towards "a more adequate interpretation of the world we live in", by identifying new forms of domination while combatting "the hubristic inclination of considering human beings as actually capable of mastering all aspects of their existence on this earth" (Wagner 2015). In this respect, there is something that, according to Tsing, we, as social scientists, can do for a start: practice the art of noticing in our research. This means "to look around rather than ahead", to cultivate the vulnerability to unexpected encounters (with entities, objects, disciplines); to pay attention to the margins, with no rush to adhere to a pre-formatted narrative.

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Luigi Pellizzoni
Ontological Politics in a Disposable World: The New Mastery of Nature,
Farnham, Ashgate, 2015, pp. 259

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Since roughly the 1990s, the "ontological turn" has been one of the most thrilling "turns" within social sciences. It has been a breath of fresh air beyond the limits and impasses of either constructionism and positivism. However, its thrill stems also from the controversies it raised, as STS scholars know (see, for instance, the debate in a recent issue of *Social Studies of Science*, 3/45 of 2015, spurred by a previous issue of *SSS*, 3/43 of 2013, dedicated to the issue).

Luigi Pellizzoni, in his book, brings such turn under deep scrutiny. Is it really the case, he asks, that the ontological turn has emancipatory implications? Can the conflation of the epistemological under the ontological liberate humans and non-humans from a dominative, hierarchical and exploitative logic which is based on dichotomies (of nature/culture, thing/thought etc.)? His answer is substantially negative. Pellizzoni, indeed, argues that the ontological turn is paradoxically nourishing neolib-

eral values and very consistent with them by celebrating flexibility, contingency and precariousness together with the "ever-green" capitalistic value of endless growth.

His critique is illuminating and, even if not always totally convincing, it is an engaging contribution, which encourage critical thinking. Through an unprecedented broad and very analytical examination, this book is also an impressive work of erudition, an exciting journey that connects ancient Greeks to most recent approaches in philosophy, social sciences and anthropology. For this reason, it can be read as a good – even if not short – introduction to the ontological turn, as well as a critical in-depth analysis of it. By drawing together the apparently unconnected threads of the ontological turn, it allows to grasp a broad intellectual landscape. The book starts with four cases, which have gained salience since the '90s and which exemplify the commodification of fields of material reality previously unaffected by market dynamics: 1) Carbon markets: each company has the right to pollute up to a certain amount, but can always buy quota from companies that pollute less; connected to this exchange of pollution permits there are "weather derivatives", i.e. financial instruments transforming environmental risks into investment opportunities; 2) Geoengineering: it consists in the manipulation of the planetary environment to counteract climate change, through, for example, carbon dioxide removal or solar radiation management; 3) Biosciences and biotechnology patenting; 4) Human enhancement: i.e. techniques applied to the human body to enhance indefinitely its potentiality and efficiency.

The blurring of the distinction between matter and information, living and non-living, identity and difference is what these four cases have in common. In this way they legitimize an ecological politics based on the value of unlimited growth and ideas of mitigation of risks and adaptation, instead of one based on limits and equilibrium, thus weakening precaution as policy framework.

In the second chapter, Pellizzoni grounds these cases in the "ontology of the present", marked by the imbrication of humans things, nature, environment. Neoliberalism is seen as an intensification of liberalism, which, differently from the latter is not concerned by limits. Chapter 3 is the core of the book, the one in which Pellizzoni confronts himself with scholars linked to the ontological turn – the "post-constructionists", as he calls them. The main hypothesis of the book is the existence of a "subterranean complicity of social theory with neoliberalism" (69), defined by him not as simple subservience to capitalist interests, but "the sharing of a framing and sense-making which constitute the condition of possibility for certain problems to emerge and certain answers to these problems to become conceivable" (70). In the first part of the chapter he discusses the main features of the ontological turn: an exacerbation of constructionism, as an attempt to reconcile constructivism and realism. As everything is constructed, it is also real. This brings to 1)

the rejection of dualisms, hierarchies and identities, these replaced by flu-id, emergent and contingent ontologies; 2) taking techno-scientific ad-vancements as inspiration for innovation in social sciences; 3) connection of the "real" and the "political". In the second part of the chapter Pelliz-zoni analyses selected strands in the ontological turn: Marx and post structural-marxism; Actor-Network Theory; feminist new materialism; Paolo Virno; multinaturalism; speculative realist philosophers. There is no space to account for the detailed ways in which Pellizzoni examines these approaches. In general, he observes that indeterminacy is not a means for emancipation but a perspective of the world in contiguity with Neoliberalism, thus not a real alternative to it. Pellizzoni defines post-constructionism as just another analytics of truth (as positivism, for ex-ample), which defines what is right and true (contingency, fluidity, etc.) against what is not (stability, identities, etc.) (see also Laidlaw and Hey-wood 2013) and, as such, it is intolerant of other perspectives (see also Scott 2013).

In the fourth chapter, Pellizzoni analyses the limits of both post-constructionist theories and neoliberalism. He illustrates the metaphysical underpinning of modern science and technology, which, through Darwin-ism, conceive life as a general force, exceeding the life of singular living beings and thus establishing an ontological symmetry and continuity be-tween humans and non-humans, where difference and variation are the base for contingent ontological outcomes. By assuming the Darwinian continuity between humans and animals, modern technology conflates nature into culture making ontology and epistemology overlap, thus justi-fying an unlimited exploitation of nature. Against this backdrop which characterizes both the *a-priori* of neoliberalism and of post-constructionism, Pellizzoni proposes Heideggerian theories: for Heidegger, technology is positive as long as it is used to dis-conceal na-ture through "bestowing", which is "listening to and respecting the poie-sis of nature, its self-giving" (154). According to Pellizzoni's reading of Heidegger, humans and non-humans can never fully overlap and the ac-knowledgment of this gap, this "remainder" is key to respect nature's mystery. Thus, Pellizzoni, building on Heidegger, proposes a critical hu-manism which is critical because builds on the conditions specific to hu-mans without drawing any hierarchical implication from it. I consider this call to a re-evaluation of a certain kind of humanism, as a solution to an increasing trend of exploitations, the most innovative contribution of this book.

