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CARL SCHMITT AND SIMONE WEIL

PHILOSOPHY AND NAKED FORCE

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Abstract

The paper is conceptualized on the premise that modern discourses on violence can be read within two fundamental paradigms: the paradigm of force (Simone Weil) and the paradigm of domination (Frankfurt School and its followers). While the first half of the 20th century can be viewed as the exemplification of force, after WWII we are instead faced with violence understood as domination. However, it seems that the 21st century begins with a return of force in a new form. The aim of the paper is to

read Carl Schmitt's political theology as an illustration and extension of Simone Weil's analysis of force in "*The Iliad, or the Poem of Force*." The essay is devoted to an analysis of Schmitt's fundamental political-legal categories, such as sovereignty, decisionism, and friend-foe opposition as modern translations of force in Weil's conceptualization: as invasions of brute force into the human order.

The paper wishes to be not only an historical-philosophical analysis, but a contribution to the modern project of antifascist education, insofar as the modes of contemporary European authoritarianism (e.g., in Hungary and Poland) more or less overtly refer to the Schmittian legacy. Thus, the contribution aims at an intellectual depotentialization of this legacy and mitigation of the impact of its renaissance.

Keywords: Homer, Adorno, Horkheimer, Weil, Schmitt, force, violence, domination.

Carl Schmitt in Simone Weil. Filozofija in gola sila

Povzetek

26 Príspevek je zasnovan na domnevi, da moderne obravnave nasilja lahko beremo znotraj dveh temeljnih paradigem, in sicer paradigme sile (Simone Weil) in paradigme dominacije (frankfurtska šola in njeni nasledniki). Medtem ko lahko prvo polovico 20. stoletja vidimo kot ponazoritev sile, se po drugi svetovni vojni soočamo z nasiljem kot dominacijo. Vendar se zdi, da se 21. stoletje začne z vrnitvijo sile v novi obliki. Namen sestavka je interpretacija politične teologije Carla Schmitta kot ilustracije in razširitve analize sile v eseju Simone Weil z naslovom »*Iliada* ali pesnitev o sili«. Članek je posvečen razgrnitvi Schmittovih temeljnih politično-pravnih kategorij, kakršne so suverenost, decizionizem in opozicija prijatelj-sovražnik, kot modernih raztolmačenj sile s konceptualizacijo Weilove: kot vdorov brutalne sile v človeški red.

Članek ne želi biti samo zgodovinsko-filozofska analiza, ampak prispevek k modernemu projektu antifašističnega izobraževanja, kolikor se oblike sodobnega evropskega avtoritarizma (denimo na Madžarskem in Poljskem) bolj ali manj odkrito sklicujejo na Schmittovo dediščino. Slednjo želi besedilo intelektualno depotencirati in oblažiti vplive njene renesanse.

Ključne besede: Homer, Adorno, Horkheimer, Weil, Schmitt, sila, nasilje, dominacija.

Introduction

From a metatheoretical perspective, the following article is a contribution to what Zbigniew Kwieciński called “discreet pedagogy” or “implicit pedagogy” (Jaworska-Witkowska and Kwieciński 2011, 28): it has no straightforward educational or scientific-pedagogical ambitions. It is futile to look into it for immediate connections between theory and practice, let alone projects to be applied “in the classroom.” This does not mean that this analysis is not pedagogical—it is such precisely in an implicit manner: its premise is that *thinking* alone about our human condition, *understanding* the human world, and *making sense* of them is essentially pedagogical. This does not necessarily mean that such an approach, so to speak, dissolves education or educational thinking into a kind of philosophy. The above-mentioned words *thinking*, *understanding*, and *making sense* are not used in the widest possible sense as is often the case. Here, behind those terms there is a strong assumption that even the most unapproachable, elusive, or traumatic phenomena can and should be understood or made sense of, or, even better, that ethics *demand*s that we make them intelligible (Neiman 2015, 8). This, of course, also means “graspable” in discursive language. I am not naive enough to claim that such a translation is always possible or that it does not distort experience in any way. Rather, I understand it as a postulate: we must at least try to understand and never surrender in the face of what is at first sight seemingly incomprehensible (Arendt 2005).

