

—Lipin Ram

**Blurring Ideological Lines: Soft Authoritarian Shifts in French Public Discourse.**

—Hagen Steinhauer

Contemporary right-wing regimes in different parts of the world display a “chameleon-like” (Randeria 22) nature, rendering stable categorizations of their political character nearly impossible. These governments and political formations—such as in Turkey, Hungary, France and India—exhibit a wide range of traits attributable to far-right politics, neo-fascism and autocratic rule while also continuing to be democratic nation states. In the process, they blur the boundaries between democracy, illiberalism and authoritarianism, thus placing contradictions at the heart of their modus vivendi and necessitating the conceptual vocabulary of ‘soft-authoritarianism’. This panel explores the different ways in which ‘soft-authoritarian’ regimes perpetuate themselves and aims to provide different approaches to conceptually understand the way in which these formative contradictions play out in the form of authoritarian government. To this end, we emphasize in particular the central role of ‘unpredictability’, ‘confusion’ and the figure of the ‘trickster’ as abiding motives across different contexts. Our aim is to reveal and to analyze the politically and conceptually slippery nature of these regimes, and how they construct a model of governance and political mobilization that embraces contradiction instead of eschewing it. In dialogue with Contradiction Studies and its conceptual framework, we offer insights into the workings of these regimes through fine-grained empirical research based on Turkey, France and India. In doing so, we hope to contribute to multi-disciplinary discussions that place contradiction at the center of understanding the durability of socio-political and discursive regimes, as opposed to those that seek to resolve and explain away the former.

**Keywords***Soft-Authoritarianism · Right-wing Politics · Unpredictability*



## Roundtable

Ramona Pellegrino | David Papallado | Daniel Schmidt

*Es zählt nicht, wo was ist. Oder woher man ist. Es zählt, wohin du gehst. Und am Ende zählt nicht mal das.* <sup>Stanišić (2019: 337)</sup>

–Contradictions in German–Speaking Translingual Literature through the lens of globale° and POLYPHONIE

Literary translingualism, which is understood as “the phenomenon of writers who create texts in more than one language or in a language other than their primary one” (Kellman 2019: 337), inherently embodies contradictions as it navigates multiple languages and cultural frameworks, often simultaneously. Translingual literature often juxtaposes linguistic and cultural elements that appear contradictory, creating a dynamic interplay between them. German–speaking translingual literature provides striking examples of such contradictions. For instance, the works of Emine Sevgi Özdamar, particularly *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* (1998), blend Turkish and German cultural and linguistic elements, portraying the protagonist’s experience as a Turkish immigrant in Germany. Another example is Saša Stanišić’s *Herkunft* (2019), which oscillates between Bosnian and German narratives, revealing the contradictions of identity formation and the impact of war and migration on personal (and collective) memory. Finally, Slata Roschal’s *153 Formen des Nichtseins* (2022) showcase an original example of German–Russian translingualism which employs language(s) and multimedial contents to reinforce a sense of non–identity and distancing from any essentialist form of sociocultural belonging. // For 17 years, the globale° Festival for Border–Crossing Literature (<https://globaleliteraturfestival.de/>) has been providing a platform in Bremen for discussing literature by writers of “non–German language origin”, organizing readings, workshops, and panel discussions, and establishing or strengthening collaborations with various institutions in Germany, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and Ukraine. In parallel, since 2010, the permanent international research project *Polyphonie. Mehrsprachigkeit\_Kreativität\_Schreiben* (see Bürger–Koftis et al. 2010) and the related inter–university research center [POLYPHONIE](#) established between the Universities of Genoa and Catania in 2018 have been investigating the multifaceted connections between multilingualism and creativity in writing systematically, and from an interdisciplinary perspective. In 2023, the collaboration between globale° and POLYPHONIE was initiated in order to promote a long–term scientific and transnational exchange between culture and science on the topics of multilingualism and writing, as well as literary and cultural transfer (<https://globale-polyphonie.de/>). // Our contribution is planned as a roundtable with the three presenters being the organizers of the cooperation. It aims to elucidate how globale° and POLYPHONIE represent and celebrate—rather than resolve—contradictions in German–speaking translingual literature. The discussion is the chance to evaluate findings and results that were acquired in the work which found their way already into the project. The analysis will be positioned within the context of Contradiction Studies, considering the epistemic preconditions, formation, and negotiation of contradictions in translingual literary production. This approach aligns with the conference’s aim to rethink the complex topic of contradiction by focusing on living in and with contradictions, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on provincializing and decolonizing contradiction as an ordering practice.

### Literature

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**Keywords**

*Translingual Literature · Migration and Literature · Multilingual Creativity*