In the final chapter, Pellizzoni, on one hand questions the way politics is addressed by these ontological approaches, transfiguring politics into ethics, on the other hand he introduces other possible approaches. By re-considering biopolitics, Pellizzoni not only states the impossibility to de-activate biopower through desubjectivation, but also brings attention to how, through desubjectivation, biopower is enhanced: "the more deper-

sonalized one is, we could say, the more one can personalize itself in whatever direction" (183). Pellizzoni identifies a link between this process and current forms of self-capitalization, political consumerism, and – referring to the digital revolution – the coexistence of new monopolies thanks to "open" and ideological communities of commons. According to Pellizzoni, the current focus on ethics results in apolitical consequences because it prompts an ideal of fulfilment, expression and expansion of oneself, a move toward internalizing the world within oneself and, therefore, moulding and exploiting it in line with the capitalistic values of optimization, growth and expansion.

As alternatives, Pellizzoni considers Theodore Adorno and Giorgio Agamben. The German philosopher emphasizes the always present remainder out of the encounter between epistemology and ontology, the necessary violence (contrasted by Pellizzoni with the pacification of assemblages) necessary for change and critique. For Pellizzoni, the subtle but crucial difference between Adorno and post-constructionists is that for the former things are neither cultural nor natural, while for the latter things are both cultural and natural. The most recent work on Franciscanism of Agamben inspires, on the other hand, Pellizzoni's proposal for an alternative to both post-constructionism and realism or constructionism. It is to encourage a form of life based on our impotentialities, defined as "our possibility of not willing = doing = being" (215), against neoliberal understanding of "being" as consequence of the capacity to act, based on ideas of duty and will. Choose to not choose is, for Agamben-Pellizzoni, the crucial feature making us truly "human", as the capacity to deactivate the paradigm of operativity. This can be obtained granting primacy to acting over being (as according to the monastic rule) and establishing "use" as an alternative to property or right. This conclusion is somehow evocative and intriguing but it is not very clear how this alternative can be applied in real life and also intruding the doubt that the acting which should ground this new form of life is, at the end, very similar to "practice".

In general, Pellizzoni's critique of the ontological turn being not political is not a totally new observation but while similar critiques are mostly based on ideological and weak underpinnings easily deconstructed (Candea 2011; 2014; Holbraad and Pedersen 2014; Holbraad, Pedersen and De Castro 2013), Pellizzoni's argument is theoretically very solid and he deals with an in-depth and careful analysis of what he criticizes. Therefore, Pellizzoni's work cannot simply be dismissed as trivial "non-common-sense" (Pedersen 2012) but it provides food for thought for the critical assessment of the limits and threats of the ontological turn.

Still, I have two main remarks: I do not totally agree that post-constructionists draw a complete overlap between the epistemological and the ontological: in the work of Barad (2007) "what is left" is often reminded and in the work of other scholars (see for example Abra-

hamsson, Bertoni, Mol and Ibáñez Martín 2015; Greco 2004) is the main topic. Secondly, and related, I am not sure that Pellizzoni's theoretical alternative is not in the order of an analytics of truth. Pellizzoni advances a privative ethics, a negative modality of knowledge based on what is not accessible because out of human limits, while post-constructionists propose an ethics of excess (see for example, de la Cadena 2015), this resulting, similarly, in the incapability to access a final truth, because there are too many truths and only one is realizable at a time. Both define truth as something beyond the human – and this is a statement of reality. Thus, I would find more appropriate to define both as analytics of truth: Pellizzoni's negative modality is a step in the dialectical construction of identity, therefore within a logic of identity. The difference is that one has affirmative connotations, while the other has critical tones. Probably, it is impossible for humans to escape an analytics of truth exactly because the constitutive gap between ontology and epistemology condemns us to stick to the epistemic side, these being critical or affirmative. Thought, these two options are fairly different, and with potential for supporting or criticizing very different applications, as they define the ethical and political posture in accessing and relating to reality.

To conclude, Pellizzoni seems guilty of the same sin he accuses post-constructionists: to exaggerate the differences among them. But after all, I do not see this as sin but as a skill, necessary for developing critique, which is to make visible some hidden or potential risky trends allowing us to reflect always deeper about who we are and what we are doing in this world.

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Signer ensemble. Contribution et évaluation en sciences [*Signing Together. Contribution and Evaluation in Sciences*], Paris, Economica, 2016, pp. 206

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Since the 1980s we have seen the rise – if not the obsession – of evaluation policies of the academic production through the proliferation of performance indicators and devices to judge and measure contribution in sciences (bibliometric indicators, journal classification, and peer review). The translation of new public management theories into the academic field with the aim of tracing and measuring the individual contribution becomes problematic since every scientific activity – as *Laboratory Studies* had proved – implies the participation of human teams and the use of many instruments, artefacts and techniques. So the question is: how to distinguish the contribution of each one? How to decide who is legitimated to acquire the status of *author* signing the publication of research results? How to establish, without any doubt, what a scientific contribution is? The book *Signer Ensemble. Contribution et évaluation en sciences*, by David Pontille, analyses scientific contribution by simultaneously taking into account the issues linked to the knowledge production, the work organization and the evaluation policies for different historical peri-