

be smoothly inscribed, i.e., represented) *within* our social and conceptual practices, using its estranging powers to explore *social dissonance*, the estrangement of our social being. By estranging us from ourselves and our environment, noise sheds light on the estranged nature of our *selves* and our social world, both on the subjective and objective sides of alienation.

In Mattin's account, the practice of noise is neither a puerile exaltation of senselessness nor an abstract expression of discontent, but a radical and theoretically grounded exploration of negativity. Noise is negativity-in-act, and its practice aims to expose the negativity of our social world. By disrupting immediacy, it breaks its semblance of givenness, exposing the latter as the product of a complex net of mediations. It estranges us from the reality of our estrangement.

Despite the cogency and indubitable appeal of Mattin's argument, a few objections come to mind. First, the estranging powers of noise are arguably more ambiguous than Mattin suggests. It might well be that encountering noise when harmony was expected would simply end up fuelling feelings of anger and aggressivity. Second, and

most importantly, the senselessness of noise could reinforce the feeling of powerlessness among the oppressed rather than, as Adorno would put it, 'break the spell' of alienation. Thus, despite Mattin's insightful criticism of the entwinement of avant-garde art and certain romantic tropes, his aesthetic of noise is not entirely alien to one of the most troubling problems of the former in its relation to emancipatory politics: elitism.

More generally, in the absence of a link between the practice of noise and a broader, more explicitly political struggle against alienation, the disentanglement of the latter from the insidious *noise* that is part of the fabric of our everyday life (a profoundly disempowering exposure to an endless stream of information, stimuli, etc., streaming from opaque social mediations) might prove a Herculean task.

These problematic issues notwithstanding, *Social Dissonance* more than meets the most important requisite of any contribution to Marxian theory: reminding us that there is much to think, and much to be done, whilst providing some precious tools to face this challenge.

Mario Aguiriano

Allegorical mappings

Fredric Jameson, *Allegory and Ideology* (London and New York: Verso, 2019). 432pp., £19.99 pb., 978 1 78873 043 3

A concern with allegory as a mode of interpretation rather than as a literary historical description of a moribund genre has been a leitmotif in Fredric Jameson's thought from *Fables of Aggression* (1979) and *The Political Unconscious* (1981) to *Brecht and Method* (1998) and *A Singular Modernity* (2002). In *Allegory and Ideology* – announced as the second volume of the 'Poetics of Social Forms' series – Jameson returns to concepts and arguments that will be familiar to many of his readers. There are the Greimas-inspired diagrams; the discussions of totality, cognitive mapping, Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Paul De Man and science fiction; and the defence of Marxist criticism as an expansive approach that makes of the literary work an act in history rather than reducing texts to an expression of economic relations. This latter claim recalls Jameson's Althusserian suggestion in *The Polit-*

ical Unconscious that history is understood as an 'absent cause' in literary texts, and that it can only be apprehended through effects which set 'inexorable limits to individual as well as collective praxis'. Yet Jameson's latest account of allegory as a dynamic and multidimensional system of reference and signification also allows for rich and varied reflections on the ways in which the construction of the modern subject entails the transformation of 'named emotions into feelings that challenge language itself'.

Likening his dialectical materialist approach to that of a scientist in a laboratory, Jameson also reframes some of these ideas through new readings of Dante, Spencer, Shakespeare and Goethe, and a rethinking of his controversial 1986 essay on Third World Literature. To develop these readings, Jameson takes the three-level model of

allegory that he adopts from mediaeval philosophy via Northrop Frye, recasting it as a dynamic and transversal mode of historical interpretation. This approach is distinct from the argument he makes in *The Political Unconscious*, where Frye's allegorical method is reframed in terms of three horizons of interpretations, and the collective and the subject/body swap places, so that 'the imagery of libidinal revolution and of bodily transfiguration once again becomes a figure for the perfected community'. Drawing together this previous work on Frye and the Greimas square with Félix Guattari's concept of transversality, Jameson argues that the fourfold scheme of allegorical reading involves 'perpetual dissolution and recombination' in a way that also 'scrambles the levels' of allegorical analysis.



If this approach seems rather too poststructuralist for a Marxist thinker such as Jameson, it is perhaps worth considering some of the examples he invokes. At one point during the response to critics of his Third World Literature essay ('Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism' (1986)), Jameson turns to the globalisation of men's professional football, both in respect of the transfer of players and of capital between top league clubs in Europe and Latin America, and in the take-over of such clubs by oil tycoons and oligarchs. For Jameson, it is the circulation of foreign national football players that characterises 'the mapping problem of the world system today'; this football player, he adds, 'caught between his [*sic*] origins, his home team, and his national representation, is only the most dramatic figure for the multidimensionality of globalisation evoked and presupposed in the essay on national allegory'. One might well take exception to the exclusion of women's

professional football from Jameson's analysis, the perfunctory account of football club ownership and sports washing, and the exclusion of fan's voices from the way that many elite clubs are run. Yet this allegorical football player does, in a certain way, help to clarify, if not personify, some of the key points that Jameson's critics missed in their response to his essay on national allegory: that the nation refers to a national bourgeoisie that mediates between multinational corporations and local extraction industries; and that allegory is a much more complex and multidimensional form of reading than Jameson's critics have allowed.