27

This means that no philosophical phenomenon we have in our tradition is intrinsically pedagogical, but only those ones are, which are fueled with an urge to understand. Therefore, we can think of philosophy that is explicitly educational (e.g., referring to the care of others), and implicitly non-educational (withdrawing from this postulate of understanding): I dare to say that the great works of Søren Kierkegaard, Emmanuel Levinas, or the “post-turn” Heidegger are of this sort, while Hannah Arendt’s thought is the opposite: explicitly rarely educational, implicitly powered with the pedagogical and ethical urge to understand.

According to these premises, this attempt is part of a wider project aimed at rereading a variety of modern discourses on violence by putting them in the context of the two fundamental patterns of critical thinking about the phenomenon at stake: the pattern of force and the pattern of domination.

Both patterns cover two different, perhaps even opposite aspects of violence. Nevertheless, they show some formal affinities, suggesting their complementarity: (1) both more or less overtly refer to the terror of the 20th-century World Wars, and both are predominantly interested in grasping the human condition within the context of current historical development; (2) precisely for the sake of understanding the present, they nevertheless dig very deeply into prehistoric spiritual sources of the West, namely Homer.

28 The pattern of domination can be easily identified as being launched by the Frankfurt School (mostly Horkheimer and Adorno) and their critique of instrumental reason. After the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and its reading of the *Odyssey* (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002), many authors connected (instrumental) rationality with violence understood as domination (among others, Heidegger's powerful concept of calculative thinking, Bauman's analyses of bureaucracy, or Foucault's interconnections between power and knowledge). These ideas reverberated later in the so-called critical or radical pedagogy focused on emancipation from power relations, cultural reproduction, and domination in education. On the margins of this analysis, I give in to the temptation of saying that critical pedagogy understands violence too widely, often conceiving the asymmetrical relationship between teacher and student as violent *per se*, no matter how this relationship is shaped (e.g., in American radical pedagogy any transmission of culture and knowledge is conservative and violently imposes the past on the new generation).¹ My proposal here is to focus on a different conception of violence, much narrower and more specific. This gesture is dictated by a deep conviction that thinking about education automatically in categories of violence distorts our understanding of both education as well as violence.

1 The newest version of this approach in Poland is Piotr Zamojski's most inspiring book *Edukacja jako rzecz publiczna*, where the author reads education (the transmission of knowledge) through the Aristotelian division of people into masters and slaves, where students are slaves and teachers are masters, and where masters always maintain their superiority (Zamojski 2022, 19). The most legitimate criticism of inequalities in the political sphere is automatically translated into education: while superiority in politics tends to be permanent and is always condescending towards the uneducated, the very essence of education is to abolish inequality.

Now, identifying the pattern of force is a more difficult task, since it is much less prevalent in (post)modern thought. My analysis is based on the premise that it was Simone Weil who not only delivered a profound phenomenological description of violence understood as immediate force in her analysis of *The Iliad* (Weil 1965), but also that this analysis can offset the overwhelming impact of the Frankfurt School. One thing is clear though: Simone Weil did not have the followers that they did. Nevertheless, I assume that she can also be read as a paradigm for modern reflection on violence in more than one way. In this essay, I would like to outline one of them: to read the conceptual frameworks of modern political theories that somehow repeat and support the rules of war violence as described in Weil's essay. An exemplification of the affirmation of force against "reflection, justice, and prudence" (as Weil put it), incorporated in the modern history of thought, can be found in the German political and juridical discourse of the Weimar Republic, inspired by Georges Sorel's *Reflections on Violence*, early Walter Benjamin, and, foremostly, Carl Schmitt.

