

ENERGY

AND THE QUESTION OF INVESTMENT

**INTERDISCIPLINARY
CONFERENCE**

3-4 NOV 2025

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

**TECHNO-HUMANITIES LAB,
FACULTY OF „ARTES LIBERALES”,
UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW**

Info about
the Conference:



Technology
and Socialization
Project:



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Monday, 3 November 2025

08.45-09.00 Introduction

Szymon Wróbel, Jerzy Axer

09.00-09.50 Keynote Lecture

Allan Stoekl, *Trump and Sovereignty: Bataille's Theories of Fascism and Energy from a Contemporary Perspective*

09.50-10.00 Coffee Break

10.00-11.30 Panel I - Bataille's Energies

Maciej Huzarski, *With the Rest – Without Reserve: Energy, Bataille, and the Metaphysics of Excess*

Václav Sklenář, *Holiness of the Human Machine (Bataille and Contemporary Horror)*

Christopher Phillippe-Rodriguez, *Action as Excess*

11.30-11.40 Coffee Break

11.40-12.30 Keynote Lecture

Alex Taek-Gwang Lee, *Asymmetrical Energy: Deleuze and the Critique of Thermodynamics*

12.30-12.40 Coffee Break

12.40-13.30 Keynote Lecture

Michał Federowicz, *Investment as a Process of Learning*

13.30-14.20 Lunch Break

14.20-15.10 Keynote Lecture

Antti Salminen, *What was energy, again?*

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15.10-15.20 Coffee Break

15.20-16.20 Panel II – What is Energy – from Aristotle to Psychoanalysis

Ivan Dimitrijević, *From activity to resource: on the resemantization of energeia*

Jakub Babuška, Dorota Orzechowska, *The First Topography (Re)Meets the Map - libido, erogenous zones, cathexis and geopolitical analysis*

16.20-16.30 Coffee Break

16.30-18.00 Panel III – Energy and Investment in the Central-Eastern European Context

Maja Rup, *Anticipating the Future: Investments in Renewable Energy Sources, with Wind Farms in the Baltic Sea as a Case Study*

Tetiana Zaiats, Oksana Diakonenko, Tetiana Nechytailo, *From Post-war Ruin to Resilient Quality of Life: How Social Cohesion Drives an Innovative Economy*

Olena Sova, *Rethinking Contemporary Investment through Social Resilience*

Anna Hvelesiani, Tetiana Kotenko, *Investment Behavior Of Households From The Perspective Of New Socio-Economic Reality In Ukraine*

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09.00-09.50 Keynote Lecture

Noam Yuran, *Technology for making money*

09.50-10.00 Coffee Break

10.00-10.50 Keynote Lecture

Andrzej Leder, *Energy, Signs, Structure –
The Economy of Excess*

10.50-11.00 Coffee Break

11.00-13.00 Panel IV – Psychoanalytical Explorations of Energy

Antoni Grzybowski, *The economic problem of psychoanalysis.
What is Freudian energy?*

Gustaw Owczarski, *Can energy lie? Freud's Project for a
Scientific Psychology and proton pseudos*

Piotr Wesołowski, *Social Jouissance?
A Lacanian "Sociology of Energy"*

Jiaqian Wei, *AI as Object of Psychoanalysis*

13.00-13.10 Coffee Break

13.10-14.00 Keynote Lecture

Joanna Bednarek, *Life in its proper place:
Thomas Nail's ethics of dissipation*

14.00-14.50 Lunch Break

14.50-15.40 Keynote Lecture

Andrzej Waśkiewicz, *Minimalism as Soul Investment*

15.40-15.50 Coffee Break

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15.50-17.50 Panel V – Energy and Investment in the Social Context

Andrzej Frelek, *Investing in a wrong life:
on Adorno's critical theory of needs*

Maciej Bednarski, *The Emperor's New Clothes:
some thoughts on social tailoring*

Aljoša Kravanja, *The Limits of the Hydraulic Model
in Social Explanation*

Katarzyna Szafranowska, *Brain Power Failure:
Neuroatypical Self and the Crisis of Neoliberal Energy
Management*

17.50-18.00 Coffee Break

18.00-18.50 Final Remarks

Szymon Wróbel, *The Difference Between Good and Bad Energy*

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Joanna Bednarek
Independent Researcher

Life in its proper place: Thomas Nail's ethics of dissipation

ABSTRACT:

We are used to think about life as a small island of negentropy on an ocean of entropic non-living matter. This may lead us to understand life as something 'more' than mere matter due to its alleged superior power of self-organization (or, depending on our philosophical allegiances, to disregard of life as not inhuman enough in comparison to non-living matter). However, as Thomas Nail argues in *Theory of the Earth*, this approach is based on a fundamental error concerning the nature of life and its relation to matter as a whole.

Although life is admittedly characterized by a specific self-organization, it is exceptional not because it renders life more 'organized' or complex than matter in general, but because it renders it more capable of dissipating energy – precisely thanks to the ways of self-organization proper to it. Life does not oppose entropy, it furthers it. It is no coincidence that physics describes living arrangements as 'dissipative structures'. The ethical and political injunction to act on behalf of the biosphere is thus based not in the will to conserve or to limit the forces of unproductive expenditure, but the will to maximize them.

Is this ethical project consistent? How does it compare to the projects of Nail's two main predecessors: Bataille and Deleuze? And is it viable as a guide to living and dying in the anthropocene/capitalocene/cthulucene?

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BIO:

Joanna Bednarek – philosopher, writer and translator. Author of the books „Politics Beyond Form. Ontological determinations of poststructuralist political philosophy”, „Lines of Femininity. How Sexual Difference Transformed Literature and Philosophy?”, „Life that Speaks. Modern Community and Animals”, and „Origin of the Family”. She translated (among others) Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway and Karen Barad. Former member of the editorial board of the journal „Praktyka Teoretyczna”. Collaborator of „Krytyka Polityczna” in the years 2006-2009. Her fields of interest are: poststructuralism, feminism, autonomist marxism and literature.

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Michał Federowicz
Polish Academy of Sciences

Investment as a Process of Learning

ABSTRACT:

The one thing I believe in is the law of conservation of energy. It is, of course, only true in an isolated system. That means, that I believe that the system we live in is an isolated system. Therefore, I believe that the human mind cannot go beyond an isolated system. However, this does not mean that a new value is not possible. It is possible, but expensive.

Environment we know – both natural and humane – is a performing constellation of uncountable objects. The number of possible

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constellations is endless. We don't even know if their number is countable, which means a boundary between one constellation and another may be indefinite. Nevertheless, performing constellations bring new values. However, this requires energy, which is moving from one part of the environment to another.

Energy conservation law means that the economic theory of 'added value' is false. Each new value requires some energy. The system we can imagine offers only a zero-sum energy game. A positive sum game is only possible locally. In economics, this locality translates into underestimating externalities or even excluding them from the model. The computational unit of the model does not reflect the energy transformation which creates new values.

What is the investment in such an environment with constant energy that permanently changes its form and constellation? The investment involves the deliberate transfer of energy from one part of the environment to another in order to obtain a new constellation creating new value that is to be beneficial to the investor. The question, however, is who the investors are and how inclusive this role is.

This question will be considered in the context of education. Learning as an investment process and investment as a learning process, which contributes to the performing energy constellations. Learning through relationships overcoming 'equivalent exchange'.

