

Intersections of Conviviality

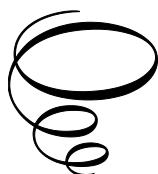
Intersections of Conviviality:

Voices from Communities

Edited by

Marina Gržinić, Jovita Pristovšek,
Asma Aiad and Anahita Neghabat

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Our deepest gratitude goes to all the contributors to this volume for their immense dedication, knowledge, and thoughtful reflections.

“Conviviality as Potentiality: From Amnesia and Pandemic towards a Convivial Epistemology” is an interdisciplinary, arts and theory based research project, funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF, AR 679) through its Programme for Arts-based Research (PEEK), based at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna from 2021 to 2025.

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

MARINA GRŽINIĆ, JOVITA PRISTOVŠEK,
ASMA AIAD AND ANAHITA NEGHBAT

Intersections of Conviviality: Voices from Communities explores the nuanced dynamics that shape conviviality and examines the different ways in which individuals within communities navigate the challenges of the neoliberal, racializing European landscape by forming alliances that transcend identity, geographical and cultural boundaries. This book aims to make the voices of these communities heard and provides a platform for their stories, struggles, collective experiences, hopes and visions for the future.

The book is based on the results of the 5-year art-based research project “Conviviality as Potentiality: From Amnesia to Pandemic towards Convivial Epistemologies” (FWF-PEEK AR 679, 2021–25),¹ which was conducted at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. It started in May 2021 with Prof. Dr. Marina Gržinić and her team, Dr. Sophie Uitz and Dr. Jovita Pristovšek. In 2023, Dr. Araba Evelyn Johnston-Arthur joined our core team for one year. In 2024, after Dr. Uitz concluded her work, predocs Asma Aiad, MA, and Anahita Neghabat, MA, joined the team. Aiad and Neghabat brought with them experience from various artistic and community projects. At the very end of the research project, the team was joined by two predocs, Esra Özmen, MA, and Ümmü Selime Türe. Throughout the research project, we worked together with our affiliated researchers: Dr. Tjaša Kancler, activist, artist, researcher and Serra Hüner Professor of Media Arts and Gender Studies at the Department of Visual Arts and Design, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Barcelona, Dr. Šefik Tatlić, sociologist and theorist in the fields of political philosophy, decolonial theory and cultural criticism, Dr. Saša Kesić, art teacher and independent researcher from Belgrade, Serbia.

As an artistic and theoretical research project, “Conviviality as Potentiality” builds on the results of our previous project “Genealogy of

¹ See the project website at <https://convivialityaspotentiality.akbild.ac.at/>.

Amnesia: Rethinking the Past for a New Future of Conviviality” (FWF-PEEK AR 439; 2018–21).² Both research projects in the time frame of 7 years were led by Marina Gržinić.

The art-based research project “Conviviality as Potentiality” began amidst the profound disruptions triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, when societies worldwide faced unprecedented challenges ranging from public health crises to deepening social inequalities due to unprecedented racial discrimination associated with certain communities linked to the emergence of the virus. Our thesis was that if the 20th century can be described as an amnesic century in terms of the repression of traumatic pasts in the European context, the 21st century can be described as a pandemic century in which conviviality is characterized not only by its relation to amnesia and forgetting but also by the global narrative of the pandemic and the social order of distance, contagion and isolation. This reconfiguration of spatial and temporal dimensions will affect not only how we (re)construct memory and history, but above all, future conviviality as such.

The amnesic momentum resonates in the earlier research “Genealogy of Amnesia,” which focused on three European territories and their traumatic pasts (Austria and antisemitism, Belgium and colonialism, and the former Yugoslavia and turbo-nationalism). It emphasized amnesia as an obstacle to social life and examined the closure of experience, memory, and history constituted by the genealogy of amnesia in Europe (see, e.g., Gržinić, Pristovšek, and Uitz 2020; Gržinić, Pristovšek, Uitz, and Jauernik 2020; Gržinić and Tatlić 2020). The “Genealogy of Amnesia” project began with the premise that we are currently experiencing a profound collective amnesia, which can be described as the “suffering” of amnesia regarding the historical violence inflicted by the White power regime on people considered inferior. On the other hand, we have recognized that communities have historically dealt with crises in a variety of ways through mutual aid and cooperation. By re-examining the practices of care in contemporary communities, we learned what conviviality can be. Convivial practices are here, materialized, shared, and lived among marginalized communities. They are powerful in their relationality, mutual support, and co-creation of knowledge.