Critics of Jameson's Third World literature essay have tended to focus on his 'sweeping hypothesis' that 'all Third World texts are to be read as national allegories' – a hypothesis that seems both reductive and generalising. For Aijaz Ahmad, the difficulty with Jameson's theory is that it 'is inseparable from the larger Three Worlds Theory which permeates the whole of Jameson's own text'. Such strident critiques tend to overlook the precise way in which Jameson understands allegory and allegoresis. As Imre Szeman argues in a careful re-assessment of 'Third World Literature' published in *South Atlantic Quarterly* in 2001, Jameson offers a dialectical approach to 'third world' literary texts as complex objects that imagine the nation as a utopian horizon for political change. By tracing the conceptual trajectory of 'national allegory' in Jameson's work from an earlier reading of Wyndham Lewis through to his more recent critical reflections on globalisation, Szeman challenges what he calls the wilful misreadings of Jameson's essay. As he puts it:

... the claim that Jameson makes about third world texts ('by way of a sweeping hypothesis') cannot help but distract from his broader aim, which is not to pass aesthetic judgment on third world texts, but to develop a system by which it might be possible to consider these texts within the global economic and political system that produces the third world as the third world.

Szeman's re-assessment is indispensable for clarifying the ways in which 'Third World' texts are indeed 'complex objects'. Yet it is important to emphasise as well that Jameson does not explicitly reference the fourfold model of allegory that he formulates in *The Political Unconscious* when he is discussing Third World literature. Had he done so, Jameson might have been able to clarify how these 'complex objects' are also often anti-

systemic, in the sense that they variously mobilise the political energies of decolonisation and the dynamic resources of anti-colonial thought in order to imagine a concrete utopian idea of an alternative world. The revolutionary optimism of much postcolonial thought in the 1950s and early 1960s, and the utopian idea of a 'Third World' alternative to capitalism and Soviet communism, may now seem like a distant memory. As Jameson acknowledges in a recent response to Ahmad, 'the concept of a Third World can no longer have the same currency today in a world in which some of the countries in question have evolved into industrial and manufacturing centers, China become the second-greatest world power, the former Second or socialist World has disintegrated, most of it enjoying a dubious "transition to capitalism".' And yet the remnants of pre-capitalist cultures in contemporary postcolonial literary and visual artworks stand as a powerful reminder that the spectre of decolonisation has not been completely subsumed by the logic of commodity fetishism, and may yet return in another form. As Neil Lazarus puts it in a bold critical assessment of Fanon's thought, 'throughout Africa and elsewhere in the colonial world, precolonial social, cultural and ideological forms survived the colonial era meaningfully. Indeed, they continue to survive meaningfully today, in the "postcolonial" present'.

Such concerns lie beyond the purview of Jameson's analysis. Instead, Jameson's transversal rethinking of allegory is developed further through readings of *Hamlet*, Mahler's Sixth, Spencer's *Faerie Queen*, Dante's epic poetry, Goethe's *Faust II*, and the fiction of Lu Xun, Ousmane Sembene, David Mitchell and Tom McCarthy. What emerges through these readings is an account of how classical allegory is replaced by allegoresis, which entails a rethinking of how personification is transformed into reification; and an understanding of how a collective sense of affect (or disaffection with the contemporary world economic system), which Jameson compares to Lévi-Strauss' idea of *pensée sauvage*, may also provide the utopian resources for changing the world in the wake of anthropogenic climate change. This concern with affect is developed in a Lacanian reading of *Hamlet*, where Jameson traces how different moods or affects – such as 'melancholia, euphoria, eagerness, fury, indolence, disdain' – 'course through the senses' in ways that exceed any one particular character. The playing out of these

affects serves to highlight both the allegorical and the pedagogical significance of *Hamlet*, which uses the representation of a father 'who does not know he is dead' as a vehicle to dramatise the inability of an 'old order' to acknowledge 'their obsolescence' and realise 'that they are dead'. 'Perhaps', Jameson adds in a tantalising aside, 'our own moment of late capitalism is in a similar situation, of denial and rebirth'.