BIO:

Michał Federowicz sociologist at the IFiS PAN, head of the Unit of Sociology of Politics, Economy and Education. He graduated in sociology at Warsaw University, having previously graduated in engineering at Warsaw University of Technology, working in the Warsaw Institute of Aviation. After his PhD in sociology (1992) he was awarded an individual studies programme as a scholarship holder of the Kościuszko Foundation at Cornell University and Harvard

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University (Centre for European Studies). In 2005 he earned a postdoctoral degree in Humanities. In 1999-2016 he coordinated the Polish research group of PISA (the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment). In 2005 he founded a Research Group on Cross-Disciplinary Education Studies, from 2009-2017 he headed the Educational Research Institute in Warsaw, then in 2017-2021 director of the Graduate School for Social Research (GSSR). Member of editorial board of the *Polish Sociological Review* (2000-2011), and chief editor of the quarterly *Edukacja* (Jan.2012 – June 2018).

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Andrzej Leder
Polish Academy of Sciences

Energy, Signs, Structure – The Economy of Excess.

ABSTRACT:

In my presentation, I will attempt to discuss the concept of energy, philosophically generalized based on Lacanian theory, which I define through the concept of excess. On the one hand, excess, concentrated and insistent, has a destructive effect; it annihilates all structures, systems, networks, entities, and connections capable of life. It is, as Lacan put it in Seminar XI, a traumatic encounter. On the other hand, everything that exists, the entire structure of the world, serves largely to distribute excess, its pressure and gravity. By creating an expanding space of diversity, this structure infuses every moment and every place of this diversity with its corresponding energy.

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Excess is distributed through networks of interconnected devices, dispositifs, that create all structures, from material to linguistic and social. They feed on the energy of excess, and at the same time, they are essential precisely as a space for the propagation and equalization of this energy's waves. This system of beings and signs—in Lacan's language, signifiers—can only exist thanks to distributed energy. Its entire dynamics, movement, and flows, changing the fate of individuals, societies, peoples, continents, and the entire globe, depend on it.

By lowering the energy level, the system of entities and signs minimizes the destruction carried by this energy. The possibility of lowering this level is inherent in the very idea of distribution. This, of course, is only partially successful. Congestion, flow bottlenecks, excessive concentration, or shortage and dilution constantly occur—all of these manifest as crises, whose (in)human face, according to G. Bataille, is war. At the same time, the imbalance of excess and shortage becomes the source of the uninterrupted flow of production, which in the human world we call economics.

I believe that from a philosophical perspective, such an approach is not only fruitful but also essential. It is an attempt to create a unifying, universalizing theory, and I consider this, contrary to late 20th-century thinking, to be the vocation of philosophy. It allows us to think about the diversity of beings, and in particular the astonishing diversity of the material world, but also about networks of signs, symbolic systems, and finally, languages, as structures that distribute excess energy and simultaneously feed on it.

Andrzej Leder, philosopher, born in 1960, professor, corresponding member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He has published some philosophical treatises in polish on philosophy of psychoanalysis, philosophical ideas of the XXth century, the way to narrate polish

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history or the linguistic analysis of the language of economy. In English he published: *The Changing Guise of Myths*; and in German: *Polen in Wachtraum: Die Revolution 1939-1956 und Ihre Folge*. He teaches at the School of Social Sciences (GSSR) of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS), and at the University of Paris (Sorbonne). He also practices psychotherapy. He lives in Warsaw.

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Alex Taek-Gwang Lee
Kyung Hee University

Asymmetrical Energy: Deleuze and the Critique of Thermodynamics

ABSTRACT:

This paper examines Gilles Deleuze's critique of thermodynamics in relation to the mathematicisation of energy, situating it within his broader philosophy of difference and becoming. For Deleuze, classical thermodynamics, with its grounding in equilibrium, entropy, and the calculus of reversible transformations, represents a reductive inscription of energy into the abstract language of mathematics. This inscription risks subordinating the intensive, differential, and qualitative dimensions of energetic processes to an extensive, homogenised model of representation. By contrast, Deleuze rethinks energy through the concepts of intensity, difference, and the event: energy is not a measurable substance to be quantified, but a dynamic field of differential relations, irreducible to metric coordinates. His

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appropriation of thermodynamic concepts—particularly entropy and irreversibility—is not an acceptance of their physicalist axioms, but a philosophical transformation, where energy becomes the very principle of differentiation and production. Thus, Deleuze's critique illuminates the limits of scientific abstraction when it suppresses the singular and the aleatory, and offers instead a philosophy of energy that privileges the virtual, the non-equilibrium, and the creative potential of becoming.

BIO:

Alex Taek-Gwang Lee is a professor at the Department of British and American Cultural Studies and a founding director of Center for Technology in Humanities, Kyung Hee University, South Korea. He was invited as a visiting professor at Centre for Culture Media, and Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia University, India and an international visiting scholar at Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences, National Taiwan University, Taiwan. He is a member of the advisory board for The International Deleuze and Guattari Studies in Asia and the board member of The International Consortium of Critical Theory (ICCT) as well as Asia Theory Network (ATN). He edited the third volume of *The Idea of Communism* (2016) and published articles in various journals such as *Telos*, *Deleuze and Guattari Studies* and *Philosophy Today* and chapters in *Back to the '30s?: Recurring Crises of Capitalism, Liberalism and Democracy* (2020) and *Balibar/Wallerstein's "Race, Nation, Class": Rereading a Dialogue for Our Times* (2018).

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Antti Salminen

University of the Arts, Helsinki

What was energy, again?

ABSTRACT:

According to the scientific consensus, the forces of nature (mechanical, electrical, chemical etc.) are forms of a single, universal exergy (energy capable of work) that cannot be created or destroyed. What mostly seems to be forgotten is that none of it, and none of its relative eternity, is made by humans. Energy (and uses of it) as a neutral term needs to be interrogated and re-evaluated from a crisis-informed standpoint. Bataillean point of view, especially his essays on "heterogenous" (*hétérogénéité*), gives us an crucial alternative: a vast majority of energy is not useful nor productive – the Sun and solar radiation suffice as an example. Re-thinking Bataille's heterogenous view of energy is needed to tackle the most vile environmental problems at hand: energy as exergy is dependent of its shadow – anergy – to appear as well as a philosophical topos as a transformative cultural drive. This kind of "night vision" to energy is needed to sufficiently understand modernity proper (c. 1870 →) and modern productivism as such. These phenomena are driven by cheap, high-end fossil fuels that affect the innermost cores of human experience exposed to fossil forces. "The fossil subject" is thus a dominant subjectivity of modernity: this free-wheeling, unrooted and consumerist-productivist condition needs not only non-human fossil powers but is ultimately a by-product of anergetic ghosts that remain unaddressed as long as the productivist energy regimes reign over post-fossil modes of thought. The lecture introduces key terms of *Energy-trilogy* (A. Salminen & T. Vadén 2013–2024) that reconceptualizes thinking of energy and experience of modernity.

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BIO:

Antti Salminen (b. 1983) is a Finnish philosopher, poet, and theorist. His work is marked by a deft balance between strictly aesthetic concerns and contemporary material challenges, such as dependence on hydrocarbons and the possibilities of self-sustainability. Salminen works as professor of writing in University of the Arts Helsinki. His most recent works include completion of acclaimed Energy-trilogy (2013–2024) with philosopher Tere Vadén. The trilogy re-evaluates and conceptualizes "fossil modernity" as human and non-human condition in order to pave a way for post-fossil thinking and experience.

