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Confronting Discrimination: Phenomenological and Genealogical Perspectives. Introductory Remarks

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In this editorial for the special collection *Confronting Discrimination: Phenomenological and Genealogical Perspectives*, we discuss the productive aspects and limitations of discrimination as a concept for social criticism. Insofar as a proper understanding of discrimination must take into account both concrete experience and historical conditions, we propose to combine phenomenological and genealogical methodologies. While phenomenological analyses run the risk of individualizing discrimination, genealogical approaches are often suspected to reduce experiences of discrimination to their social-historical conditions. Dovetailing phenomenology and genealogy allows for mutual instruction and may herald a more comprehensive understanding of discrimination. To this end, we revisit formative phenomenological contributions to the study of discriminatory experiences and recall prominent motifs in the genealogical tradition for investigating discriminatory patterns. Finally, we show how the articles in this collection apply and critically reflect upon this proposal.

Confronting Discrimination between Experience and History

The archives of critical theory burst with concepts to scrutinize social relations: from exploitation, heteronomy, alienation, reification, and social pathology to ideology, domination, subjugation, and injustice (Honneth 2008; Jaeggi and Wesche 2009; Boltanski and Fraser 2014; Allen 2016; Celikates 2018; Loick 2019). In view of this rich store, it is not clear why social criticism should specifically turn to the concept of discrimination. Recent events seem to bear out this reservation. Think of the controversy about the "One love" armband at the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar: FIFA's decision to forbid team captains to wear an armband with the slogan "One love" was not the most outrageous but one of the pettiest incidents in the context of a spectacle that, according to a 2020 *Guardian* investigation, cost more than 6,500 migrant workers their lives (Pattison et al. 2020). While FIFA's ban on the "One love" armband was apparently meant to appease anti-queer sentiment on part of the organizers, the ensuing compromise was a new armband that read "No discrimination" (Olley 2022), which was worn by many team captains throughout the tournament. This example suggests that taking a stance "against discrimination" is so anemic that anyone—from leftists to western liberals, neocons, capitalist exploiters, religious fundamentalists, and authoritarians—is willing to agree with it. In fact, the "No discrimination" armband not only depoliticized the issue of queer rights but obscured what is at stake by indulging in ambiguity. Vis-à-vis queer rights activists, FIFA could claim that "no discrimination" means no discrimination against queer people, while religious fundamentalists, too, could rest assured that FIFA would not tolerate discrimination against their values and beliefs.

Accordingly, advocates of nondiscrimination do not so much go head to head with card-carrying discriminators as haggle over the interpretation of discrimination and nondiscrimination: Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán notoriously describes his authoritarian government as an "illiberal democracy" (Frick 2021; Holzleithner 2022), while denouncing concerns about the rule of law in his country as Western discrimination against the Hungarian way of life. Similarly, New Right actors (such as the Identitarian Movement and Neo-Supremacists) bemoan discrimination against 'white people' based on the conspiracy narrative of a 'great replacement.'[1] Consequently,

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[1] Given that equal treatment is one of the basic tenets of democracy (Habermas 1994), the hackneyed mantra of nondiscrimination seems to attest to the much-lamented crisis of democracy, where conflict lines run not so much between democrats and self-proclaimed antidemocrats as between different actors striving to inscribe their political actions and goals in the conceptual space of democracy, regardless of the political views they hold (Brown 2009; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). Even the most brazen antidemocrats invoke democratic motives to justify their political agenda. Or, to quote Derrida: "When assured of a numerical majority, the worst enemies of democratic freedom can, by a plausible rhetorical simulacrum [...], present themselves as staunch democrats." (Derrida 2003, 34)

confronting discrimination also means acknowledging how this concept is a token at the heart of political dispute.

This is even more pressing as discrimination often goes unnoticed or is tacitly tolerated, all the more so when discriminatory patterns are rooted in the hegemonic social imaginary (Fricker 2009). One of the goals of the global *Black Lives Matter* movement was precisely to draw attention and alert to the structural racism in Western societies (Lebron 2017; Dilts 2019). Also, the COVID-19 pandemic made visible a broad array of systematic forms of discrimination. Susceptibility to the virus has been a matter not only of biological vulnerability but of complex structures and histories of discrimination (Butler 2022, 45–66; Govrin 2022). Finally, the climate crisis, too, disproportionally affects marginalized populations in the Global South, exacerbating existing asymmetries and hierarchies (Latour 2017; Mouffe 2022; Latour/Schultz 2023). All of this points to (a) the broad variety of experiences of discrimination—from racism, antisemitism, xenophobia, and linguicism to sexism, homophobia and transphobia, classism, ableism, and ageism; (b) the ways in which discriminatory patterns are anchored in the very structure of social relations; and (c) their manifold expressions, such as othering, stigmatization, incitement, stereotyping, hate speech, deprivation, exploitation, and physical violence.