To achieve convivial practices of living together, it is necessary to find a new common epistemological ground; therefore, we need to engage in processes of co-elaboration, which we call “convivial epistemologies.” The question of conviviality as potentiality is explored through the

² See the project website at <https://archiveofamnesia.akbild.ac.at/>.

corresponding problems in South Africa, Australia, Lebanon, Israel, Northern Ireland, and Austria.

We reflect on: 1) decolonial practices of LGBT*QIA+ communities for new social formations in post-apartheid South Africa; 2) refugee and Indigenous community activism against nationalist isolationism and White power regimes in the context of the violent return of coloniality in Australia; 3) the empowerment of community through images and taxonomies of material in a public image archive in the shadow of war in Lebanon; 4) the conflict in the Middle East and the reality of conviviality in Northern Ireland after The Troubles; 5) the conceptualization of convivial epistemologies in exchange with grassroots artistic collectives and art students, migrant organizations and LGBT*QIA+ communities in the context of the anti-migration and anti-refugee regime in Austria.

These events have not only highlighted existing vulnerabilities but also underscored the need for new forms of knowledge and artistic/social/political practices that promote, explore, and utilize the concept of conviviality—defined as living together in mutual respect and recognition of diverse cultural backgrounds—as a framework for developing a more inclusive and responsive epistemology.

Together with local and international artists, activists, academics, grassroots organizations, and research partners, this project seeks to develop a new definition and practice of conviviality as a positive, affirmative action of agency in the form of change. The book in front of you reflects on this conviviality as a potentiality within different communities in the neoliberal European context of Austria, the EU, and the global world.

On Conviviality

Intersections of Conviviality proposes a new focus on conviviality by expanding its scope to non-European spaces and broadening the analysis of conviviality by moving from amnesia to the notion of pandemic.

Drawing on interdisciplinary perspectives, theory, political philosophy, aesthetics, social sciences, art, community practices, etc., our project explores how (if at all) conviviality can be imagined and enacted in different contexts marked by historical violence and its continuities in the present to address the multifaceted challenges highlighted by the global crises and exacerbated by necrocapitalism through the wars waged on a global scale. Developing a convivial epistemology is about finding tools, forms, and mechanisms of knowledge to create communities in togetherness.

We therefore set about creating, (co)organizing, and using various settings as safe places in which we could address the following questions: What do we learn from a “convivial epistemology” in the global world? What kind of practices, vocabularies, and artistic and knowledge-based methodologies create the potential for conviviality? How can we create a place of negotiation rather than negation? How can we learn together to live together? To what extent are amnesia and the pandemic hindering our capacity for sociability? Together with various communities, we learned and developed practical strategies for anchoring convivial principles in public spaces and everyday practices. Ultimately, “Conviviality as Potentiality” envisions a transformative shift towards an epistemology that not only recognizes marginalized voices but actively un/learns and co-creates convivial epistemologies with them.

But what do we mean by conviviality? Paul Gilroy (2004, 2006) made an important contribution by linking convivial culture to colonial pasts, amnesia, and denial, arguing that these create unique political and social fields in which we must navigate and organize (2006, 2). *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (2004) is Gilroy's in many ways a sequel to his classic study of race and nation: *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (1987).

After Empire explores Britain's failure to come to terms with the loss of its empire and pre-eminent global standing. Drawing on texts from the writings of Fanon and Orwell to Ali G. (satirical fictional character created and performed by English comedian Sacha Baron Cohen), etc., shows that what we make of the country's postcolonial opportunity will influence the future of Europe. Also referencing the political language of the post 9/11 world as a new point of departure, he defends long-suffering multiculturalism against accusations of failure.

Gilroy takes the discourse of human rights to task in terms of both racism and imperialism. He inspects how this imperial dissolution has resulted not only in hostility directed at Black people, migrants, and foreigners but also in the country's inability to appreciate the ordinary, unruly multiculturalism that has evolved organically and unnoticed in its urban centers. Gilroy thus extended the notion of conviviality not only to a context of “living together in real time” (Gilroy 2006, 6), but to a culturally complex, mobile global world; as argued by Amanda Wise and Greg Noble (2016, 424): “It is with Gilroy that cultural differences arising from the long-term consequences of post-colonialism, mass migration, multicultural policies and transnationalism are foregrounded.”

