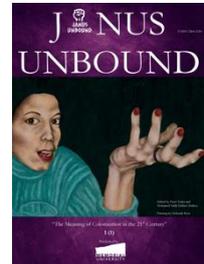


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Message from the Editors

The editors welcome letters on all subjects, especially if they discuss or comment on the works published in *Janus Unbound*. Please read our Guidelines for Authors prior to submitting your manuscript.

Precocious Posts, Perpetual Beginnings: Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

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Peter Trnka



Manifesting

Welcome to the collective global expression *Janus Unbound*. There are many taking part, from all over. Multiples of multitudes, cells of groups, in bubbles even. Possessed by no-one. Coming together by chance, struggle, and always, though never equally, by suffering and trauma, in virtual common. Working as shadows in the shadows, collectively, forming and deforming cabinets, as needed. Speaking in poems and riddles, sometimes. In manifestos and research articles, also, and soon becoming-more-multimediac.

A journal of critical studies, to become aware and to stay aware of the power in knowledge and the knowledge in power. Resisting falling into the fascination of spectacle(s).

Unbound, geared for resistance and struggle, oriented to liberation. Opposing any and all laws and practices of domination.

Needs and drives scream to begin again.

Opposing domination by discipline and control in knowledge work and knowledge institutions, from kindergartens, families, and universities to state and global epistemic and communicative infrastructures and access conditions. Opposing arbitrary and oppressive rules and rulings of grammarians, logicians, and other language and thought police. Aware of the ironies of launching a journal of critical studies featuring the anti-colonial and global while operating in the English language.

A desire for combining and cutting across world literature, politics, cultural studies, theory, art, and philosophy, and open to many others. Transdisciplinary. Challenging to read. Full of attitude and spark. An irritant to default operations. A more probable condition for intellectual revolution than any other. Transdisciplinary. Transcritical, transversal, transvaluing.

Logics of addition, affirmative conjunction, thinking with the *and*. *And* binary exclusionary logics of *either/or*. Which is major and which minor?

Cross-cutting transversal, disciplinary matrices extended and transformed, for cosmopolitan collective intelligences. For perpetual emergence, beginning, creation.

Today, here and now, the point of departure, first volume, first issue: *The Meaning of Colonization in the 21st Century*. Begin today again with colonization. Does nothing change? No, colonization, in some form or another, is here to stay. Not “what is a colonialist today” or “what is colonialism today” but specifically “what does it mean today to colonize and to be colonized?”

Significant events in history repeat, or so Marx says, in beginning his critical historical essay, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, an *au courant* famed analysis of the early 19th century French despot Louis Bonaparte, a pale imitation and echo of Napoleon-Bonaparte. Marx starts his analysis of the rise of despotism by remarking that Hegel, the Prussian state philosopher, omitted the point to his observation “that all great, world-historical facts and personages occur, as it were, twice,” namely “[he] has forgotten to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce” (594). In history’s double appearance or repetition there is a difference: first there is the common tragedy then, on repetition, ridiculous comedy (Ronald Reagan the tragedy of Make America Great, Donald Trump the insurrectionary global comedy of MAG Again).

History repeats, colonization continues and happens anew, today. In the biosphere, the (to some suddenly by way of Covid-19 pandemic) virtualized and biopoliticized biosphere, people are colonized anew every day, everywhere. Dead stored labour, the zombie apocalypse, continues to reproduce itself, in the biosphere: the paradox is screaming. Dead labour reproduces itself by any and all means necessary, including by so-called primitive accumulation or extraction: theft by conquest, expulsion, and killing. Dead labour perpetually repeats itself, at core and margin, feeding on living labour power in all its times and shapes of expression. Dead labour nonetheless is quick to primitivize and dehumanize that very same living labour, and by implication, to render colonial rule free of any guilt.

Anti-colonial means here in its widest sense resisting any unwanted intrusion, intromission, insertion, invasion, inhabitation or other act. Colonial here includes micro-colonial. Anti-colonial entails, to begin with, anti-imperial, anti-capital, anti-patriarch.

Consider symbolically, epistemically, the body counts of indigenous and racialized youth featured in global media channels in this second year of the post-modern 21st century, 2021. How can you say “postcolonial” in the context of such frequent, putatively legal racialized mass killings? Hundreds, then thousands of corpses of indigenous children located at forced residential Canadian state schools, often managed by Christian church organizations. The count continues. Palestinians again bombed in their own homes by the racist Israeli colonial war machine.