Aside from the somewhat perfunctory readings of Lu Xun and Sembene, one might well object that most of the texts Jameson selects for these allegorical readings are taken from a rather narrow European and American literary canon that offers little sustained account of the multi-dimensional allegorical significance of literary texts from the global South. And yet, Jameson's re-assessment of Lévi-Strauss' account of *pensée sauvage* offers a thought-provoking account of the allegorical structures of indigenous thought that are germane to the decolonisation of allegory. In a move that both recalls and extends his commentary in *The Political Unconscious* on Lévi-Strauss' analysis of Caduveo face painting in *Structural Anthropology*, Jameson argues that *pensée sauvage* is 'something like a perceptual science', 'a set which is part of itself, the name of a specific leaf doing double duty as the name of leaves in general'. Jameson's clarifying note that the English translation of *pensée sauvage* as *savage mind* 'fails to render the adjective with its natural and spontaneous overtones, as in *grève sauvage*, or *wildcat strike*' makes clear how this term is a constitutive part of modern radical political thought. This intriguing observation implies something radical about indigenous thought as a dynamic allegorical system of knowledge that is also immanent to the modern capitalist world-system. In Dene stories about tar sands extraction in Athabasca or West African narratives of fossil oil imperialism, for instance, allegorical figures from indigenous thought are mobilised to question the devastation of indigenous ecologies and societies. Jameson does not pursue this line of inquiry. Instead, by subordinating the rethinking of Lévi-Strauss to an allegorical reading of canonical western literature, Jameson misses the opportunity to develop the more detailed and sophisticated rethinking of allegory and indigenous thought in 'Third World literature' that his work enables.

The distinctive contribution of *Allegory and Ideology* lies not merely in its account of how allegoresis allows

for a multidimensional mapping of the totality of the world economic system, but also in its painstaking and rigorous reconstruction of the Utopian truth content of modern allegory. Jameson's concluding gesture to the reinvention of the terraform after the anthropocene certainly reframes some of the concerns he raised about

the salutary value of failed utopias in *Archaeologies of the Future*; but it also prompts further questions about how allegoresis can shed further light on the ways in which cultural narratives from the global South both register and contest the uneven ecological devastation that capitalist modernity has left in its wake.

Stephen Morton

Intersectional humanism

Kevin B. Anderson, Kieran Durkin and Heather A. Brown eds., *Raya Dunayevskaya's Intersectional Marxism: Race, Class, Gender, and the Dialectics of Liberation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). 350pp., £99.99 hb., 978 3 03053 716 6

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910-1987) was a Marxist, humanist, feminist and revolutionary thinker, neglected in both Marxist and feminist traditions. This collection presents Dunayevskaya as a strong Hegelian-Marxist philosopher, focusing on her novel interpretations of Hegel on absolute negativity as emphasising the positive that is contained in the negative, which, for Dunayevskaya, is a path to an absolute humanism. She reads Hegel's absolutes as new beginnings, as a new form of liberation for today's freedom struggles. Hegel's absolutes, on her reading, constitute no closed ontology. For instance, Dunayevskaya argues that Marx's engagement with the working class and their struggles led to the creation of an entirely new intellectual dimension and new philosophy of labour. The book discusses Dunayevskaya's total opposition to existing society, one which does not stop at a first or bare negation, but which moves on to a second negation, to the positive within the negative, to express philosophically the longing of humans to be whole. The humanism that characterises Dunayevskaya's account of the dialectics of liberation is her central contribution to Marxism: a unique form of humanism that speaks to the movement from practice to theory (and from theory to practice) in the processes of realising the whole human dimension.

In their contribution, Anderson and Hudis set out Dunayevskaya's dual movement from theory to practice and from practice to theory. They mark an important shift found in Dunayevskaya's work: that spontaneous revolts in social movements raise and develop *theoretical* questions in struggles against oppression, but that

a philosophically grounded alternative to capitalism is needed to give action to their direction. The book successfully opens and defends the notion that the philosophy of liberation is indispensable, since the movement from practice is *a* form of theory, not *the* form of theory. Dunayevskaya takes from Marx his resistance to all static, stagnant ways of being, the deep apprehension of motion and transformation as principles of thought and of human process, and the mind-weaving dialectic as the flying shuttle in the loom of human activity (as shown in Monzo's essay in this volume). The collection develops the engagement of Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom* with the dialectical relation between theory and practice and between organisation and spontaneity that, she claims, will prove necessary to bring down capital. This dialectical relationship is crucial for creating opportunities for change and for reorganising social relations under capitalism. Dunayevskaya's insights into these dialectical relations propose ways of imagining how current social movements can become better organised for challenging capital and its many antagonisms.

The collection focuses on Dunayevskaya's 'intersectional' Marxist feminism. Dunayevskaya did not use this term herself, but she nonetheless engaged with intersectional questions and dialectics of history throughout her lifetime. The collection develops specific aspects of her work that explore intersectional feminism under the influence of Black struggles in the US and Africa, the revolutionary humanism of Frantz Fanon, and philosophies of revolution and revolutionary subjects. They also explore the unity of idealism and materialism and the dialectical