Besides affirmationism? On geography and negativity

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Abstract: This paper poses questions on the possibility of styles of working besides 'affirmationism'. The paper begins by defining negativity as a force or status of disunification, and traces how it remains closely associated with dialectics within Geography. The paper goes on to explore how the renunciation of dialectics has meant that negativity more generally has been rendered outside thought, with a concomitant uptake of an affirmationist ethos. Despite the promise of such work, there remains disquiet. What is omitted or elided in the uptake of affirmationism? Critiques, largely from outside the discipline, highlight how affirmationism privileges the lively and Life, novelty and experimentation, and the generous and generative in conjunction with a suspicion of negativity. We particularly hone in on and reflect on three ostensible limits of affirmationism: affirmationist vitalism, affirmationist politics, and affirmationist critique. We argue that renouncing dialectics does not entail, necessarily so, a concomitant abandonment of negativity. Indeed, we need to embrace attempts to think and act which elude, or dispense with, the propensity to affirm, making space for affects that are far from hopeful, for those becomings-otherwise which do not increase capacities to act, or for modes of critique that refuse; in other words, for that which is besides affirmationism or simply

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'unaffirmable'. Crucially, however, we point towards the dangers of a simple (re)turn to negativity, preferring a steadfast refusal to settle these tensions.

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1 WHITHER NEGATIVITY?

This paper raises questions around the possibility of styles of working besides affirmationism.[1] It is not concerned with being on trend or responding to a 'negative turn' (Dekeyser, 2020) but instead reflects on how 'affirmationism', a term we borrow from Benjamin Noys (2010), has come to shape the parameters of contemporary geographic thought. Affirmationism, as we define it, is the inclination to embrace – ontologically, politically and/or ethically – the productive forces of inciting, sustaining and cultivating existence. In other words, it describes the proclivity within human geography towards philosophies of affirmation. As such, we use it to gesture towards a wide range of work, especially as it has been considered a diffuse condition (Gerlach, 2020). Drawing on a range of critiques we examine the limits of affirmationism, asking: what, if anything, is lost in the uptake of an affirmationist ethos? As we will demonstrate, critiques of affirmationism have highlighted how it privileges the lively and Life, novelty and experimentation, and the generous and generative in conjunction with a suspicion of negativity. These concerns are increasingly echoed by geographers who have begun to turn to "some of the less 'additive' and 'affirmative' dimensions of worldly existence" (Straughan et al., 2020, p. 204; see also Anderson, 2019; Philo, 2017a; Raynor, 2017). What, then, are we to make of the status of negativity today?

Diana Coole (2000) notes that negativity can frequently appear profound if somewhat elusive. As she goes on to highlight, negativity gains "its most obvious sense from its opposition to the positive" (Coole, 2000, p. 2), and we can see this perhaps most clearly in

the case of dialectics. Albeit only one way in which negativity has been thought in Geography, it is clear that dialectics is one of several "non-synonymous substitutes" (Coole, 2000, p. 2). If dialectics, in the Greek tradition, originally referred to the role debate and opposition play in the quest for truth (Doel, 2008), geographers' contemporary usage of the term tends to invoke a metaphysics that emphasises process over static entities. More specifically, a dialectical process is deemed to proceed by way of the "perpetual resolution of binary oppositions" (Gregory, 2009, p. 157), and is caricatured as thesis-antithesis-synthesis. Dialectics might be considered, then, as the temporary disunification and destabilisation of concepts, followed by their resolution: the antithesis negates the thesis; the differences between them are then resolved in the synthesis. Dialectics is most closely associated with Marxist thought although it is worth underlining that dialectics is not "some single, solid entity" (Castree, 1996, p. 344) and "remains obscure, neglected, and badly misunderstood" (Doel, 2008, p. 2631).[2]

It has been suggested that the advent of poststructuralism curtailed the purchase of dialectics (Doel, 2008). It now carries the "burden of a litany of criticisms levelled against its occasional idealisms, teleologies, totalities, binarisms, and at times, its downright clunkiness" (Dixon et al., 2008, p. 2549). Indeed, this clunkiness is taken to task by Deleuze (1991, p. 44) when he describes dialectics as a "false movement … which goes from one opposite to the other only by means of imprecision". More bluntly, he contends that the "combination of opposites tells us nothing: it forms a net so slack that everything slips through" (1991, pp. 44-45).