Free pdf of the first part of the trilogy downloadable in English:
<https://www.mcmprime.com/files/Energy-and-Experience.pdf>

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Allan Stoekl

Pennsylvania State University

Trump and Sovereignty: Bataille's Theories of Fascism and Energy from a Contemporary Perspective

ABSTRACT:

This talk will first discuss Bataille's crucial essay "The Psychological Structure of Fascism," with special emphasis placed on the fascist leader, the embodiment of what Bataille would have called an elevated sacred (the holy). Against this is the base sacred, linked to

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untouchables, death, and the cthonian forces of disruption). This is also a theory of sovereignty: the elevated sovereign is absolute, all-powerful, unconditioned, the base is subversive and erotic. My point will be that President Trump's authority is largely derived precisely from this type of unconditioned, sovereign, sacred; it is why, in fact, he can commit no crime (by his own reckoning). In his position he transcends crime and good and evil. Likewise, his energy policy sees fossil fuel derived energy as inseparable from his sovereign authority. (Fossil fuels are the embodiment of abstract monetary value and emerge from the earth to be stockpiled.) The larger question: can we imagine, or posit, another sacred, a base one, that envisages another, post-Trump sovereignty, and another, non or post-carbon based, energy regime?

BIO:

Allan Stoekl is professor emeritus of French and Comparative Literature, Pennsylvania State University, University Park. His recent work has focused especially on questions of energy, finitude and the sacred in a postmodern context (*Bataille's Peak* [2007]; *The Three Sustainabilities* [2021]). He is also a translator, most notably of Georges Bataille's early works.

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Andrzej Waśkiewicz
University of Warsaw

Minimalism as Soul Investment

ABSTRACT:

Minimalism as a cultural phenomenon, characteristic of Generation Z in particular, is already well described in the sociological and cultural studies literature, but the conference subject does not allow it to be overlooked in this context, either. This is all the more so because the proponents of this lifestyle themselves – Leo Babauta, Dominique Loreau or Joshua Becker, to name the most influential ones – present it as a mobilisation of the individual's energy, which in an economy of excess is dissipated into goods that do not serve any needs and is entangled in equally unnecessary activities. In its normative aspect, contemporary minimalism most often refers to Zen Buddhism, currently dominating the therapeutic market of philosophies of life, but in its implementation it is also close to the ancient practices that Michel Foucault called the Culture of the Self, rooted in the Western tradition. My presentation also disregards this aspect, already as extensively presented in the literature on the subject, and depicts it narrowly from the individual point of view as (1) a strategy of reclaiming space, which (2) will allow the individual to reclaim his time and attention, in order to (3) focus his individual, autonomous will and (4) give him the energy and power for the social emancipation necessary (5) to achieve his own goals, whether this makes the individual more or less socialised. To put it metaphorically, minimalism is meant to enable the individual to live on the margins of a society corrupted by consumerism, close to the model set by Jean Jacques Rousseau in his *Emile*. In the form of manifestos and guidebooks, minimalist texts are thus survival manuals for the civilised world, useful

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especially in times of the new spirit of capitalism described by Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello. Paradoxically, by opposing the consumer's greed to his sophistication, the minimalists nevertheless contribute to 'micro-shifts' within the production structure of capitalism and thus legitimise its spirit, sensitive to and capable of absorbing criticism.

Key references:

Leo Babauta, *The Simple Guide to a Minimalist Life*.

Joshua Becker, *The More of Less. Finding the Way You Want Under Everything You Own*.

Dominique Loreau, *L'art de la simplicité. How to Live More with Less*.

Luc Boltanski, Ève Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*.

BIO:

Andrzej Waśkiewicz teaches history of social and political ideas at the Department of Sociology and Collegium Artes Liberales, University of Warsaw. He has authored several books in Polish. His English publications include "Strangers by Choice: an Asocial Philosophy of Life" (2015), "The Idea of Political Representation and Its Paradoxes" (2020), "Understanding Recognition. Conceptual and Empirical Studies" (2020, edited with Piotr Kulas and Stanisław Krawczyk).

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Szymon Wróbel

University of Warsaw, Polish Academy of Sciences

The Difference Between Good and Bad Energy

ABSTRACT:

In everyday life, public discourse, and even scientific discourse, we use the distinction between "good" and "bad" energy. "Bad" energy, we surmise, is energy that leaves a carbon footprint on the world, released from non-renewable materials, energy that devastates natural deposits and resources, energy used for luxury, representing waste and thoughtlessness, but also a form of sovereign power. "Bad" energy—in the Spinozian sense—unleashes "sad affects" that arm us with a sense of finitude, powerlessness, guilt, or fantasies of domination over a world that overwhelms and terrifies us and therefore requires constant supervision and management. The fantasy of omnipotence, fed by "bad" energy, collapses into a sense of inertia and meaninglessness. "Good" energy, on the contrary, is the energy of wind, sun, the movement of water, the flow of rivers, the movement of ocean waves—all these forces that seem infinite and repeatable, reproduced by natural forces to which man merely "plugs in", borrowing power without destroying it, without wasting it. "Good" energy—to reiterate Spinoza—arms us with „joyful affects”, allowing us to build ever-larger collectives, transmitters of the flow of forces, without allowing any element to exercise imaginary or symbolic domination or the phantasm of sovereignty. "Good" energy is nourished not so much by the ideal of absolute freedom as by interdependence. "Good" energy calls for constant reflection on the meaning and meaninglessness of wasting energy. Finally, beyond the "bad" energy of coal and fossil fuels and the "good" energy of natural circular processes, we have atomic energy, which makes us realize that the greatest power resides in the most

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minor things. Atomic energy is the energy released by atomic fission, an energy that challenges the very concepts of reality and power. Nuclear energy is, in a sense, beyond good and evil, which means it is beyond ethical difference, because it is beyond the traditionally understood reality. Before the discovery of atomic energy, we believed that whatever we created could be destroyed. And whatever was destroyed could be rebuilt. We lived under the belief that the capacity to destroy and the capacity to create balanced each other: the world seemed perfectly reversible. Atomic energy shatters this belief. Atomic energy is absolute energy. During my presentation, I would like to consider this non-obvious difference between "good" and "bad" energy. I want to consider the triangle of bad, good, and absolute energy. Following Nietzsche's example, who demands a revision of our great values and a rethinking of the ethical difference between what is "base" and what is "noble," I would like to initiate, at least in part, the genealogy of "energy difference" and problematize the very concept of pure energy.

BIO:

Szymon Wróbel is a professor of philosophy at the Faculty of Artes Liberales at the University of Warsaw and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He is the author of numerous books and articles scattered in various scientific journals. His books in English include: *Deferring the Self and Grammar and Glamor of Cooperation*, published in 2013 and 2015. In Polish: *Ćwiczenia z przyjaźni* (*Exercises in Friendship*), *Lektury retroaktywne* (*Retroactive Readings*) and *Polska pozycja depresyjna* (*Polish Depressive Position*) published by Kraków Publishing House Universitas. In 2016, IFiS PAN published his book, *Filozof i terytorium* (*Philosopher and Territory*) on the Warsaw School of Historians of Ideas and in 2024, the Universitas Publishing House in the series "Horizons of Modernity" published his monograph entitled *Materializm, ateizm, immanencja. Notatki do*

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przyszłej heteroontologii (*Materialism, Atheism, Immanence. Notes for the Future Heteroontology*). Together with Krzysztof Skonieczny, he is co-editor of four books – *Atheism Revisited. Rethinking Modernity and Inventing New Modes of Life* (Palgrave Macmillan 2020), *Living and Thinking in the Post-Digital World* (Universitas 2021) and *Regimes of Capital in the Post-Digital Age* (Routledge 2022), *Rethinking Materialism Making the World Material Again* (Palgrave Macmillan 2025). This year, the IBL PAN Publishing House published his new book, *Rozstrojeni. Theodor W. Adorno o muzyce w zarządzanym Świecie* (*Out of tune. Theodor W. Adorno on Music in the Managed World*), in the "New Humanities" series. Currently, he is the head of the experimental Laboratory of Techno-Humanities at the Faculty of *Artes Liberales* where for several years he realizes the "Technology and Socialization" project.