Other references: Ivan Illich (born 1926 in Vienna, died 2002), theologian, philosopher, etc. For Illich, conviviality is a term that describes

what is essentially the opposite of industrialism. In his book *Deschooling Society*, published in 1971, he criticizes modern society's institutional approach to education, an approach that constrains learning to narrow situations in a fairly short period of the human lifespan. The *Tools for Conviviality* is a 1973 book by Illich on the proper use of technology. The book was inspired by the movements of the 1960s Third-Worldists that incorporated elements from African decolonial movements as well as the diverse voices in support of the oppressed that were spreading throughout Latin America at the time (Costa 2019). The "tools for conviviality" were developed to negotiate industrialization by taking control of the tools and production processes that shaped people's lives. Convivial tools are tools that are free, creative, and can be used by anyone with minimal special training.

Recent examples of theoretical works that critically examine the connection between conviviality and inequality in relation to race, gender, and class relations, borders, and migrations are the works of María Lugones (2007), Joseph Pugliese (2015), and Gržinić (2018).

Another example of the revision of the concept of conviviality can be found in Achille Mbembe's *Critique of Black Reason*. Mbembe (2017, 180) concludes his book with an epilog entitled "There is Only One World," which implies both what he calls the Becoming Black of the world and the paradoxical universalization of the Black condition in neoliberal global capitalism. He also refers to Édouard Glissant's idea called "Tout-Monde, All world." Mbembe writes: "There is only one world [...] composed of a totality of a thousand parts. Of everyone. Of all worlds" (2017, 180). We share Mbembe's emphasis on sharing the world with others as a system of exchange, reciprocity, and mutuality (181).

As such, the concept of conviviality stands in opposition to the normative narratives of multiculturalism, integration, and assimilation, and it is this understanding of conviviality that we build on to update and extend it. Following Gilroy, it is crucial to understand the obstacle of amnesia to the potential of conviviality and convivial futures. Amnesia means a closure of experience, memory, and history. The combination of ignorance, denial, and guilt creates a unique context that must be constantly questioned.

The Book Structure

The structure of the book *Intersections of Conviviality* emphasizes the (im)possibility of conviviality through the relevant predicaments in South Africa, Australia, Lebanon, Israel, and Austria.

We traveled to Cape Town (October 9–13, 2023) after years of researching colonialism in Europe using the example of the Belgian Congo. We asked ourselves what forms of conviviality can be found in the African context and, more importantly, whether it is possible to envisage a post-apartheid conviviality in South Africa. We cooperated with Ass. Prof. Nomusa Makhubu (Faculty of Humanities, University of Cape Town), and further engaged in a discussion on the topic with Dr. Thabang Monoa (Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town) who visited us in Vienna (June 3–8, 2024) and through a week-long program we explored how disparate knowledge systems and perspectives can come into contact with one another through cacophony and generate new insights and alternative interpretations of how to inhabit the world.

Suvendrini Perera, a John Curtin Distinguished Emeritus Professor (Curtin University), and Joseph Pugliese, a Professor in the Department of Media, Communications, Creative Arts, Language and Literature (Macquarie University), Australia, presented an overview of their transnational research project *Deathscapes: Mapping Racial Violence in Settler Colonial Societies* (2016–20), which maps racialized deaths in custody and technologies of state violence across several settler states—and their points of origin in the European metropolis. In Vienna (April 15–20, 2024) they confronted their research with the Viennese public of academics and grassroots civic society organizations. The research in Australia from our side focuses on convivial methodologies and art practices and is centered on Indigenous artists and artists focused on migrant and refugee stories and narratives of displacement and exile.

The Australian case also suggests important links to South Africa and Lebanon. In the 1980s and 1990s, both countries experienced significant migration, and Australia was a major destination country for many South Africans and Lebanese. Our interest in the case of Lebanon is in the forms of knowledge that developed the possibilities of building a community and a common life. In the case of Lebanon, which was hit by a catastrophic explosion in August 2020 when a large amount of ammonium nitrate stored in the port of Beirut in the Lebanese capital exploded, causing maximum destruction, we have opened a platform for exchange and reflection in the Viennese context through the gesture of hosting our Beirut-based interlocutor Lamia Joreige. She is a visual artist and filmmaker who uses archival documents and fictional elements to reflect on the construction of historical narratives and the relationship between individual stories and collective memory. Rooted in the experience of her native Lebanon, her works explore the possibilities of representing the Lebanese wars and their aftermath.

The research in Israel explores on the ground the dynamics of civil society organizations, the way culture and art are conceptualized in society, and what kind of knowledge is produced. Joshua Simon reflected on the war in Israel/Gaza, on destinies and atrocities (January 18, 2024).

