

Editorial.

FROM *ANIME*
GENRE AND
ZOO-POETICS
TO LITERARY
AND SOMATIC
STUDIES.

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The common ground for this issue of *New Theories* would be the concept of “the performative” in a variety of discourses, spanning in a diachronic and synchronic realm of humanities. In the opening paper by Srećko Jurišić, the author re-examines an innovative oeuvre by Ezra Koenig, that builds up his anime as a series of *hommages* and citations within a perverted Marxist frame. The analysis of the show helps to shed a light on what happened to Marx’s ideas within a millennial pop-cultural *Stimmung*. Koenig’s anime show is a part of what could be defined millennial socialism or Marxism or even Marx’s revival and a segment within a growing interest in socialism and left-political theory among the millennials impelled by the crisis of capitalism and incited by the new media that emerged during the Bush/Obama and Cameron/Clegg era. In a comparative manner, this type of discursiveness is set against the works as *n+1* (New York, 2004), *Endnotes* (Brighton, 2005), *The New Inquiry* (New York, 2009), and *Salvage* (London, 2015), with *The Baffler* relaunched in 2009 and *Dissent*, founded in 1954 and restyled in 2014; not to mention a slightly more elaborate project, at least in style and format, of *Jacobin*, founded in Washington DC in 2010, and Novara Media, which followed a year later in London. Ideas as these are also found in books published by *Jacobin* editors Aaron Bastani or Bhaskar Sunkara in 2019. Bastani’s book, *Fully Automated Luxury Communism* ideally recalls Neoyokian universe since it proposes future alternatives to it, permeated as it is with references to Karl Marx, Pico della Mirandola, Lui Pirandello etc. Bastani argues that climate change, resource scarcity, surplus populations, and technical unemployment, are syndromes of a dying socio-economic order, whereas technological advances in robotics and AI, as well as renewable energies, gene editing, synthetic meats, cellular agricultures, and (eventually) asteroid mining, provide opportunities to achieve Fully Automated Luxury Communism (FALC). Igor Gajin, on the other hand, traces “the performative” in a contemporary medium of common narratives, pop culture reflecting and emulating collective fantasies and beliefs, often indiscriminately adopting, building and reinforcing stereotypical notions. Therefore, this aspect of mutual recognition in the communication of popular or mass culture and its audience becomes one of the basic factors of its popularity, not only for this type of culture in general, but also for certain long-lived mythemes whose construction and maintenance are contributed by the mass culture industry. One of the manifestations of the afore mentioned mechanism

in the large offer of pop culture production is Catwoman, that the author is eager to re-examine, representing a range of cultural interpretations of a cat, but also the prejudices that serve as a basis for constructing one of the possible definitions of the female sex. Gajin implies that this work demonstrates the cultural and ideological penetration into the comic representation of a complex, ambivalent psychology of that symbolic relationship (and the mediating role of the symbolic cat motif) in a seemingly infantile or benign and escapist narrative such as the (super) heroine Catwoman narrative. By using feminist theory and cultural animalism repertoire, the work examines the strategies of representation exemplified by this popcultural icon as a reproduction of a long-lasting patriarchal ideology within the fundamentally unchanged views of phallogentrism, only adorned and modernized by pseudofeminist emancipation into a “strong female subject” such as Catwoman is.

Boris Škvorc enters a philological topic, i.e., the relations and controversies that arise in discussion about the relationships between history and literature. In this paper he offers an approach from the position of literary theory and that is a reason why the emphasis is on question of history as a discipline, how it is seen and viewed from a position of theory. That is followed by posing the question of historicism and place of story in historical presentation, i.e., the usage of narratives in historical approaches. Historicism is discussed from diachronic perspective, namely by presenting the German Historicism. His discussion always bares on mind the way that the problem of historicity is framed and defined in relationship towards the problematizing of field of history of literature, thus re-offering or even re-introducing a possible contextual approach to various models of literary history as a starting position for comparative possibilities in the field and viewing the comparative history in a different light, compared to what was the case with very strict appreciation of “disciplinary borders” set by traditional philologists in Southeast Europe.

Miško Šuvaković's paper, again tracing a performative turn inside of the digital context, identifies theoretical approaches to interpreting the existence of photography. The first position provides an answer to the question “What is photography?” starting from the essential non-objectivity of photography – distorted by the “optical unconscious”. The second position allows the interpretation of this issue starting from the fundamental turn of photographic practice, from the production of

technical images in the reflection of the concept, discourse and policy of photographic practice in specific institutional frameworks, and the third position commences from the digital turn – material restructuring of technological, conceptual, and distribution character materialist representational surfaces, in the flow/flux of visual information and potential manipulations that can be done on them.

Suzana Marjanić, on the other hand, deals with a performative-queer problem of *potential* unification of triadic animality within the framework of Deleuze and Guattari's concept, using the example of works by Carolee Schneemann, in which she recorded everyday kisses with her male cats Cluny and Vesper. The zoophilic binomial iconography of Carolee Schneemann with Vesper – who *passed away* on 19 July 1999, and whose death was commemorated by the artist in the video installation *Vesper's Pool (Five Kisses)* that evokes archetypes of the cultural history of witches and their animal patron from the feline family – covers the overall triadic animality from Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *becoming-animal*, which includes the *Oedipal animal*, the *archetype animal*, and the *demonic animal*. Svetlana Slapšak, finally, offers comparative research on ancient women, with the argument that, due to the assumed patriarchal censorship and/or forced oblivion, something is missing from written sources, archaeological evidence, visual material, or ethnographic parallelism, is frequently introduced. This, for instance, is the main argumentative framework of the seminal study by Eva Keuls. Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae* is part of her argument there. Written and presented in the same year as *Lysistrata*, this comedy would thus witness of Aristophanes' interest in women's rebellion related to the *hermae* affair, which is the central topic of the ancient studies *per se*.

The final part of the journal offers essays and reviews of different topics related with art studies or performance studies in broader sense of the word (Maja Đurinović, Helena Sablić Tomić and Igor Gajin). Predrag Finci discusses art as synonymous with the beautiful, although there have always been works of art that considered the object ugly, crude, ugly, or itself sought to be such a work. On the other side of "fine art", art can be terrible, cruel, crude, cruelly true, sometimes paralyzed in horror, powerless and silent, and to express such a thing difficult, unpleasant, and repulsive. Such art eludes the couple nicely – ugly. Scary is neither beautiful nor ugly. But it really cannot be terrible in the text or in some other work because it would destroy both the creator and

his (or her) work or it would become silence, which is a description of the indescribable. In the description of the terrible destruction of war and extermination, horror appears as an indescribable essence of itself. Performative contexts of anime genre, literary history, photography, or even pure performance are hereby re-contextualized, mainly on the surface of their queer-collision, with Marxism in Jurišić's paper, with zoo-poetics in Gajin's and Marjanić's case, with somatic studies in Slapšak's paper, or with "new concepts" of literary history in the paper by Boris Škvorc.