



Editorial

EDITORIAL

KIMBERLY HUTCHINGS

**Author affiliations can be found in the back matter of this article*



Welcome to the latest issue of *Redescriptions*. As one of the editors of the journal I am delighted to introduce the first issue in Volume 29 of the journal, a reminder that the Editorial Team is looking forward to the journal's thirtieth anniversary next year. *Redescriptions* has always prided itself on the breadth and depth of its engagement with the fields of political thought, conceptual history and feminist theory. It remains one of the few forums in which contributions that remain firmly within those sub-fields and ones that reach across them are welcome.

This issue exemplifies the journal's remit. It takes forward debates on political representation, political judgment and ideology studies. The articles also push forward scholarship on particular thinkers and texts, classical and contemporary, from Cobden and Arendt on the one hand, to Saward and Negri on the other. And across the different articles we find approaches that draw on a wide range of theoretical and methodological resources, from Freeden's morphological understanding of ideologies to the feminist epistemology of Fricker. At the same time as contributing to a variety of ongoing debates, the articles in the issue also testify to some of the deepest puzzles that political theorists, conceptual historians and feminist theorists seek to address. The first two articles, Pereira's "The Few and the Best of the Bodily Contract" and Šima's "Thinking Where I am Not: Aversive Judgment in Political Representation" focus on how we should think about the meaning of political representation. The second two articles, López's "British Liberalism and Conservatism as Ideological Mirrors" and Khudyer's "Contributions of Antonio Negri in building the theoretical foundations of Autonomous Marxism" are concerned with different historical periods and ideological traditions, but they showcase how we can think about the study of ideologies in very different ways.

Pereira focuses on the ways in which different accounts and practices of political representation, even those that are critical of liberal democracy, nevertheless continue to perpetrate exclusions at different levels of depth that map onto the

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Kimberly Hutchings

Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom

k.hutchings@qmul.ac.uk

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denigration and, in some cases, erasure of bodies that do not fit a white, masculine, heteronormative and able-bodied norm. Pereira engages critically with various mechanisms through which apparent lack of political representation has been tackled in representative democracies, using the case study of the 14th Spanish legislature (2019–2023) to bring home how the most that such mechanisms have achieved is to improve representation of white, heteronormative and able-bodied cis-gender women. She argues that we can read the logic of this in terms of Fricker's distinction between testimonial and hermeneutic epistemic injustice – in the case of white women the criteria for epistemic credibility can be expanded to include them, but for black, queer, trans, intersex, differently abled bodies standard accounts and systems of representation lack the hermeneutical resources to even see those bodies in the first place. Only by starting with bodies and the diversity of bodies, she argues can we achieve a theory or practice of anti-oligarchical representation and move from a world of democracy based on top-down abstract inclusions and concrete exclusions to one that constructs a plebian bottom up gaze out of our bodily realities.

Šima comes to the question of political representation very differently, building on Saward's constructivist account in which the collective to be represented is constructed in the act of representing on the part of the representer. Šima's concern is that this way of thinking makes the position of those represented implausibly passive and undertheorizes the role of political judgment in the represented as well as the representer. Drawing on Arendt's account of political judgement and how it has been built on in the work of thinkers such as Disch and Norval, Šima argues that imagination and plurality are key to political judgment and to the possibility of novelty and creativity in representative democracies and that this means that perceptions of political reality are never fixed. In this sense, representation cannot be understood as reliably in the hands of representatives constructing their constituency in a particular way in terms of an identity or set of interests or of abstract normative criteria, rather the relation of representation is always unstable and open to multiple interpretations from the position of those who are represented. In contrast to Pereira's emphasis on the materiality of the body and the idea of the plebian gaze, Šima pluralizes the potential of relations of representation and sees the key to bottom up accounts and practices of representation as a universally shared capacity for imagination, for thinking 'where I am not'.

López's article takes us from the question of how we should understand political representation to the different terrain of how we should understand political ideologies. The article seeks to build a theory of ideologies that supplements Freedman's understanding of the role of 'mirroring' in the development of Conservatism. Using the issue of Free Trade and the example of Cobden, López seeks to cast light on three issues that have preoccupied students of ideology and of conceptual history: how does the migration of concepts happen; how should we understand the entanglement of Liberal and Conservative ideologies across time; and how do we explain the difficulties that scholars have in placing Cobden within histories of Liberalism and Conservatism. A key point to emerge from this argument, is that we can only understand how concepts migrate if we approach the history of ideologies relationally to begin with. This means going beyond understanding Conservatism as a reaction to Liberalism to grasping the much more dialectical historical processes through which they have each transformed the other at different historical moments.

In Khudyer's article we remain in the realm of ideology studies, in this case looking at autonomous Marxism and how we should understand Negri's intellectual trajectory

in relation to this broader ideology and movement. In contrast to López, who uses Cobden to illustrate a broader argument about the conceptual histories of Liberalism and Conservatism, Khudyer is much more focused on the role of Negri in shaping the meaning of autonomous Marxism. For Khudyer, the different phases of Negri's intellectual development do not imply an abandonment of Marx for Spinoza but the 'systematic liberation of Marx's own categories'. In effect, Negri provides the ground for generalizing beyond the specific context of Italy, providing the basis on which the insights and concepts of autonomous Marxism can travel. This is shown by a very careful textual reading of Negri's work. Taking the two articles together raises important methodological questions about the relation between specific thinkers and ideological traditions. It also shows how one can gain insights from very different approaches to the relation between text and context.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Kimberly Hutchings is on the journal's Editorial Team.

AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

Kimberly Hutchings

Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom

Hutchings K

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