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Noam Yuran
Bar Ilan University

Technology for making money

ABSTRACT:

Bitcoin captured popular imagination as a form of currency based on new technologies. Ironically, precisely because it captured public imagination it became a speculative asset which lacks a necessary feature of money, namely a stability of value. In this sense Bitcoin is an emblem of contemporary capitalism, and points to a way to distinguish it from industrial capitalism. The digital economy is characterized by a

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direct link between technology and money. Technology was always a key factor in profit making. Industrial capitalism, however, was characterized by a difference between the art of making things and the art of making money, between engineering and finance. The connection between technology and finance was mediated by things: engineers were experts in making things and businessmen were experts in making money. Today, I would argue, the gap between engineering and finance is disappearing. The obvious example is the realm of FinTech, technologies designed for no other end but profit. Yet in some senses, all digital economy is a form of financial engineering, where financial considerations are indistinguishable from engineering. Peter Thiel's *From Zero to One* shows how this new form of engineering is inscribed on the logic of venture capital. What successful innovators should seek, he writes, is not the idea of making a good service or product to profit from, but an intentional creation of a monopoly. Veblen's distinction between capital goods and intangible assets expressed the tension between engineers and investors. Engineers, specializing in the management of things, work within a logic where profit making is beneficial to society. In the logic of investment, by contrast, profits for one come at the expense of benefit to society. In Veblen's terminology, venture capital promotes a new kind of engineer, specializing in creating intangible assets.

BIO:

Noam Yuran is the Chair of the Graduate Program of Science, Technology and Society at Bar Ilan University. He is the author of *What Money Wants* and *The Sexual Economy of Capitalism*. His current research explores the eroticism of technology.

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Panel Presentations

Jakub Babuška

University of Edinburgh

Dorota Orzechowska

University College London, University of Warsaw

The First Topography (Re)Meets the Map - libido, erogenous zones, cathexis and geopolitical analysis

ABSTRACT:

This paper stages a dialogue between a quantitative turn in contemporary psychoanalysis and a parallel recalibration in geopolitics. On the psychoanalytic side, Lacan's late teaching and Jacques Alain Miller's writings on an economy of jouissance mark a turn to materialism and to a quantitative psychoanalysis, bringing back into view Freud's early, energetically driven metapsychology of 'the first topography'. On the geopolitical side, there is a renewed emphasis on the determinative role of location, resources and terrain in shaping political power. Classical geopolitics, associated with Rudolf Kjellén's conception of the state as 'geographic organism', has re-emerged in debates attentive to borders, strategic positions and access to resources, as in Zbigniew Brzezinski's *The Grand Chessboard*, Robert D. Kaplan's *The Revenge of Geography*, and John J. Mearsheimer's offensive realism with its territorial imperatives.

This contemporary focus contrasts with the late twentieth-century dominance of state-centric, ideological and normative frameworks that tended to sanitise power politics from physical reference points. Hans J. Morgenthau's realism privileged power over terrain, George F. Kennan's containment centred ideological conflict, and Gerard Toal's critical geopolitics foregrounded narrative and discourse.

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I argue that the psychoanalytic turn to quantities offers a neglected vocabulary for this geopolitical return to material determinants. Reviving Freud's concepts of quantitative libido, cathexis and erogenous zonality allows us to describe how energies are allocated, intensified and displaced across both subjects and spaces. This vocabulary can supplement discourse-oriented studies of ideology, statehood and international law with an economy-and-geography lexicon fit for analysing borders, corridors, resource basins and chokepoints. The result is a programme for reading investments as measurable energetic operations that organise political attachment and action, without collapsing them into moralising accounts of waste or reducing them to purely symbolic effects.

BIOS:

Jakub Babuška graduated with an LLB from the University of Warwick and an MA in Medical Ethics and Law from King's College London. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Law at the University of Edinburgh.

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Dorota Orzechowska holds an MEng in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Warwick. She is currently studying for an MSc in Data Science and Ecology at University College London, as well as pursuing a Master's degree in Philosophy at the University of Warsaw.

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Maciej Bednarski
University of Warsaw

The Emperor's New Clothes: some thoughts on social tailoring

ABSTRACT:

In contemporary capitalist society, the notion of investment is understood in an overwhelmingly economic horizon: to invest is to allocate resources now to extract profit later, and the mode of investment is increasingly speculative. Yet the etymology of the word points to another, pre-modern meaning, related to the verb to vest - to clothe - which was at the core of medieval practices of investiture. These practices wove together threads of fabric and threads of meaning into durable institutional forms.

Hans Christian Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes* depicts an extreme case of disinvestment in such practices, replaced by an equally extreme investment in speculation. Emperor's robes dissolve into nothing - what is left is naked speculation bereft of material or symbolic support. Full transparency of the Emperor's new garment means two things at once: as all weaves become transparent and equivalent, society loses its instituted meaning and con-men succeed in a perfect speculation, a profit without investment, an "immediate" yield.

The contrast between investment-as-institution and investment-as-speculation resonates with Cornelius Castoriadis' core opposition between autonomy and heteronomy from *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. Investment-investiture-institution is a fundamental act of autonomy which *tailors* new meanings (thus, social "energy") by marking and weaving material-symbolic figures out of the *magma* of

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significations, whereas investment-speculation imposes a transparent equivalency of all figures, demanding a belief in an invisible future yield (heteronomous to the current society) and a cathexis that drains all energy into empty circulation.

In this short paper I want to elaborate on this outline and claim that to recover investment after speculation, thinking about investment must itself be re-instituted. In other words, to build new sources of (social) energy we must invest in institutions – we must *tailor* ourselves some new clothes.

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BIO:

Maciej Bednarski – final stage PhD student at the University of Warsaw, his doctoral dissertation focuses on the role of the phenomenon of place(fulness) in the University study practices and how it is impacted by digitalization. He has published research papers in *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture*, *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria*, *Techne: Research in Philosophy & Technology*, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, and *Philosophy and Theory in Higher Education*.

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Ivan Dimitrijevic
University of Warsaw

From activity to resource: on the resemantization of *energeia*

ABSTRACT:

According to du Cange lexicon *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, during Middle Ages the transformation occurred of the meaning of Aristotelian concept of *energeia* (translated as *operatio* and *actus*) to *efficacia*, *conatus* or *labor*. This remark cannot be overlooked if we are interested in understanding the semantic trajectory of *energeia* from activity to resource (in psychological, techno-industrial or economic sense).

The aim of this paper is to investigate the premises of the great inversion of meaning which laid the foundations of modern and postmodern culture. After having briefly examined *energeia* as “being-at-work” (Agamben) that defines the objective contours of a thing (being natural or artificial) by exposing its essential capability, I will move on to analyze the theological resemnatization of *actus/operatio* as realities that fully belong to God alone. Finally I will sketch out the passage to naturalistic meaning of the concept, already established in the Age of Enlightenment, as a passive quality of a thing that can be used (and misused or abused) and that does not relate to the nature or essence of the thing. If *energeia* was first used to study the work of a thing, now it is used to make things work independently of what they are and what their *telos* is. Energy thus pertains to a world of culture supposing there is no goal and there is no direction – accordingly, all things are plunged in ontological passivity and are at disposal of a bigger force.