While the first half of the 20th century, haunted by WWI, is a conceptualization of force (Sorel, Schmitt, Benjamin, but also Max Weber to some extent), after WWII, philosophy is instead concerned with various unmaskings of domination. This is also connected with the change of attitudes towards political myths (Cassirer 1946). Nevertheless, Andrzej Leder demonstrated how the 21st century begins with the return of force in new forms: of suppressed contempt, hatred, and naked violence (Leder 2018). Symptomatically, we simultaneously encounter an increased interest in Carl Schmitt who seems to have gained a political impact no weaker than in the 1920s, especially in the new European authoritarianism.

Thus, if my project of deconstructing Schmitt by Simone Weil is feasible, the latter analyses of force turn out to be at least as relevant for the first three decades of the 21st century as those of poststructuralists. Even so, one thing is clear: reading Schmitt as an approximation of Weil's analysis of *The Iliad* is far from being unproblematic. History and developed civilization modified, sublimated, and mediated this pattern so that it cannot be simply copied in modern discourses. But one can read these discourses as reminiscent of the archaic sources, even if this reminiscence is blurred.

Simone Weil: The mythical symmetry of force

Simone Weil's treatise on *The Iliad*, composed on the basis of her school lectures of 1937/38 in 1940 after the capitulation of France, is apparently reminiscent of the hopelessness of WWI, and implies a premonition of the hecatomb to come in the years that followed.

Nevertheless, the essay is clearly very far from purely historical or literary interest. Rather, Weil delivers a phenomenological description of immediate physical violence, i.e. force:

For those dreamers who considered that force, thanks to progress, would soon be a thing of the past, *The Iliad* could appear as a historical document; for others, whose powers of recognition are more acute and who perceive force, today as yesterday, at the very center of human history, *The Iliad* is the purest and the loveliest of mirrors. (Weil 1965, 5.)

30 At the same time, this phenomenological description is not an immediate eidetic analysis, but is the outcome of mediated interpretation of symbols, myths, and literary sources. In other words, it is also hermeneutics.

Paul Ricoeur showed how philosophical reflection has nothing to do with immediate consciousness or intuition. Instead of being given, reflection emerges from the task of interpretation of symbols. If symbols refer us to at least a double meaning, then myths can similarly be considered to be symbolic systems that require interpretation. But there is more to it: symbolic structures require not only interpretation (as an explanation of this duality of meanings present in language), they also call for thinking and philosophic reflection whose task it is to re-cover their meaning for our own existence: "I cannot grasp the act of existing except in signs scattered in the world." (Ricoeur 1970, 46.) This is exactly what Simone Weil (or, differently, the Frankfurt School) does: her account of Homer can be read as a mediator or reminder of this sign of our existence, and strives at "recovering something which has first been lost" (Ricoeur 1970, 45).

What kind of reflection can we see in this "mirror"? What is force? What does force do to us? Weil's hermeneutical phenomenology of force can be

grasped succinctly in three entries: (1) reification, (2) symmetry, and (3) blind mechanisms.

(1) Reification: Foremost, subjection to force or physical violence turns a human being into a thing. In Weil's essay, we can grasp at least three modes of reification:

(a) Literal killing, turning a living body into a corpse.

(b) The petrification of spirit in the brief moment of awaiting certain death, in the "not-yet." The figure of Lycaon begging Achilles for life is a paradigm of a person who "becomes a corpse before anybody or anything touches him" (Weil 1965, 7). Other examples include Priam beseeching Achilles to hand over Hector's body and Achilles treating Priam as an inert object.

(c) The prolonged "not-yet" present in slavery, as an effect of brute force. The paradigmatic figure here is Briseis, a slave concubine of Achilles. She laments and grieves over her master's friend Patroclus instead of her family, slaughtered by Achilles himself. Her own feelings are replaced and she "loses her own inner life" (Weil 1965, 11).²

(2) Symmetry: In truth, nobody is spared from suffering, pain, fear, and misery in *The Iliad*. The favors given to one side would mask the symmetry of force, pitilessly shown in the epos. According to Simone Weil, the greatness of *The Iliad* (and contrary to other great books of Western and Jewish civilization), is its neutrality: "One is barely aware that the poet is a Greek." (Weil 1965, 26.) What is decisive is that reification, obviously inflicting the victims, concerns and intoxicates also those who are *by chance* in power.