Finally, at the beginning of 2025, we conducted a research visit to Belfast for on-site research. We visited the exhibition “The Troubles and Beyond,” which explores the complex heritage of Northern Ireland, and “Drawing Support: Murals, Memory and Identity,” which showcases the work of Bill Rolston at the Ulster Museum in Belfast. During her stay, Gržinić interviewed Richard English, Professor of Politics at Queen’s College Belfast, where he is also Director of the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice.

The way of coming together and sharing, recording and reflecting is also a result of another research project: the Citizen Science project “Citizens’ Memories and Imaginaries: Democratic Citizenship” (FWF TCS 119; March 2022 to February 2024),³ which was conducted at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, under the leadership of Gržinić with her research team, Uitz and Pristovšek. “Citizens’ Memories and Imaginaries” combined citizen science with art-based research and investigated the imaginaries of Jewish, queer, and migrant citizen groups in post-Nazi Austria from 1945 to the present, particularly the imaginaries shaped by memories.

This research, which took place over two years and developed parallel to the “Conviviality as Potentiality” research project, established a practice of encounter that we called “memory labs.” It brought us to practice, discussions, and uncovering processes of discrimination and racism, but also convivial good practices within important public institutions, with deep discussions, loud reflections, the powerful labels, carnal descriptions, and afterthoughts on (non)citizenship and democracy, on marginalization, muteness, and integration (see Gržinić, Uitz, Pristovšek 2024). We could also include these formats as methods of the oppressed in the recent encounter with a distant geography that is, after all, the heart of Europe.

Therefore, when we return to Austria and Europe, we focus on community work in the fields of migration and refugee politics. Our local cooperation partner is maiz—Autonomous Centre of and for Migrant Women in Linz. maiz is an example of an independent association that has set itself the goal of improving the living and working situation of migrant women in Austria, promoting their political and cultural participation, and changing the existing unjust social conditions. maiz’ particular focus is on

³ See <https://convivialityaspotentiality.akbild.ac.at/citizen-science/>.

language as a means of appropriating a changed reality, on learning the hegemonic language German with regard to the participation of migrant women in social life and the shaping of a self-determined life in Austria.

Coda

Intersections of Conviviality offers a very renewed reflection on different communities that are largely marginalized, Black and POC communities, Muslim communities and Trans*, building their context around identities such as migration, LGBTQI+ etc. and thinking out loud about institutional and structural racism, inequalities and also empowerment.

It exposes the richness and diversity of conviviality within European communities against the backdrop of racializing neoliberalism and racial capitalism. We believe that within the complex web of modern society, there are actions and networks of shared resilience and collaboration that need to be made visible and mapped.

Therefore, despite structural-economic-institutional discrimination, silencing, extractivism, exploitation, dispossession, and marginalization, the book creates a map of stories and narratives that celebrate the potential of communities and conviviality as a way forward.

It highlights examples where communities have resisted the homogenizing effects of neoliberal policies, discrimination, and racism in all its forms, demonstrating their resilience and capacity for collective action.

The book presents innovative approaches to addressing societal challenges through community-led initiatives, grassroots movements, and alternative forms of organizing.

Ultimately, this book is about the vision of a convivial future.

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* Next page image: Siniša Ilić, *Whirlpool*, no. 6, ink on paper, 2025.



A WORLD IN FRONT OF US

DEMOCRACY FOR ALL

MARINA GRŽINIĆ

Introduction

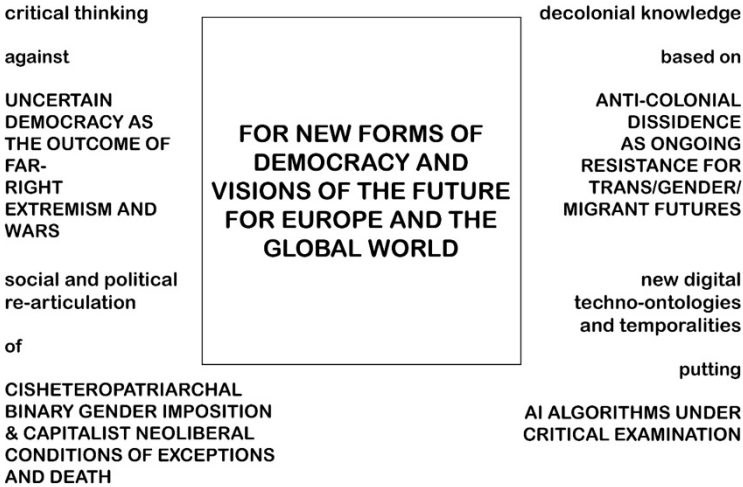
This text aims to establish an art-based research framework that provides a philosophical and theoretical foundation for envisioning a democratic future centered on social equity, human rights, decolonial knowledge, and digital justice.¹ It is the result of a scientific and research-driven effort to rethink conviviality—living together in an Austria shaped by many communities, encompassing both citizens and non-citizens.