Three points might be made at this juncture. One is the vehemence with which dialectics has been critiqued and, in turn, defended within the discipline. For the critics, for those with a 'disrelish for dialectics', it was likened to magic – where the dialectician "conjures a profusion of hats and rabbits without rhyme or reason" (Doel, 2008, p. 2633). Those with a passion for dialectics were quick to point out that "many so-called post-structuralist thinkers have a profoundly ambivalent relation to the dialectic" (Elden, 2008, p. 2641). Our purpose is not to settle this dispute. Instead, we are interested in what remains of negativity. We argue that, in disavowing dialectics, geographers may have too readily jettisoned a broader concern with negativity.

The second and related point is that despite this disavowal, "something of the 'spirit' or 'spectre' of the dialectic looms large in the discipline" (Dixon et al., 2008, p. 255). This

suspicion, written more than a decade ago, seems to be rather prescient. To question the prevalence of an affirmative ethos in Geography can therefore be seen by some as a dialectical inversion, or opposition. After all, did we not spend so long overthrowing negativity? Or, worse, is to do so an attempt to resolve two incompossible worlds? This spectre of dialectics is just as palpable today.

The third point, and to return to Coole, is that negativity remains elusive. Her suggestion is to approach it circumspectly, through allusion or metaphor. While we agree that any attempt to consider negativity as some kind of neat inversion or antonym for positivity will fail to consider the term's complexity, we nevertheless seek to sketch, circumspectly, a semblance of a definition, as that which disunifies or undermines. In other words, negativity is a manner of describing the coming apart or breaking down of concepts, passions, reason, bodies, ethics, lives, and more besides.

For us, to renounce dialectics does not mean that we also need to forgo negativity. In this paper, we will suggest that negativity, understood as a state or force of disunification – characterised by decomposition, break down, and ends – is an important part of any account of ontology, politics and critique. In this spirit, we chart three ostensible limits of affirmationist thought in Geography.[3] The first is the limit of affirmationist vitalism faced with the excessive negativity of life. The second is the limit of affirmationist politics in light of the integrationist efforts of capitalism. The third is the limit of affirmationist critique faced with the violences of contemporary life. In discerning these three limits in the sections which follow, we ask: what does affirmationism elide? What is omitted in the inclination towards that which incites or sustains existence? We conclude by pointing towards the dangers of a simple (re)turn to negativity, preferring a steadfast refusal to settle these tensions.

2 LIMIT 1: AFFIRMATIONIST VITALISM

If, as we have noted, dialectics has tended to be associated with negativity, then affirmationism has increasingly become associated, if not *conflated,* with vitalist thought across the social sciences. If vitalism was, in its earliest conceptions by biologists, an argument for the specificity of biological life (Greco, 2020), in Geography (and the social sciences more broadly) it now signals an alternative intellectual trajectory: philosophies of becoming unrestricted by conventional demarcations between living organisms and material 'nature'. In short, vitalism is "a concern with Life, and the vital processes that compose it"

(Anderson and Harrison, 2010, p. 12). Such vital processes are often understood in terms of process ('becoming'), as opposed to essential or given qualities ('being') (Greenhough, 2010). Vitalism is commonly proposed as an alternative to 'dead geographies' (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000) as it refuses to follow certain habits of rendering the modern world as a cold, indifferent, unlively, disenchanted place (Bennett, 2001). But much of the engagement with vitalism is uneven and there are often sharp distinctions between different vitalist thinkers (Osborne, 2016). Moreover, none of the figures who are considered important to a renewed or neo-vitalism – thinkers such as Bergson, Canguilhem, Deleuze, or Whitehead – "subscribed to 'vitalism' in any straightforward, conventional, or unprovocative sense" (Greco, 2020, p. 14).

The interest in vitalism has exasperated some and, at times, provoked derogatory tones. Gandy and Jasper (2017) express concerns that to engage with vitalism requires that one risks overlooking the historiography of ideas. Ian Klinke (2019) has gone so far as to claim that human geography is haunted by the 'spectre' of vitalism and describes vitalism as a 'temptation'. For others, there is a fear that we are witnessing "a kind of normative vitalism" (Romanillos, 2015, p. 565), where "theories of life, of vitality, and of affirmation, are in the ascendant" (Harrison, 2015, p. 285). John Wylie has suggested that the present-day "idiom of force, vitality, materiality and relationality" in human geography, has much to do with "the fact that the initial energies of non-representational theory were decidedly Deleuzian in tone and argument" (2010, p. 104). Greco (forthcoming, p. 2) suspects that, with the embrace of vitalism, an "implicit enthusiasm for the 'vital' as a signifier of contingency, potentiality, and the possibility of change" emerges.