31

This random character of force is crucial here, as it makes the symmetry of reification visible on several levels. On the level of events, each crowing hero at a certain moment becomes a victim of force, even Achilles. But symmetry has another dimension: each character using force simultaneously undergoes its reciprocal power, which reifies him even before the change of roles. By reifying others, a hero is also reifying himself: he believes he is the one who uses force, while it is force that overwhelms him: his deeds and reactions become predictable.

2 At this point, it is important to mention Pat Barker's novel *The Silence of the Girls*. The book is told from Briseis's perspective and widens the scope of Simone Weil's arguments (see Barker 2018).

(3) Mythical blindness: The symmetrical character of force eventually creates the illusion that it is given by destiny, that it is beyond human powers and overwhelms humans. The warriors of the Trojan war behave, with no exception, as if they were caught in a blind mechanism. They reject any reasonable voice that mitigates the use of violence and further fighting (Thersites), they prevent the war from finishing, as if they were programmed to proceed towards the final destruction: “What they want, in fact, is everything” (Achaeans: to see Troy in ruins; Trojans: to see the Achaean ships in flames).

All this comes to a fallacious understanding of force by those who exercise and suffer it: force is conceived as an individual attribute only at the beginning, until it reveals its symmetrical and mechanical character. Later, it is understood as natural or divine, but not as human power. At the end of the day, man is only a marionette in the hands of destiny, nature, or gods. “Thus violence obliterates anybody who feels its touch, it comes to seem just as external to its employer as to its victim. And from this springs the idea of a destiny before which executioner and victim stand equally innocent.” (Weil 1965, 17.)

32 All this excludes moderation in the use of force. The symmetrical, blind, and seemingly natural character of reification forfeits any reflection or mediation that would mitigate violence. This makes the boys slaughtering each other in the mud of Flanders in 1917 so similar to mythic Achaean and Trojan warriors. After the first childish embrace of war as a game, there comes a day of fear. They feel condemned, by Zeus, or the hand of necessity, or in a more modern manner, by history. Any reflection or moderation “would expose their mind to suffering so naked, so violent that it could not be borne” (Weil 1965, 20). Their blindness secures them and haunts them at the same time: “the conquering soldier is like a scourge of nature. Possessed by war, he, like the slave, becomes a thing.” (Weil 1965, 22.)

It is important to note the role of myth in the symmetrical and blind mechanism of war. Both the initial irrational trust in being chosen by the gods and the later illusion of force, being the overwhelming and impersonal mechanism, are clearly distortions of the human perspective. A good example is the scales of Zeus, by which the god examines the verdicts of Moira—the highest and irrevocable voice of destiny.

Schmitt read through Weil

It is not an accident that the advocates of immediate force connect their interpretation of violence with myth. The first was George Sorel. In his *Reflections on Violence*, Sorel sought a new, radical mythical opening for the revolutionary faction of the 19th-century syndicalism and constructed a radical left-wing myth of the general proletarian strike:

Appeal must be made to collections of images which, taken together and through intuition alone, before any considered analyses can be made, are capable of evoking the mass of sentiments which correspond to the different manifestations of socialism against society. (Sorel 1999, 113.)

Sorel's idea is aimed at the opposite of classical political myths whose purpose was to conserve power relations: it is aimed at total destruction of the given political order. In this way, Sorel set up a pattern for rehabilitation of force in politics. He strongly inspired not only revolutionary Marxist works (like Benjamin's essay on violence), but also many on the opposite side of the political scene.