This vision includes migrants with regulated status who actively contribute to society, as well as refugees and asylum seekers who aspire to a better life in Austria and the EU. They seek to participate in social, economic, and cultural endeavors, bringing forth their histories, practices, and knowledge to share and build a convivial future.

Equally central to this vision are citizens from the second and third generations of communities that migrated to Austria in the 20th century. Many of these families arrived as laborers, drawn to Austria, Germany, and Europe as a whole to support the reconstruction of post-Nazi societies following World War II. Their contributions were essential to rebuilding these nations and shaping the cultural, social, and economic realities of Europe today. This acknowledgment underscores the importance of honoring their histories and legacies within the broader narrative of a convivial and equitable future.

With this perspective, I aim to address the pressing issues of inequality, difference, distribution, and disparity within Austria, the EU, and the wider world. These challenges are central to the vision of a shared, inclusive future (Ahmed and Fortier 2003; Ahmed 2012; Bakshi, Jivraj and Posocco 2015; Gilmore 2017, 2022, 2024; Keeling 2019; Pristovšek 2019; Gržinić and Pristovšek 2022).

¹ Parts of this text have been developed and submitted for the *ERC Advanced Grant 2024 Part B2*, project proposal Ref. Ares(2024)6419456 - 10/09/2024 (see Gržinić 2024).



Based on the references and the research by Marina Gržinić, designed by Jovita Pristovšek, 2024

Fig. 2–1 Diagram based on the references and the research by Marina Gržinić, designed by Jovita Pristovšek, 2024.

Where Do We Want to Take You?

The philosophical, political, and technological dispositives of Europe and the global world urgently require reconceptualization to include the perspectives and voices explored in this text. Perspectives that are currently severely hampered by a series of backsliding or “failures.” At present, democracy is a hollowed out concept as a result of far-right extremism and the current wars in Europe and the Middle East; the rise of right-wing and fascist new political forces fuel pervasive inequalities with racism and antisemitism, the violent exclusion of refugees and the violent marginalization of migrants and ethnic communities; heterosexual norms are enforced despite the multiplicities of sexualities, and the cleansing of spaces of LGBTQI+ people in former Eastern Europe is increasing, as is the new control over female reproductive capacities worldwide; the multiracial, multicultural, multireligious and multigender EU is confronted with new re-Eurocentric tendencies in knowledge/education/pedagogy. These realities continue to restrict alternative approaches, especially decolonial thought and methodologies. Finally, instead of digital rights and (cognitive) justice, AI is part of heavily monopolized tech corporations.

Therefore, the characteristics of today's global capitalism are the result of the intertwining of capital, technology, and militarism. Therefore, to engage with such an intertwined structure, it is not enough to bring together critical thinking, decolonial knowledge, renewed social and political processes, new techno-ontologies and temporalities, but we must also interweave them as an entangled theoretical, philosophical, and methodological assemblages. Only with this complexity can we respond to the reality of violent obstacles. That is, there is a need to juxtapose interwoven capacities of theoretical and practical agencies, to undo the harmful, historically embedded conditions. The naturalized logic and structures of the various research binarisms that lock research into boxes under the pretext of specialization require disassembling in order to overcome the compartmentalization of scientific disciplines. Instead, the promotion of engagement of science, philosophy, and theory as a socio-material network of agency and methodologies is required in order to create new forms of democracy and visions of the future. Why does this research connect a seemingly disparate set of challenges, social and political, with digital technology and AI? Thinking about the interconnectedness of global capitalism means weaving together different realities and their theoretical conceptualizations in the way they function. Furthermore, there is an urgent need for a bold focus on marginalized groups and under-researched topics/perspectives related to such groups. In addition to the social, political, and technological view, we propose an experimental, visionary take on this point.

Eva von Redecker (2021) refers to *The Black Women's Manifesto* (1969) that contains a social analysis by Frances Beal titled "Double Jeopardy: On Being Black and Female." In this text, Beal addresses her understanding of revolution and demands: "We must begin to understand that a revolution entails not only the willingness to lay our lives on the firing line and get killed. In some ways, this is an easy commitment to make. To die for the revolution is a one-shot deal; to live for the revolution means taking on the more difficult commitment of changing our day-to-day life patterns" (Beal 1969, 31–32; cited in Von Redecker 2021, 17).