Drawing on the work of Canguilhem, Osborne draws attention to how vitalism needs to accommodate the pathic aspects of life – pathology, sickness, error. As he reads it, in Deleuze's work there is a "sort of cosmic … celebratory affirmation undertaken in the name of Nietzsche" but that what is "affirmed when Nietzsche affirms life is life as pathos, as overcoming, struggle and experience" (2016, p. 198). Such an emphasis on the pathic aspects of life need not lead to outright pessimism or miserabilism. Indeed, Osborne muses in a footnote, "is it absurd to suggest that there is something depressing about endless Deleuzian celebratory affirmation, just as there is something life-affirming, heartily sardonic and jocular about the miserabilism of a Samuel Johnson, Schopenhauer, Dorothy Parker or Samuel Beckett?" (2016, p. 199n.15).

Romanillos (2015, p. 574) adopts a related disposition to Osborne, asking: "are contemporary geographical imaginations able to adequately address those difficult, if unfashionable, mortal conditions of vulnerability, decline and exposure"? His fear is that certain vitalist tendencies may well end up subsuming, passing over, or even erasing the conditions of absence, loss and corporeal decline that, at times, so thoroughly mark our lives. At a time characterised by an ethic of plenitude, he asks: how are geographers able to adequately witness certain kinds of negativity? It is this plenitude that similarly troubles Mitch Rose (2010) and Chris Philo (2017a). Rose finds certain kinds of theorising in human geography to be thrilling, not least for the "joyous affirmation of and encouragement for supplementation, multiplicity and vitalism" (2010, p. 345). But he notes that there is "more to living than life, more to life than life itself and more to ethics than living ethically. There is … [a] responsibility to the future, to the dead and the not-yet-living." (2010, p. 345). Likewise, Philo (2017a, p. 257) spotlights Paul Harrison's work on the "less vital instances of exhaustion, hesitation, sleepiness, corporeal decay, pain, being 'a loser'" to suggest that this is something of an antidote to vitalist thought in the discipline. His turn of phrase for this is 'less-than-human geographies', something of an inversion of the 'more-than-human geographies' which have been feted for their incorporation of "vitality into the dynamics and distribution of life" (Barua, 2018, p. 103).

Let us be clear though: vitalism need not be the same as affirmationism. Indeed, our target is not vitalism as such. Rather we wonder if the affirmationism that can be found in certain strands of vitalism – the tendency, that we have charted, to engage those forces that incite or sustain existence whilst failing to consider those moments when existence comes apart or breaks down – is adequate. In other words, what kind of vitalist thought can allow us to apprehend "the excessive negativity of life" (Noys, 2015, p. 178): that which includes the pathic, the dead, the vulnerable, the exhausted, the extinct?[4] What happens to such negativity and how are we to account for and make sense of it? This is not simply about making a "list of miseries, of atrocities, of frustrations and thereby revel[ling] in the negativity of the present" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 469) but about making palpable diminishments and incapacities. Here we find negativity rendered as a temptation best avoided.

3 LIMIT 2: AFFIRMATIONIST POLITICS

In David Harvey's (2009) account of dialectics, capital progresses and expands through the resolution of contradictions within and between the elements and relations of capitalism. But

the comfortable alliance between dialectics and capitalism charges geographers' suspicion of negativity. If dialectical negativity is the motor of capital, then we need to be wary of simply celebrating dialectics as offering us the conceptual means for developing antidotes to the logic of the market economy. The congruency of negativity and capitalist progress haunts the dialectic, punctuating long histories of emancipatory dreams. As Sue Ruddick (2008, p. 2600) makes clear, dialectics is "animated through a process that can never arrive at transformation, engaging only in a repetition of the same masquerading as transformation".