33

On the left, it was Walter Benjamin who knew how to develop Sorel's ideas. In his *Critique of Violence* of 1921, he undermines the traditional opposition between violence and law. Law is not a negation of violence, but a monopolization of it. Through law, state power secures the monopoly of enacting violence and makes sure not to leave any possibility of violence outside its scope (Benjamin 1996, 238–40). Violence and law are interconnected in a double way. Violence either makes new law or preserves the existing law, but in both cases, it supports it. The violence of law refers to mythical violence and is its manifestation. There are only two ways of possible escape from this circular interdependence of myth, law, and violence. One of them is the Sorelian anarchistic proletarian general strike, conceived by Benjamin as pure means (Tyson Lewis applied this motive, in order to outline a project of non-instrumental pedagogy; Lewis 2020). Its clearly destructive character severs bonds with existing law and order, and has no external instrumental purpose. “[T]he proletarian general strike sets itself the sole task of destroying state power.” (Benjamin 1996, 246.)

The classical examples of the modern discourse on force are the basic political concepts of Carl Schmitt. It is not an accident that in the young Weimar Republic it was the conservative, right-wing jurist who referred to Sorel, and beyond a doubt was also influenced by Benjamin's essay. By no means did he need to support Sorel's proletarian revolutionary approach, in order to use his arguments in his attack on public debate and parliamentary democracy. He entirely supported Sorel's agonistic understanding of myth, which "gives the strength of martyrdom as well as courage to use force" (Schmitt 1992, 68). "Whatever value human life has does not come from reason; it emerges from a state of war between those who are inspired by great mythical images to join the battle." (Schmitt 1992, 71.)

Thus, Sorel's analysis, deprived of its radical leftist content, but maintaining its logic, supported the main features of Schmitt's political philosophy: anti-liberalism and anti-parliamentarianism.

34 Nevertheless, the most representative categories of Schmitt's political thought cannot be fully understood without Benjamin's influence. As Giorgio Agamben rightly notices, the key concepts of *Political Theology* of 1922 (Schmitt 1985), the concept of decision and the concept of sovereignty, emerge from his effort to lead the Benjaminian anomic violence "back to juridical context" (Agamben 2005, 54).

Schmitt's sovereignty and decisionism can be read as a modern translation of force in Weil's conceptualization. This becomes clear, when we read the famous opening sentence of political theology: "Sovereign is who decides on the exception." (Schmitt 1985, 5.) Situating an individual (a sovereign king) or a group (a sovereign people) beyond the legal order and giving them the right to suspend the law and announce the state of exception means the subordination of the measure of existing public law, its rationality, and democratic political debate under the external, war-like anomic rules, where legal measure, moderation, and reasonable balance of contracts lose their meaning. In this sense, power emerges from the state of nature, and manifests itself in the political order as brute force.

Seen from this point of view, the state of exception, decision, suspension of law, and sovereignty are not miracles, as Schmitt interpreted them according to his political theology, but an invasion of violence, brute force into the human

order, being an exemplary application of Weil's analysis. The primary key concepts of the Schmittian political thought only corroborate this tendency: "The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy." (Schmitt 2007, 26.) Putting politics on the foundation of enmity leads to a truly agonistic and military understanding of public human relations.

As early as the 1960s and long before we realized the bubble-like structure of social media and the role of search algorithms in polarizing societies, Jacques Ellul noticed a phenomenon that lets us understand the easy transition from radically leftist to radically right-wing political myths: the logic of propaganda, autonomous from any particular ideology:

[T]he more propaganda there is, the more partitioning there is. For propaganda suppresses conversation; the man opposite is no longer an interlocutor but an enemy. And to the extent that he rejects his role, the other becomes the unknown whose words can no longer be understood. Thus, we see before our eyes how the world of closed minds establishes itself, a world in which everybody talks to himself, everybody constantly reviews his own certainty about himself and the wrongs done [to] him by the Others—a world in which nobody listens to anybody else, everybody talks and nobody listens. (Ellul 1973, 213–14).

35

This makes easy ideological transitions more fathomable. It is the logic that stays the same, not so much the content. That is why it was possible for Schmitt to be more inspired by revolutionary Marxists than conservative thinkers of his time. And that is why the Schmittian-like conceptualizations of the political as *agon* (the battle) are as popular on the right of the political scene as they are attractive on the left; the most prominent example of the latter being Chantal Mouffe *et consortes* (Mouffe 1999).