Furthermore, discrimination operates on many levels. Persons affected by discrimination will often testify to how it affects their horizon of experience and penetrates their relation to themselves, the world, and others. Discrimination is woven into processes of subjectivation, so that discriminatory practices do not only infringe on an already constituted subject; rather, becoming a subject involves differential relations to historically rooted discriminatory frameworks (Butler 1996). In this way, individual experience is tangled up with social-historical structures. Confronting discrimination, then, means explicating how discrimination is both constitutive of subjective, embodied experience and a matter of social-historical dispositifs. This requires a many-layered approach that eludes monocausal explanations.

As a topic of engaged theoretical reflection, discrimination has loomed large in the humanities and social sciences for several decades. Gender, postcolonial, disability, queer, critical race, legal, and human-animal studies have all contributed significantly to understanding discrimination. In this collection, we explore what social philosophy has to say on the matter.[2] To this end, we turn to phenomenological and genealogical approaches, which, we argue, can mutually inform each other. Phenomenology casts light on discrimination's experiential dimensions and its fundamental historicity.

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[2] We think of social philosophy as located at the intersection of ethics and political philosophy. As Burkhard Liebsch argues, a fully-fledged social philosophy comprises a "critical theory of society, a social phenomenology of the concrete experience of 'being-with,' and an ethics of alterity" (Liebsch 1999, 41, our trans.; see also Herrmann 2019, 18–20).

However, while phenomenology explicates the genesis of experience, its founders remain caught up in notions of linear historical progress (Husserl) or decay (Heidegger).[3] The Foucauldian tradition of critical genealogy, by contrast, enables us to problematize discrimination's concrete historical workings. Genealogical accounts acknowledge historical contingency as well as its discontinuous, eventful character, thus making possible a critical analysis of discursive power structures and modes of subjectivation. Though seldom conceded by its respective proponents, phenomenology and genealogy may complement each other. While phenomenologists often suspect genealogical analyses of reducing experience to social-historical conditions,[4] advocates of a structural-historical approach argue that phenomenology runs the risk of absolutizing the perspective of affectedness, thereby individualizing discrimination.[5] Dovetailing phenomenology and genealogy may fashion a more comprehensive understanding of discrimination and its many facets. In the following, we (1) revisit formative phenomenological contributions to the study of discrimination and (2) recall prominent motifs and concepts in the genealogical tradition. Finally (3), we show how the articles in this collection implement, apply, and critically reflect upon the proposal to combine phenomenology and genealogy.[6]

1. Phenomenologies of Discrimination

Phenomenology equips us with an elaborate notion of experience that allows to describe how discriminatory normative frameworks are embodied and habitualized, thus orienting and structuring access to the world. Rather than thinking experience in classical epistemic terms, Edmund Husserl's notion of intentional consciousness and Martin Heidegger's concept of being-in-the-word emphasize the complex relationality of all

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[3] Husserl sketches a progressive, linear view of Western history: the "telos of European humanity" is to fulfill the exigencies of reason (Husserl 1936, 13; see also Casement 1988). Heidegger, on the other hand, while describing historicity as a primary existential condition (Heidegger 1927, §74), conceives of history in terms of a process of decay in which the relation to being is successively distorted (Maass 2001, 102–3).

[4] Maren Wehrle notes that "Foucault never developed a notion of experience and embodiment himself." She suggests that "his ideas can be re-read and complemented from a phenomenological perspective" (Wehrle 2016, 56).

[5] Seen from the perspective of disability studies, Thomas Abrams argues, the "biggest limit that phenomenology must address, […] is to account for the structures of capitalism. […] [E]xchange value in this world determines who lives and who dies. Health care decision-making, administration of disability in the workplace, gendered and racialized care work, classroom accommodations, benefits provided, and insurance denied to persons fighting for a diagnosis […] are of prime concern to disability studies. Are they of prime concern to phenomenology?" (Abrams 2020, 17)

[6] Note that neither in phenomenology nor in genealogy is discrimination merely a topic of sober study. Indeed, both traditions are problematically entangled in webs of discrimination. Abrams argues that we need to "orient[] phenomenology" and, as we would add, genealogy, "towards the oppression of marginalized people" and "admit[] to the horrible politics phenomenologists [or genealogists, for that matter] have been party to" (Abrams 2020, 17).