If dialectics is concerned with integrating negativity back into the 'whole' (Gidwani, 2008), synthesising it yet forever unable to do so, forever in repetitious suspense, is it not the refusal of genuine transformation? In Marx's materialist inversion of Hegelian dialectics, dialectics defines the labour class struggling for emancipation, but does so within a referential framing to capital. Remaining dialectically tied to capital, negativity is easily harnessed for the production of value. This is the tragedy of dialectics: it is prone to conjuring the semblance of alternatives, yet enacts the same under the name of difference.[5]

With affirmationism, the quest for novelty is figured anew. Affirmationist thought can only get to difference, understood as the new, by undermining the relational impasse of dialectical negativity. In a first move, an immanent and affirmationist relation to capital removes the oppositional urge of dialectics and its search for an outside to the capitalist relation. In a second move, affirmationism hopes to pre-figure patterns of alternative becoming (Braidotti, 2019). Affirmationism escapes dialectics' subordination to capitalist representation, preferring the logic of self-sufficiency; that is to say, its modus operandi is generative in the sense of hoping to enact futures that are not dependent on the present. The violence of the present does not condition its carving of new paths of existence (Hynes et al. 2007). With affirmationism, the language, aesthetic, and performance of opposition is complicated by those urging for new modes of existence: creativity, playfulness and experimentation. In other words, the generative force of affirmationism hopes to cancel the destructive life of *ressentiment*.

But in the eyes of certain geographers (Macfarlane, 2017) and cultural theorists (Culp, 2016; Noys, 2013; Toscano, 2008), affirmationism presents a false resolution. In its double move, affirmationism comes to occupy an unstable position: neither outside nor dependent on the capitalist relation; at once immanent and self-sufficient (Noys, 2013). Difference, in the affirmationist argument, can only emerge in this within-without of capitalism. But the tension

between 'within' and 'without', presented as a detachment from the dialectical relation, is never easily resolved. Whilst the dedication to self-sufficiency disconnects affirmationism from a simple subordination to capitalist logics, there is a danger that its logic of immanence keeps it within the orbit of capitalist interest. Put simply, affirmationism is circumscribed by the very logic it condemns. As Benjamin Noys (2013, p. 142) puts it succinctly in his critique of affirmationism: "the exit door leads in".

When some geographers suggest that affirmationist orientations towards the political offer grounds for "developing ways of working that allow for experimentation with alternate worlds and possibilities" (Woodyer and Geoghegan, 2013, p. 206), others pause and ask: alternate worlds for whom or what? We may find that, for all its emphasis on self-sufficiency and independency, affirmationism, at times, coincides with the logic, reason and culture of contemporary capitalist practices. Do genres of affirmationism underestimate contemporary capitalism's 'immunological drive' (Neyrat, 2018) towards absorbing all that might come to destabilise its endurance, widening its own limits? Oppositional or immanent, the quest for difference encounters the widening embrace of contemporary capitalism – think, for instance, of Silicon Valley's desire to annex and its obsession with disruptive experimentation. This is a creative mode of capitalism predicated on the value-creating powers of invention, experimentation, disruption and absorption (Toscano, 2008). Despite the promise of newness, affirmationism may find in contemporary capitalism an all-too familiar valorization of the new.

If dialectics actively seeks synthesis with the whole, then affirmationism, too, might involuntarily end up a victim of capital's integrationist efforts. Affirmationism, as the refusal of the dialectical recuperation of difference, might fail to break the 'circle' of the capitalist dialectic, its invoking of "a superior power of positive difference qua resistance" in unfortunate alignment with contemporary capitalism's ethos of connectivity, creativity and experimentation (Noys, 2010, p. xi). Such is the shadow looming over any simple declaration of affirmationism as the production of the radically new.

However, there remain a few dangers. As outlined in the previous section, where we explore affirmationist tendencies under the banner of vitalism, affirmationism continues to be a deferred target. The proximity of affirmationism to capitalist logics appears to legitimise a critique of affirmationism by way of a critique of capitalism. We posit the necessity for a direct critical engagement with affirmationism itself. We would, then, not go as far as

declaring the stance of affirmationism "an artless re-enactment of the conservative horizon" (Negarestani, 2011, p. 200), lacking the desire for 'real' change (Macfarlane, 2017, p. 304). Nor would we suggest that "the general destruction of things as such" is the primary path into alternative worlds (Tiqqun, 2011, p. 10). Such declarations caricature affirmationist difference as simply and, indeed, *only* the face of capital, whilst embracing an extreme account of negativity as the ultimate critical praxis. This simple reversal of affirmationist logics is, or so it is contended, capable of offering the final blow to capitalist recuperation. We do not share such convictions. Instead, we posit that the problem of difference will not be so easily resolved by affirmationism or negativity, nor even a synthesis of the two (something we return to in the conclusion). Perhaps only by more thoroughly questioning the lure of dialectics, in its various guises, can we begin to carefully attend capital's embrace of difference.