While I definitely agree with Mouffe that Schmitt is "an important political thinker whose work it would be a great mistake to dismiss merely because of his support for Hitler in 1933" (Mouffe 1999, 1), it is this "merely" that I have doubts about. The post-war writings of the German jurist, although more careful than those of the 1930s, give away the same logic as the earlier works. *Nomos der Erde* (*The Nomos of the Earth*) of 1950 is a paradigmatic example here. Although

Schmitt's work is concerned solely with modern international law, the author refers to the Greek word *nomos*, in order to step beyond legality, the existing legal order. In Schmitt's exegesis, *nomos* originally is not a norm and not an opposite to *physis*, but a description of the first colonization and land appropriation. The fundamental sense of law is of spatial connotation and connects order with orientation (*Ortung und Ordnung*). *Nomos* refers to *nemein*, meaning both division of the earth and pasture. "Thus, *nomos* is the immediate form in which the political and social order of a people—the initial measure and division of pastureland, i.e., the land-appropriation as well as the concrete order contained in it and following from it." (Schmitt 2006, 70.) Strictly speaking, *nomos*, the essence and source of law, is not law itself, but measure, border, or wall of the city, conditioning legality within it. In fact, the establishment of legal order on the act of asportation or takeover is, whilst against Schmitt's intention, fundamentally imperialistic. As Hannah Arendt argued, the annexation of land as an act of force cannot be a source of justice and law. As in the German formulation we have a double entendre, which completely disappears in the existing English translation, I will quote the German formula: "Dass die Juristen nicht wissen, was Recht ist, gibt Schmitt nicht das Recht, Unrecht mit Recht-Setzung zu identifizieren." (Schmitt and Arendt n.d., 50.; cf. Jurkevics 2016, 11.)³

However, what is perhaps even more important in the outlined context of this paper is the deeper background of the agonistic polarization. On the one hand, one can, with Susan Neiman (Neiman 2015, 333), identify Schmitt with pre-Socratic standpoints (virtue is a matter of helping your friends and hurting your enemies, as Trasimach preaches in Plato's *Republic*). On the other, one notices that the apparent imbalance of polarization obscures the genuine nature of agonistic politics: the common denominator of symmetrical force. In fact, both parties of antagonized society, "friends and enemies" or "enemies and friends," fall under the same mythical illusion of the fundamental imbalance of social relations and their own superiority. This, in my view, justifies reading Schmitt's theory as a non-critical and mythical repetition of the symbols of *The Iliad*, ingeniously deciphered by Simone Weil.

3 "That jurists do not know what justice is does not give Schmitt the right to equate injustice and lawmaking." (As trans. in: Jurkevics 2017, 7.)

That is why I find the contemporary resurrection of the Schmittian concepts, mostly in Central and Eastern Europe (e.g., Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and recently also other, “more Western” countries; the former Polish government constantly referred to sovereignty and enmity in the Schmittian sense), alarming and demanding of philosophical deconstruction in the name of justice and measure, as called for by Simone Weil, despite the academic interest in them, which of course is legitimate.

Weil’s pattern of understanding violence as force appreciates reason and rational measure as an antidote to the seemingly unlimited, mythical power of force. This is, I believe, one of the rationales why she sounds more outdated than the various critiques of reason in the second half of the 20th century as launched spectacularly by Horkheimer and Adorno. Still, the fundamental problem with the critique of reason is that it leads to the rejection of reason (Leder 2018, 146). As Leder writes on Kafka: where thought falls apart, it is not nothingness that looms up. Rather, a space for regressive forms of humanity opens up with all its monstrosities (Leder 2018, 163). Tribal politics is one of them. Institutional inequality is another. Both can be “the fundamentals of social structure and legitimize the political order, what Carl Schmitt expressed theoretically” (Leder 2018, 158). Therefore, the present poses a pedagogical-philosophical task in front of us: how to reinforce reason, enlightenment, measure, and the fragile equilibrium of justice and law. And this without falling back onto the narrowly understood rationality of technological instrumentalism, legitimately questioned by the Frankfurters, Heidegger, Foucault, and critical or post-critical educators.