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Yet, if the modern energy represents an inversion of the original *energeia*, doesn't this mean that modernity, far from being something new, embodies a dialectic continuation of a past that has been reduced to a useful resource?

BIO:

Ivan Dimitrijevic teaches philosophy at the Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw. His research interests include political philosophy, philosophy of praxis, and conceptual history. His last works have been devoted to the conceptual history of political and practical aspects of concepts of madness, work and movement: *Critique and Care: Madness Before and After Basaglia* (2022, in Italian), *Dispute on Work* (2022, in Polish) and *To Go and to Arrive at the Same Time: Four Essays in the Critique of Therapeutic Politics* (2023, in Polish).

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Andrzej Frelek
University of Warsaw

Investing in a wrong life: on Adorno's critical theory of needs

ABSTRACT:

The question of needs is one which contemporary philosophy has largely abandoned, especially in the realms of social and political theory. Its relegation to the field of behavioral sciences has led to the dominance of abstract models of human motivation in which needs are somewhat simple creatures, pertaining to free and rational choices of

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individuals. Yet, the contemporary proliferation of crises should disabuse us as to such notions. The social logic of the capitalist society has given rise to countless forms of needs and desires that are actively harmful to human beings and extra-human nature. As society and as individuals we seem to be investing – monetarily and libidinally – in a wrong life, day after day. It should be unsurprising that the last few decades have seen a reserved return to the problem of the theory of needs, and of its import for thinking about the possibility of a different social order.

But what we have so far are mostly critiques of modes of living. Valuable as those are, they should stand on a philosophically rigorous foundation that can only be provided by a critical concept of subjectivity that would take seriously the valances of need and desire – which means taking seriously the possibility that both need and desire can find expressions that are ultimately harmful to the subject. It is my contention that Theodor W. Adorno's 1942 text *Theses on Need*, which investigates the hijacking of libidinal investments by the social logic of capitalism, presents us with an extremely valuable point of departure towards such a project – one that in many respects seems more conceptually advanced than many contemporary alternatives. The aim of this paper is therefore to acquaint others with the contents of this underappreciated text, and to place Adorno's Freudo-Marxian thinking about need in a contemporary context.

BIO:

Andrzej Frelek, PhD, is a researcher in critical theory. His interests lie primarily in the works of Karl Marx and Theodor Adorno, as well as in the Freudian and Lacanian traditions of psychoanalysis. His work centers on social and philosophical problems connected with the climate crisis, on which he wrote his doctoral thesis titled *Nature and domination: reading Marx and Adorno in the age of the climate crisis*. In his writings he strives to analyze the immediate problems of climate

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politics from the viewpoint of critical social theory. At present he is a guest co-editor of three issues of the *Praktyka Teoretyczna* journal on the contemporary relevance of the Frankfurt School.

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Antoni Grzybowski
Polish Academy of Sciences

The economic problem of psychoanalysis. What is Freudian energy?

ABSTRACT:

Today, we prefer to see Freud as a representative of the humanities, a hermeneuticist or semiotician. This reinterpretation of psychoanalytic theory has not only protected Freud's work from its most fierce critics, but also brought out its philosophical and anthropological stakes. However, it not only opened up new channels for the reception of psychoanalysis, but also, out of necessity, had to "censor" some theoretical excesses that did not fit into it. The victim of this kind of censorship was primarily Freud's concept of the distribution of "energy" in the psychic apparatus - the economic dimension of psychoanalytic theory. On the surface, it appears to be merely a remnant of the former scientific ambitions of the founder of psychoanalysis. However, the energetic concepts used by Freud appear in those areas of psychoanalytic theorizing where the language of "meaning and intention," the language proper to semiocentric revision, proves increasingly insufficient. Psychoanalysis attempts to capture not only the purely linguistic relationship between signs, but

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also their dynamics. So what is Freudian energy? It is a metaphor whose meaning must be examined by reference to the field of research specific to psychoanalysis. I will argue that Freudian economics frames the tension between the undefined, unrepresented, and helplessness-inducing—the dimensions of the body and trauma—and the tendency of the psychic apparatus to synthesize, maintain structural identity, and reduce ambiguity by combining and reorganizing its representations—a kind of economy of representation. In this way, I would like to propose a conceptual thread that will make it possible to escape from the labyrinth of “mixed language of force and meaning” created by Freud.

BIO:

Antoni Grzybowski – psychologist, psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapist, PhD student at the GSSR at the Polish Academy of Sciences. Member of the Krakow Psychoanalysis Circle of the New Lacanian School. His academic interests revolve around the possible dialogue between psychoanalysis (especially Freud, Lacan, Laplanche) and philosophy. He has published in Psychoterapia, Diametros, International Journal of Psychoanalysis, among others.

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Maciej Huzarski
Polish Academy of Sciences

With the Rest – Without Reserve: Energy, Bataille, and the Metaphysics of Excess

ABSTRACT:

The presentation addresses the metaphysical consequences of Georges Bataille's thought, arguing that it exemplifies a distinctive logic of excess. We set out to delineate a metaphysical aspect of this logic by drawing analogies between certain physical properties and philosophical concepts – with particular attention to the notion of energy and the constant c . Engaging Richard Feynman, we briefly argue that the role of these properties is the production of meaning within a given epistemic framework, the alternative being a sudden slide into scandal, nonsense – and, at the limit, into metaphysics. This threshold is precisely where Bataille situates his inquiry.

We investigate both the ontological positions and stakes of the author of *The Accursed Share*, underlining the pivotal role of negation. Only then can we tackle the concept of continuity Bataille consistently employs and propose its ontological reading. By drawing an analogy between Bataille's concept and Yakir Aharonov's two-state vector formalism in quantum mechanics, I suggest that french thinker gestures toward more than an experiential stance: he intimates an actual continuity of potentialities, wherein the future conditions the present as decisively as the past.

In conclusion, I propose a reconstruction of the structure of the logic of excess that underlies—and clearly exceeds—Bataille's thought.

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Maciej Huzarski is a PhD candidate in philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN). His research focuses on the concept of excess, with particular attention to and psychoanalysis. He has worked on Peter Sloterdijk, Alenka Zupančič, and the poetics of philosophical writing.

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Aljoša Kravanja
University of Ljubljana

The Limits of the Hydraulic Model in Social Explanation

ABSTRACT:

In the paper I examine what is sometimes called the hydraulic model of social explanation. Briefly formulated, the model states:

In a social or psychological system, if a given amount of energy is not released when first produced, it must be eventually released in a substitute form.

Once we become aware of the model, we can find it in all genres of social theory. For instance, Nietzsche claims that when we cannot avenge ourselves for an injury, we must develop *ressentiment*. In Marxist tradition, authors argue (following *18th Brumaire*) that an unsuccessful revolution channels political energy to the right, resulting in a populist coup. For Freud, a patient that represses an affect transfers it to another target. And in Albert Hirschman's *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, not being able to exit an organization forces a dissatisfied member to release her criticisms by voice.