experience. These relations are never purely epistemic but harbor affective, bodily, and axiological significance. Also, they are from the start pervaded by social and historical meanings. In his phenomenology of the life-world, Husserl expounds on how intentional access to oneself, the world, and others is structured by social norms, habitualized practices, and sedimented patterns of understanding.[7] Heidegger, in turn, argues that being-with others (*Mitsein*) is bound up with societal stereotypes and standard interpretations. These, Heidegger contends, are a primary source for one's self-understanding (Heidegger 1927, 121), leading him to analyze how social meaning is produced through discursive stereotyping and the coordination of mass sentiment in language and the media (Heidegger 1927, §§26, 35, 37). What is more, both Husserl and Heidegger emphasize the historicity of experience. In Husserl, the life-world is always already pervaded by historical patterns of meaning and understanding; in Heidegger, *Geschichtlichkeit* (historicity) is one of Dasein's existential conditions. At the same time, they both subscribe to grand yet opposing historical narratives: Husserl assumes a *telos* of European humanity and conceives of Western history in terms of a linear progress toward full rationality (Husserl 1936, 15). Heidegger, by contrast, pictures history mostly in terms of decay and a continued "forgetfulness of being" that forecloses authentic human self-understanding (Heidegger 1936–1946, 70; Heidegger 1953, 28).[8]

Far from being a matter of mere theoretical interest, discrimination soon became a question of life and death for early phenomenologists in general and for Husserl in particular. Subject to the Nuremberg Race Laws passed by the Nazis in 1935, Husserl lost his teaching license, was restricted in his travels to congresses, and found his claim to membership in different philosophical organizations revoked or thwarted (Klautke 2017, 20). Needless to say, he was also hit hard by Heidegger's decision to join the Nazi Party in 1933 and his former disciple's ensuing ascent to the rectorate of the University of Freiburg. The suspicion, arguably borne out by the posthumous publication of the *Black Notebooks* in 2014,[9] that there is an undercurrent of antisemitism

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[7] Sara Heinämaa and James Jardine point out that Husserl's account makes us sensitive to phenomena of normalization and objectification: from moral disregard, where the other is intended as a mere instrument, to juridical discrimination, where "a human being's membership of a legal community or participation in juridical practices" is neglected, to theoretical abstraction, where the "other is not addressed as a unique person" but "studied as [an] instance[] of general natural laws" (Heinämaa/Jardine 2021, 310). On discrimination in Husserl, see Tristan Hedges's contribution to this collection.

[8] Concerning the proposal to combine phenomenology and genealogy, note that phenomenological accounts of history and historicity were a constant critical reference point for Foucault when developing his own genealogical account of history (Milchman and Rosenberg 2003). We come back to this point in the next section.

[9] Peter Trawny notes that the publication of the *Black Notebooks* caused a "landslide in the reception of Heidegger" (Trawny 2016, 8, our trans.) and that, at least from now on, "an introduction to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger must [...] necessarily include an introduction to his antisemitism" (Trawny 2016, 8, our trans.).

running through Heidegger's thinking is there from the very beginning. According to Husserl, Heidegger's commitment to Nazism is not only an expression of his political convictions but has philosophical significance (Vongehr 2017, 17). Emmanuel Levinas argues that Heidegger's ontology bears affinities with totalitarianism and that the "possibility of *elemental Evil* [...] is inscribed within the ontology of a being concerned with being" (Levinas 1990, 63). For Levinas, Heidegger privileges the affirmation of the self over the ethical relation to the other. While Husserl's phenomenology opens up the possibility of thinking otherness not in terms of "objectification, but society" (Levinas 1959, 120), Heidegger "end[s] up affirming a tradition in which the same dominates the other" (Levinas 1957, 53).

Hannah Arendt is one of the first phenomenologists to explicitly address phenomena of discrimination and to approach history beyond Husserl's and Heidegger's grand narratives of progress or decay. In doing so, she zooms in on the experience and the consequences of (total) exclusion as the cornerstone of her phenomenology of the political.[10] Arendt analyzes the experience of worldlessness in the context of the catastrophes of the twentieth century, which resulted in disenfranchisement, mass displacements, expulsions, and deportations, ultimately engendering a life without rights. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), Arendt argues that the abandonment of the modern masses is accompanied by a rupture of intersubjectivity as one of the necessary conditions of the political capacity for thought and action (Arendt 1951, 477). In view of refugees, the stateless (Arendt 1943; Arendt 1949; Arendt 1951), slaves, and women (Arendt 1958, 51−53), Arendt argues that self-alienation looms wherever interpersonal bonds break.[11] Subsequently, Arendt's reflections on the subjects of the household, who find themselves debarred from acting with others and "imprisoned in the eternal recurrence of the life process" (Arendt 1958, 69), were to become a constant point of reference and contestation in discussions about social gender differences (hooks 1984; Benhabib 1993; Klinger 2000; Davis 2001; Bargetz 2016).