37

Conclusion

Simone Weil, whose voice reverberated in a much less strong and impactful way than that of the Frankfurt School, convincingly showed that non-instrumental violence (which she calls force) can be more penetrating than domination limited by the means–ends logic. Unlike Adorno, who concentrated on the adroit and manipulative Odysseus, Weil showed non-instrumental, endless, and unlimited force in the Achaeans (after all, they do not want their instrumental goals, that is, Helen and her treasures, they want

everything, they desire to see Troy in ruins and ashes). By the same token, the modern paroxysms of violence cannot be fully explained within instrumental rationality. Instrumental reason is not enough, when we think of bloody wars of attrition, like the fronts of WWI or even the concentration camps of WWII. Neither can it explain September 11 and its aftermath in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, and, even less, the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

38 There is a possibility that the discourse on instrumental domination, which dominated our understanding of violence, apart from all its intellectual merits and invaluable insights, or maybe precisely because of them, started to function as a mask of the discourse of non-instrumental, endless, and unlimited force, or, to refer to a different vocabulary, of deeper thanatoid powers that revealed themselves in the 20th and 21st centuries. In this respect, I believe, it would also be a great intellectual and practical challenge for philosophers of education, first and foremost for the author of this essay, to reconsider instrumentalism's paradigm in their struggles with old and new fascisms, and to rehabilitate enlightenment and reason, without falling into the trap of reducing their minds to behavioristic instrumental rationality. This would require a harking back to critical and post-critical pedagogies as well as stepping beyond them, as both, apart from deep differences and oppositions, succinctly conceptualized and expressed in *The Manifesto for Post-Critical Pedagogy* (Hodgson, Vlieghe, and Zamojski 2017), and most recently developed in Morten Korsgaard's ingenious and beautiful book *Retuning Education* (Korsgaard 2024), seem to have a common denominator and common focus in the comprehensive rejection of instrumentality, which sometimes touches upon a rejection of rationality.⁴

4 For example, where the authors of the *Manifesto* try to avoid instrumentalization and contextualization of education by a quasi-Heideggerian gesture of drawing upon the somewhat mystical term "The educational" (Hodgson, Vlieghe, and Zamojski 2017, 84); where Korsgaard too sweepingly criticizes the Enlightenment and the ideal of *Bildung* as being within the logic of progress and violent instrumentalism "through the acquisition of reason" (Korsgaard 2024, 40–48).

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Human Existence and Coexistence in the Epoch of Nihilism

Damir Barbarić | Jon Stewart | Cathrin Nielsen | Ilia Inishev
| Petar Bojanić | Holger Zaborowski | Dragan D. Prole | Susanna Lindberg | Jeff Malpas | Azelarabe Lahkim Bennani | Josef Estermann | Chung-Chi Yu | Alfredo Rocha de la Torre | Jesús Adrián Escudero | Veronica Neri | Žarko Paić | Werner Stegmaier | Adriano Fabris | Dean Komel



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Mindaugas Briedis | Irfan Muhammad | Bence Peter Marosan
| Sazan Kryeziu | Petar Šegedin | Johannes Vorlauffer | Manca Erzetič | David-Augustin Mândruț | René Dentz | Olena Budnyk | Maxim D. Miroshnichenko | Luka Hrovat | Tonči Valentić | Dean Komel | Bernhard Waldenfels | Damir Barbarić



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Demarcations | Razmejitve

Damir Barbarić | Dragan Prole | Artur R. Boelderl | Johannes Vorlauffer | Cathrin Nielsen | Virgilio Cesarone | Mario Kopić | Petr Prášek | Žarko Paić | Tonči Valentić | Dean Komel | Emanuele Severino | Jonel Kolić | Jordan Huston