Ultimately, this text is concerned with nothing less than life itself, its modes, and its reproduction under capitalism. Those who have the capacity to reflect on the conditions of their lives and to change those conditions through politics—both personal and communal—are anything but in a privileged position (Gržinić 2023).

Returning to the State of the Art

The current state of affairs shows a reality that stands in stark contrast to these demands. Which are these backsides? Democracy as an entirely uncertain concept for the future (current wars in Europe and the Middle East); the rise of right-wing and fascist new political powers that fuel pervasive inequalities with racism and antisemitism, violent abandonment of refugees and violent marginalization, and racializations; despite the multiplicities of sexualities, the imposition of heterosexual norms and the cleansing of spaces of LGBTQI+ people in former Eastern Europe with the new control over female reproductive capacities show a bleak future; multiracial, multicultural, multireligious and multigender EU, is confronted with re-Eurocentrism in education and pedagogy, disconnected from decolonial approaches and methodologies; finally, instead of digital rights and (cognitive) justice, AI is part of monopolized technology (digital totalizations).

These backsides are not just mistakes or failures, although they function as such, but the result of two much broader structural pillars of subjugation the reproduction of life under capitalism: necrocapitalism and racial capitalism (Gržinić 2019).

European democracy, which is presently difficult to imagine, is defined by three important shifts that mark the transition from the previous 20th century of modernity to the global capitalism of the 21st century. These three shifts are: 1) from biopolitics to necropolitics; 2) from biopower to necropower (from governmentality to sovereignty); and 3) from neoliberal global capitalism to racial capitalism.

From Biopolitics to Necropolitics

In the past, we began our research with Michel Foucault's ([1974] 2003) concept of biopolitics. Foucault made it clear that after World War II and the Shoah, politics should take care of the population's life. He also explained that the mechanisms of biopower (the state's management of individuals and the population's life in the West) should be inscribed in the functioning of all Western modern states.

However, we propose to take a different path: let us start with Achille Mbembe's (2003, 2019) notion of necropolitics to examine the insufficiency of biopolitics for the new millennium. Mbembe's "Necropolitics" (2003) starts from the questioning of the validity of biopolitics and the idea that politics enables the well-being of the population of the nation-state through various regulations of life (bio). The global neoliberal capitalist world

enforces in different ways the non-management, the abandonment, and the non-care of the human life of the population. Necropolitics describes political power, state institutions, and authorities that strongly control the lives of the population, providing only a minimum for life, and, if necessary, destroy the lives of various (marginalized) communities by violent means. We identify various methods of state abandonment, neocolonial practices, and border controls (Pugliese 2013; Perera and Pugliese 2020). It is not only the machinery of war that is crucial to necropolitics, but the system of global proxy wars and local marginalization of all those who are produced as “others” for the needs of a heteropatriarchal and hyper neoliberal society, be they (non-)citizens, second-degree citizens, or asylum seekers.

As global capital flows unimpeded across national borders, nation-states constantly seek to redefine their borders through processes of racialization and discrimination of humans, of counting bodies in favor of bodies that count. Racialized individuals and communities are heavily immobilized and left to die (Gržinić 2017, 6; Zuboff 2019; Perera and Pugliese 2022). What we see is a rampant proliferation of violent racist systems that constantly separate the inside from the outside and decide “who may live and who must die,” according to Mbembe’s shortest definition of necropolitics (2003, 11). To be clear, necropolitical border control in this case is not a passive act of “letting die,” as Foucault theorizes about biopolitics, but an active act of “making die,” for example, push-backs of refugees, pre-emptive restriction of citizenship, etc. (Gržinić 2016). In short, colonialism, plunder, slavery, and neo-colonial exploitation for the needs of the West, Europe, and US capitalism need to be recontextualized.

From Biopower to Necropower (From Governmentality to Sovereignty)

In contrast to Foucault, who characterizes biopower as a distinctly modern form of power that involves the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations through the regulation of life (Foucault 1978, 139–41), it is crucial to expose necropower, which deploys the increasingly obvious and exponential logic of death to regulate bodies and territories rather than life. Necropower ultimately defines “who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not” (Mbembe 2003, 27). In necropower, we thus have zones of death and zones of life, based on the principle of mutual exclusivity (Fanon [1961] 1967, 39; Mbembe 2003, 26), meaning either life or death, and yet both regimes of managing the life of the population are strongly intertwined. Mbembe emphasizes that the function of racism, already in the economy of biopower, is to regulate the distribution of death and enable the possible murderous functions of the state (Mbembe 2003,

17). This mechanism plays a central role; it is structural, racism is no longer a dirty word, it never was, but it is now a structural, murderous neoliberal management of “foreign” bodies (migrants, refugees, asylum seekers are the most vulnerable categories) (Gržinić 2016).