There is no maximum minority body count for those in power: that would be to assume a naïve logic that promotes life rather than the zombie logic of more intense and extended colonization.

Uneven or untimely is the “development” of modes of production, and modes of exchange, and also forms of rule, class, and social group, including gender. Neo-colonial and neo-feudal are extensions of the postmodern into the post-postmodern return of the modern and premodern. Hence very quickly, al-

most instantaneously always way-too-too early, crying with fulfilment, the precociousness of posts: postcolonial, postimperial, postcapitalist, postclass, postgender, postfeminist, postracist, posthuman, and so on.

The perpetual nature of beginnings is shown in the faces of Janus: one visage turned toward the past as the other is turned to the future, both together actualize the present. Shelley's Janus is a spirit of doorways and openings, of initiative, activity, and movement; a sublime spirit, Janus holds destruction and preservation together, and opposes not the sublime to the ordinary, but the terrifying and redeeming life of the sublime to the empty or false life without it, that is, a zombie life or "a walking death" (Bromwich 1-2).

Beginning is what study and scholarship promise, especially in the arts and humanities. In his analysis of intention and method, titled *Beginnings*, Edward Said finishes the work by noting that:

A beginning is what I think scholarship ought to see itself as, for in that light scholarship or criticism revitalizes itself. ... [A] beginning methodologically unites a practical need with a theory, an intention with a method. For the scholar or researcher, a beginning develops when the conditions of his reality become equal to the generosity of his, of everyman's, intellectual potential. To call this a *radical* beginning is to risk repeating a hackneyed expression. Yet a root is always one among many, and I believe the beginning radically to be a method or intention among many, never *the* radical method or intention. (380, emphasis in original)

Said is repeating here with a difference Marx's well-known reflection (from his "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*") on the meaning of radical as root, and the meaning of the root of man (woman or person) in man himself, woman herself, or they themselves, or more properly, all collectively, dead alive and still to be born.

Not all beginning is good. There are false beginnings, or repetitions of the same: restarting colonialism, colonizing, anew. Colonization and capitalization are dynamic systemic activities, constantly reinventing themselves, through variations. Oppression, exploitation, slavery, and killing continue, until we have new beginnings.

How do we begin anew?

Janus opens by doubling, by becoming-two, facing this way and that. The gesture is paradoxical and also, at the same time, quotidian, basic. What does unbinding Janus do? It cuts knots and ties, like those around Pandora's box, making appear all kinds of monsters. Various forces are put on show in a release and multiplication of energies.

I look forward to *Janus Unbound* keeping me on my toes: alert, attentive to the emerging, living, new voices of struggle. I hope you do too.

Doubling

Mohamed Salah Eddine Madiou, the originator and founder of *Janus Unbound*, invited me to join the editorial board in 2020. When a year or so later, in March 2021, he proposed that I take up the position of Editor-in-Chief, it took me some time to appreciate the scope and significance of his gracious offer. Since

then, we have been working closely together as a pair of editors, a body and a shadow, a shadow and a body.

Similar doubling—pairing, dyad forming—spreads through the journal’s network. Each position is duplicated and so protected by a shadow. Shadows are not inferior to bodies nor bodies to shadows. Each is inseparable from the other. Working to grow *Janus Unbound* globally and to establish our home at Memorial University in St. John’s, Newfoundland, it has been a pleasure and an honour.

Two Editors, as Janus has two or more faces. We push and pull each other. Friends and collaborators. Nowhere near the same, we work well together. Three Associate Editors: Danine Farquharson, Memorial, Department of English; Tahrir Hamdi, Arab Open University, Jordan, Department of Literature; and Ilan Pappé, Exeter University, UK, Director of the Center for Palestinian Studies. Our international Editorial Board numbers 19, the international Advisory Board 21; a staff of nine subeditors and assistant editors; a multidisciplinary set of over 140 international referees. Many of the works in this issue and issues to come feature voices from the collective.

The structure of the collective is a two-faced Janus shadow form, with each editorial position shadowed by an assistant. Built-in duplication allows for adjustment to personal needs and particular circumstances, and perpetual training.