Simone de Beauvoir made the female body the focus of phenomenological analysis. With her ground-breaking *The Second Sex* (1949), the gendered dimension of experience takes center stage. Examining experiences of discrimination, Beauvoir draws attention to the differentially distributed scope of action among the sexes. Her reference to the "woman's drama" (Beauvoir 1949, 42) addresses the curtailment of developmental

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[10] As we show in the next section, there is a genealogical dimension to Arendt's phenomenology of the political, too.

[11] This also resonates with Levinas's ethics of vulnerability and his analysis of the "total dereliction" experienced by the Jews (Levinas 1963, 11; see also Bstieler 2023).

possibilities that condemn women to immanence—a condition that she links to the failure to give meaning to one's existence. Anticipating Iris Marion Young's concept of "inhibited intentionality" (Young 2005, 35),[12] Beauvoir traces women's immanence to habitualized and socialized bodily practices that result in differentiated, gendered movement patterns, uses of space, and, ultimately, in the othering of women as the "second sex." In Beauvoir and Young, the bodily experience of women serves as a starting point for critical reflection on the relationship between social norms, sexism, and institutional arrangements.

Phenomenologies of discrimination thus explicate how discriminatory patterns differentially infiltrate and shape experience. In his famous 1944 essay *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Jean-Paul Sartre analyzes antisemitism as a repertoire of practices, passions, and interpretative schemes that structure both the antisemite's and the Jew's access to themselves and the world. As for the antisemite, the antisemitic imaginary governs and preconditions all concrete experience with Jews: "Far from experience producing his idea of the Jew, it was the latter which explained his experience. If the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would invent him." (Sartre 1944, 8) On Sartre's view, antisemitism is a device to disclaim responsibility and externalize conflict. Antisemitism disguises social antagonisms; the antisemite chooses passionate hate over political struggle, holding on to an idea of unified community. In this sense, antisemitism serves as a "safety valve for the owning classes" (Sartre 1944, 31). As for the Jew, their whole situatedness in the world is conditioned by being the object of hate, so that experience is rendered unstable and ephemeral: "his situation, his power, and even his right to live may be placed in jeopardy from one moment to the next" (Sartre 1944, 95−96). In a situation engulfed in antisemitism, even benign encounters may take on objectifying meaning: "Under the looks of support and compassion […] [the Jews] felt themselves becoming objects: objects of commiseration, of pity, of what you will—but objects. They provided […] virtuous liberals with an occasion for making a general gesture, for uttering a manifesto. They were only an occasion." (Sartre 1944, 55) Antisemitism thus operates at the core of subject constitution and conditions community formation as well as one's relation to oneself and one's body, as Sartre (1944, 86) underlines.

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[12] Ina Kerner emphasizes that Young's phenomenological approach gained less attention than her political-theoretical work on justice and inclusion in modern democracies (Kerner 2020). In both contexts, Young adopts a feminist perspective and calls for "eradicating gender-based oppression" (Young 1985, 180). In doing so, she draws on Beauvoir and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Herrmann (2015) shows how Young takes up Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of corporeality and makes it part of a theory of inequality.

The social and political situation that structures one's existence and relations to the world, to institutions, to others, and to one's self also proves decisive for Frantz Fanon's "phenomenology of racialization" (Bedorf 2021). In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Fanon builds on Sartre to examine how racist practices in general and the "white gaze" (Fanon 1952, 104) in particular affect the specific spatial position of the racialized subject, dislocate its body, and constitute it as a Black subject in the first place. In this way, Fanon carves out how the Black subject's scope of action begins to shrink when confronted with the other's gaze, causing an altered bodily habitualization (Fanon 1952, 103–34). Thus, Fanon's phenomenological outlook—just like Beauvoir's and Young's—holds out the prospect of a phenomenology of the body that undermines the subject-object dichotomy. Indeed, Fanon understands the subject as constitutively embedded in racialized spatial structures that primordially enable or preclude specific experiences.