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I argue that this model's explanatory power is limited, for it relies on two (non-trivial) assumptions. First, for the agent involved in the model, what matters is not the type of action, but energy release. Following Marxist account, the social class that is prevented from carrying out revolution releases its energy by supporting chauvinist politics. But this explanation supposes that an action (be it revolution or chauvinist politics) is a channel of energy release, rather than an action that the class intends to carry out for its own sake.

The second assumption is that the social energy behaves like physical energy. Physical energy cannot vanish. The hydraulic model supposes that social energy cannot disappear either. It stays in a system until it is released in one form or another. But this claim is non-trivial in social or psychic systems. For human beings can often absorb excess social shocks. Consider tolerance, slack, oblivion, neglect, and apathy. While we usually look down on these attributes, they have a function: they help us endure social tension without releasing it. It is these capacities, the paper argues, that the hydraulic model overlooks.

BIO:

Aljoša Kravanja is a lecturer at the Department of Philosophy, University of Ljubljana. He lectures in "Political Philosophy" and "Psychoanalysis and Structuralism". He is also a translator: his translations include Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and Hobbes's *Leviathan*.

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Gustaw Owczarski

Global Center for Advanced Studies, University of Warsaw

Can energy lie? Freud's *Project for a Scientific Psychology* and *proton pseudos*

ABSTRACT:

In 1895, Freud created an energetic model of the psychic apparatus, consisting of three types of neurons and a quantity that cathects them. However, his focus on psychopathologies forced him to introduce, at the heart of this system, a primary lie (*proton pseudos*), to which, according to Laplanche, all psychic phenomena are indebted. I'd like to explore this relation between lie and energy in order to ascertain the nature of energy in psychoanalysis (libido) and why it is often seemingly invested in vain, while at the same time producing surplus *jouissance* (Lacan's *Seminar XVI*).

I'll ask whether there can be a lie without meaning – the lie of energy. I'll do this by reading Freud's text in conjunction with Miller's *Barcelona seminar*, which builds on Frege's distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*. Miller's claim – that the symptom, as a formation of the Real which sticks in place while simultaneously engendering the mobility of desire as meaning, "always lies" – will be a jumping-off point for thinking of a lie without meaning (*Sinn*) or conflict with truth.

I'll show that the *proton pseudos* concerns the sexual nature of the traumatic event and, as such, can only be read in reference to the concept of *Nachträglichkeit* (deferred action), as understood by Laplanche and later Kirchhoff. Analyzing the untimely appearance of sexual release, I'll introduce logical time (a Lacanian concept) into the heart of libido. In this way, energy itself will be shown to carry "the germ of hysteria."

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I'll then show how, around the *Bedeutung* of this lie (symptom), the truth of meaning-effects can emerge. Looking at Lacan's *Seminar XVII*, I'll speak of "truth as the little sister of *jouissance*." I'll show that truth is, at the same time, a resource extracted by the lie of energy and what remains at the end of the "path to the formation of the symptom." Lacan spoke of truth as "always being a half-truth" – I'll add that it's the discarded half. The truth is what can no longer be used by the symptom to reproduce *jouissance* – this structure could provide a new way of thinking about ecology.

I'll conclude by saying that the Freudian understanding of energy as sexual energy is propped on the primacy of the lie, which – by moving energy into logical time – constitutes an economy of investment and fixation partially opposed to the law of inertia.

BIO:

Gustaw Owczarski – Graduate of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Warsaw with a diploma from Artes Liberales. Currently studies psychoanalysis at GCAS. Editor of the literary journal "Trytytka". Author of the book of poetry "Trap Crypt". Member of the student research group for contemporary thought co-responsible for organizing readings in psychoanalytic and dialectic series.

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Christopher Phillippe-Rodriguez
University College London

Action as Excess

ABSTRACT:

Bataille's most well-known work was written primarily within a sociological and economic context; his notion of "general economy", as the kind of economy that takes excess rather than consumption as the primary phenomenon of its analysis, was formulated in part to explain the kinds of behavior that under a traditional economic model would be considered "irrational". On the contrary, according to Bataille, there is something distinctly human about the expenditure of excess resources; hence, it would be remiss to structure political economy around the exclusion of such a feature.

However, it can be argued that much the same could be said on the level of individual action; the kinds of phenomenological and epistemological processes involved in behavior and decision-making. In this paper, I will present a case, drawing upon the likes of Merleau-Ponty and Charles Taylor among others, for conceiving of action as excess; and that this quality makes human action a distinct kind of action with a unique kind of "sense". This model will stand in contrast to commonly held theories of human behavior, wherein the freedom of an agent is usually indexed to the number of choices they have available to them. Rather, under the present model, human action possesses an additional dialectical feature that involves the *renunciation* or *negation* of an abundance of choices. Thus, the ability to act does not strictly depend simply on singling out a possible choice among other choices, but additionally, and chiefly, "expending" the excess of possibilities available to oneself.

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BIO:

Christopher Phillippe-Rodriguez is a recently completed M.A. and current MPhil. Stud. student at University College London (UCL) in London, England. He obtained his bachelor's degree (B.A.) *summa cum laude* at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in philosophy with a minor in chemistry. He primarily works in the philosophy of language (translation, interpretation, and pragmatism), perception, and 20th Century continental philosophy, especially in phenomenology and the work of Merleau-Ponty. He has other academic interests in linguistics, political theory and philosophy, cognitive science, and jurisprudence.

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Maja Rup
University of Warsaw

Anticipating the Future: Investments in Renewable Energy Sources, with Wind Farms in the Baltic Sea as a Case Study

ABSTRACT:

The energy transition marks a moment of anticipating the future – one in which multiple possibilities and ways of life begin to unfold. Within this context, the notion of *investment* entails not only financial commitment but also the materialisation of certain envisioned futures and forms of life.

Decisions surrounding energy investments shape possible futures – albeit within highly constrained frameworks of decision-making power.

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Such choices determine access to energy (and consequently the life forms and practices conditioned by it), influence the direction and structure of economic development, dictate patterns of resource consumption, and mediate relationships with the natural environment and the extent of anthropogenic impact. Amidst the ongoing climate and ecological crisis, these decisions acquire an even broader, planetary significance.

In this presentation, I will examine the case of offshore wind farms currently being developed in the Polish sector of the Baltic Sea. Through this lens, I will explore questions of agency and responsibility in the making of energy futures: Who makes these decisions, and who bears their consequences? What implications do these investments hold for both human and non-human beings, as well as for ecosystems? What potential futures are being anticipated through this case? Does it reproduce the entrenched power structures of the fossil fuel era, or does it open space for more egalitarian and transformative relations?

BIO:

Maja Rup: PhD student at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Warsaw. Graduate in bioethics, philosophy and gender studies. Her main research interests are in ethical problems of climate and environmental crisis from feminist new materialism and critical posthumanism perspective. Prepares a dissertation on the ethics of renewable energy sources, with offshore wind farms being developed on the Polish coast as a case study.

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Václav Sklenář
University of Pardubice

Holiness of the Human Machine (Bataille and Contemporary Horror)

ABSTRACT:

In 2013 a horror video game called *Amnesia: Machine for Pigs* was published. A few years later a brilliant video essay appeared on YouTube linking the universe of the game to ideas of Bataille's *The Accursed Share*, explaining how the game's location, a strange factory whose primal purpose is human sacrifice, replicates the structure of Bataille's interpretation of Aztec culture as an example of functioning of general economy. Taking the story of the game as a starting point, I want to connect its (and Bataille's) theory of sacrifice with Mark Steven's book of film analysis *Splatter Capital* that proves horror to be *the* genre of capitalism. Starting from these reference points, I want to show two things. 1) There is a still under-analysed contradiction in capitalism, which lies in the dual role of sacrifice. To sacrifice originally means to make something holy, which would traditionally mean to take it out of the sphere of utility. Yet capitalism manages to make things (keeping in mind that workers properly belong in this category) holy precisely by making them as useful as possible, creating a contradiction of what I propose to call "holiness of the useful". 2) This sphere of the "holiness of the useful" has been instantiated in recent cinema, where pressures of incessant involvement in the process of circulation of capital produce new form of the sacred, which either ends up in symbolic sacrificial death of the hero/worker (like in the movie *Boiling point*) or cause an implosion of consciousness, transferring us into the sacred realm of horror proper (the prime example being the movie *Smile 2*).

