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Editorial

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Introducing Vol. 12 No. 1

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The first article in this issue of *Retorik*, "Human's and Nonhuman's Negotiations after the Conversion of the Function of Mangrove Forests into Salt Mines" by Eventus Ombri Kaho, examines the transformation in the relationship between humans and nonhumans following the conversion of mangrove forests to salt mines in East Nusa Tenggara. From a posthumanist perspective that draws from Donna Haraway and Rosi Braidotti, Kaho examines how the intimate relation between the inhabitants of the Weseben village with the mangrove forest were lost due to the salt mine development and goes on to consider how the damaged human-nonhuman "kinship" might be recovered.

While contemporary posthumanist thought often draws inspiration from what, in the English-speaking world, is often called the "continental" tradition in philosophy, serious engagement between posthumanist thinkers and analytic philosophy is not non-existent. One such engagement appears in Cary Wolfe's *What is Posthumanism?*, in which Wolfe—a Derrida-inspired posthumanist and an important contributor to the discourse of animal studies—criticizes Daniel Dennett's work in philosophy of mind as eventually reaffirming Cartesian, anthropocentric presuppositions, despite initial appearances to the contrary. In the article titled "Dennett and Posthumanism: A Defense of the Program to Naturalize Mind from Posthumanist Suspicions of Wolfe," Dimas Aditya Wicaksono argues with admirable rigor that Wolfe misunderstands Dennett's philosophical project.

Wicaksono's article is a welcome contribution to *Retorik*, as it offers a positive glimpse into the thought of a contemporary philosopher who belongs to a tradition—the Anglophone analytic philosophy—with which the greater part of the journal's readership is unlikely to be familiar. The readership of *Retorik* predominantly consists of students and scholars in Cultural Studies whose interests and conceptual vocabularies are intimately tied to French proper names such as Althusser, Baudrillard, Derrida, Deleuze, Guat-

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tari, Foucault, Lacan, and Lyotard. While these authors, who hail from an extraordinary explosive moment of philosophy in Paris—the kind of moment previously witnessed in Athens and Jena—in the mid-twentieth century, may appear to share little in terms of interest (and style) with philosophers on the other side of the English Channel at that time, it would be extremely reductive to construe the division between analytic and "continental" traditions as in some sense primordial, fundamental, and unsurpassable. As the UK-based editors and translators of the *Cahiers pour l'Analyse*—a short-lived but fascinating journal edited by Althusser's students on whose pages contributions by thinkers such as Derrida, Foucault, and Irigaray can be found—assert, "[e]ven a superficial review of the contents of the *Cahiers* is enough to demonstrate that this [kind of construal of the analytic/continental] divide is largely an illusion: new articles on linguistics, logic and mathematics appear alongside translations of articles by thinkers like Cantor, Gödel and Russell."[1]

Indeed, a rigorous thought of "inclusion," "belonging," "exclusion," and the "infinite"—notions that feature centrally in many works of contemporary continental philosophers—may be inseparable from set theory, and most likely requires some understanding of the post-Cantorian struggles to defend set theory (as David Hilbert famously said: "No one shall expel us from the paradise that Cantor has created for us") and to axiomatize it. I write, of course, with the works of Alain Badiou in my mind here, but there are many others, such as Giorgio Agamben, in whose writings on political community set theoretical reflections become explicit. Saul Kripke's account of rigid designator and his view of the act of naming as primal baptism paved the way for theorizing the *constitutive* role of naming, found, among others, in the works of Slavoj Žižek and Ernesto Laclau. The proximity of a certain poststructuralist problematic with that of heterodox logic pursued by philosophers on the other side of the supposed analytic/continental divide had been masterfully demonstrated by Graham Priest and Paul Livingston.[2] Moreover, the recent interest in neuroscience among philosophers close to the continental tradition—the trailblazing work on *plasticity* by Catherine Malabou, a former student of Derrida, is perhaps the best-known example—problematizes the widespread

[1] "Project Overview," *Concept and Form: The Cahiers pour l'Analyse and Contemporary French Thought*. http://cahiers.kingston.ac.uk/overview.html. Accessed 26 June 2024.

[2] Graham Priest, *Beyond the Limits of Thought*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003); Paul M. Livingston, *The Politics of Logic: Badiou, Wittgenstein, and the Consequences of Formalism* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

image that continental philosophy remains distant from, or at least deeply suspicious of, natural, and especially biological, sciences (although it is perhaps for this reason that Malabou and other recent generations of philosophers emerging from the continental tradition interested in brain and biological sciences are sometimes categorized as "post-continental"). All this points to the simple conclusion that there is no reason why the readers of *Retorik* should not have more than a passing interest in the influential works of W. V. O. Quine and Donald Davidson, Wilfred Sellars and Robert Brandom, or Patricia and Paul Churchland, David Chalmers, and indeed, the subject of Wicaksono's article, Daniel Dennett, who passed away while this issue of *Retorik* was being prepared.

The third article included in this issue discusses the question of social organization and control through an analysis of *Psycho-Pass*, a Japanese animated television series that depicts a near future reminiscent of the one that appears in Philip K. Dick's "The Minority Report," in which a hive mind (called the "Sibyl System") determines individuals' propensity or probability to commit crime ("crime coefficient") and pre-emptively enforces restrictive or punitive measures. In his article "*Psycho-Pass*: The Portrait of a Control Society Under an Algorithmic System," Eirens Josua Mata Hine discusses the implications of this apparently "perfect" social system on the human freedom to think and act.

The question of morality in the near future is also the theme of the fourth article, titled "Empirical Experience as a Source and Consideration of Human Morality in Society 5.0 through David Hume's Perspective on Morality," by Thomas Rosario Babtista, Rengga Nata Pratama, and Cindy Gupita Sari. Approaching the so-called Society 5.0, a label that expresses the impact on society induced by technological development paradigmatically represented by the Internet of Things (IoT), the authors raise the question of whether this technological development can influence moral thinking in potentially negative ways, turning, in the extreme case, human beings into "unfeeling entities" focused solely on material or economic gains. Drawing from Hume, the authors suggest that there are dimensions of morality that cannot, at least in principle, be subjected to conquest by technology.

The last article of this issue, "Gateway to Precarization: A Study of the Work Experience of Young Volunteers and Interns at the Biennale Jogja Equator Arts Festival" by Sukma Smita Grah Brillianesti, offers an insight into the dynamics of cultural labor in the local art world. Through extensive interviews with volunteers and interns at the Biennale Jogja, Brillianesti reveals

the challenges of volunteer labor. Brillianesti suggests that while the volunteers do accumulate cultural and social capital—that is, skills acquisition and networking opportunities—there remains questions regarding the translation of those social and cultural capital into economic capital or tangible benefits for the individual. For Brillianesti, the dynamics of the artworld tends to render volunteer work and internship programs "gateways" to precarization.

This first issue of volume twelve closes with Henry Vumjou's review of *Christianity and Empire in South Manipur Hills: Senvon Encounter and the Dialogic Zo Peoples* by Samuel G. Ngaihte and Reuben Paulianding. This book on the history and culture of the Zo peoples of northeast India represents, according to Vumjou, "'speaking back' to what has been said about one's history by reintroducing and re-interpreting the misunderstood or deliberately ignored colonial accounts."