This body-centered approach to discrimination has recently been intensified by Sara Ahmed's "queer phenomenology" (Ahmed 2006). Combining classical phenomenological approaches (Husserl, Merleau-Ponty) with insights from postcolonial and queer studies, she promotes the further development of phenomenological methodology. In doing so, Ahmed provides concepts to critically question the social and political conditions of possibility of our being-in-the-world. Arguing that orientation and motility correspond to a "bodily form of privilege," Ahmed proposes a negative phenomenology, a "phenomenology of 'being stopped:'" "Who are you? Why are you here? What are you doing? Each question, when asked, is a kind of *stopping device*: you are stopped by being asked a question, just as asking the question requires you to be stopped." (Ahmed 2006, 139) Ahmed points to everyday practices such as showing the passport, which grants motility to certain subjects and denies it to others (Ahmed 2006, 140). Uncovering the implicit epistemic structures that govern the experiential horizons of (marginalized) subjects, Ahmed aims at unmasking the normative orders that condition social reality. In doing so, she advances a notion of phenomenology that probes into the social-political conditions of possibility of our relations to the world and to others. This endeavor has been taken up by many scholars in what has come to be known as "Critical Phenomenology" (Günther 2020; Weiss et al. 2020; Magiri/ McQueen 2022) and "Political Phenomenology" (Bedorf and Herrmann 2020).

2. Genealogies of Discrimination

Genealogy, in the tradition of Friedrich Nietzsche and Michel Foucault, can be understood as a specific form of historical-philosophical inquiry and critique (Saar 2009; Koopman 2013). Crucially, it evades the dichotomy of internal and external critique.

While internal criticism confronts an object with the latter's own normative stand-ards, external criticism evaluates it by referring to universal values such as freedom or equality. Genealogy, by contrast, argues that the criteria and normative claims brought to bear in the process of critique cannot themselves be spared from critical scrutiny (Vogelmann 2019). In this vein, Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* questions the "value of these values" (Nietzsche 1887, 6), while Foucault stresses the importance of the knowledge/power nexus (Foucault 1980). For the genealogist, there can be no external point of view, as she is always entangled with the practices and structures she analyzes (Seitz 2016, 72).

Already in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, the study of discrimination is topical in genealogical thinking. By launching a polemic (*Streitschrift*) against "herd morality" (Nietzsche 1887, 150), Nietzsche's own account of discrimination initially takes the form of a blatantly biased, generalized accusation—namely, that modern (European) morality is quintessentially "slave morality": "the ressentiment of those natures that are denied the true reaction, compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge" (Nietzsche 1887, 36). In other words, Nietzsche's critique of discrimination is itself discriminatory, blaming "the descendants of [...] slavery [to ...] represent the *regression* of mankind" (Nietzsche 1887, 43) and at times even calling for a reevaluation of (ancient) slavery.[13]

Foucault continues Nietzsche's project of studying and criticizing processes of normalization. As regards his response to the "perpetual question [...]: 'how not to be governed *like that*'" (Foucault 1978, 384), however, he parts ways with Nietzsche. Foucault's analyses of madness (*History of Madness*, 1972), disciplinary institutions (*The Birth of the Clinic*, 1963; *Discipline and Punish*, 1975), the abnormal (lectures at the *Collège de France*, 1974/1975), racism (lectures at the *Collège de France*, 1975/1976), and sexuality (*The History of Sexuality*, 1976–1984) can be read as critical genealogies of various forms, processes, and institutions of discrimination. Along Nietzschean lines, Foucault contends that once the curtain of modern pedagogy—as a moralizing project—is lifted, we get a clear view of the cruelty of modernity and its disciplinary institutions. With his reflections on the birth of biopolitics, Foucault also presents a genealogy of racism in Western societies. Contrary to classical forms of sovereign power, biopower as "the right to make live and to let die" (Foucault 1976/1977, 241) marks "one of the greatest transformations political right underwent in the nineteenth

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[13] Domenico Losurdo argues that Nietzsche's genealogical project rebels against the conformism of his epoch while call-ing for "social apartheid" (Losurdo 2002, 358), making Nietzsche an *Aristocratic Rebel* (2002). This is not to say, however, that Nietzsche uncritically endorsed slavery and domination. Rather, he was "tirelessly committed to reiterating the inescapability of a drastic division of labour for the survival and development of culture," as Losurdo (2002, 928) puts it.

century" (Foucault 1976/1977, 241). In its wake, racism "introduc[es] a break into the domain of life that is under power's control: the break between what must live and what must die." For Foucault, racism "is a way of fragmenting the field of the biological that power controls" (Foucault 1976/1977, 255).