From Neoliberal Global Capitalism to Racial Capitalism

The entanglement of racialization and capitalism has a tangential impact on the form of what, in the parlance of Marxism, is the basis of capitalism, the mode of capitalist reproduction, and also on the superstructures of the capitalist social, political, knowledge and institutional regimes that are aggregated within a given capitalist formation, i.e., necrocapitalism, finance capitalism, turbo-capitalism, etc. (Gržinić 2021a, 199–200). Capitalist domination and its mode of reproduction are based on processes of racialization and class and gender discrimination that centrally redefine the relationship between labor and capital, the extraction of surplus value (profit) as conceived in the Marxist critique of political economy, as well as the expropriation of land, violent processes of othering, and the functioning of (neo)liberal institutions with their ideological and repressive apparatuses (Gržinić 2020). This is undoubtedly the context of racial capitalism (Robinson [1983] 2000; Gilmore 2007, 2017, 2024; Melamed 2015; Beller 2021).

In his 1983 book *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, Cedric Robinson defines exactly what racial capitalism is. He departs and challenges the idea that capitalism is a revolutionary negation of feudalism (Kelley 2017). Instead, Robinson argues that capitalism emerged within the feudal order and flourished in the cultural soil of a Western civilization that was already thoroughly infused with racialism (Kelley 2017). Capitalism and racism did not break with the old order, but evolved out of it to create a modern world system of “racial capitalism.” In its entirety, racial capitalism was dependent on slavery, violence, and imperialism, to which we can add all forms of genocide. Moreover,

Capitalism was “racial” not because of some conspiracy to divide workers or justify slavery and dispossession, but because racialism had already permeated Western feudal society. The first European proletarians were *racial* subjects (Irish, Jews, Roma or Gypsies, Slavs, etc.) and they were victims of dispossession (enclosure), colonialism, and slavery *within Europe*. (Kelley 2017)

Robinson therefore argued that racialization in Europe was to a large extent a colonial process involving invasion, settlement, dispossession, and racial

hierarchy (Kelley 2017). Racialization not only refers to structural processes of racial, class, and gender differentiation of citizens, non-citizens, second-class citizens, and various already racialized minorities, but can also be applied to geographies, democracy, knowledge, and technologies. For example, the geography of the former East and the contemporary South is a racialized geography (Hall [1992] 2018; Gržinić 2021a, 200).

Capitalist development has not renounced racialization (intensive processes of racial/colonial division of society, supported by class and gender differentiations), but has even intensified racialized social, political, and institutional relations with many different forms of racialization.

To elucidate these complexities and open up the possibility of agency, to rethink the possibilities of equity, democracy, and the future, it is therefore necessary to continually revisit the following histories, theories, and politics: colonial history (Fanon [1961] 1967; Mbembe [2013] 2017; Luste Boulbina 2019), governance (Puar 2007; Gržinić 2012; Haritaworn, Kuntsman, and Posocco 2014; Rexhepi 2022), post-colonialism (Mbembe 2001), feminism (Lugones 2008; Caixeta 2013; Espinosa Miñoso, Gómez Correal, and Ochoa Muñoz 2014; Espinosa Miñoso 2015; Adlbi Sibai 2016; Filigrana 2021; Bey 2022), body politics (Ortega Arjonilla 2019), and practices of political activism (Muñoz 1998; El-Tayeb 2011; Ferguson 2012; Gržinić 2014; Rojas Miranda and Godoy Vega 2017; Clover 2019; Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Ndlovu 2021; Gilmore 2022, 2024; Ochieng Okoth 2023).

Looking At the Underbelly or Aberrations of the Future of Europe in the Present and the Not-Yet Tangible Social, Political, and Technological Perspectives to Imagine a Future

1. Democracy as an Entirely Uncertain Concept for the Future (Current Wars in Europe and the Middle East)

Democracy as an entirely uncertain concept for the future requires a critical examination of the historical and contemporary events at the origins of the European Union, the dynamics of wars in Europe and its surroundings, and a vision for the future of Europe.