4 LIMIT 3: AFFIRMATIONIST CRITIQUE

Affirmationism questions the status of critique: too dialectical, too reactionary, too human, too detached, too fixed, too certain, too… much. But also too little: not critical enough. Critique afraid of itself, unable, unwilling, to critique critique itself, to confront a simple insight: "There is no sure ground even for criticism" (Latour, 2004, p. 227). The conventional project of critique, associated with what Latour terms a subtractive logic, might be considered to have a temporal shortcoming, being wedded to a renunciation of the past and the existing, falling short of asserting future worlds. Critique all too often closes down, preferring the certainty of its own categories and condemnations. Along the way, it makes only enemies (Mahtani and Shafer, 2018). It is comfortable in milieus already polarised with clashes between opposites, a world marked by strict distinction and fierce antagonism. This is often how critique is understood, but it might better be termed 'negative critique'.

Such an understanding of 'critique' rests on a faith in the sufficiency of debunking, in the idea that the condemnation of injustices, according to strict – transcendental – modalities of morality, carries with it its own impetus for destabilising wrongs and enacting rights. Jane Bennett (2011), for instance, traces this Kantian belief in 'rational demystification' in Adorno and Horkheimer's belief in enlightenment of the masses as revolutionary program. Geographers are in tune with Jane Bennett (2011) in complicating political consciousness as the terrain of reason, autonomy, and emancipation. Questioning the teleology of progress, geographers are also at odds with Hegelian dialectics. Hegel's centralisation of the antithesis

in the development of the absolute Idea, of absolute knowing, has been helpfully undermined by Deleuze (2004) and, subsequently, by geographers (Doel, 1996). The role of negativity, and with it, the role of negative critique, is downplayed, at times even refuted, in the progression of thought, knowledge and politics (Braidotti, 2019).

At odds with Hegel and Kant, geographers' critical spirit is sent down a new path: towards affirmationist critique. Certain affirmationist modes of critique call on geographers to experiment with a hopeful, affective stance towards the present, and to "open ourselves to the positive energies thereby made available" (Woodyer and Geoghegan, 2013, p. 207). Others urge us not to dissolve a critical stance, but to transform it into less prescriptive formations (McCormack, 2012). Affirmationist critique cherishes "a state of openness to the disturbing-captivating elements in everyday experience" (Bennett, 2001, p. 131). Because the world is wondrous, sometimes in those ways and those places we least expect it, enchantment is a key driver of affirmationist critique (Anderson and Harrison, 2010; Woodyer and Geoghegan, 2013). Affirmationist critique is admirable in its openness to different modes of relating to our objects of critique. And yet, we wonder, echoing Romanillos (2015, p. 574), what it means to present "cultivations of joy and enchantment as appropriate affective typologies for addressing the world" (see also Ahmed, 2010; Brassier, 2015; Philo, 2017b), and more specifically, to insert 'generosity' as the primary mode of critique.

For Chris Philo (2017b, p. 25), to blindly accept the call of generosity, and with it, the urge to reconcile, "to heal the wounds", in the face of violence and suffering, is to chart a dubious, or even undesirable path. In a sense, the pressure to heal wounds makes it easier to comply with the horrors of a situation. Philo prefers the work of "being wounded, bearing wounds, feeling wounds, remembering wounds, voicing wounds, and writing wounds" (p. 36); in other words, staying with rather than resolving sad passions "as a constant check on the excesses of the present" (p. 34). To relate more generously to the world, does not, by default, alter the horrors of that world. In this spirit, negativity urges the coming-to-terms-with, rather than the working-away, of a past or present that wounds, disturbs, mortifies, destroys.