These analyses challenge classical forms of historiography and intellectual history. Instead of "dealing with the representations which might be behind discourse," Foucault focuses on "discourses as regular and distinct series of events," which "enable[s] us to introduce chance, the discontinuous, and materiality at the very roots of thought" (Foucault 1970, 69). Contingency and materiality undermine the classical historical project of "narrating the continuous unravelling of an ideal necessity" (Foucault 1970, 69). Instead of referring to a pure and simple origin, genealogy multiplies origins and shows how present phenomena refer back to discontinuous, power-laden histories.[14] In doing so, it contests naturalized and reified power structures, making explicit how our present self-understanding is bound up with relations of power, forms of knowledge, and modes of subjectivation (Oberprantacher/Siclodi 2016; Posselt/Seitz 2020, 137).

Even though Arendt is not usually considered a genealogical thinker, some of her works can be interpreted as genealogical investigations, which is why we deem it instructive to include her here once again. Indeed, already prior to Foucault, Arendt analyzes both antisemitism and the imperialistic combination of racism and bureaucracy in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. She offers a comprehensive account of the "Birth of Antisemitism" (Arendt 1951, xii; see also Arendt 1948, Arendt 1950) that refutes "the thesis of eternal antisemitism" as well as "the scapegoat theory" (Arendt 1951, 8). What is more, Arendt carves out "an insoluble mixture of political motives and social elements" (Arendt 1951, 87) that culminated in a genocidal project. In a similar vein, she shows how "race-thinking" became racism under the conditions of (bureaucratic) imperialism, and how it first gained purchase on the "Dark Continent" (Arendt 1951, xlii).[15]

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[14] Foucault reproaches Heidegger for turning a blind eye to historical contingency and discursive power by referring to a primordial dimension of experience exempt from discursive materiality: The "theme [...] of originating experience [...] supposes that at the very basis of experience, even before it could be grasped in the form of a cogito, there were prior significations—in a sense, already said—wandering around in the world, arranging it all around us and opening it up from the outset to a sort of primitive recognition" (Foucault 1970, 65).

[15] Arendt's own analyses are ambivalent insofar as she repeatedly employs racist terms without sufficiently clarifying whether she paraphrases discriminatory assumptions (of others) or speaks in her own voice. This becomes apparent both in her much-discussed essay *Reflections on Little Rock* (1959; see also Knott 2022) and at the point in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* where she argues that "race was the emergency explanation of human beings whom no European or civilized man could understand and whose humanity so frightened and humiliated the immigrants that they no longer cared to belong to the same human species. Race was the Boers' answer to the overwhelming monstrosity of Africa—a whole continent populated and overpopulated by savages—an explanation of the madness which grasped and illuminated them like 'a flash of lightning in a serene sky:' 'Exterminate all the brutes'" (Arendt 1951, 185).

More recently, Giorgio Agamben synthesized Arendt's and Foucault's account to develop his own genealogical critique of genocidal violence. In *Homo Sacer* (1995), the first part of the eponymous nine-volume series, Agamben argues, *pace* Foucault, that sovereign and biopolitical power are not incompatible. Quite the contrary, "*the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power*" (Agamben 1995, 6). For Agamben, the emergence of bare life—and the generation of a "*zone of indistinction between nature and right*" (Agamben 1995, 21)—is a consequence of the biopolitical contradictions of sovereignty. On this view, the camp is the "biopolitical paradigm" (Agamben 1995, viii), the "hidden matrix" (Agamben 1995, 175), and even "the new biopolitical nomos of the planet" (Agamben 1995, 175).[16]

Agamben's position was widely debated and harshly criticized. Jacques Derrida reproached Agamben for "his most irrepressible gesture" (Derrida 2001/2002, 92) of (secretly) positing "himself as sovereign" (Derrida 2001/2002, 92). Judith Butler censured Agamben for his "metaphysically extravagant" (Butler 2015, 79) claim that the so-called rightless are "reduced to mere being" (Butler 2015, 79). Advancing an alternative phenomenology and genealogy of discrimination, Butler holds that "the life stripped of rights is still within the sphere of the political and is thus not reduced to mere being, but is, more often than not, angered, indignant, rising up, and resisting" (Butler 2015, 80).[17] Note also that Agamben's account of biopolitics runs the risk of reintroducing a grand narrative of decay, drawing a continuous historical line connecting the Greek separation of *bios* and *zoe* to twentieth century totalitarianism.

Refraining from such grand narratives, other authors rework some of Foucault's basic assumptions to retrace genealogies of discrimination. Georges Didi-Huberman's *Invention of Hysteria* shares Foucault's interest in how "clinical knowledge" (Didi-Huberman 1982, 13–28) (in)formed discrimination—in this case, discrimination against women diagnosed as "hysterics"—while focusing more closely on aesthetic and graphic aspects. Siding with those subjected to cruelty and perceived as insane, Didi-Huberman argues that images require us to rethink how we position ourselves vis-à-vis what we see (Didi-Huberman 1982). This critical impetus is further developed in postcolonial studies that interrogate Eurocentric prejudices. Ann Laura Stoler's *Race and the Education of Desire* starts with "some obvious questions: Why, for Foucault, colonial bodies never figure as a possible site of the articulation of nineteenth-century European sexuality? And given this omission, what are the

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[16] Agamben's genealogy of discrimination to the point of indistinction is continued and further elaborated on in *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (1998) and *State of Exception* (2003).