Issuing

Thank you to the many people involved in the writing and editing of the whole of this issue Number One. *Janus Unbound* pulled itself together by creating a full, thoroughly thematic, cuttingly critical, and diverse issue. Two letters, six articles, four poems, and three reviews, all on colonization, in one form or another. 15 pieces, seven by women, four of those being poets. Hence the most vivid glimmers of future ways of being, at least here and now, come from women (at the dawn perhaps of becoming-woman).

We splash into existence with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s “How the Heritage of Postcolonial Studies Thinks Colonialism Today.” Thank you always for the challenge, work, and example. Spivak here argues, among other things, for the humanities beyond the disciplines as the hope of criticism. A selective historical analysis of the ongoing resistance to colonialism in India, and many other things, is followed by a historical and contemporary analysis of the continuing *Nakba* in Palestine, Ahmad Qabaha and Bilal Hamamra’s “The Nakba Continues: The Palestinian Crisis from the Past to the Present.” This is the first of three articles on Israeli colonization of Palestine. Each affirms that the *Nakba*, the singular catastrophe of the 1948 Zionist Israeli invasion, continues—or happens again and again—to this day, on this day, and tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, and so on. Unless.

In Michelle Véronique Switzer’s “Resisting Ideological English: Agency and Valuing Against Reified Abstractions and Erasures” she asks the reader to consider colonization from the point of view of yet again a different colonial history and experience, this time in the contemporary USA. There are few if any spaces free of colonial history or free of colonization. The question appears rather to be “Which colonization do you mean in the 21st century?” Ramzy Baroud and Romana Rubeo take us, in their “Dismantling the Violent Discourse of the State

of Israel: On Zionism, Palestinian Liberation, and the Power of Language,” to a Palestine similar in at least one tragic way to Spivak’s India, namely in the attention given to the repetition of colonizing behaviour by the colonized.

The obfuscations and cover-ups concerning colonial history, imperial aggression, racialized and ethnic cleansing and genocide, make “the meaning of colonization” less than simple and clear: we appear to be caught in a dangerous kind of shadow play where agency is never settled or taken-up, assumed or inhabited responsibly. Today’s colonizer has a more difficult justificatory or public relations problem, but unfortunately that suggests that the more serious obstacles to colonization have somehow been removed, dismantled, or worn down.

If you are able to see, directly, clearly, what is happening in front of you then perhaps there is more hope. The experiment of Ilan Pappé, in his “Everyday Evil in Palestine: The View from Lucifer’s Hill,” is just such a gamble.

We end our scholarly articles with the thought, in Fadi Abou-Rihan’s “On the Micro-Colonial,” that colonization in the 21st century—in the sense of the most general perhaps of colonizations, libidinal colonization, the colonization of desire on desire—is what it has “always” pretty much been and will be, that is, open for business. But that there is always violence does not determine resistance nor the intensity and extent of freedom.

The poems. Thank you Rebecca Salazar, Heather Nolan, Shazia Ramji, Diane Roberts, and *Janus Unbound*’s Poetry Editor, Andreae Callanan, for giving a brilliant answer to the question of why articles and poems in a transdisciplinary, anti-colonial, anti-orientalist, anti-imperial endeavour? Resistance to and by way of grammar brings the poetic, philosophic, and transdisciplinary together in a zone of intensity. Hope, to figure resistance and freedoms, the many as yet impossible faces of freedom.

The journal closes its inaugural issue with three on-theme book reviews. Jay Foster’s critical review of Kenneth E Bauzon’s *Capitalism, The American Empire, and Neoliberal Globalization*, sets a standard for in-house criticism (Bauzon and Foster are both editorial board members): treat friends with as much or more criticism as enemies. Critical attention is a gift, not an insult.

The two end pieces are Syrine Hout’s review of the volume *Post-Millennial Palestine: Literature, Memory, Resistance*, edited by Ahmad Qabaha and Rachel Fox, and Louis Brehony’s review of Nili Belkind’s *Music in Conflict: Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Aesthetic Production*. We end in Palestine, squarely focused on Palestine, showing the breadth of the political in the musical and aesthetic, and pointing to our futures in the multimediac.

In solidarity and collective resistance,
Peter Trnka, Editor-in-Chief
Associate Professor of Philosophy, Memorial University
St. John’s, Newfoundland
11 November 2021

Biography

Peter Trnka is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Memorial University. He has taught at Karlova University, Prague as well as Toronto and York. He has published scholarly philosophical and transdisciplinary articles in various international journals, as well as poetry and a cookbook.

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