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BIO:

Dr. Václav Sklenář is an assistant professor and a deputy head of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at University of Pardubice. His work focuses on Hegel, Marx and critical theory as sources for rethinking and restructuring current political frameworks. Scholar profile at: <https://kfr.upce.cz/en/mgr-vaclav-sklenar-phd>

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Olena Sova

Institute for Demography of the NAS of Ukraine

Rethinking Contemporary Investment through Social Resilience

ABSTRACT:

In the context of global turbulence – ranging from economic crises and demographic challenges to technological disruptions and war-induced shocks – the question of how societies sustain and strengthen resilience has become central. Social resilience is not only the ability of individuals to adapt but also the collective capacity of communities to withstand stress, recover from crises, and transform adversity into opportunities.

Contemporary investment strategies increasingly recognize human and social capital as equally crucial components alongside financial and physical assets. Investments in education, healthcare, digital literacy, and inclusive local initiatives generate long-term returns that strengthen resilience. Digital platforms that enable civic participation

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during the war in Ukraine demonstrate how technological investments, combined with social cohesion, can create effective rapid-response mechanisms. Similarly, community-based insurance schemes and social protection programs illustrate how financial instruments can be redesigned to enhance collective security.

This perspective redefines investment not merely as the accumulation of capital but as a multidimensional process that shapes adaptive capacity. Investment in people – including skills, trust networks, and inclusive governance – directly contributes to resilience in periods of uncertainty. The shift from narrowly defined economic gains to broader measures of well-being and sustainability reflects a fundamental paradigm shift.

International evidence supports these findings. South Korea's investment in digital governance and citizen engagement during the pandemic strengthened national resilience through institutional agility and platform diversity. Poland's "Smart Village" initiatives, including the e-VITA program, expanded internet access and digital literacy in rural areas, fostering self-organization and cultural vitality. The Baltic States, particularly Estonia, have integrated e-governance tools such as e-ID and X-Road, creating robust trust mechanisms between the state and its citizens that have proved effective during crises.

The paper argues that fostering social resilience through such multidimensional investments is essential for ensuring stability and promoting innovation. Sustainable development in the 21st century depends less on traditional growth models and more on building resilient communities capable of self-organization, adaptive governance, and long-term renewal.

BIO:

Olena Sova holds a PhD in Economics, the academic title of Associate Professor, and works as a Senior Research Fellow at the Mykhailo

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Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Life Quality Research of the NAS of Ukraine. With two decades of teaching experience at Ukrainian universities, she combines scholarly research with active involvement in educational development. Her research focus on the digital transformation of the economy, social insurance, human capital development, and the promotion of effective state policies in the field of social protection. She has authored more than 100 scientific publications, including articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, and regularly contributes to international academic discourse through conferences and collaborative research projects.

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Katarzyna Szafranowska
University of Warsaw

Brain Power Failure: Neuroatypical Self and the Crisis of Neoliberal Energy Management

ABSTRACT:

The point of departure for my paper is the concept of the brain as a machine of mental labour, an energy circuit, a force of production, or a ground for investment. I aim to examine contemporary neuroculture, particularly its discourse of resources, management, and waste. To do so, I follow Catherine Malabou and her critique of the appropriation of brain plasticity within neoliberal logic, as well as Victoria Pitts-Taylor's analysis of how neoliberalism shapes contemporary technologies of the self through neuroculture. Yet, it is not the concept of plasticity that interests me, but rather that of

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neuroatypicality, which, as I argue, marks a significant shift in thinking about the brain and the neuronal self. It emphasises dysregulation, functional failures, and the challenges of energy management that ultimately lead to energy waste.

Using content analysis of the mainstream magazine ADDitude — a popular online and print source devoted to the symptoms and treatment of ADD (attention deficit disorder) and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) — I examine the concept of the “ADHD brain,” which is framed in terms of limited capacity, a tendency for circuit overload, and mental underperformance. My interest lies in how the cultural mediation of neuroscience shapes contemporary understandings of the self, and in the potential social consequences of framing the brain in terms of poor energy management. As the neuroatypical self questions the common basis of the flexible, adaptive brain of an ideal neoliberal subject, neurodivergence may be seen as an inconsistency that threatens the neoliberal system. An inherent human inadequacy to function in a late capitalist reality indicates an inadequacy of capitalism itself and for that very reason, may provoke a reactionary political response such as disability and healthcare policy shifts aiming to preserve the existing socioeconomic order.

I argue that neuroculture generates both conservative and critical discourse, making narratives around neurodivergence highly ambiguous: they simultaneously reflect neoliberal frameworks for conceptualizing the brain while potentially destabilizing the premises of the contemporary socioeconomic order. The main question I ask is to what extent the neurodivergent discourse is conservative — serving as a new iteration of neoliberal views of the self — and conversely, to what extent it may transform our thinking by undermining the assumptions of the brain’s limitlessness and its endless capacity for adaptation, which late capitalism demands.

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BIO:

Katarzyna Szafranowska is a philosopher/cultural theorist, assistant professor at Faculty of “Artes Liberales” (University of Warsaw), and a proud member of Techno-Humanities Lab. Her interests encompass contemporary culture, gender studies, feminist theory, and Jewish philosophy. She has been investigating the influences of French thought on Jewish feminism, and feminist readings of the philosophy of Spinoza. Currently, she is more occupied with the analysis of various body discourses and cultural practices.

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Jiaqian Wei
University College London

AI as Object of Psychoanalysis

ABSTRACT :

The work opens the discussion of psychoanalytic theories with wider philosophical and technical debates on AI. It argues that contemporary AI—exemplified by large language models—should be framed not through questions of subject (thinking, agency, consciousness), but through psychoanalysis’ theories of the object, which offer a richer account of how technology mediates fantasy, failure, and socialization.

The argument advances in three moves. First, historically locating the concept of *objectivization*, distinguishing it from conventional *objectification*. Revisiting Freud’s claim that “the ego is not master in

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its own house,” the object-relations tradition, and Lacan’s theorization of the object *a*, where subjectivity and object are always entangled, I show why we cannot speak of AI as a subject without first addressing object, and why notions such as “consciousness” are unstable even for humans. Second, *anthropomorphism and fantasy*. Although recognized as statistical machines, LLMs invite projections of subjectivity and intimacy. Drawing on transference, projective identification, and the uncanny, I argue that hallucinations, role-play, and misrecognition are not mere technical flaws but fantasmatic scenes that knowledge alone cannot resist, implicating ideology and the limits of scientific reason. Third, *failure’s openings*. Following the idea of the “stupidity of intelligence,” I propose that breakdowns and refusals are not simply limits but productive sites where enjoyment and ethical possibilities emerge.

Together, these perspectives show how psychoanalysis can illuminate the libidinal and social investments in AI, and how psychoanalytic readings disclose fantasies and failures through which new forms of socialisation can be organised.