[17] The practices, tactics, and aesthetics of such a resistant subjectivity have recently been elaborated on by Iris Därmann (Därmann 2020; Därmann 2021) and Elsa Dorlin (Dorlin 2022).

consequences for his treatment of racism in the making of the European bourgeois self?" (Stoler 1995, vii; see also McClintock 1995) Simone Browne criticizes Foucault's failure to perceive the significance of modern slavery for the formation of racism. She argues that "[t]he violent regulation of blackness as spectacle and as disciplinary combined in the racializing surveillance of the slave system" (Browne 2015, 42; see also Mbembe 2003, 21), prefiguring later disciplinary designs (such as the Panopticon analyzed by Foucault).

Paul B. Preciado criticizes Agamben's notion of bare life, arguing that under the conditions of "[b]iotechnology" (Preciado 2008, 50) lives run the risk of being exploited as "*naked technolife*" (Preciado 2008, 49). Naked technolife stands "at the center of postindustrial democracies, forming part of a global, integrated multimedia laboratory–brothel" (Preciado 2008, 50). Instead of claiming that we are all vulnerable in the same way or to the same degree, Preciado underscores that we need to rethink the paradoxes of discrimination in an age where a "normative regime for segregated distribution of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability coexists with the process of 'becoming common' of technologies of the production of body, gender, sex, race, and sexuality" (Preciado 2008, 127). Thus, even if the traditional "segmentations of social space according to gender" are "currently becoming diluted" (Preciado 2008, 303), the (racialized and sexualized) difference between "universal penetrators" (Preciado 2008, 304; "Western white minorities") and those "who are universally penetrable" (Preciado 2008, 303; "pharmacoporno workers") is on top of current global discriminatory hierarchies.

What all these critical engagements suggest is that genealogical analyses cannot brush aside questions of normative embodiment and habitualization. Adopting a phenomenological perspective, Maren Wehrle argues that to understand how "prevailing cultural and social norms as expressions of power" are implicit "in our embodiment and influence the way we experience," genealogy needs to be supplemented with a phenomenological approach to corporeality: "phenomenology can help to explain why techniques of normalization that work directly on the body are so successful and 'dangerous'" (Wehrle 2016, 57). Phenomenology's notion of experience may complement genealogy's historical approach, disclosing how "every experience […] leaves its traces, in temporality, sedimentation and habitualization" (Wehrle 2016, 57).

3. Combining Phenomenology and Genealogy: Selected Contributions

The contributions to this collection can be read as exemplary attempts to bridge the gap between phenomenological and genealogical perspectives on discrimination. By way of

conclusion, we trace some of their main lines of argument and methodical decisions.[18] *Torsten Menge* (1) draws on Ahmed's queer phenomenology and various genealogical approaches for a critical analysis of discriminatory border regimes and nationalist imaginaries. *Tristan Hedges* (2) provides a re-reading of Husserl to explain how social-historically structured experiences of what is (ab)normal are constituted in the intentional life of the discriminator. *Marina Martinez Mateo* (3) focuses on the category of identity as both enabling political confrontations of discrimination and producing exclusions, thus envisaging political collectivization beyond rigid identity formations. *Corinne Kaszner* (4) presents the Social Justice and Radical Diversity approach, a framework that anchors antidiscrimination both in theory and in educational practice, outlining the theoretical presuppositions for combining phenomenological and genealogical methodologies in this context.

   Torsten Menge sheds light on the discriminatory function of state borders. His critique zeros in on liberal nationalism, which "justifies the differential treatment of people who are designated as 'political strangers' by emphasizing the importance of national cultures" (Menge 2023, 6). To challenge liberal nationalism, Menge mobilizes Ahmed's phenomenology of (dis)orientation as well as genealogies of the national(ist) imaginary (El-Enany, Mongia, Sharma). He argues that "phenomenological and genealogical methods can help us make salient features of our practices that are otherwise unacknowledged and make them an object for explicit normative reflection" (Menge 2023, 4). The key phenomenological idea is that orientation is structured by categories of race. The racialized subject is constituted in a state of disorientation, which, though hampering agency, also opens up a subversive perspective on the normative social matrix: "Dominant orientations such as whiteness" thus come better "into view from a *disoriented* perspective" (Menge 2023, 4). Genealogically, Menge reconstructs how the national-territorial imaginary is rooted in European colonial rule. To this end, Menge takes up José Medinas concept of "counter-histories" (Medina 2011). Counter-histories "remind us that sovereign control over the composition of a country's population is deeply bound up with the imperialist project of dividing opportunities along racial lines" (Menge 2023, 20). Combining phenomenology and genealogy "not only produces a disorienting experience but undermines the default authority of important political principles and categories" (Menge 2023, 6).