Focusing on the concept of democracy makes it necessary to learn about different ways of building a civic life and how to unlearn stigmatization and discrimination as characteristics of today's democracies. In contrast to the fascist parties of the interwar and war period of the 20th century, which wanted to abolish democracy, today's fascist and far-right parties across the

EU present themselves as parties that want to restore democracy, but do so through xenonationalism and thus also undermine the central features and values of democracy. This means that the experiences and life in Europe should be understood, theorized, and presented as globally co-extensive in order to work with a concept such as democracy.

Democracy cannot be seen outside of two systems, the colonial and the slave system (Mbembe 2019, 20), which directly link democracy to violence. Firstly, capitalist or liberal democracy has the colony within it, secondly, it exists in and on the borders, and thirdly, it relies on history without the people (27–32).

At the same time, capital has inherited from the colonial era the right to decide over life and death (Mbembe 2003, 34), which has been elaborated as necrocapitalism (Banerjee 2008; Gržinić 2008). For example, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has caused death not because of the demand for rapid vaccination, but because of the inadequate distribution of vaccines between Europe and the rest of the world.

One of the key points in the analysis of democracy is that democracy is currently producing a society of division rather than the imagined society of equity and justice. To support this claim, we can refer to two positions that also appear in Mbembe's book *Necropolitics* (2019; Gržinić 2021b). One reference is the controversial German jurist Carl Schmitt and his critique of parliamentary democracy ([1923] 1985). Recapitulating Schmitt's position, Mbembe asserts that in a democracy, the surplus population is wholly or partially without rights. The second reference is Wendy Brown. In her article "American Nightmare: Neoliberalism, Neoconservatism, and De-Democratization" (2006), she discusses how neoliberalism and neoconservatism are two distinct political rationalities prevalent in the United States today and increasingly present in the EU. Neoliberalism and neoconservatism devalue political liberty, equity, substantive citizenship, and the rule of law in favor of governance by market criteria on the one hand and the valorization of state power for supposedly moral purposes on the other (Brown 2006, 690). She also shows how they undermine the culture and institutions of constitutional democracy and create an uncomfortable situation of indifference to "political freedom and equality among citizens" (690).

Mbembe (2019) shows that the enemy is a social necessity in such a situation and is constitutive of the nation-state. Referring to the book *The Human Right to Dominate* (2015) by Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon, the uncertainty of democracy, which is one of the main starting points of this research, shows that militarism no longer needs a mask to assert itself in the current state of democracy.

In short, the uncertainty of democracy is the result of what John E. Drabinski (2013) writes, namely that the meaning of the human and the meaning of the social have changed in the twenty-first century. So we can summarize this by the palpable paradox: On the one hand, we yearn for a democracy and theorize the demos and its associated notions of belonging, justice, and the like, all of which date back to the twentieth century, while the present is sandwiched between the virtual and the real state of society and politics, which, due to digital technologies and the incredible compression of temporalities and spatializations, is no longer compatible with our twentieth-century theorizations. We are dealing with a completely confusing perspective that brings together a whole series of different centuries and partial futures.

2. The Rise of Right-Wing and Fascist New Political Powers That Fuel Pervasive Inequalities with Racism and Antisemitism, Violent Abandonment of Refugees and Violent Marginalization, and Racializations

In order to analyze the current necropolitical logics that organize European space, it is necessary to examine the multiple conditions and power relations that lead to exclusion, discrimination, erasure, and death. The transatlantic slave trade from 1492 onwards, genocide, the expulsion of Muslims and Jews, and the genocide of Roma during the Spanish Inquisition on the Iberian Peninsula are early examples of Islamophobia, antisemitism, anti-Black racism, and anti-Roman racism, which are still crucial elements in the discourse on racialization and fascism today (see Gržinić and Tatlić 2014). In the European context, the Spanish conquest and colonization laid the foundation for the modern/colonial capitalist system we live in today, structuring power along lines of race, class, and gender binaries from the very beginning.

It is a permanent situation of lethal or necro-equilibrium. The Occident attempts to differentiate between “real” and “fake” refugees, selectively ensuring that those who are in exile do not “die,” but not caring for those who flee in order to “live.” Different positions—non-citizens, migrants, refugees, those who, despite being citizens, are constantly treated as “second or third class” citizens—are cut off from belonging and becoming, not only socially and culturally, but even prevented from participating in any form of political participation. Belonging is a category that resonates both in the institutions of governmentality and in the social and cultural life of civic society. But belonging can also be understood through its absence, as in the case of the displacement of refugees from Ukraine or refugees in general. In