To others, pursuing generosity might not only be undesirable, but equally impossible. To embrace generosity, as the presumptive willingness to enter into constructive relations to bodies and events, is, by definition, to have hope in the present, to believe that it is laced with virtual traces for alternative futures, few or many, that can be actualised if only caringly engaged with. But what tools does affirmationist critique serve to those who are unable, in

the encounter with violence, to situate themselves in a generous relationship to the present (Ahmed, 2010)? Might it be that, in tending towards affirmationist critique, we are implicitly denying the possibility of refusal and its desire to break away from the conditions of the present (Brassier, 2015), its urge to end the existence of violence? It might be that, if affirmationism's emphasis with generosity lies with producing alternative relations to the present, refusal becomes if not taboo, then, at the very least, less likely.

There remain moments when we are faced with a present whose values, truths, ideals and privileges, are entirely foreign if not hostile to us, demanding that we, in the words of Maurice Blanchot (2010, p. 7), "learn how to refuse and to maintain intact this power of refusal". In such moments, like those presented to us through death or fascism, we hesitate to relay the call of affirmationist critique. But the alternative – refusal – is interesting precisely when it does not signal a return to the resolute 'No!' of all that exists. Figured non-dialectically, refusal is the prerequisite not of *ressentiment*, but of charting new futures beyond the grasp of the present.

5 REFUSAL?

In this paper, we have developed three claims. The first is that we can discern a widespread affirmationism in human geography and that there is now an attendant tendency to espouse – ontologically, politically and ethically – that which is lively and novel. But let us be clear: we do not suggest that this affirmationism has been imposed by fiat, nor do we call for something after affirmation. The second is that there are a range of critiques of affirmationism, happening largely outside of geography, that deserve deeper consideration. We have gathered together and examined such critiques in order to explore how they point to that which is omitted within affirmationist thought. Importantly, though, we suggest that such critiques, taken together, make space for dwelling on that which is *besides* affirmationism or, indeed, 'unaffirmable'. The third and final claim is that a putative reversal from affirmationism to 'negative geographies' may not be particularly helpful. Such a reversal might not only be construed as a dialectical move but may also be in keeping with the discourse (and indeed imperative) to detect and name new 'turns' in the discipline (see Hawkins, 2019). Instead, we point to the gesture of refusal. Refusal as a reluctance or hesitation to settle, to resolve, to integrate; instead staying with the tension (see Gerlach, 2020; Harrison, 2015). Therefore, while we seek to draw out the consequences and ostensible limits of a diffuse affirmationism, we do not do this so as to abandon affirmation. Instead, we

point to the perils of ruling out negativity *tout court*. This, then, is a disposition that seeks to make more of the discomfort for that which is not – and perhaps cannot, or should not, be – celebrated, sustained or cultivated; that is, for those affects that are far from hopeful, for those becomings otherwise which do not increase capacities to act, or for a critique which refuses. Reluctant to choose between or to combine the irreconcilable, we ask instead: is there a *besides* affirmationism, and what might this entail for human geography?

NOTES

[1] We use the term 'besides' because it connotes both in addition to and yet apart from.

[2] As one reviewer reminded us, dialectics has not only a classical Greek sense (Plato, Aristotle), and a classical Hegelian-Marxist sense (Hegel, Marx, Lenin, Engels), but also a more modern sense (Adorno, Derrida). Both Adorno and Derrida, in their own ways, take issue with the reconciliatory nature of Hegelian-Marxist dialectics.

[3] We use the term limit after David Lapoujade (2017, p. 310): "The limit is not something that we think but that we confront, and we think only by confronting." We are not seeking to displace limits – to determine a new division of what is legitimate and illegitimate – but to draw attention to the conditions under (or within) which human geography is taking place, paying particular scrutiny to what affirmationism omits or elides.

[4] We begin to witness such a mode of vitalism in the 'passive vitalism' of Claire Colebrook (2010), in Ray Brassier's interest (2007, p. 227) in the "levelling force of extinction", and in geographers' ontologies attuned to passivity and decomposition (see, for instance, Bissell, 2011; Raynor, 2017). Here we encounter, commonly via Deleuze, the non-anthropocentric dedication to philosophies of becoming characteristic of vitalism, without an affirmationism that would emphasise that which endorses life.

[5] Whilst an investigation of the links connecting ontology, difference and dialectics is insightful (Cockayne et al. 2017), we focus specifically on difference as it emerges vis-à-vis capitalism. Here, following Toscano's (2007) general account of difference, the term encapsulates various desires for thinking, feeling and acting in ways at odds with those elicited and managed by the imperatives of capitalist accumulation.

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