BIO:

Jiaqian (JK) Wei is a researcher in psychoanalysis and technology. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Science and Technology Studies at UCL on fantasies of AI and social desire. He holds an MA in Psychoanalytic Studies from Birkbeck, University of London, where his dissertation *AI as Object of Psychoanalysis* examined large language models as psychoanalytic objects through Freud, object relations, and Lacan. Trained also in Electronic & Electrical Engineering (UCL, MEng), he co-hosts bilingual seminars on psychoanalysis and AI, and has published on data barriers in infrastructure.

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Piotr Wesołowski
Polish Academy of Sciences

Social *Jouissance*? A Lacanian “Sociology of Energy”

ABSTRACT:

Freudian libido as psychic energy, and the drives that carry it, is rewritten by Jacques Lacan in terms of *jouissance*. At the same time, Lacan distinguishes between different kinds of *jouissance*. Most of these, however, are the *jouissances* of the particular subject. Yet Lacan and the Lacanians, much like Freud, also developed a theory of culture and the social field. The well-known concept of the Big Other is a Lacanian way of understanding the symbolic order as a social field. But the Other is only a structure; what is also required is the element that sets this structure into motion – energy. This would be what I call “social *jouissance*”. Jacques-Alain Miller has stated that “culture is a mode of distribution of *jouissance*”. Should this *jouissance* be conceptualized according to the same principles as that of the subject? This is a challenge for so-called “Lacanian sociology.” In specifying this socially distributed *jouissance*, one must pose a series of questions analogous to the subject’s *jouissance*. Would it be analogous to the *jouissance* of the fantasme? Is there a form of social *jouissance* other than of the object a, which Lacan inscribed into the structure of discourse? And, when it comes to the social field, can we speak of *jouissance* beyond structure, analogous to what the so-called “late Lacan” speaks of, especially if we treat the social field itself precisely as a structure?

BIO:

Piotr Wesołowski (1995) – PhD student of philosophy at The Graduate School for Social Research, Polish Academy of Sciences. His main

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interests are intersections of philosophy and painting, and using Lacanian psychoanalysis to inquire about social and historical field. His current dissertation project examines the psychoanalysis of Rococo through the figure of Pierrot approached as a symptom. Editor of the "Machina Myśli" magazine.

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Tetiana Zaiats

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Oksana Diakonenko

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From Post-War Ruin to Resilient Quality of Life: How Social Cohesion Drives an Innovative Economy

ABSTRACT:

The devastating and tragic consequences of the war in Ukraine have brought new challenges – particularly the threat of eroding social cohesion, which directly affects the country's capacity for recovery and its ability to preserve democratic achievements. The powerful wave of unity observed at the beginning of the full-scale invasion has gradually subsided to pre-war levels, resulting in widespread social apathy, fragmentation, and growing tensions.

The consolidation of the population has become an objective

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necessity in the context of multiple, overlapping crisis situations – crises of relationships, goals, and identity – where the priority is to build new forms of social connections based on adaptability to changing conditions for the sake of collective security and survival. Research indicates that shared socio-economic conditions, higher average incomes, and efforts to reduce inequality strengthen social cohesion, whereas disparities in status and living standards increase social isolation and reinforce existing divisions.

The growing role of virtual communication reflects people's heightened need for information as a protective response to life-threatening conditions. Social media now play an essential role in expanding opportunities for social mobility, facilitating information exchange, and enabling individuals to adapt their behavior – thereby generating new forms of collective interaction. On social network platforms, residents actively share updates (about air raids, possible evacuation routes, destruction, shelters, and response protocols for victims), coordinating their actions in real time. Such practices create hubs of activity that attract a larger number of participants and foster new connections, leading to what can be defined as emergent social cohesion – the capacity of a system to exhibit properties not found in its individual components. This emergent cohesion is based on weak social ties formed around specific, often short-lived events (such as an air raid) and is characterized by equal participation conditions for all network members, regardless of their personal characteristics.

BIOS:

Tetiana Zaiats is a Doctor of Sciences (Economics), Professor, and Head of the Department at the Mykhailo Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Life Quality Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. She is a distinguished scholar with more than three decades of academic and research experience in the fields of social and regional economics. Professor Zaiats has authored and co-authored over sixty

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books and more than two hundred scholarly articles that have been widely recognized in Ukraine and beyond. She is actively involved in the academic community as a member of the editorial boards of the journals *Demography* and *Social Economy and Economy of Ukraine*. Alongside her research work, she has more than 30 years of teaching experience at leading Ukrainian universities, where she has trained numerous specialists in economics and demography.

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Oksana Diakonenko holds a PhD in Economics and serves as a Senior Research Fellow at the Mykhailo Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Life Quality Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. She is the author of over 120 scientific publications, including 28 co-authored collective monographs. Her professional interests focus on economic analysis of social phenomena, including social capital, civil society, and social cohesion. Currently, she is involved in research projects examining the role of social cohesion in Ukraine's post-war development.

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Tetiana Nechytailo is the Chief Economist at the Mykhailo Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Life Quality Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Her academic profile focuses on research and publications in the following areas: transformation processes in of socio-labor relations and their role in shaping social capital in urban and rural communities; the integration of information and communication technologies and innovative approaches across various sectors of economic activity; digitalization of community interactions through ICT as an instrument for enhancing social capital.

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Investment Behavior of Households from the Perspective of New Socio-Economic Reality in Ukraine

ABSTRACT:

Household savings and investment behaviour is one of the key factors in shaping economic stability at both micro and macro levels. In today's conditions - growing economic uncertainty, the impact of the pandemic and ongoing armed aggression - the study of the population's investment behaviour is becoming particularly relevant. In theoretical terms, the issue of household investment has been actively studied since the beginning of the 20th century. Modern approaches are largely focused on the analysis of behavioural finance, focusing on the mistakes that households make when managing financial resources. Modern households face numerous difficulties in managing finances: insufficient financial literacy, tendency to errors, low level of asset diversification.

The essence of household savings is interpreted as an economic category that reflects relations regarding the distribution of income and formation of monetary funds intended for future consumption or investment. In process of accumulating savings and transforming them into working assets through financial market instruments, organized household savings are transformed into investments. Exclusively organized savings, which are accumulated in accounts of financial

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institutions, banks, insurance companies, non-state pension funds, etc, are investments that are attracted on the basis of maturity, payment and risk. Thus, in our study, investment behaviour of households is considered from classical economic point of view, as making decisions about ways to use household resources in the financial market in order to preserve and increase property by using financial instruments to obtain profit or benefit in monetary or non-monetary forms. In terms of "energy", investment can be considered as a contribution of labour, emotions, care, expectations, which are not always rational or measurable in classic economic sense. This idea provides opportunity to rethink the investment behaviour of households not only as rational process, but as a complex of motivations, affects, ideas about the future, fears and social structures.

BIOS:

Anna Hvelesiani is a PhD in Economics, Senior Researcher in the Department of Modeling of Socio-Economic Processes and Structures of Mykhailo Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Life Quality Research of the NAS of Ukraine of Ukraine; Research Fellow of the Department of Statistics and Demographic Studies of the University of the Western Cape in the Republic of South Africa. Her main areas include theoretical and empirical socio-economic research on evaluation of social policy in education, healthcare, youth, NEETs, IDP's issues; applied and theoretical research on labour economics; research on housing provision, investment in social infrastructures facilities; access to and exclusion from social services; the households consumption behavior in Ukraine in time of crises.

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