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[18] Note that this is an ongoing collection, which means that some articles will be added after the publication of this editorial. In this section, we discuss only the articles that are already in print at this point.

With *Tristan Hedges*, we turn from the phenomenology of (dis)orientation to the phenomenology of (ab)normality. Hedges draws on Husserl to investigate the intentional experience of the discriminator. Based on Husserl's phenomenology of normality, discriminatory acts are referred to "a narrow, exclusionary, or even oppressive sense of 'normality'" that "persists at the expense of revising one's prejudiced normative, *doxic*, and epistemic commitments" (Hedges 2022, 2). Taking up Husserl's distinction between static and genetic normality, Hedges argues that the normal is not a matter of static determination but always open to revisions and "in a constant process of becoming" (Husserl 1929–1935, 177; Hedges 2022, 15). It is precisely this incessant *genesis* of normality that the discriminator obliterates, falling prey to "a misguided prioritising of static over genetic normality" (Hedges 2022, 2). Insofar as one's own "horizon of possibilities" is reified as unchanging, "[d]ivergence from the norm" is met with "hostility, resistance, or even exoticization" (Hedges 2022, 15). Hedges showcases phenomenology's explicatory power when it comes to clarifying how norms become naturalized. Phenomenology can "enrich more structural approaches to discrimination," such as genealogical criticism, "with a perspective at the level of prereflective perceptual experience and bodily being" (Hedges 2022, 14).

Marina Martinez Mateo ponders identity and representation from a feminist angle, starting out with a reflection on the violence of representation. Speaking-for-others is always in danger of privileging certain perspectives and identity formations over others. Here, the question of normality again comes up, as "experiences that do not conform to an assumed 'shared' normality […] are structurally excluded from the collective which is spoken for" (Martinez Mateo 2022, 5). Identity can be a fulcrum of political contestation but also "produces ambiguities and exclusions that seem to challenge the possibility of building political collectives" (Martinez Mateo 2022, 1). In response to this problem, Martinez Mateo turns to Chicana Feminism (esp. Anzaldúa, Sandoval), where the constitution of political collectives is no longer based on shared identity categories. Chicana is not a positively given identity, but "a negative category, a category of non-belonging and non-fitting" (Martinez Mateo 2022, 15). Chicana may thus "transform[] this very perspective of non-fitting and non-belonging to a political starting point and scope for action" (Martinez Mateo 2022, 15). Martinez Mateo connects affectedness to political agency on the level of discriminatory social structures, so that political "connections" can be established "out of different—perhaps comparable, perhaps differing, perhaps conflicting—experiences" (Martinez Mateo 2022, 21).

Corinne Kaszner joins discrimination theory with a practical outlook, presenting the Social Justice and Radical Diversity approach (SJRD), a theoretical framework and educational practice first developed by Leah Carola Czollek, Gudrun Perko, and Heike

Weinbach in 2001. Kaszner shows how SJRD draws on phenomenological and genealogical insights to foster a "society based on *radical diversity*" (Kaszner 2022, 5), focusing on structural forms of discrimination as "historically engrained systems of oppression" (Kaszner 2022, 5). The notion of *radical* diversity rejects neoliberal diversity rhetoric and envisages a "transformation of societal structures as well as categories of social difference in view of a more substantial ideal of plurality" (Kaszner 2022, 6). Here, critical genealogy comes in to cast light on "shared patterns and functional complexities of discrimination" instead of monocausally "tracing forms of discrimination to an origin" (Kaszner 2022, 12). Phenomenology, in turn, contributes to SJRD "where it is methodologically akin to questions of the dialogical and to plurality" (Kaszner 2022, 16). Kaszner concludes that instead of constructing a contradiction between structure/history and concrete experience, a thorough "critique of discrimination must comprise both" (Kaszner 2022, 19).

This overview shows that there is not one way of combining phenomenology and genealogy to confront discrimination but many. The contributions to this collection display various starting points for critical analysis and allow for complementary methodical constellations and arrangements. Instead of compiling definite findings, this collection is meant to spark further engagement and reflection in this direction.

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